

The Park of Cilento

A living landscape



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The Park of Cilento
and Vallo di Diano
A living landscape

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Among its objectives, the Salerno Provincial Council has set up a complex program aiming at protecting and making the most of the environment and its natural habitat. In this context, particular weight is given to the application of the National Park of Cilento and Vallo di Diano entry in the Unesco World Heritage List, in agreement with the Park's Agency, the Community of Capaccio-Paestum, and the Salerno Province Tourist Bureau.

In my opinion, the local institutions must be in the front line to indicate the strategies for the promotion of the territory.

Within this context, the Province Authorities also play a primary role, as they are the necessary link between the local administrative bodies and the higher institutions: the Regional Government, the Central Government and the European Union. The support and assistance from the Provincial Council has already given fruitful results.

The concept of the public administration, that is changing from an authoritarian body into one that is meant to serve the general public, is crucial on the road leading to full development, and has already proved to be effective.

As some experts and researchers suggest, the territory is the first great resource to exploit in Italy – particularly in the South – and a careful policy needs to be followed in this matter by the Local Institutions; it is a very complex resource, and is the only real added value to rely on, if we

want to compete with the other European countries and the rest of the world.

The National Park of Cilento and the Vallo di Diano, in the Province of Salerno, is in itself a fundamental option. The widespread awareness to protect and safeguard the environment, the small rural business, the historical buildings, the landscape with its variety of flora and fauna, the thousand-year old intertwining of history and legend are the texture and framework, the starting point for further development of the undertaken projects.

Being aware of all that potential, the Salerno Provincial Council has decided to protect and safeguard the territory following the guidelines that the experts themselves deem exhaustive: from the monitoring of the environmental pollution to fostering tourism, thanks to the wealth of architectural treasures, restoring and re-utilizing abandoned buildings and their facilities.

In carrying out the idea of sustainable social and economic development, we have been inspired by the basic principles any modern and functional institution should make its own: the demand for services by the citizen-user, acceptance of queries from the area, incentives to growth and development processes needed by the people. These are the guidelines to look ahead, never forgetting the value of our traditions.

Alfonso Andria
President of the Province of Salerno

The application of the National Park of Cilento and Vallo di Diano (with its archaeological sites of Paestum and Velia) for entry in the Unesco World Heritage List is an internationally innovative event, both because the environmental and cultural aspects of the vast territory are seen as an inseparable whole and because it has been put forward by several administrative institutions and agencies in the area, such as the Park's Agency, the Salerno Provincial Council, the Province Tourist Bureau, in agreement with the B.A.A.S. and Archaeological Superintendents – under the patronage of the Salerno Prefecture. This also proves that the local institutions and the people are highly committed to the task of protecting and safeguarding the cultural wealth and the environmental beauties of the Park's area, which is one of the largest in Italy, and a very interesting one in the Mediterranean.

There are many and complex reasons that have driven us to put this application forward and the pages of this volume would not be enough to contain them all.

How could you explain your astonishment and wonder, when you look at the temples of Paestum or the ruins of Velia, the dizzy heights of the coastal cliffs, the smell of the moss and fern in the Park's inland gorges, the mysterious rock sculptures, the fascination of the wooded mountains and the peaks shaping the skyline, the fluttering of a thousand butterflies, the shadow of a cave full of tools and remains of the paleolithic man, or gazing at the eyes of a portrait in a Basilian monastery, while listening to the muffled chirping of cicadas.

However, the territory of the National Park, that has also been declared MaB-Unesco Biosphere Reserve, is not just an area full of Cultural Treasures and a more or less untouched environment; there are people that still retain their

thousand-year old proud spirit. The Park is the outcome of the combined work of Man and Nature, of historical, social, economic, artistic and spiritual events. All this is evident, today, in the peculiar expression and a "way" that is the result of a thousand-year old close communion between Man and his natural environment.

Hence the wish and need to offer the whole of mankind not just a single temple or biotype, but a whole area, a living landscape, a thousand-year old cross-roads and melting pot of peoples and civilizations, where man has lived and left traces in the caves, has sculpted his image on the rocks, has built temples and strongholds, interacted with, and changed the original natural habitat by cutting down woods to make ships, setting the bushes on fire to have better pasturelands for his herds, terracing the dry hillsides to cultivate vineyards, olive groves, chestnut trees, fruit trees, and turn wild herbs into vegetables. This is a living landscape that, while having an active role in today's society, still preserves the traditional features that have created it, in its organization of the territory, in its network of communication routes, in its structure of farmedlands and settlements, which all reveals a harmonious blending between man's work and the whole natural unchanged environment.

*Hence the wish and pride to be in the front line and make the most of that all: applying for entry in the Unesco World Heritage List may be the starting point for a new *èlan* and, like the ancient sea-faring peoples, resume our journey in full sails towards broader horizons and by recollecting our past, make our history, culture and land known elsewhere.*

Vincenzo La Valva

*President of the National Park
of Cilento and Vallo di Diano*

Foreword

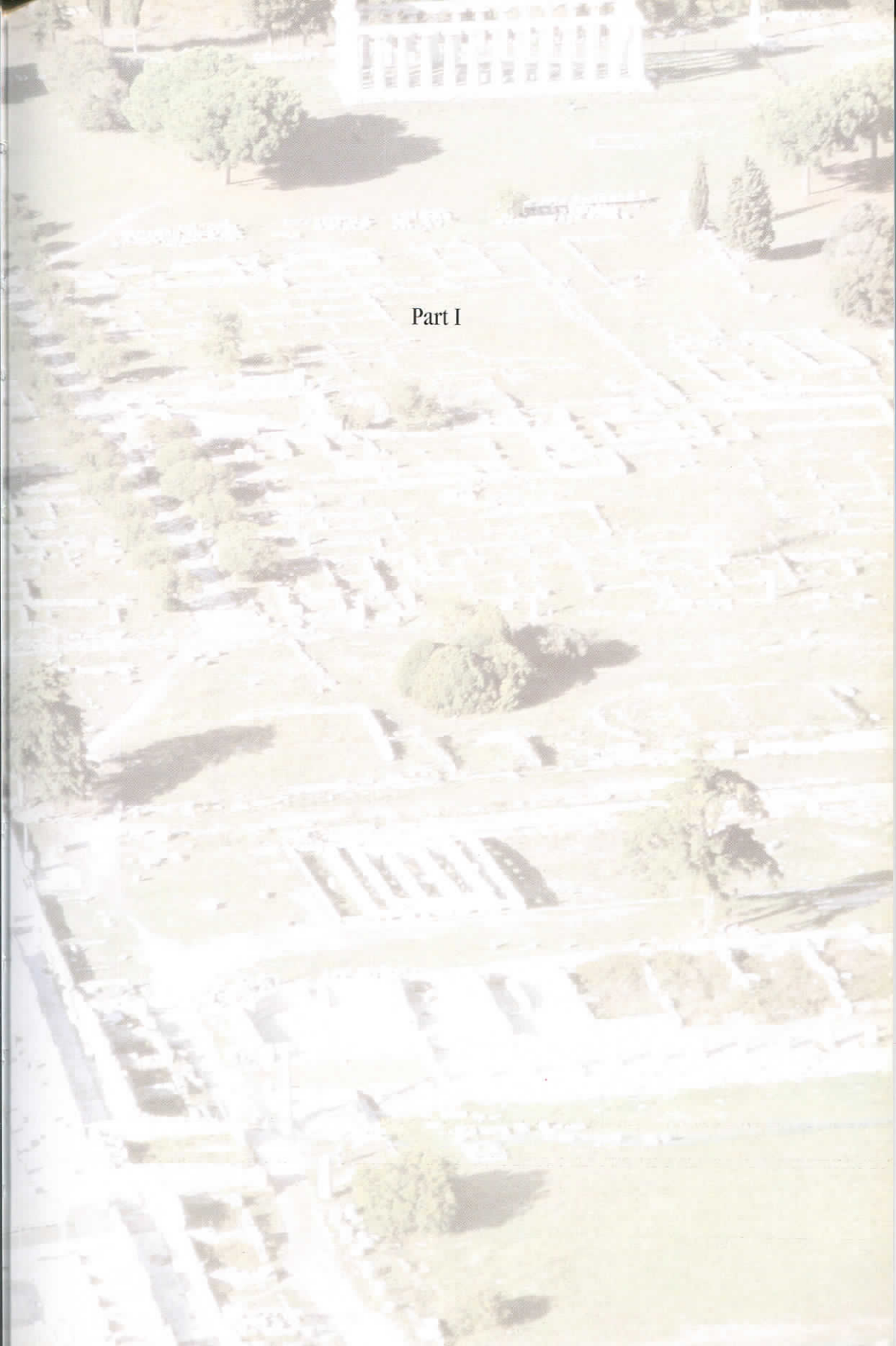
This work is based on the research carried out for the dossier of the National Park of Cilento and Vallo di Diano entry in the Unesco World Heritage List.

The results of this study have proved the Park territory to be the place where Euromediterranean ecosystems and cultures meet and mix, thanks to its central geographic location and to the extraordinary variety of natural environments coexisting in it.

Therefore, this territory, which is the extraordinary outcome of the combined work of man and nature, is an evolving landscape shaped by the different social, economic and spiritual factors depending on, and interacting with its natural environment over the millennia.

Today, Cilento is a living and vital landscape that still keeps the traditional features that have been created by its land use, road network, farming ways, variety of settlements, and traditions. Just like the different natural species, different populations have come into contact and mixed in these geographical environments, as we can clearly see in the archaeological remains and the existing customs and traditions.

Situated in the centre of the Mediterranean sea, this is its Park par excellence, because, just like this sea, it has been the place where different civilizations have met and mixed for thousands of years.



Part I

The National Park of Cilento and Vallo di Diano, a Living Landscape

Geographical and naturalistic features

The National Park of Cilento is situated half way between the centre and south of Italy and includes the whole of the southern part of the province of Salerno, where the Campania region borders on the Basilicata region.

The Park faces the Tyrrhenian sea on the west coast of Italy, but, due to the particular shape of the Italian peninsula stretching remarkably both southwards and eastwards, it occupies a central position in the Mediterranean area.

In terms of latitude, it stands between two very distinct mediterranean areas with contrasting geographical and environmental features: the one pertaining to an euroarctic climate, the other resembling that of a dry African landscape.

In terms of longitude, it stands on the narrowest part of the Italian peninsula, where the eastern and western parts of the Mediterranean are easier to reach overland, and subatlantic conditions meet Asian ones.

Thus the Park's area is the place where exchanges are easily made from both a naturalistic and anthropological point of view.

It has a variety of environmental features stretching from the coast to the mountains and valleys, and has an area of about 180000 hectares with geographical boundaries that are well marked by the Tyrrhenian sea and by the drainage area of the Sele and Tanagro rivers. The stretch of the Tyrrhenian sea between the Gulf of Salerno and the Gulf of Policastro marks its boundary to the West and South, the Sele river to the North, and the Tanagro river, a tributary of the Sele, flowing all along the wide Vallo di Diano depression, marks its boundary to the East.

In terms of land forms and plant life the Park has an exceptional array of interesting sites on account of

its peculiar geomorphological and microclimatic characteristics.

The shape of the land is characterized by mountains and hills sloping down towards the sea where the coast takes the form of a series of cliffs, beaches, bays and promontories with karst formations, a wealth of sea caves and fresh water springs. The general North-West/South-East orientation of the Apennine mountain range combines with contrasting relief and rock formations with mountains and hills showing no precise orientation, separated by transversal and longitudinal valleys.

The eastern massifs are made of calcareous rock, calcareous dolomitic stone and stratified dolomitic rock. The highest peaks are the Alburni Mountains (1742 m), Mount Cocuzzo (1411 m), Mount Mottola (1700 m), and Mount Cervati (1898 m), which rise all west of Vallo di Diano, forming an arc-shaped range that marks the boundary of the coastal area.

The slopes contain long side valleys eroded by streams and torrents. Erosion and karst formations, dolines, swallow-holes, caves and springs characterize this landscape of flat areas, plateaus, steep gorges, narrow and deep V-shaped valleys similar to those found along the course of the Calore rivers and its tributary, the Sammaro.

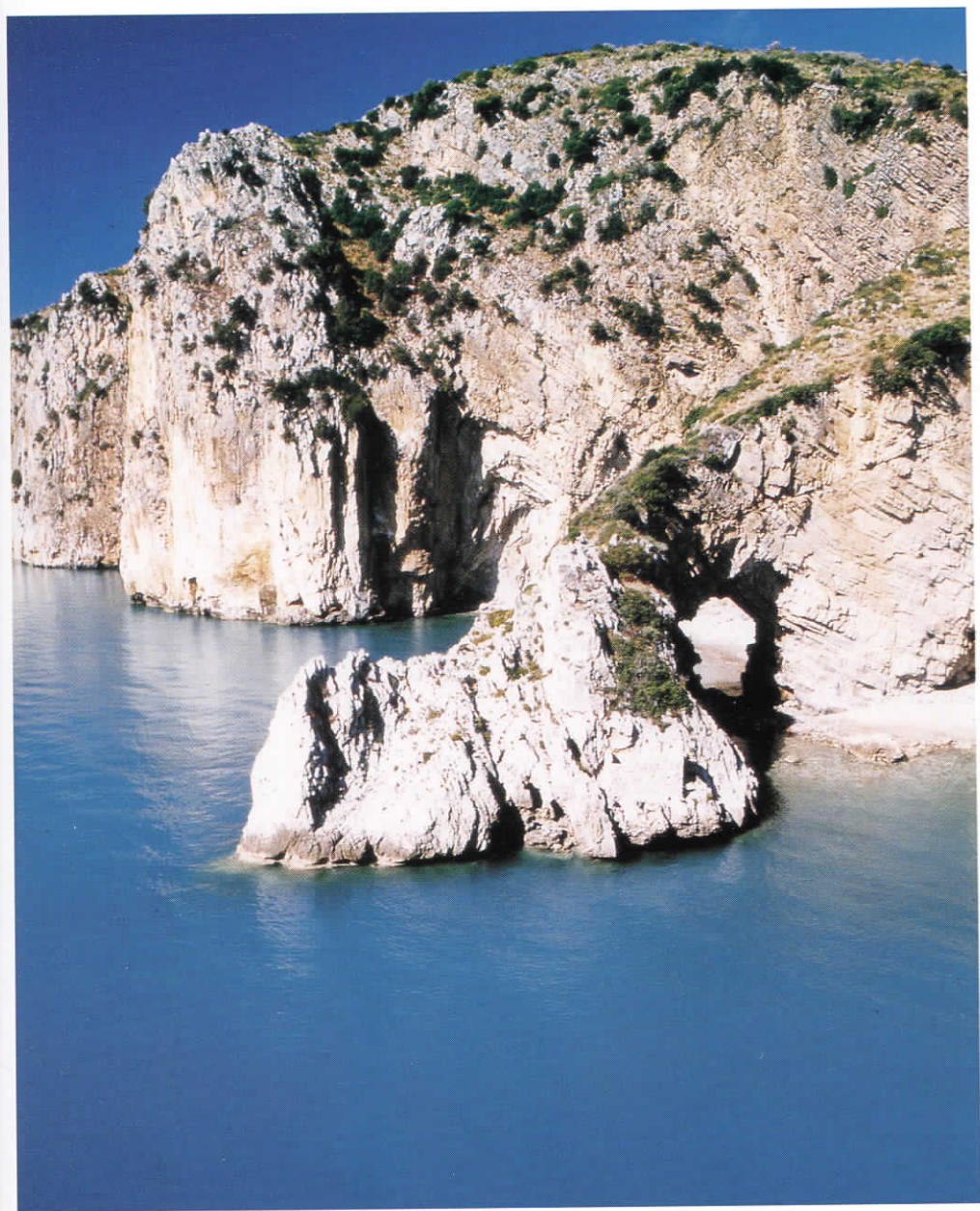
Apart from Mount Bulgheria, that is also made of calcareous rock, the relief in the western part is made of sedimentary stratified rocks of different origin: clay, sand and calcareous stone, quartzite and sandstone, loam-rock and conglomerates forming the Cilento *flysch*. The highest mountain in the area is Monte Sacro or Gelbison (1702 m), that shows a less rugged terrain than the calcareous rock mountains.

The neighbouring mountains, Gelbison and Mount Stella, separated by the Alento river drainage area, are similar in their geological and rock formation. The landscape of rolling hills, that separates the

Capo Palinuro: coast-line

Punta del Telegrafo: coast-line





mountains from the coast, slopes down towards the sea more gently for Mount Gelbison than it does for Mount Stella. Because of its peculiar geographic position, climate and geological formation, the Park is characterized by an exceptional wealth of habitats and plant variety. This variety of natural environments implies a high degree of biodiversity, since some 3200-3500 wild plant species have been counted there.

Proceeding from sea level to the highest altitude we notice the following plant belts:

- dry mediterranean belt: coastal area containing endemic Aleppo pinetree (*Pinus halepensis*) woods; binding grass bush (*amphelodesmos mauritanicus*) on the coast and the creeping variety (*cistus monspeliensis*) on the hills close to the coast; dry pasture grass growth (*thero-brachypodietea*); bushy plants that are present in both this and the mediterranean belts, wild olive trees (*olea europea* var. *sylvestris*), carob tree (*ceratonia siliqua*), Phenician juniper (*juniperus phoenicia*), arboreal euphorbia bushes (*euphorbia dendroides*);
- mediterranean belt: inland valleys and hills up to 600 m above sea level containing holm-oak (*quercus ilex*) woods that have been periodically cut down until recent times and a great variety of plant species like *asplenium onopteris*, *rubia peregrina*, *asparagus acutifolius*, *viburnum tinus*; plantations of holm-oak trees ranging from the coastal areas up to an altitude of 800 m above sea level; short coastal scub with plant species that are present in both this and in the dry mediterranean areas;
- Apennine belt: (Samnitic and Lucanian area) between 400 m and 1000 m above sea level containing turkey oak (*quercus cerris*) woods and specimens as high as 25/30 metres along with other deciduous tall trees (*acer obtusatum*, *alnus cordata*, *ostyria carpinifolia*), deciduous oak woods (*quercus cerris*

and *quercus pubescens*) maple and hornbeam trees (*carpinus orientalis* and *carpinus betulis*); chestnut woods spread to the inland Park areas by men; thickets of Neapolitan alder (*alnus cordata*) that have replaced broad leaved trees once predominant in the area but whose range has shrunk thanks to man's work; on calcareous rock slopes used for pastures we find euphorbia spinosa bushes and over 900 m above sea level we find lavandula angustifolia bushes; asphodelus albus or asphodelus lutea are found on highly exploited calcareous pastureland, and a high number of species on arid pastures (*thero-brachypodietea*);

- subatlantic belt: altitudes between 1000 and 1800 m on the Alburni Mountains, Mount Cervati, Mount Motola and Mount Gelbison with quite tall beechtree (*fagus sylvatica*) woods; in the undergrowth, the ilex aquifolium can often be found;

- highland mediterranean belt: above the beechtree line, on the highest calcareous rock slopes and on the summit flat grounds we find *sesleria tenuifolia* highland prairies, the largest of which found on Mount Cervati.

More species can be added to each of the climatic belts mentioned above; these species have been introduced into habitats of specific ecological or soil conditions depending on factors not connected with the areas.

There are numerous endemic species to the Park. One of the most interesting is the *Primula Palinuri* (*Palinuro primrose*) that can be found on a 50 km stretch of coast from Palinuro to Marina di Camerota and up to an altitude of 400 m.

Of pre-glacial origin, the *Primula Palinuri* presents ancestral features. It grows on calcareous rock cliffs in gorges facing the North and manages to survive the summer heat in a dormant state. It develops into a kind of bush with large leaves at the base of its blossoms. It bears early (February-April) yellow

flowers and is extremely interesting among the mediterranean primroses on account of its marine habitat and its very broad leaves.

Among the natural habitats there are many priority sites declared as being of special interest by the European Union in the Council dated May 25, 1992, which dealt with the preservation of the natural and semi-natural habitats, as well as with the wild flora and fauna.

Such wealth of plant life is not solely due to natural factors, since man's work has interacted with nature since the remotest of times and has constantly conditioned its characteristics. The traditional ways of land exploitation have in time shaped the Park's landscape and favoured biodiversity. The physical environment with its geographical location, the topographic and climatic conditioning, with the possibilities offered by the various landscapes, lands and rocks, has, in turn, offered the framework within which man has operated and found therein the lifeblood to support his body and soul.

From the rock shelters used in the Paleolithic Age to the neolithic settlements, and from the sea and overland trade routes of the Age of Metals to the grandiose Greek and Lucanian urban structures of Pastum and Velia, the Park of Cilento preserves the signs of land exploitation that shows a highly cultural and spiritual relationship with nature.

Just like the natural species and the natural environments, the people have found in these places their favourite meeting point for interchanging and mixing. Sea and mountain, East and West, nordic and African cultures, peoples and civilizations all meet in Cilento that preserves their clear features in its peculiar characters.

Situated in the Mediterranean sea, it is the mediterranean Park *par excellence*, because it synthesizes its peculiar features: biodiversity, environmental amalgamation and mixing of peoples: the very

features implied in the etimological meaning of Mediterranean: "land in the middle".

Linked by the road network, the sea, the caves, the ridges, the springs, the slopes, the summits, and the valleys all become the structural elements of a human project. These – though in different ways – continually recur in the various points in history and are reutilized in the economy, redesigned with farming, enriched by art and architecture, and become mythical, metaphysical and cultural elements in the people's minds.

In the Middle Ages the arcaic ridge road-network of Cilento, that was discarded and neglected in Roman times, is revitilized and gives birth to a series of villages, settlements, churches and shrines that are built according to precise rules and reasons reviving ancient traditions.

Nowadays, the Park of Cilento further enriches its territory, that takes on the shape of a living, vital, and evolving landscape in the contemporary world. The institution of the Park aims at preserving such historical, archaeological and anthropological values continuing their cultural process, and safeguarding this environmental *unicum*, a fundamental component of the great Mediterranean civilizations, world heritage of the history of mankind.

Caves, Landing Places, and Ridges in Pre-Historic Times

In pre-historic times the Cilento environment offers people a luxuriant vegetation with plenty of game and comfortable shelters in its numerous caves.

In spite of successive climate changes in the very long period from the Paleolithic to the Neolithic Age down to the Age of Metals, the various geographic environment and the microclimatic conditions have allowed people to live in the area more or less without interruption. Land surveys and researches carried out by the Archaeological Supervision Office





of Salerno and by the University of Siena of 19 caves and open shelters, finds relating to the main pre-historic cultures ranging from the Paleolithic to the Age of Metals have been unearthed on the coast that stretches from Scario to Marina di Camerota. In particular, the Cala cave that was investigated by Paolo Gambassini, presents a clear series of archaeological layers ranging from 250000 to 10000 years ago.

In the early Paleolithic *Homo Erectus* uses these caves and shelters leaving a number of tools of the Acheulean culture. During the following period, the Middle Paleolithic, the Neandertal Man emerges, as is proved, among other things by the existence of a child's mandible found in the Scario shelter along with stone tools of the Mousterian production site.

The Neandertal hunters roam also the northern area of Cilento. In fact, not only in the coastal sites are their stone tools found, but also on the inland mountains of Calpazio and the Alburni range, namely, in the Granato shelter, and in the Castelvita, (2 San Michele at Sant'Angelo di Fasanelle caves, respectively. The latter cave has been used for an astonishingly long period until today's cultural utilization.

During the late Paleolithic and Mesolithic Ages the same places in the Alburni range and also on the coast between Marina di Camerota and Scario are used by *Homo Sapiens Sapiens*, as signs of his presence have been found in the Castelvita caves (Alburni range) and in the Ausino cave which lies below it and which is lived in towards the end of that period.

With the spreading of the Neolithic culture and the continuous exploitation of the land, the settlements and the communication lines that are determined by the orographic structure, begin to take shape and become the guidelines in the process of the organization of the land and in the making of the cultural landscape.

Starting from the Neolithic Age a network of contacts is testified by the fact that we find obsidian tools from the Lipari islands, implying that trade has developed along the new spinning and weaving technologies.

Coasting trade from the Lipari islands is carried out by means of rafts that use simple landing places protected by promontories like Tresino point or Cape Palinuro, where ports later are built, or landing places with plenty of caves where it is easy to find shelter and fresh water springs, like Marina di Camerota, or also river mouths, as is the case with Paestum.

For overland movements there are sheep-tracks used by herders. The Neolithic culture spread from the large Apulian plateau villages on the Adriatic and Ionian coasts towards the highland summer pastures of the interior.

Cilento is the last stop on the Tyrrhenian coast where contacts and sea trade exchanges are possible with the western part of the Mediterranean. Communications take place mainly on foot along ridge roads, which is easier and safer, away from marshy unhealthy lowlands, and frequent river crossing is avoided.

People can watch and control the territory from the mountain tops and, consequently, they become familiar with it, mark it not only by building shelters and meeting places, but also places of cult, thus making it their own.

Surrounded by the sea and the Sele-Tanagro rivers, Cilento appears to be a protected island facing the Tyrrhenian sea. The long Vallo di Diano depression to the North West is an impassable line stretching northwards with the Alburni mountain range and reaching the sea along river Sele. This obstacle is the main reason for setting up the road network dictated by the northern and southern crossing points.

In the northern part of the Vallo di Diano a karst phenomenon prompts a highly effective geographical event in terms of man's organization in his environment. The Tanagro river sinks into a natural sinkhole between the Polla and Pertosa caves, thus creating an easy crossing and only gateway to Cilento until the Roman times, when the Vallo lands are reclaimed for farming. For this reason the Polla and Pertosa caves are always used in time and become a destination point of all the routes proceeding westwards as far as Paestum along the Signora and Castelvita caves, where another road from the North along the Alburni mountain range ends.

A Neolithic road is outlined linking Cilento to the Ofanto river and the Apulian plateau. The Neolithic finds of the Polla, Castelvita, and Ausino confirm the importance of the route reaching as far as the Tyrrhenian sea along the left bank of the Sele river. Here, the Paestum Neolithic site, near the present location of the temple of Ceres testifies the presence of pre-historical people until the early Neolithic Age, as there have been found remains of VI millennium decorated pottery similar to those found at Buccino, along the itinerary leading to the earliest Neolithic culture diffusion areas of Matera and the Adriatic and Ionian coasts.

The painted pottery found in the Ausino cave dates back to the Middle Neolithic Age (IV millennium) and is similar in style to the that found at Serra d'Alto near Matera. This pottery, which is also found at the Paestum site, is characterized by its typically coiled and reeled handles, shapes that have been found over very long periods in places as far afield as Lipari and Messapia, and even in the Aegean area.

Starting from the third millennium, in the recent Neolithic Age, plain pottery prevails in the Diana Bellavista style, named after the two major settlements,

one located in Lipari and the other in the Taranto area. In this period cave-dwellings prevail, whereas in the Apulian plateau culture large settlements are protected by earthen barriers and ditches. The expansion drive of the latter culture is now over. It is a consequence of a first large-scale farming of the Adriatic coast followed by gradual desertification. Therefore, a farming and herding culture emerges based on the seasonal drive of livestock to the pasturelands of the interior and to Cilento which offers many cave dwellings. The importance of these routes is proved by the pottery in the Diana style found at Zacchito, in a gorge near Caggiano, just north of Padula and Pertosa, that is along the road leading from the northern exit of Cilento towards Lucania and the Apulian plateau. A second route in Cilento crosses the southern end of Vallo di Diano, goes around Mount Bulgheria and reaches the Neolithic sites of the caves at Marina di Camerota.

The position of the two roads is, therefore, determined by the landing places and the northern and southern gateways to the Vallo di Diano.

However, man's presence is not confined just to the areas along the routes, but there is evidence that it has reached also the central areas. This is proved by two sites situated on the opposite sides of a gorge in the Calore-Sele drainage area. One, the Stio site is located at the sources of the Alento river on the mountain range separating this drainage area from that of the Calore-Sele. The second, the Campora site, faces the previous one from the slopes of Monte Sacro or Gelbison. Linking these two sites is a route that travels along Mount Soprano ridge leading to Paestum, and along the main Gelbison ridge leads to Palinuro.

The summits and ridge routes are used by people, beginning a longlasting utilization and space appropriation.

Padula: St. Lawrence Carthusian
monastery seen from the south





The area's role of meeting point of cultures coming from the Tyrrhenian and Adriatic coasts continues in the Aeneolithic Age when new people, bearers of the first copper processing techniques reach the Cilento area, within a wider expansion drive of people looking for metals all over the Mediterranean.

The Piano di Conte culture that spread from Lipari to Calabria and Puglia, can also be traced in the fossil sinkhole of the Polla cave, into which the Pleistocene lake waters, which filled the Vallo plain, once used to pour. The wide natural caves of this sinkhole have been lived in until aeneolithic times. This culture is found in sizeable coastal caves in Puglia and Calabria, the most important being Porto Badisco, Zinzilusa, Otranto and Praia a Mare. In Cilento and Campania this is found in the hinterland sites of Buccino on the northern route towards Lucania, in the Ausino cave, as well as in that at Polla.

During the same period a new event changes the cultural landscape on the Cilento coast: a large scale colonization starts with people burying their dead in a huddled position in multiple, large, oven-shaped graves, and possibly coming either from the Aegean area or from Anatolia. This is evident in the impressive Gaudio necropolis dating back to the second half of the III millennium and located near Paestum. These people discard the caves and defendable places and choose to live in the open spaces and exposed ground. A beautiful flintstone blade, probably belonging to a burial dowry, has been found on Mount Stella near Punta della Carpinina along the road link to Paestum that goes through Punta Tresino – where the Saùco site has yielded finds typical of the Diana's culture.

These people, who dedicated themselves to farming, herding and trade, do not neglect the inland routes. Infact, one of the major settlements of the Gaudio culture is the Buccino site located north of Cilento,

beyond the gateway to the Vallo di Diano, on the overland communication routes.

The Gaudio culture expands on a vast area and extends to Calabria and Lucania. Here it penetrates into the aeneolithic culture of Laterza, that from its centre in Puglia and Lucania spreads as far as Pontecagnano and Paestum, a hundred metres from the temple of Ceres, just in the centre of the Gaudio culture, as is evident from their burial places found there.

This is a further demonstration that Cilento is the place where different groups and cultures meet, and that it played an important role in integrating itself with the Apennine mountains of the hinterland and the Apulian and Lucanian highlands, a role that grows increasingly in later times.

The Making of the Territorial Structure in the Early Historical Times

The Gaudio culture proves that Cilento, situated on the border between Campania and Lucania, is the area where Mediterranean cultures made their way into Italy. This is confirmed in the Bronze and Iron Ages with the arrival of armed groups, traders, and people looking for metals with more advanced technologies. These push the people living on the peninsula living in isolated groups, on account of the unfavourable orographic structure of the land, to form larger and more consolidated units with a more stable and better organized social and civil structure that can be defined as early urban societies.

At the beginning of the the II millennium (early Bronze Age) groups of shepherds settle on the left bank of the Sele river, near the site where the temple of Hera Argiva will be built and leave four votive axes in Paestum.

Later, during the middle Bronze Age their presence becomes more and more pressing. It is the period we now call "Apennine civilization" that develops in

Southern Italy and spreads northwards. It is characterized by a remarkable demographic growth due to the successful economic model based on livestock rearing.

The seasonal drive of herds from the coast to the highlands of the interior brings about the creation of satellite settlements: highland pasture sites, seasonal fences, caves used for shelter along the sheep-tracks, summit facilities to control the routes, meeting points on market days exploiting natural sources of fresh water springs and caves that later develop into places of cult, strongholds and trading centres.

The sites and routes of previous ages are still used if they happen to be in strategic points, such as the crossing of the Vallo di Diano at Polla, to which we must add the nearby sites at Pertosa, at Costa Palomba and Costa d'Elice and Sant'Angelo a Fasanello. The archaeological finds in some natural hypogea reveal that there existed a kind of cave cult in which the pre-historical mother goddess is worshipped with some water rites. In the same caves the warriors consecrate their swords and keep them in votive hiding places. In the splendid Grotta (cave) dell'Angelo at Pertosa pile dwellings are set up in the stream inside the mountain and ritual metal weapons are stored outside.

First of all the territory is studded with landmarks marked by large stone burial mounds and new important villages. Along the route leading towards the interior and starting from Paestum, where a thickly built hut village is erected, we find the village of Trentinara surrounded by a defensive earthen wall and in a commanding position over the whole of Paestum plain. From that point mountain shepherds and warriors follow the ridges towards the Alburni mountain range and the Vallo di Diano; on this route and precisely on the mountain stronghold of Costa Palomba the impressive shape

of a warrior engraved in the rock and locally called "l'Antece" (the Ancestor) still stands today as a reminder of those ancient populations.

A similar arrangement of the territory is made on the slopes of Monte Sacro or Gelbison: from the coastal site of Velia a route leads inland along the sites of Pattano, Cannalonga and Scannoichiuso leading towards the Vallo di Diano passing by the Grotta Fraulusi, near Laurino.

An increasing number of settlements also arise along the coast. Not only in Paestum do the Apennine people leave signs of their continued presence, but also in Agropoli, Punta Licosa, Velia, Camerota.

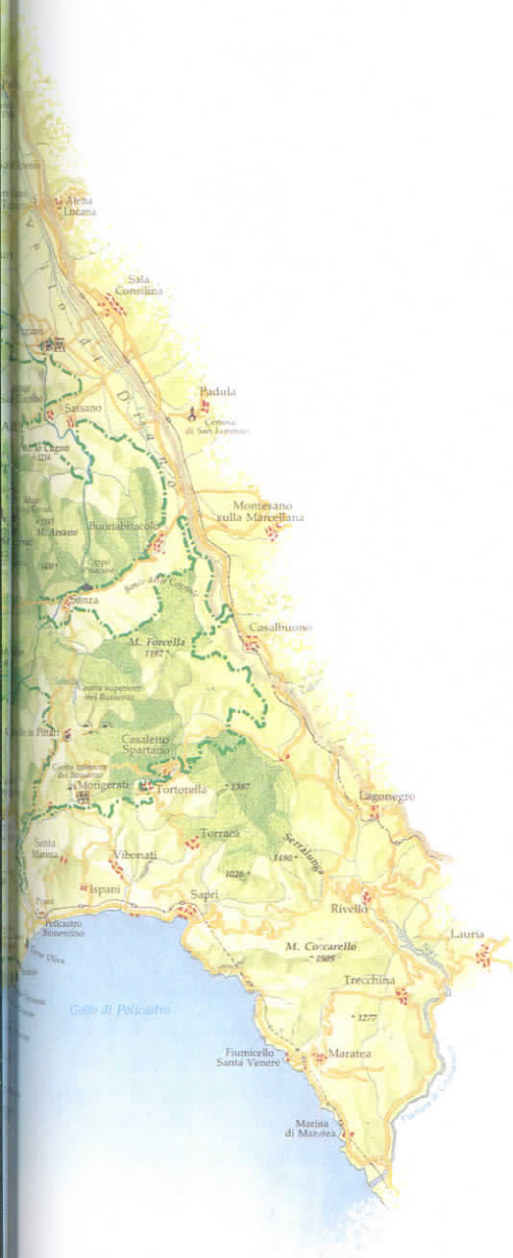
Below the Aragonese castle on the promontory of Agropoli traces of a hut village dating back to XI and X centuries B.C. are still visible on the ground. It is inhabited by a sizeable group of people dedicated to farming, herding, hunting and fishing. The slopes of the promontory are terraced for farming while the herds are kept on fenced pastureland on the hill slopes and ridges where shelters and places of cult are made: the mountain tops overgrown with woods are the ideal environment for hunting and keeping their space under control.

Mount Stella with its distinctive pointed summit overlooking the landing places of Agropoli, Licosa and Velia and the inland route towards Vallo are the relief features determining the way the territory is organized: the sacred mountain, the meeting point between land and sky. Clay ovens used for cooking, large pots for keeping foodstuff and the small ceramic pottery decorated with engraved cordons and ribbons have been found in Agropoli.

The large number of clay spinning weights proves the processing and weaving of wool. Triangular stone anchors prove that small boats are used for fishing as well as for long distance trading activities.

Contact with overseas people is also proved by the existence of Mycenaean potsherds made in Cyprus and

The Park of Cilento
and Vallo di Diano



found in the coastal area of Paestum, and also as far inland as Eboli and Pontecagnano. As we have seen, the contacts with the eastern part of the Mediterranean dates back to previous ages, but not until the Apennine people reach economical and territorial stability, do these contacts evolve into real trading activities.

Mycenae, in the full swing of its expansion, is searching for raw materials. The Mycenaean people's demand of local products from the local peoples probably stimulates and triggers the development of their communities.

Infact, the local production of metal goods has been influenced by foreign designs long before the first real imports. This shows the adaptability of the Apennine people who organize their territory in a functional way by manufacturing a variety of different products.

Skilled potters produce state-of-the-art painted vases using a turning lathe. It is likely that that metal workers also organised their own guilds. The pressing demand for goods instigates the organization of all the necessary activities to meet it, as well as the emergence of individuals and family clans. The fact that local swords are made in imitation of those imported from Mycenae shows the importance of a number of outstanding people who probably acted as importers-exporters and production managers. As the Iron Age draws to an end, and Mycaean kingdoms begin to decline overseas trade is consequently reduced, allowing internal contacts among the various communities of the peninsula to increase. However, trade among the Mediterranean peoples does not stop completely. Iron manufacturing skills are imported into Italy by the Phoenicians or groups of Greek people.

During the Iron Age it is possible to recognise the specific cultural features of the various local communities, despite the overall ethnic unity. The main

cultural differences are dictated by rituals of burying the dead based either on interment or cremation. In this respect, Italy is divided into two cultural areas. Cremation is practised in the North, the area that will later be the Etruscan domain, whereas interment is practised in the South from Cumae to the Strait.

Once again Cilento, situated on the border area, is influenced by both cultures, combining northern and southern ways to the already combined western and eastern (Thyrranean-Adriatic) ones. From the IX to the VII centuries Pontecagnano witnesses the arrival of northern people belonging to the Villanovian culture named after the Villanova site near Bologna. These groups have an aristocracy of traders and warriors practising the cremation rite. They use the area communication network based on the natural gateways to Cilento, setting up large stable settlements at its borders, in proportion to the increased trade exchanges with the area. The most important villages are on the right bank of the Sele river, where the Arenosola necropolis has yielded over a hundred tombs; this confirms that the river is a natural barrier, but also an attraction area. Infact, both Paestum and its hinterland, the Capodifiume site, also show their presence, though to a lesser extent.

It is important to notice that, after thousands of years, the Pertosa and Polla caves are no longer used.

This event is related to the rise of the new Villanovian villages whose activities are no longer primarily based on the traditional herding economy using the caves. They set up large stable villages supported by local and external markets. It is in this context that we can explain why open ground was for the first time the location chosen to build a large village, namely, the Sala Consilina. This village thrives without interruption from the early IX century

almost until the IV century B.C., when it was replaced by the nearby Consilinum, near today's Padula.

The location of Sala Consilina on the right bank of the Tanagro river shows that the Vallo di Diano opened up to new trade relations. This place, situated on the North-South communication route, between the Etruscan and the southern Thyrranean areas, is linked, in the West, to the Cilento hinterland by the central route leading to the Velia and Paestum sites, and, in the East, to the Ionian coastal area, along the Villanovian village of Timmari (Matera) or along the Agri and Sinni valleys.

The extraordinary burial dowries of the Sala Consilina necropolis, that are preserved in the museum of the Carthusian monastery of Padula, show the enormous importance of this international trading post, a melting pot of peoples and civilizations, as is shown by the rich cinerary urns buried in rectangular wells, that are similar to those dug out for interment, and are covered with stone slabs. The very shapes and decorations of the vases and urns recall a world full of Aegean, Anatolian and African motifs. The Vallo di Diano, the crossroad of the Campania Etruscans and the Lucanian hinterland, is enriched by all the cultural influences from all over the Mediterranean area.

Urban Organization Between Greater Greece and Lucanian Predominance

During the Iron Age, the Cilento hinterland is marginalised in comparison to the rapid growth and development of the Middle Bronze Age. This is probably due to the sharp contrast between its economy based on an arcaic herding system and the Villanovian civilization. The latter, infact, shifts the new manufacturing and trading activities outside Cilento with its new centres at places like Arenosola, Caggiano and Sala Consilina. It is in this context that the Greek colonization begins.

At the end of the VII century B.C. the inhabitants of Sybaris, an Achean colony on the southern tip of the Gulf of Taranto establish a trading post on the Agropoli site. The place is already inhabited by Apennine people who had arrived towards the end of the Bronze Age. Today it still keeps its Greek etimological origin in the placename "Agropolis" meaning *stronghold on top of the promontory*.

From this site the Greeks move northwards to the mouth of the Sele river to found the colony of Poseidonia, that will later be called Paestum, on the site where people have lived since pre-historic times and that is at that time occupied by an indigenous group.

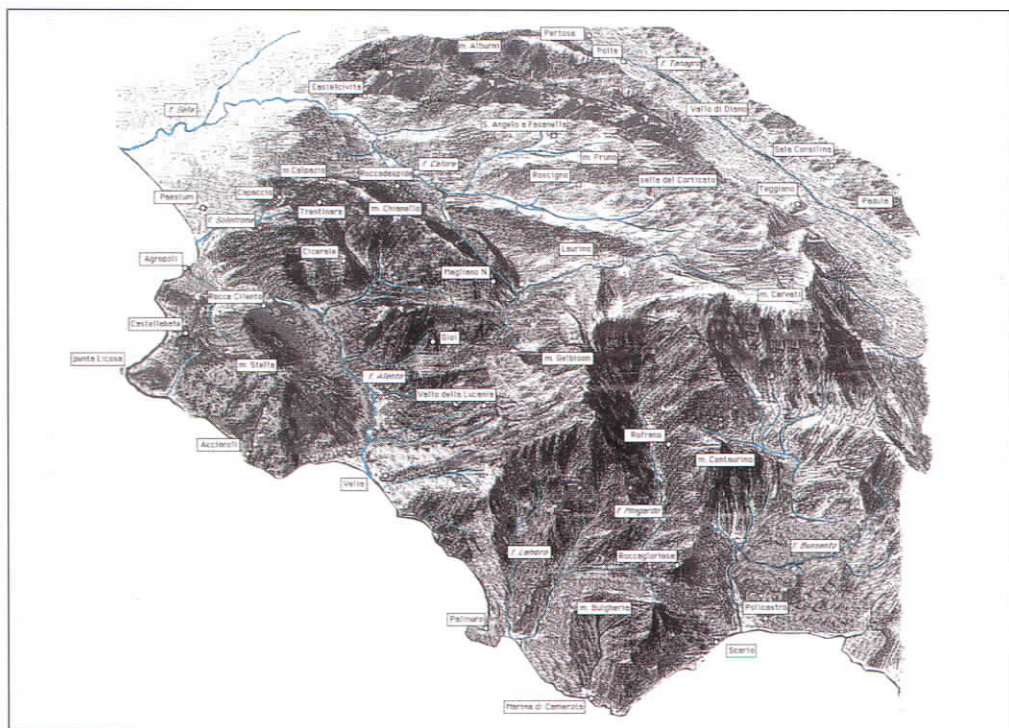
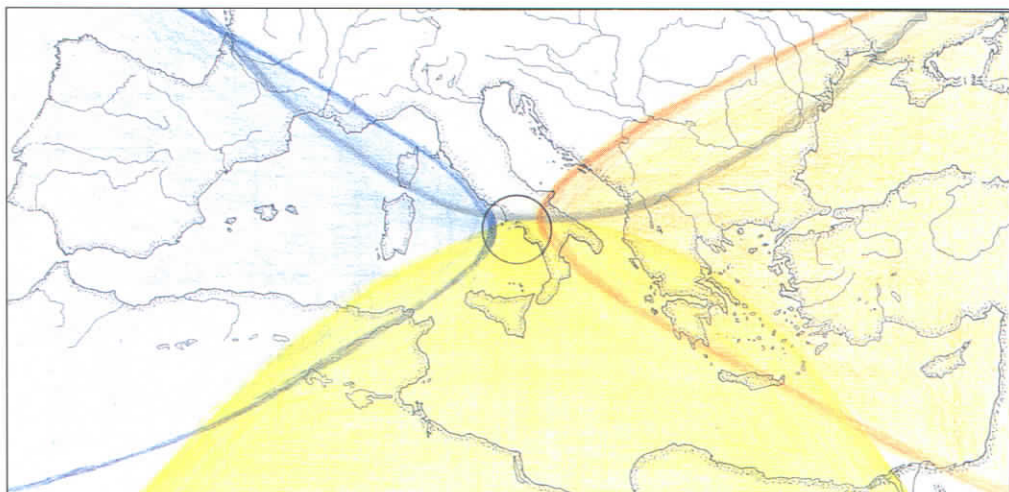
This new town rises in a very fertile plain that is immediately colonized. Its northern boundary is the Sele river, the dividing line between the areas of Etruscan and the Greek areas, which still allowed commercial and cultural exchanges. Infact, this natural border feature of Cilento is a favourite trading area, which is also made sacred by the the famous temple of Hera, the guadian deity of gardens and crops, where virgin maidens and priestesses dedicated themselves to farmacopoeia and weaving activities. The southern border of Cilento is marked by the Licosa promontory and the slopes of Mount Stella.

During the V century B.C. this city experiences large-scale architectonic planning, when the impressive temples are built, the Athenaion and the Heraion, traditionally known as the temple of Ceres and the temple of Neptune, whose intact Doric-style pillars we can still admire today.

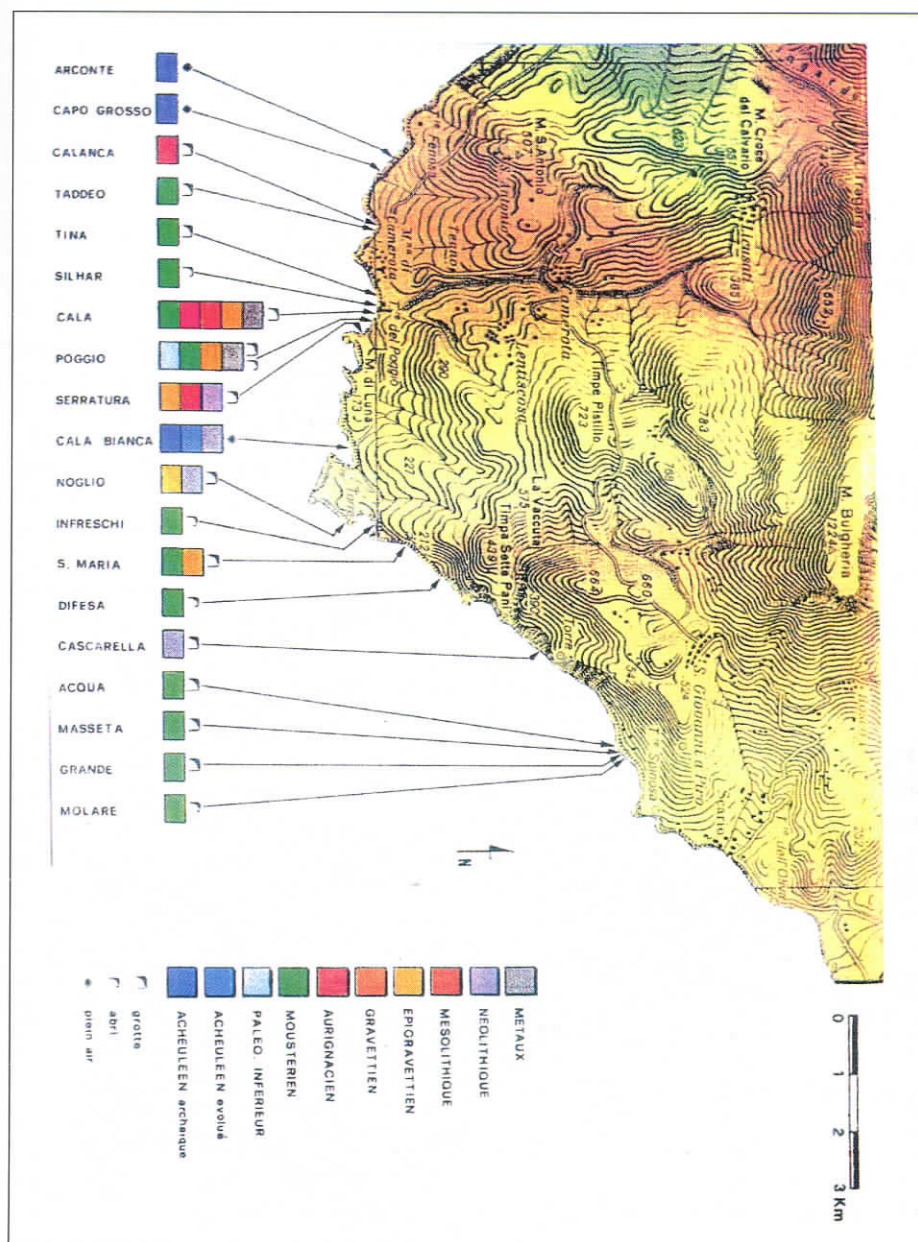
In the year 540 B.C. settlers from Phoecea found the city of Elea (Velia) for merely strategic and trading reasons, since it has no farming hinterland. The city rises to fame because of its School of Philosophy, the Eleatic School founded by Xenophones of Colophon and directed first by the philosopher Parmenides and then Zeno, who deeply influenced the

The Park of Cilento
at the confluence of the great
climatic zones

The Park of Cilento: orography
and principal sites



Pre-historical sites on the coast
between Marina di Camerota
and Scario



development of thought in classical times. Along with the Pythagorean doctrine, it laid the foundation of the experimental method that fostered the advancement of knowledge in the fields of astronomy and medicine. The medical knowledge and the practices used in the Asclepion of Elea have been kept alive until the Middle Ages in the tradition and culture of the famous "Scuola Medica Salernitana" (the Salerno Medical School). Today, Elea is an extremely interesting archaeological site for its splendid "Porta Rosa" with its large, still intact archways.

Greek records tell us that colonization was a peaceful process carried out in harmony with the local people. The Greeks seem to respect the existing organization of the land and build temples and places of cult on the sacred areas of the local people.

For example, the hills at the rear of Paestum are studded with shrines that renew the cult of the caves and the springs, that is part of the indigenous people's spiritual world. The very cult of Hera sitting on her throne with a pomegranate in her hand proves the persistence of archaic traditions like the cult of the Great Mediterranean Mother.

The integration process with the local world can be seen on the painted tomb stone slabs of Poseidonia. One such, known as *Il Tuffatore* – the Diver – dating back to the V century B.C. and many more burial paintings tell us a lot about the very harmonious integration between the Greek artistic world with the Etruscan tradition and the emerging Lucanian world. The presence of Greek colonies on both sides of the peninsula completely revitalized the communication network between the Tyrrhenian and the Ionian coasts. Cilento represents the western end of the shortest overland link in Italy, known to Greek Geographers as "The Isthmian Way".

The overland roads leading to the Ionian sea cross Vallo di Diano to Lucania, along which is found a

series of real urban centres. Along the ancient ridge roads and highland cult places the Lucanian "shepherd kings" adopt Greek ways and customs with all the excesses typical of a warrior clan culture. On Mount Pruno the monumental tomb of a local chief endowed with a large burial dowry reveals a determination to show off the wealth and the status that he achieved.

At the end of the V century the Lucanians are poised to conquer the lands of Poseidonia. After the first clashes, the latter carry on with peaceful penetration, as is evident from the increased prosperity of the countryside.

With few exceptions, Greek institutions survive in the cities; their names are translated into the Oscan language that uses the Greek alphabet. Only the city of Elea-Velia does not seem to experience Lucanian occupation, which is possibly due to the fact that it is in their own interest to keep this Greek trading post, and not to political or cultural reasons.

The Lucanian predominance expanding from Cilento to the Greek colonies of the Ionian coast brings about welfare and demographic increase. It appears as if the Italic populations, enriched by Hellenic wisdom, revive the ancient Apennine civilization. This is proved by the great urban development expanding old centres and creating new ones, such as Omignano, Padula, Teggiano, Atena Lucana, Rescigno, Rocca Gloriosa and Sanza.

The population increases remarkably in the countryside both on the hills and in the plains. New ground is prepared for farming at the expense of the shrinking woodland, that is replaced by cultivated fields or deciduous tree plantations. Vines have been introduced by the Greeks since the archaic period and later olive tree plantations followed. A combined series of cultivations strictly linked to the ritual and spiritual moments begins to shape the composition of the ancient agrarian Italian landscape.

*The Making of the Cultural Landscape
from the Middle Ages to the Present*

The Roman conquest ends the period of unity and road links that integrates Cilento to the Ionian coast by means of the Lucanian shrines of Serra del Vaglio, Grumento and Armento. In their overall organization of the conquered lands, the Romans build large roads at the bottom of the valleys which become the guidelines for building new towns. Their technical knowledge and finance enable them to build bridges for crossing rivers and reclaim marshland. This is the case of the Vallo di Diano that can now be crossed from North to South. New towns are founded or rebuilt like Padula, Teggiano, Sala and Polla and become the centres of this territorial organization.

The Roman road network is the reason for the neglect of the old sheep-tracks and inland areas. Thus the Cilento centres experience a demise of their strategic importance.

With the decline of the Roman Empire, their water-works and road facilities are increasingly neglected. In the Middle Ages people begin to reorganize themselves starting from the ancient mountain ridges. The feudal castles, the monasteries, the strongholds and churches resume the pre-Roman territorial reorganization. The Basilian monks look for shelter in the ancient caves used as hermitages in this environment where features of paganism often filter into Christian rites. This is the case of the image of the Madonna del Granato (Our Lady of the Pomigranate) modelled exactly on the classical statue of Hera sitting on the throne with a pomigranate in her hand. Starting from the monasteries, the renewal process that was also fostered by Benedictine monks reaches the highland area and the Vallo di Diano, thus reconfirming its strategic role. The Carthusian monastery of St. Lawrence near

Padula is built on an existing coenoby, starting from the XIV century. It will be one of the major monastic centres of Europe extending its influence as far as Taranto and the Ionian coast along the arcaic routes. Today, after the recent restoration, this Carthusian monastery has become a splendid structure housing prestigious cultural institutions, among which the Archaeological Museum of Lucanian Antiquities and stands as the eastern gateway to the Park.

In the Middle Ages, Longobard, Saracen, Norman, Swabian, Angevin, and Aragonese influences contribute to the shaping of the present cultural landscape of the Park of Cilento that encompasses the historical and ecological events of the past. The process can be seen in the origin of the physical structure of Mount Stella, the heartland of Ancient Cilento. This massif, surrounded to the north-west and south west by the sea and for the rest by the Alento river, marked in classical times the dividing line between the possessions of Paestum and Velia. The relief outline is characterized by a principal ridge with NW-SE orientation and rises up to 1130 m above sea level. From its top, secondary ridges radiate all around and slope down to the sea and the Alento river valley. Since pre-historic times, this particular radial ridge system has deeply conditioned man's use of the land in the many ways man has appropriated space down to our days.

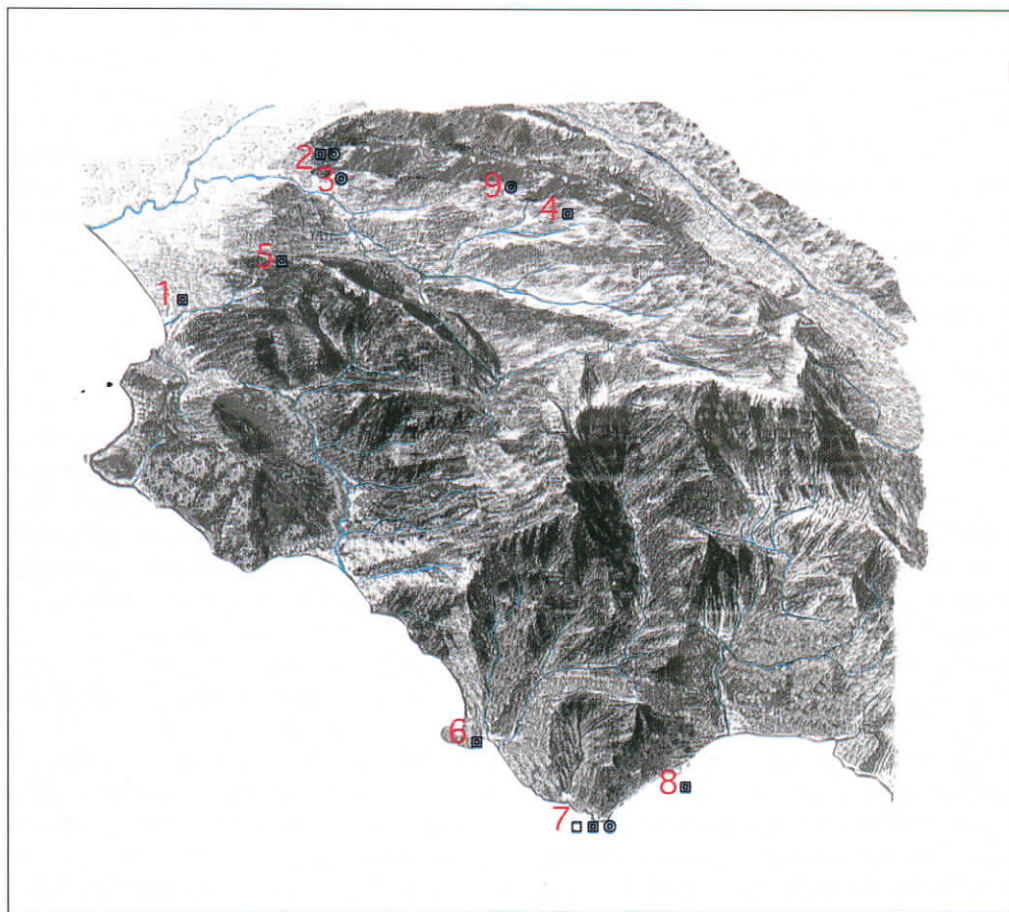
In the Middle Ages, thanks to the presence of numerous and industrious Basilian monks first and later of Benedictine monks coming from the Abbey of Cava starting from the XI century, the number of rural centres increases, though they never exceed a few hundred inhabitants. They rise along the guidelines of previous expansions and give the landscape the present outline.

On the top of Mount Stella a Longobard stronghold, rising on a previous settlement and utilized until

The making of the cultural
landscape: The Paleolithic Age

1. Paestum (Basilica)
2. Castelcivita caves
3. The Ausino cave
4. The cave at St. Michele at
Sant'Angelo a Fasanella

5. Shelter on Mount Calpazio
6. Cape Palinuro caves
7. Marina di camerota caves
8. Scario caves
9. Ottati (Ruspitelle, San Pellegrino)



Next page:

Cilento during the expansion of the Neolithic culture in Southern Italy

- A. Paestum
- B. Polla and Pertosa caves
- C. Palinuro and Canerota caves
- D. Vallo di Diano
- E. Routes in the Neolithic age

Neolithic and Aeneolithic finds with the relevant range extent and settlements

- 1. The Apulian Plateau culture
- 2. Lipari Islands culture
- 3. Serra d'Alto culture
- 4. Gaudio culture
- 5. Laterza culture
- 6. Epicentro culture

the XIV century, becomes the administrative and political centre of the area, a real pivot of the whole system, wherefrom the ridge roads radiate towards the valley and the sea.

This star-shaped road network strengthens and regulates the urbanization of the mountain slopes for many centuries in a centripetal way, until long distance carriage roads for wheeled vehicles prevail. In other words, as in Roman times, the advent of large-scale structured geopolitical organizations, valley road links exclude the whole of hilly Cilento from the new development guidelines.

The evolution of Mount Stella road links can be outlined in four phases: first the principal ridge road is connected to a centripetal system of secondary ridge roads dating back to the prehistory or early historical times. During Greek, Lucanian and Roman times, the ridges were connected by a first ring road centered around the summit, whereas other routes marginal to this system began to open up between Paestum and Velia; in the Middle Ages, a system of cross-ridge routes running halfway up the slope around the mountain integrated with those previous to it; finally, the development of 'horizontal' relations between the centres and the gradual decline of the stronghold on top of the mountain, the circular system prevails over the previous linear organization, becoming the primary means for internal relations, separated from the coastal and bottom of valley roads, outside the conurbation.

The Mount Stella urbanization system characterized by a large number of small rural centres, along the radial ridge road network of pre-historic origin shows the determining effects of monasteries in the shaping of the territory.

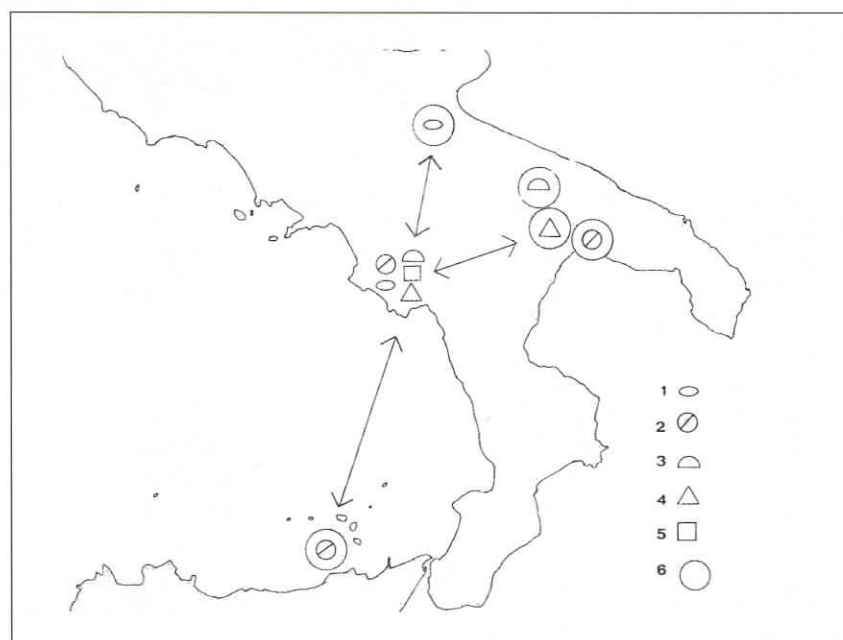
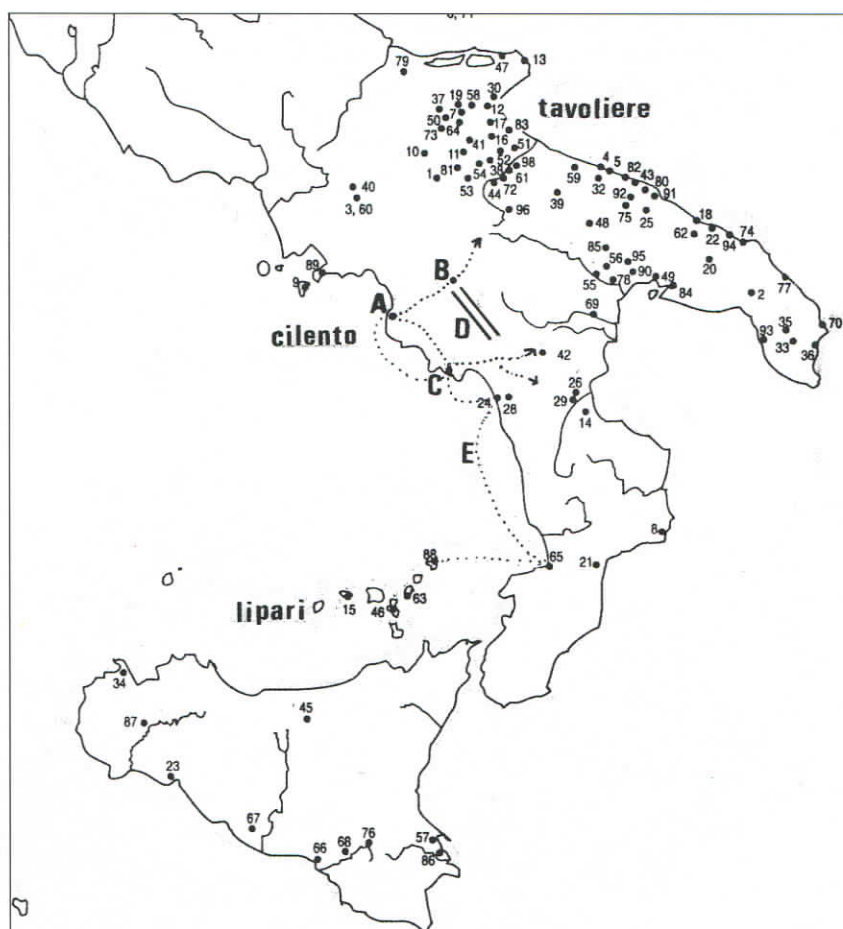
The monasteries played an important role in choosing to use the many small plots of land for farming, that will always be the starting point of the local economic system. The influence of the monastic

centres, however, did not confine itself to the economic sector, but deeply shaped the organization and the daily life of the Cilento people. The spiritual and religious feeling that arose in these places with the catholic culture has produced peculiar features within the frame of the European Christian civilization. It is a combination of ideas and beliefs spread all over the Mediterranean area. Among these we can mention the role of the sound of bells in the overall community life, and also the para-liturgical rites of the confraternities.

Soundscape

Outside the urban areas very few sounds made by men must have been heard that could match those produced by nature, at the end of the Middle Ages. The use of bells began in Europe during the VIII century and they soon took on a very meaningful role within the settled areas, since their toll became a symbol of social union drawing to itself and unifying the community. Particularly important was the bells' connection with the rural settlements, where "the merchant's time", that is, the one marked by mechanical instruments was widespread, and the bell became the clock and calendar of the civilian and religious time; infact, an unlikely etymology of the early XIII century is that the word *campana* derives from *campi*, the place where peasants work and could only tell the time by hearing the bell's toll.

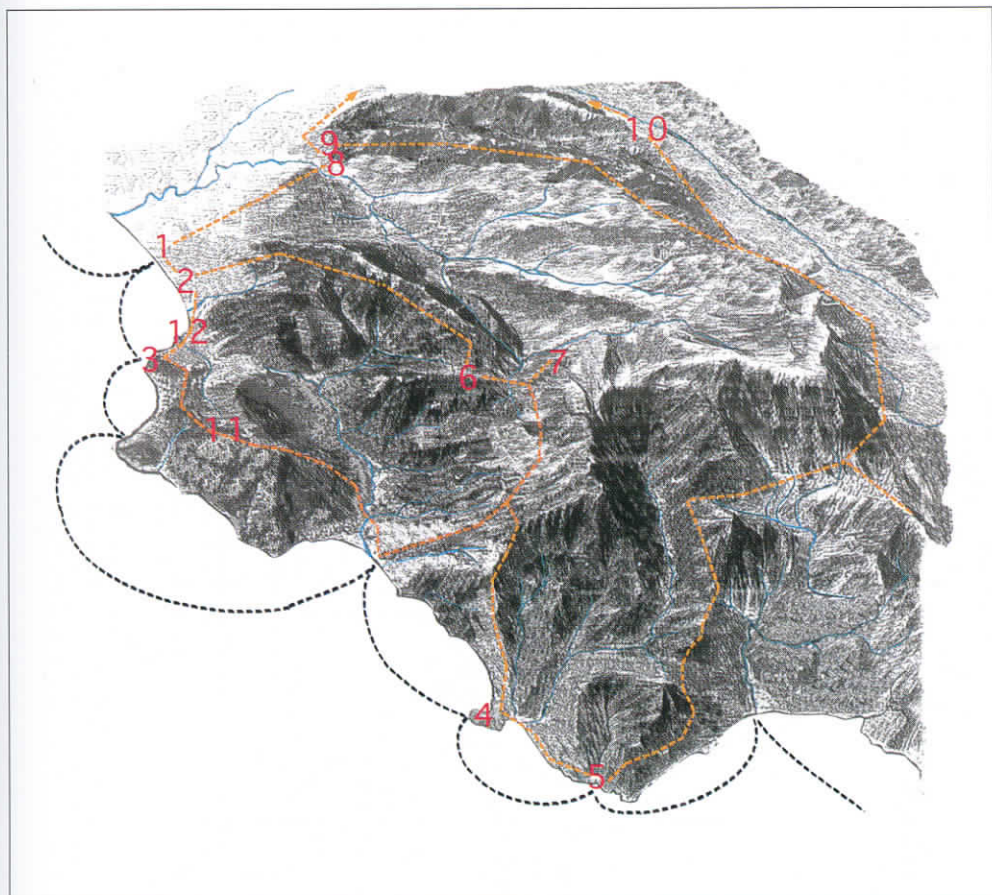
In the rural daily life the bell would tell the peasants to stop work and remind them to pray, thus projecting also into the countryside the times and meaning of the monastery "service hours". This outward projection of monastic life, combined with the monks' fundamental role on the lands belonging to the convent, gave shape to what could be defined a vision of the territory as a metaphor of the convent.



The Making of the cultural
landscape: caves, landing places,
mountain ridges during
the Neolithic and Aeneolithic Ages

1. Gaudio
2. Paestum (Basilica)
3. Tresino Point (Saucu)

4. Palinuro
5. Camerota
6. Stio
7. Campora
8. Ausino cave
9. Castelcivita cave
10. Polla cave
11. Mount Stella (Carpinina point)

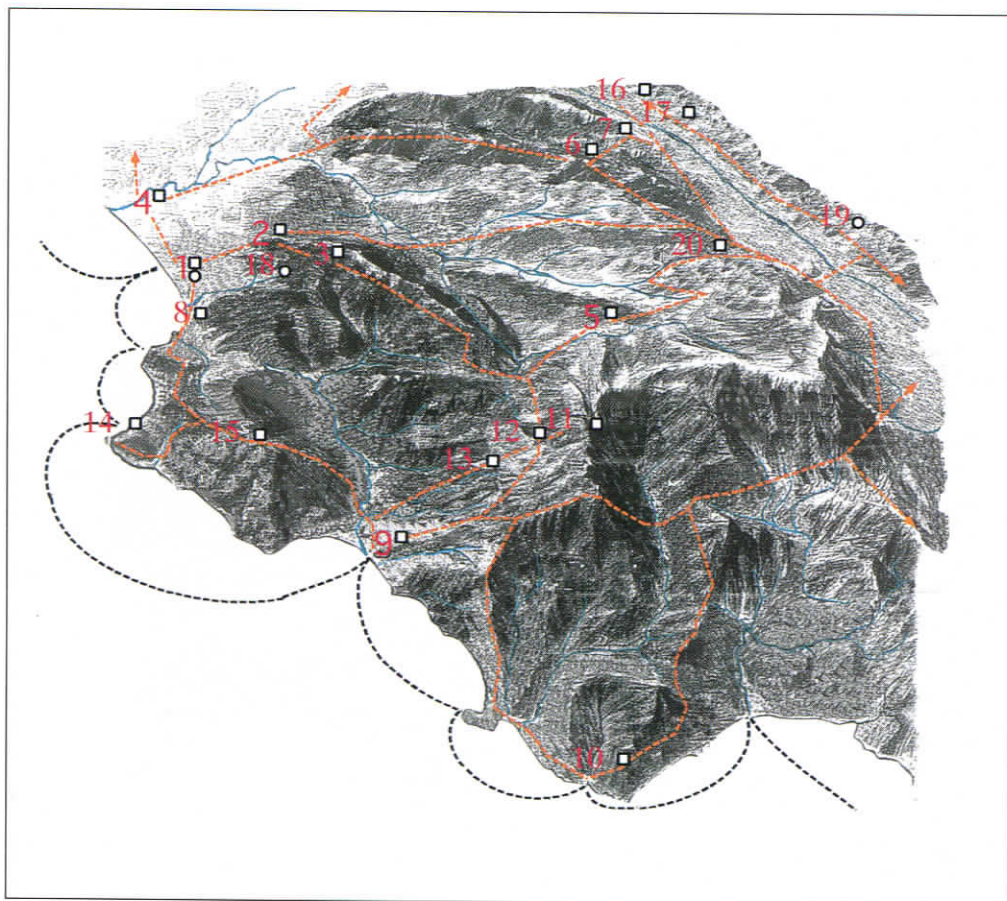


The making of the cultural
landscape: origin of the territorial
structure in the early historic times

1. Paestum, Porta Giustizia
(Law Court Gate)
2. Madonna del Granato
(Our Lady of the Pomigranate)
3. Trentinara

4. Mouth of river Sele
5. Laurino (Fraulusi cave)
6. St. Angelo a Fasanella
7. Costa Palomba - Costa d'Elice
8. Agropoli
9. Velia
10. Camerota (the Noglio cave)
11. Mount Gelbison
(Scannochiuso)

12. Cannalonga
13. Pattano
14. Licoso point
15. Mount Stella (ridge)
16. Pertosa
17. Polla
18. Capodifiume
19. Sala Consilina
20. Sella del Corticato



I. The mouth of river Sele

III. Fonte

V. Capodifiume-Capaccio

VII. Agropoli

Santa Venera Stazione

IX. Roccagloriosa



The bells were stopped from Thursday to Saturday before Easter as a sign of mourning and were replaced by instruments of various shapes called *crepitacoli* with entirely different sounds from the round 'divine' sound of bells. These bells are associated with a number of symbolic connotations that are expressed, for instance, in the terminology of their parts: *crown*, *head*, *mouth* and in the popular belief that the sound of bells possessed the power of God's voice in averting evil and sin. Thus the toll of bells had a primary role in the ancient soundscape. Looking at a map with the sound range of each bell in Ancient Cilento, we can see a series of circles overlapping each other: most of the territory is covered by two or more bells. Such redundancy of sounds, comparable to that found in urban areas with more churches, must have given people a deep feeling of belonging to a polycentric community. The fact that nearly all the bell towers are still standing today confirms the huge amount of sound signals coming from the bells, but today that is no longer isolated in the soundscape, as the case was five or more centuries ago. Today, we can still see the many belltowers, each in every village of Mount Stella, and the toll of their bells still resounds all over the area and fill the air with a traditional spirituality.

Rites and Spirituality in the Making of the Cultural Landscape

Talking of Cilento's religious traditions, we must mention the great annual community rite called "Visita ai Sepolcri" (visit to Christ laid down from the Cross) still continued today by the confraternities of the villages of Mount Stella on Good Friday, just before Easter Day.

The confraternities in Cilento developed since the XVI century, though some believe they were started three centuries earlier, and were so widespread that

every hamlet could – and still can – boast of one. Even today, in small places of just a few hundred inhabitants there are some with about seventy members, who are regularly present in important religious events having their climax in the Easter liturgy.

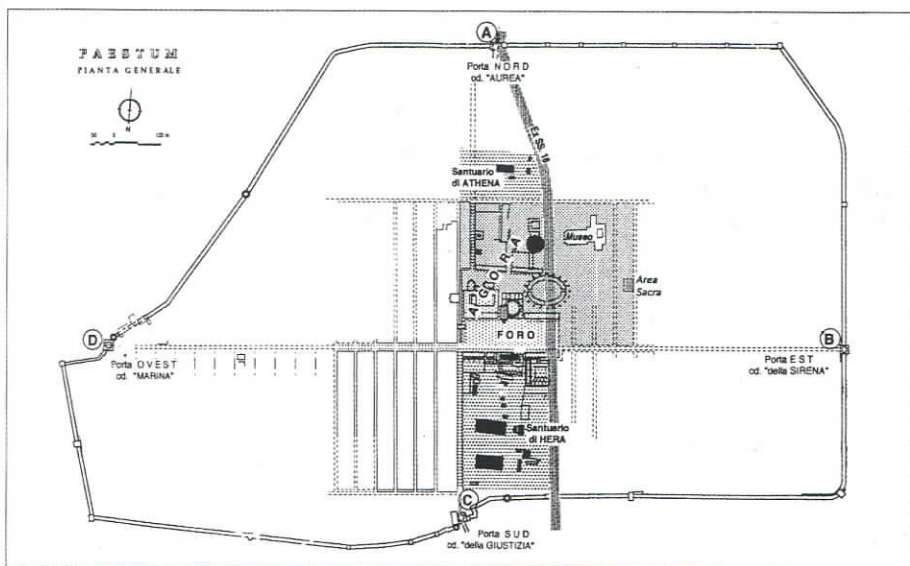
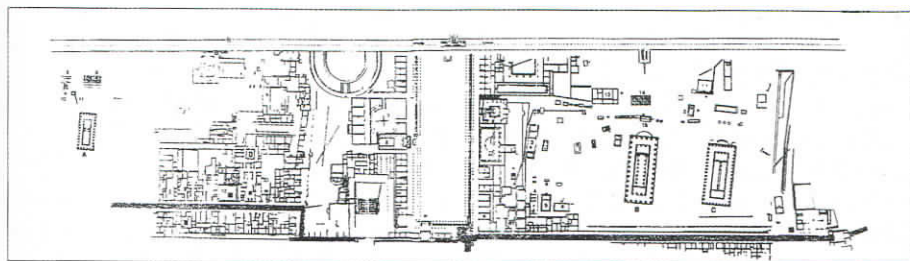
On Good Friday, in particular, the confraternities pay their "Visita ai Sepolcri": all the members with their distinctive badges and clothes walk in procession first to the churches of the nearby villages and then to their own church. There, walking in circles and stopping at several points, they sing hymns about Christ's Passion.

The ceremony inside the church is similar to those taking place at the same time all over Europe, but the Ancient Cilento confraternities have a specific feature that makes them special: all the confraternities pay the visit to the churches in the villages of the Mount Stella massif at the same time.

Overlapping the itineraries linking the villages visited by each confraternity, there emerges a common area for all the communities. The logistics of these itineraries, cyclical in time and circular in space, reveals a great circumambulation rite. This rite symbolizes the desire to keep the universe together and by walking round the ancient centre, they try to contrast the loss of the small centres. Therefore it is not just a circular movement, but the definition of a real *temenos* or sacred centre, a definition in geographical terms of a polycentric community with its history and identity, trying to avert dispersion.

In everyday life, in solemn moments and on feast-days, in general, all the year round, every important moment is stressed by the church liturgy using music as a means to represent the sacred time and space. The function of the bells used as a means to organize the territory confirms the important role of traditions in the Park of Cilento: for the archaic

Poseidonia - Paestum: map
of the city and its centre

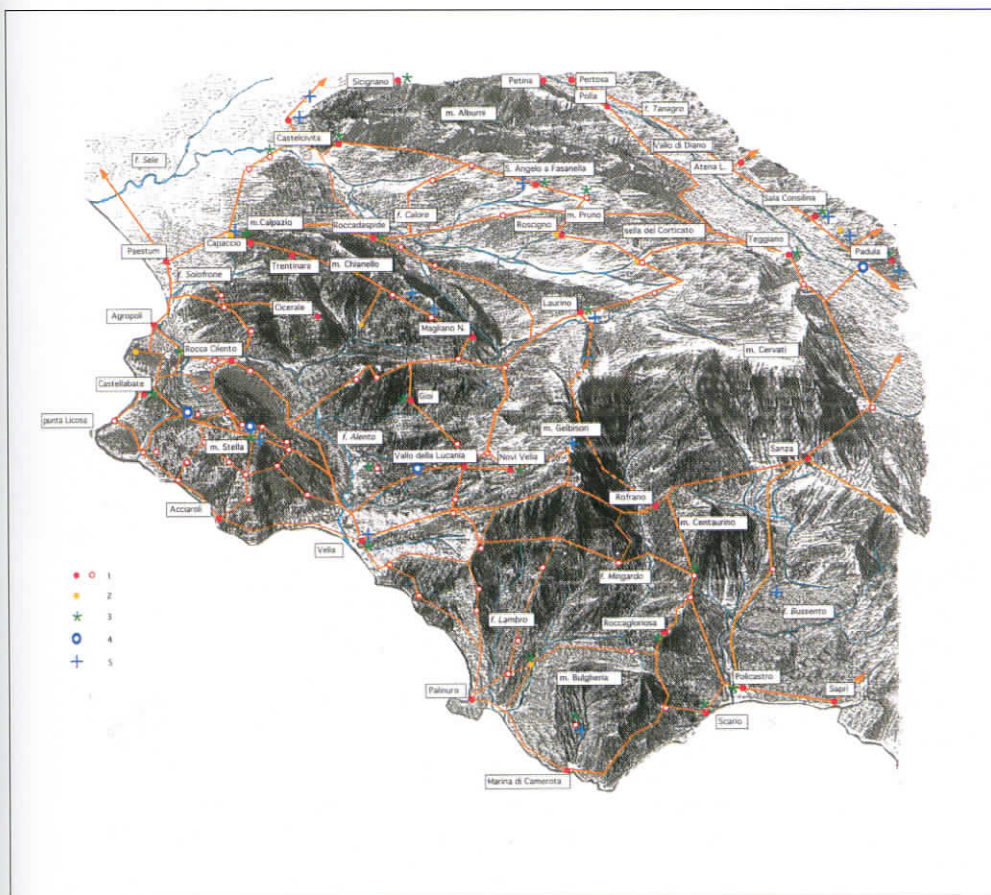




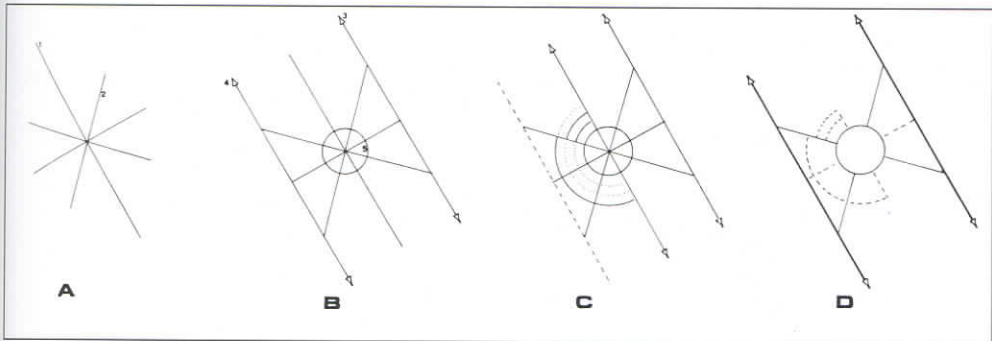
The making of the cultural landscape: The Middle Ages

1. Major centres
2. Major abandoned centres

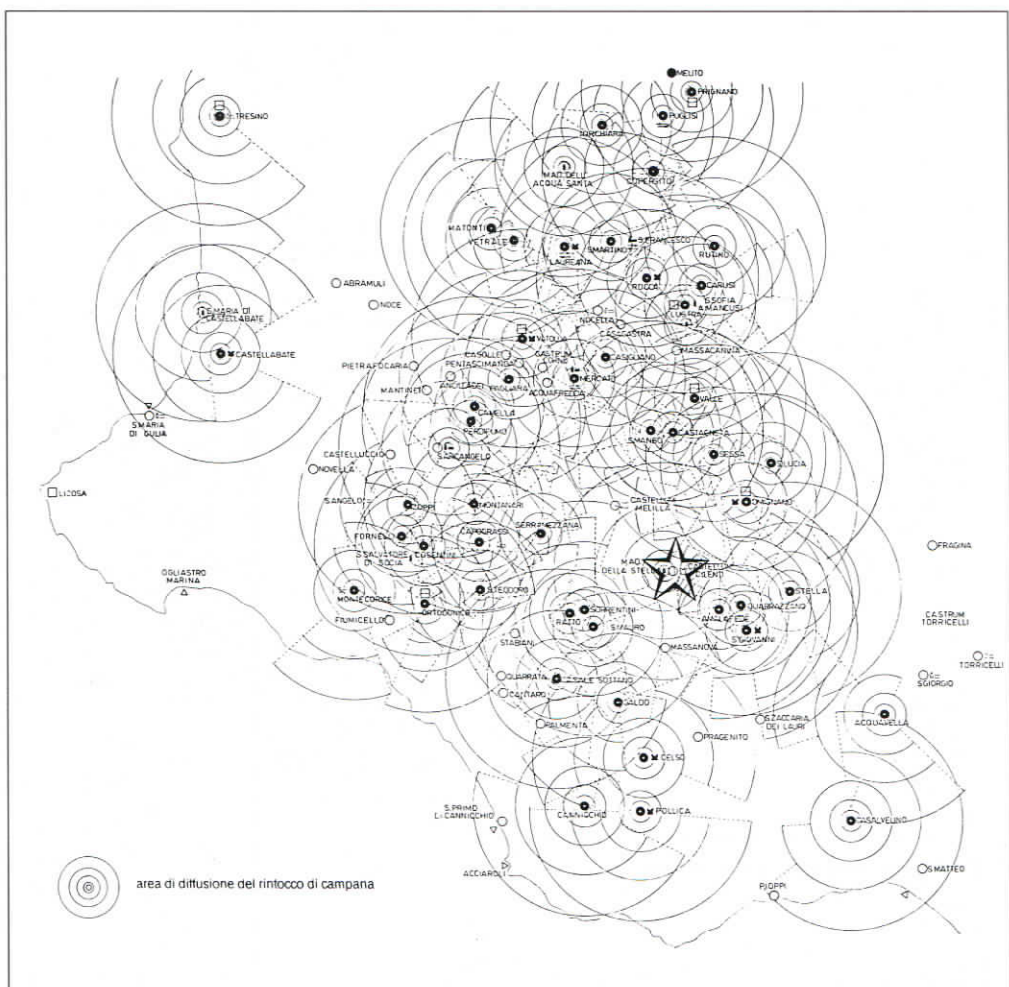
3. Major strongholds
4. Major monastic centres
5. Mountain churches
and main shrines



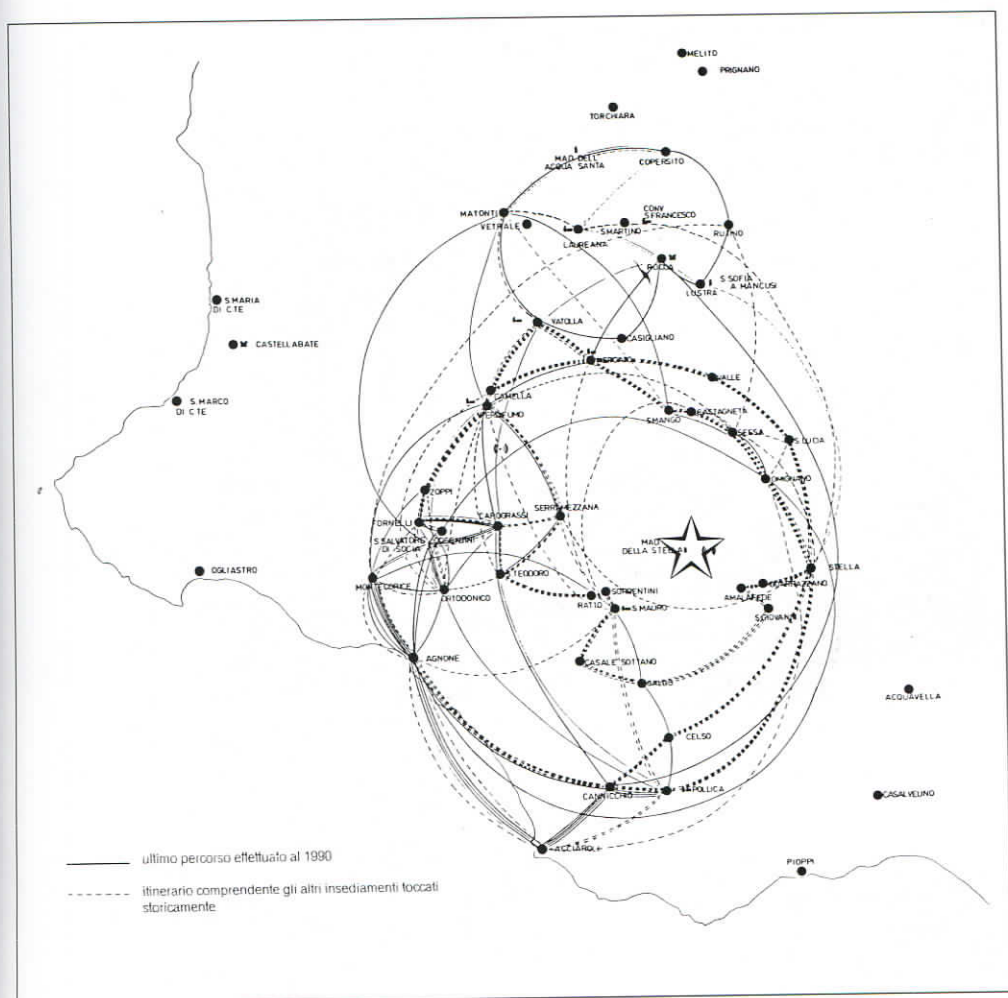




Mounth Stella: soundscape in the making of the cultural landscape



Mounth Stella: rites in the making of the cultural landscape



Carta Vaticana XVI century,
detail



man nothing is meaningful unless it is part of a prototype or reproduces a primeval act. The return to a mythical age, ritually represented in numerous events has one of its most profound meanings in the longing for reversible time and in the of partaking the cosmic rhythms. All this is revived when people take part together and feel one with the geographical and spiritual context, as occurs in Cilento, that is instinctively seen here in its most

ancestral meaning, and that is today organized as a cultural Park entrusted to the custody of its people and its institutions, a world heritage.

The texts and graphs relative to the Mount Stella area are taken from *Lo spazio sonoro* by Giuseppe Anzani and *Lo spazio rituale* by G. Anzani and D. Mazzoleni, in *Cilento Antico - i luoghi e l'immaginario*, Electa Napoli, Napoli 1993.