

WORLD HERITAGE LIST

Cilento (Italy) [Mixed site]

No 842

Identification

<i>Nomination</i>	The Cilento and Vallo di Diano National Park
<i>Location</i>	Province of Salerno, Campanian Region
<i>State Party</i>	Italy
<i>Date</i>	4 July 1996

Justification by State Party

Cilento National Park is the result of the combined work of nature and humankind. It falls into the category of evolved landscape, the result of historical, social, economic, artistic, and spiritual imperatives and assumed its present form in association with and in response to its natural environment. Today it is a living landscape which continues to play an active role in contemporary society whilst retaining the traditional characteristics that created it in the organization of its landscape, its communication routes, the way in which it is cultivated, and the human settlement pattern. Like natural species and geographical environments, human beings have found points of contact, of interaction, and of coalescence in these places. Cilento is the point of intersection between the sea and the mountains, the Atlantic and the Orient, the Nordic and African cultures, it has produced peoples and civilizations, and it retains clear traces of this in its distinctive characteristics. Located in the heart of the Mediterranean, it is the park *par excellence* because the most typical aspect of that sea is the interpenetration and diversity of environments and the coming together of peoples.

[*Note: This is the justification for the entire National Park nomination. From this point on in this evaluation, ICOMOS will concentrate on the cultural aspects of this mixed site nomination.*]

As a cultural property it conforms with the following criteria:

Criterion iii: It bears exceptional witness to the cultural tradition and civilization of ancient Mediterranean peoples by means of its system of

routes, human settlement, surviving sanctuaries, and intact archaeological remains;

Criterion iv: It is an outstanding example of the urban civilization and architecture that throw light on the first Greek colonization of Italy, *Magna Grecia*;

Criterion v: It is an outstanding example of human settlement and the use of space representative of medieval culture overlying systems of communication and land allotment that go back to early antiquity and prehistory.

Category of property

In terms of the categories of cultural property set out in the 1972 World Heritage Convention, the cultural elements in this nomination constitute a series of *groups of buildings*. In its evaluation, however, ICOMOS has also treated this property as a *cultural landscape* (see "Qualities" below).

History and Description

History

Archaeological research show that the earliest human occupation identified in this region dates back to over 250,000 years ago, in the Lower Palaeolithic period, when *Homo erectus* was living in caves along the coast. In the Middle Palaeolithic *Homo neanderthalensis* moved into the region, and artefacts of the Mousterian Culture have been found on various sites. *Homo sapiens sapiens* replaced his Neanderthal cousin during the Upper Palaeolithic period and established seasonal camps during this and the subsequent Mesolithic period.

The good soils and climate favoured the introduction of settled farming during the Neolithic period. Finds of obsidian from the Lipari Islands indicate that maritime trade began at this time, no doubt encouraged by the relatively good harbours along the Lucanian coast and the communication routes afforded by the topography up the river valleys. Neolithic settlements have been discovered in a number of places across the area of the Park. The Gaudio Culture, which established itself over a very wide area of Lucania and Calabria, was instrumental in defining the special role of Cilento in the penetration of the Italian peninsula by more advanced Mediterranean cultures.

During the Bronze and Iron Ages small groups of warriors and traders moved into to the region. They came in search of metals and brought with them advanced technologies. In response, the scattered peoples of the region formed themselves into larger ethnic groups which resulted in the creation of a proto-urban social and economic structure. Transhumance pastoralism, perhaps introduced from further north, established itself successfully in the early 2nd millennium BC, and brought with it some profound changes in human settlement, especially in the interior.

By the end of the 2nd millennium trade with Mycenae had become substantial, and many of the sophisticated

cultural and technological elements of Late Bronze Age Greece were introduced. With the collapse of Mycenae this trade with the Eastern Mediterranean declined greatly, to be replaced by active trade within the peninsula itself, since Cilento was also an important boundary zone with the Etruscan cultures of northern Italy. In the 9th-7th centuries BC this resulted in the arrival of a warrior aristocratic society, the Villanovan Culture, from the region around Bologna which imposed its imprint on the landscape and its use.

Greek colonization began in the late 7th century with coastal trading settlements being established at Agropoli and Poseidonia (Paestum) in the northern part of Cilento. Elea (Velia) was founded in 540 BC and was to become one of the most influential centres of learning in the ancient world. The Eleatic school, based on the affirmation of the identity and eternity of the spirit, was founded by Xenophanes of Colophon, and was later to be led by Parmenides and Zeno. It was especially noted for its development of experimental methods, in astronomy and medicine in particular.

At the end of the 5th century BC the Lucanians of the interior, led by their Shepherd Kings, who had adopted the Greek way of life, defeated the league of Greek coastal cities, apart from Elea, which may well have been spared so as to provide a commercial link with the other Greek colonies around the Mediterranean. A new urban culture grew up, many new towns were founded, and large areas of woodland were felled for agriculture and the planting of olives and vines.

The region was inevitably incorporated into the territories of Rome in the later 3rd century BC. The network of major highways established by the Romans relegated the ancient system of tracks that traversed Cilento, and as a result the towns in the interior lost much of their importance. It was not until the Western Roman Empire crumbled and its roads and bridges fell into disrepair that the earlier network of communication and settlement came into its own again. During the Middle Ages feudal castles and religious foundations were established within the pre-Roman framework, the Greek and Lucanian towns revived, and the resulting landscape has survived to the present day.

Description

Cilento National Park is essentially a mountainous region cut by several river valleys sloping down to the Tyrrhenian Sea. The mountains in the eastern part are of limestone and dolomite, whilst those in the west are more heterogeneous, with strata of sandstone, clay-limestone, quartz sand, conglomerates, etc.

The Cilento region is defined by natural features: the Tyrrhenian Sea and the Sele and Tanagro rivers, with the broad sweep of the Vallo di Diano in the upper waters of the latter. The Alburni massif lies between the Tanagro and the Calore, a tributary of the Sele. Two other massifs, the Monte Stella and the Monte Sacro or Monte Gelbison, are formed by the Alento river, which enters the sea near Elea (Velia), and the Mingaro river, the mouth of which is to the south of the Palinuro promontory.

In later prehistory communication routes were established along the crests of the mountains ranges,

and these came back into use in the Middle Ages. This is clearly indicated by the locations of the many prehistoric and protohistoric sites that have been discovered and of the medieval towns and castles.

The most noteworthy archaeological site is that of Paestum, the Greek city of Poseidonia. Because it did not lie on the main Roman communication routes, it fell into a slow but irreversible decline, and was finally abandoned in the early medieval period. The remains were rediscovered in the 18th century and systematic excavation began in the early 20th century.

Within the city walls, which extend over 5km, a number of exceptional public buildings have been revealed between the main north-south axis (*cardo maximus*) and the Sacred Way. The most outstanding of these are the three great Temples of Hera, Ceres, and Poseidon.

The oldest is the Temple of Hera, mistakenly identified as a basilica in the 18th century and hence still known by that name. Like the other temples here, it is Doric in style. Its impressive colonnades survive, but the absence of its pediment, which collapsed in the medieval period, led to its incorrect interpretation as a secular building. The so-called Temple of Ceres (probably dedicated to Athena) is dated to around 500 BC. Its proportions and use of space in this, the smallest of the Paestum temples, are superior to that of the Temple of Hera. Its survival was aided by its having been converted into a church in the early Middle Ages. The architect of the Temple of Poseidon (in reality also dedicated to Hera), from the mid 5th century BC, was clearly inspired by the Parthenon in Athens, which it closely resembles in style and appearance. It is the largest, most perfect, and best preserved of the Paestum temples.

The remains of the Roman forum built over the Greek agora have been excavated and are on view. This large open space is surrounded by public buildings, identified as the *bouleuterion* (council chamber), the *curia* (courthouse), and the *macellum* (covered market). Part of the Roman amphitheatre has also been uncovered.

Much less survives on the site of Elea/Velia. The most striking feature is the monumental Porta Rosa, the oldest and most complete example of a Greek arched town gate. Dated to around 350 BC, it passes through the massive stone town walls. Among other noteworthy features are the imposing defensive walls of the acropolis from the 6th century BC, the fine paved street, and the remains of several temples. On the acropolis, later surmounted by a Norman castle, were found the foundations of the earliest houses, built by Phocaeans when the colony was established in the 6th century BC and characteristic in form of their homeland in Asia Minor.

When they abandoned their coastal site, the remaining inhabitants of Velia established a new town inland. Novi Velia is typical of the medieval towns of Cilento, many of them on the sites of pre-Roman Lucanian towns. They are built on strategically defensive sites on hilltops and on the ancient communications routes along the mountain ridges. The houses cluster round a central castle or watch tower, the other prominent

feature being the church, and in some cases a monastic group. Roccagloriosa is a perfect illustration of this type of village.

Of the monastic properties, the most impressive is the Certosa di San Lorenzo at Padula in the Vallo di Diano. Construction began in 1306, but in its present form it is essentially Baroque, built in the 17th and 18th centuries and reflecting in its plan the gridiron on which its patron, St Lawrence, was martyred. It now houses the Archaeological Museum of Lucanian Antiquities.

Management and Protection

Legal status

The Cilento and Vallo di Diano National Park is protected by two Italian statutes. The natural areas are covered by Law No 394/1991, which applies stringent controls over designated areas. A Presidential Decree of June 1995 established the Park and guaranteed the protection of both the natural environment and the built heritage; it also encouraged the preservation of the cultural landscape within a programme of sustainable development.

The archaeological sites are covered by the basic Italian Law No 1089/1939 covering the protection of the cultural heritage. Heavy penalties are prescribed for breaches of its strict provisions.

Management

Ownership of properties within the nominated area is both private and public.

Administration of the Park is the responsibility of the Ente Parco Nazionale di Cilento e il Vallo di Diano. This is a public body, with a full-time President and professional staff; the work is supervised by a governing council, with representatives of national, regional, and local institutions and authorities, and a management group consisting of senior staff, consultants, and other specialists. The Park comes under the aegis of the Ministry of the Environment. Its authorization is required for all activities within the Park that may have an impact on its quality and status. It works closely and harmoniously with the authorities of those communes that are wholly or partially within the Park, which are very supportive of its work, as is the Provincial Administration of Salerno.

Each of the communes is required under Italian planning law to produce a *Piano Regolatore Generale* (District Plan), but this has not been done. However, the Park authorities have powers which override those of communes in planning matters. It is also worth noting that much of the Park is National Forest, which comes under the strict controls of the Italian Forest Law.

At the present time the presentational material relating to the Park is minimal. However, there is an ambitious programme for an integrated series of guidebooks (for the general public, young people, specialists, etc) that is in active preparation. At the present time there is no presentational material of reasonable quality at either of the two archaeological sites, but here also there are plans for the production of a range of materials.

No evidence was supplied in the nomination dossier of any management plan for the Park. However, a plan is in the final stages of preparation, and information about it was supplied to the ICOMOS expert mission (see below), which requested that further details be supplied to Paris.

Conservation and Authenticity

Conservation history

No information was provided in the nomination dossier on the conservation history of the Park. However, considerable work has been carried out on the archaeological sites and the Certosa di San Lorenzo. A major campaign for the restoration and conservation of the three temples at Paestum is now well advanced, and an insula of urban villas has already undergone a comprehensive restoration programme. At Velia the Roman baths and the monumental Porta Rosa have been completely restored and conserved, and work is in progress on the medieval tower on the acropolis. All these projects have been funded by the European Union.

The Certosa di Padula has been superbly restored over the past decade by the Soprintendenza. A small area remains to be completed, and plans are in progress for the adaptive re-use of some of the rooms of the upper storey round the main cloister.

Authenticity

The authenticity of the cultural elements within the Park is high. In the villages and hamlets within the Park economic and social deprivation until comparatively recently has meant that there have been few interventions that have seriously impacted the level of authenticity.

Evaluation

Action by ICOMOS

An ICOMOS expert mission visited Cilento in February 1998.

Qualities

The property is nominated as a mixed site under both natural and cultural criteria. If it is examined according to the cultural criteria alone, it should be treated as a cultural landscape, which is intimated obliquely in the nomination dossier. It is an excellent example of the relict cultural landscape defined in paragraph 39 (ii) of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*.

As such, it possesses high qualities of variety and integrity and a considerable historical depth. The landscape preserves remarkable evidence of its structure and use in prehistory and the Middle Ages, when the mountain ridges functioned as communication and trade routes. Equally, the way in which they fell into disuse during the Roman period, when the Valle di Diano was drained and a new highway was built along it, passing from Capua to Sicily, only to revert to marshland with the fall of the Western Roman Empire, is dramatically visible.

The archaeological site of Paestum is of especially high value, both for the creative genius of the builders of its great Doric temples and for the light that it throws on the transition from Magna Grecia to the Roman Empire.

Comparative analysis

The nomination dossier compares Cilento with Hierapolis-Pamukkale (Turkey) and Meteora (Greece) as a “combined work of man and nature,” quoting Article 1 of the World Heritage Convention, but considers it to be superior because of the exceptional character and diversity of the archaeological remains that it contains.

ICOMOS feels that a better comparison might be with the Costiera Amalfitana, inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1997. This is also an area rising steeply from the coast to mountain ridges and peaks with a long history that is reflected both in its settlements and in its traditional forms of cultivation. However, the Costiera lacks the specific and unique historical interest of Cilento, with its continuity from prehistory through to the Middle Ages, and in particular the important Magna Grecia episode and the age-old routes.

ICOMOS recommendations for future action

The Certosa di Padula was not included in the nominated area. ICOMOS recommended that it should be added, as representing a final stage in the development of the Cilento landscape. The State Party was also requested to include in the nominated area the town of Teggiano (a Roman foundation), on the eastern flank of the Cilento area, since it constitutes an essential link with the Valle di Diano and beyond.

This nomination was referred back to the State Party by the Bureau at its meeting in June, requesting information on the draft management plan and a revised delineation of the area proposed for inscription, to include the Certosa di Padula and Teggiano. The State Party complied with this request and supplied the necessary revised information, which was found acceptable by ICOMOS.

Brief description

The Cilento area is a cultural landscape of exceptional quality, which vividly portrays its remarkable historical evolution as a major route for trade and for cultural and political interaction during the prehistoric and medieval periods by means of the dramatic chains of sanctuaries and settlements along its three east-west mountain ridges. It was also the boundary between the Greek colonies of Magna Grecia and the indigenous Etruscan and Lucanian peoples, and so preserves the remains of two very important classical cities.

Recommendation

That this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of *criteria iii and iv*:

Criterion iii: During the prehistoric period, and again in the Middle Ages, the Cilento region served as a key route for cultural, political, and commercial communications in an exceptional manner, utilizing the crests of the mountain chains running east-west and thereby creating a cultural landscape of outstanding significance and quality.

Criterion iv: In two key episodes in the development of human societies in the Mediterranean region, the Cilento area provided the only viable means of communication between the Adriatic and the Tyrrhenian seas, in the central Mediterranean region, and this is vividly illustrated by the relict cultural landscape of today.

ICOMOS, October 1998

