

Velia and the Cilento



An Introduction

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Scope of this Account

This account focuses on Velia and the area immediately around it. But its story cannot be told in isolation. To understand the geology of Velia, we have to look at the geological history of all of Italy, and indeed, of the Mediterranean. To understand Velia's political history, we have to follow events in all of southern Italy. But the only archaeological site described is Velia. Thus, although Paestum, Novi Velia, and other interesting sites are in the Cilento, they have not been discussed here.



Monte della Stella seen from Capo Palinuro



Looking south from Capo Palinuro

1. Geology

As soon as a traveler arrives in Italy, he becomes aware of mountains. Outside of the Po valley and Puglia (the heel of the boot), mountains are visible almost everywhere. Moreover, unlike the mountains on the east coast of the United States, they come right down to the sea in many places, as you can see in the pictures above. The first is made from Cape Palinuro looking north past Velia in the middle distance to majestic Monte della Stella in the center of the picture. The picture on the right above, looking south from the same spot, shows high cliffs dropping vertically to the sea. The picture to the right of this text, taken on Capri, shows vividly this dramatic combination of rocky cliff and sea.



Tiberius's Leap on Capri

How have these mountains – and these seas – come about? We tend to think of Italy and of mountains in general as, well, as old as the hills. In fact, modern geology has discovered that these mountains are, geologically speaking, brand new. But they represent the result of enormous forces at work over hundreds of millions of years. To form an idea of the process, we need to go far back in geological history.

First, we need to recall the names of the major geological epochs. The oldest strata with fossils are called the Paleozoic (old life) era, and most of the bedrock of the eastern United States is of this time. There is virtually none of it in Italy. Next came the Mesozoic (middle life) era – the heyday of the dinosaurs. Its subdivisions, called periods, are the Triassic, Jurassic, and Cretaceous. The Mesozoic era ended with the extinction of the dinosaurs and many other species. It was then followed by the Cenozoic (recent life) era, subdivided into Paleocene, Eocene, Oligocene, Miocene, Pliocene, Pleistocene, and Holocene periods. These seven periods are also grouped into the Paleogene (the first three) and the Neogene (the last four).

Near the end of the Paleozoic, there was a huge collision of most continental plates to create one huge land mass called Pangea. This collision pushed up the Appalachians in America and the Vosges in Europe. Then the plates recoiled from one another. In the Triassic, the North American continent pulled away from the European. While there was later some big action on the American west coast, the eastern half of the continent settled into a peaceful life of erosion and deposition of sediments. Not so for what is now the Mediterranean. First, in the Triassic, the “jaw” between Africa and Europe opened wider, and out of the tear poured a material that made a green stone called ophiolite. These ophiolites on the bottom of the Mediterranean mark the areas where this tearing apart of the continents took place. As one would expect, most of it is in the middle of the Mediterranean, but there is also a narrow rim in the mountains of southern Spain, the central Alps, the Balkan peninsula and along the northwest coast of Italy that shows how large the tear was.

The “jaw” between Europe and Africa was widest open at the end of the Jurassic. In the Cretaceous, it then began closing, with the subduction of the African plate under the European plate. A significant role in this process was played by a tectonic unit called Adria, variously interpreted as a long promontory of the African plate and as an independent microcontinent. Presently, this leg-shaped promontory lies under the Ionian sea, the heel of Italy, the Adriatic sea, and the Po valley. A series of paleogeographic maps showing what Europe may have looked like in earlier ages has been made by Ron Blakey, now Professor of Geology Emeritus at Northern Arizona University. He has graciously allowed them to be used here. The following pages show the Mediterranean area from the last three of the maps, those for the Eocene (said to be 50 million years ago), the Oligocene (25 million years ago) and the Miocene (13 million years ago).

We are accustomed to thinking of Europe and of Italy in particular as the “Old World” and America as the “New World”, but geologically speaking, the reverse is true. The extract (shown below) of Professor Blakey's map for North America in the Eocene – corresponding to the oldest of the European maps shown – reveals a shape readily recognizable. Florida, Cape Cod, and the DelMarVa peninsula are missing, but the upland areas are all in place.



North America in the Eocene. © Ron Blakey, Colorado Plateau Geosystems, USA



In the Mediterranean, virtually nothing is recognizable save perhaps the Iberian peninsula. Switzerland is on the seashore with no Alps. Africa is still far away from Europe, but a sort of wedge-shaped, underwater micro continent, Adria (shown in light blue) is being pushed by Africa through the ocean floor. As it moves, it plows up ocean floor which piles up on either side.

The Mediterranean area in the Eocene, © Ron Blakey, Colorado Plateau Geosystems, USA

By the Oligocene, the eastern end of North Africa has rotated significantly northward, driving Adria to collide with Europe. The Alps are being pushed up; their peaks appear in white on the map. South of the Alps, the Italian peninsula, a pile of ocean floor, has been shoved against the southern side of Europe. A portion of Adria itself – still underwater – lies along the eastern side of the peninsula, where the Adriatic sea is today. To the west of the Italian peninsula lies a second peninsula. To the south and while farther west are two sizable islands.



The Mediterranean area in the Oligocene, © Ron Blakey, Colorado Plateau Geosystems, USA



The Mediterranean area in the Miocene, © Ron Blakey, Colorado Plateau Geosystems, USA

By the Miocene, Italy looks, if anything, even less like its present shape. The second, western, peninsula has been driven away from the European continent by a phenomenon known as back arc spreading, a sort of recoil from the force of a collision. This peninsula has been pushed south and against the eastern peninsula. In the future, it will separate again and move westward to form Sardinia. The eastern peninsula – the future Italian boot – is now connected by only a narrow neck to the European continent. East of this neck, however, is the shallow sea over the northern tip of Adria. It

will gradually fill up with the detritus from the weathering of the Alps and Apennines to form the Po valley. To the south, the Italian peninsula seems to turn into three stringy fingers. The eastern one becomes the Apulia, the heel of the present boot. The middle one I am guessing breaks away and forms Sicily, while the western one becomes the toe of the boot.

To the west are a string of islands. The largest and most western will get shoved against the southern edge of the Iberian peninsula. Some of this material now forms an underwater peninsula extending out to the island of Majorca. The remaining material has been pushed against the African plate.

Since the piles of ocean floor heaped up by all this tectonic turmoil had no topsoil covering and vegetation, they began to erode quickly and their detritus washed off during hard rains in oft-repeated turbidity currents that settled into the sea to form the turbidite sequences (formerly called *flysch*) such as is found in the Ascea formation in the Cilento. In fact, the rocks and sands of most of the Appenine chain that forms the “spinal column” of Italy were formed at this time. The rocks were formed, of course, underwater. Only later were they lifted up to become mountains.

Somewhere around 7 Ma to 5 Ma, (Ma = million years ago) the connection of the Mediterranean to the Atlantic seems to have closed, and the sea nearly completely dried up. As it dried, huge deposits of rock salt and gypsum were formed all over the bottom. River mouths were an average of 1500 meters above the almost dry bottom of the sea. During this period, animals moved easily between Europe and Africa. About 2.5 Ma, the connection with the Atlantic opened again and clay deposits soon shielded most of the salt deposits from being dissolved again by the ocean water. Moreover, water is heavier the more salt it has dissolved in it, so salt-saturated water settles to the bottom and keeps the unsaturated water away from the salt. Evaporation from the Mediterranean is greater than the inflow of its rivers, so there is a net inflow of Atlantic water from Gibraltar.

The economic consequence for Italy of its dramatic geology is that it has no coal, oil, or gas, and that much of its surface is too rugged to cultivate. It is however, rich in one thing: volcanoes. Somewhere around 2 Ma, volcanic action began along the western edge of the Italian peninsula from

Tuscany as far south as Vesuvius. The seven hills of Rome, for example, are the eroded remains of pyroclastic flows from mighty volcanoes whose collapsed remnants are called the Alban Hills. In the north, these volcanoes are now long extinct and their craters form beautiful lakes. At Vesuvius, vulcanism continues. A combination of two actions led to the formation of Vesuvius. On the one hand, the spreading under the Tyrrhenian sea mentioned above, in the process of pushing back the foot of the “boot” of Italy, caused cracking and “tear-apart” of the peninsula. In particular, a large V-shaped crack appeared forming what is now the Bay of Naples. As the mouth of the V opened, the crust was weakened and pressure built up at the point of the V. On the other hand, the spreading of the floor of the Tyrrhenian was also causing subduction of the sea floor under the land of Italy. This phenomena led to vulcanism of the Andean kind, characterized by explosive eruptions. Because the material being subducted was rich in limestone, the ash of these volcanoes, and of Vesuvius in particular, is alkaline – rather than acidic as in the volcanoes of the American west – and rich in lime and phosphorous compounds. Thus it makes very fertile soil for agriculture.

The date of the first eruption of Vesuvius is not known, but a potassium-argon date of .3 Ma was found on lava from a deep well near the volcano. The earliest known major eruption was about 23,000 BC. Others followed around 20,000, 16,300, 14,800, 6,000, and 1,760 BC. The most famous eruption is, of course, the one in 79 A.D. which covered Pompeii, Herculaneum, and other towns. The dramatic, eye-witness account of Pliny the Younger is given in Appendix A. There have been, however, many eruptions since then; the most recent was in 1944. The conduit between the magma chamber and the cone was blocked at the end of the 1944 eruption, so that now only a bit of steam is escaping. But with a 2000-year history of explosions, it is being closely watched for any signs of renewed activity. In fact, it is expected that the next eruption, now overdue, may be particularly violent.

Today, Vesuvius looks like two mountains, the Grand Cone of Vesuvius proper and the fragmentary ring known as Mount Somma. In fact, they are all part of the same volcano. It is generally assumed that the eruption of some 25,000 years ago created a symmetric cone. Subsequent eruptions tore at the sides. The great 79 AD eruption blew away much of the top, forming a cauldron. The major eruption of 1631 then began building the cone inside the cauldron, the present Grand Cone of Vesuvius.

In 1993, Vesuvius became one of the first of the national parks of Italy. A system of trails is being constructed that will allow the visitor to enjoy the unusual rocks, soils, and plants of the sides of this great volcano. Jurisdiction over the area, however, is still divided among (1) the Park Service, (2) the Forestry Service, which previously controlled it, and (3) the Vulcanological Guides, who control access to the top rim.

There are, of course, elaborate plans for what to do in the event of an eruption, and elaborate systems to detect changes which might indicate an imminent explosion. But those in charge know that they have only one chance; if they cry wolf and no wolf appears, no one will ever believe them again. And if they don't cry wolf, and he does appear, they will surely be eaten.



Bradyseism at the Macellum in Pozzuoli

A phenomenon related to vulcanism is bradyseism, the slow upward (negative) and downward (positive) movement of the earth. It is most strikingly represented at Pozzuoli, seen in the picture to the right. The dark marks on the columns of this Roman market are the bore holes of a little mollusc (*lithophagos*) that lives in the upper two meters of sea water. Since the holes were certainly not in the columns when they were erected in Roman times, the whole site clearly sank well below sea level and then rose back again in the course of about 1800 years. The significance of these bore holes was first recognized by none other than Charles Lyell, often called the father of modern geology. He was so excited by the discovery that he put a picture of these columns on subsequent editions of his *Principles of Geology*.



Sulfurous steam rising from the Solfatara

on the outskirts of Pozzuoli is the solfatara (left), an active volcano that for two millennia has simmered without exploding.

Nearby, in Rione Terra, once the heart of Pozzuoli, bradyseism struck in 1968, and in four years the ground rose 1.7 meters. Then beginning in 1982, it rose another 1.6 meters in less than two years. This rise was accompanied by an earthquake that led to a massive exodus from the area. This exodus created an archeologist's paradise -- an old site without modern inhabitants. The same phenomenon of bradyseism saved the temples of Paestum by turning the area into a malarial bog where mosquitoes protected the temples from the ravages of builders looking for cheap stone. It is probably also involved in a land rise that eliminated the harbor at Velia.

It is hardly surprising to find that just on the

2. Cilento human history before the Greeks¹

The Cilento has been inhabited about as long as any part of Europe, and the changing and evolving history of the Mediterranean is remarkably reflected in this small area. In the lower paleolithic (500,000 - 80,000 years ago), *homo erectus* lived in these parts. The grottoes along the coast from Marina di Camerota to Scario bear one of the most continuous records of habitation in prehistoric times in Europe. Aside from a few human bones, our evidence is part of economic history, namely the tools these people made and used. They chipped pebbles to make scrappers, points, and blades. Similar objects have also been found inland at the Tolve Pass near Cannalonga and Mt. Gelbison, as well as further down the coast near Sapri. While the finds are few, they are enough to establish that humans were living both along the coast and in the mountains; quite possibly they lived and hunted over much of the Cilento.

In the middle paleolithic (80,000 - 35,000 BC), Neanderthal man was living all along the coast from Cape Palinuro to Scario in grottoes, many accessible only from the sea. Relative to *homo erectus*, the Neanderthals had more refined stone implements, used fire, and buried their dead. In the Cala grotto at Marina di Camerota, were found bones of *bos premigenius* – that is, of animals ancestral to

1. This section is based on Amedeo La Greca, *Appunti de Storia del Cilento* (Centro di Promozione Culturale per il Cilento, Acciaroli, 2001). Maps and pictures are from it unless otherwise indicated.

modern cattle. In the nearby grotto of Poggia were found bones of mastodon, elephant, rhinoceros, and bear. A human cranium from about 70,000 years ago, found in the Sepulchral Grotto near Camerota, has a more prominent forehead than the typical Neanderthal, prompting the name *homo Camerotensis*. Things made by man during this age are found at many inhabited grottoes and in particular great abundance in a grotto at Castelcivita. Articles found here are often typical of those found in Lazio, the area around Rome. Thus, these people seemed to have moved widely in search of game.

In the upper paleolithic (35,000 - 10,000 BC), the same areas were inhabited but by a different type of man, *homo sapiens sapiens*. During the mesolithic (10,000 - 6,000 BC), the types of stone tools found in the Cilento suggest a shift from the hunting of mammals to hunting birds and opening molluscs. Remains of sheep, swine, and bovine cattle suggest the beginning of a rudimentary animal husbandry and some harvesting, and thus the beginning of agriculture.

The neolithic age (6,000 - 3,000 BC) saw the spread of agriculture and the beginning of pottery, spinning, and weaving. This culture seems to have come into the Cilento from two directions, both by arduous routes. One was across the formidable barrier of the Appennines from the area of Materna; pottery of this type has been found at Paestum. The other, perhaps even more surprising, was from the Lipari islands, which lie between Sicily and the Cilento. Pottery and objects of obsidian from the Diana culture of the Lipari were found at the same Paestum site. The obsidian, volcanic glass from Stromboli or other volcano in the Lipari, is evidence of trade in objects as well as possible migration of people. A hearth from this era has been found in Palinuro, thus showing a settled, stable family. The obsidian from the Lipari has been found also at Campora, Stio, Rocaglorioso, and in the valleys of the Calore and Mingardo rivers. Thus, we are in the presence of a substantial seagoing commerce, not just a stray article here or there.

While objects actually found in the Cilento are consistent with a picture of the neolithic as still quite primitive, the implication of a people capable of undertaking open sea voyages fits with other new finds and better dating that are requiring a significant revision of our view of this period. We know that domesticated grains were grown in Palestine as early as 15,000 BC. The massive city walls of Jericho (9,000 BC) include a tower with an inside staircase of hammer-dressed steps and roof slabs that would have done honor to a grand medieval castle. Around 6,200 BC, when the traditional view of the neolithic allows nothing more than simple village, there arose in what is now Turkey the rich and luxurious city of Çatal Hüyük, unique in the history of city planning in having (in the 3 percent so far excavated) no streets. People moved from house to house over roof tops. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, the enormous *menhirs* of the Atlantic shoreline have now been dated by radiocarbon methods to the period 6,500 - 2,000 BC period.² All of these findings point to a much more advanced culture in the neolithic than was previously thought. Furthermore, it has recently been shown that sea levels rose some 100 meters between 15,000 BC and 2,000 BC, as the glaciers of the ice age retreated. The area of the North Sea, almost certainly well above water when the last ice age was at its peak, was



Noglio grotto near Camerotoa. (author's photo)

² Zygmunt Krzak, *Megality Europy* (Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN. Warszawa, 1994) A 70- page appendix giving dates for all sites dated up to the time of publication, an extensive bibliography, and a long English summary make the book useful even without a knowledge of Polish.

flooded in the course of the neolithic age. Moreover, the flooding was not steady but came in three major waves in about 12,200, 9,500 and 5,600 BC.³ The middle of these coincides almost exactly with the date of the flooding of Atlantis given by the Egyptian priest to Solon and related to us by Plato in the dialogues *Timaeus* and *Critias*. This story, once discounted as pure imagination, now seems highly plausible if we locate Atlantis in what is now the North Sea. Taking Plato's story of an early, high culture in the west as a framework begins to make sense out of many things that do not fit the conventional model of Europe in the mesolithic and neolithic times. This new framework has been employed by Mary Settegast in *Plato Prehistorian: 10,000 to 5,000 BC, Myth, Religion, and Archaeology* (Lindisfarne, Hudson NY, 1990), far and away the most beautiful and fascinating book on the prehistory of Europe known to me.

The Copper age (3,000 - 2,000 BC) saw a consistent human presence in the valley of the Sele (the northern edge or the Cilento) at Gaudo, a little north-west of Paestum, where a number of graves have been found excavated into the living rock. Students of these finds believe that these people came from the Aegean looking for sources of copper for making arms. While the economy was originally based on hunting, it developed agriculture and animal husbandry. Though they had metal points, they continued to use also beautifully formed stone points. Two walled settlements of this age are found at Laurino; objects are also found at Paestum and on Monte della Stella.

In the Bronze age (2,000 -1,000 BC), a group of herdsmen established themselves on the left bank of the Sele near the mouth and built the sanctuary of Hera Argiva (much of which is now in the museum at Paestum). At this site have been found many fragments of kettles and kettle covers for working with milk to make cheese. In making cheese, rennet from the stomach of a calf is added to milk and the mixture heated to 96 ° F, at which point it curdles. The curds must then be separated from the whey. A conical cover with holes was found which seems to have been designed to push down on the curdled milk forcing the whey up through the holes while capturing curds underneath. Also found were cylindrical clay stoves for heating the milk. Large containers for food in the same site suggest the storage of grains or pulses (peas and beans). This culture, called Appennine, appears at several other places in the Cilento such as on the Alburni mountains at Costa Palomba, where a later age carved the image of a warrior into a great stone.

Were there *menhirs* in the Cilento? The official answer seems to be "No"; there are, however, stones on Monte della Stella which were clearly used as menhirs, though nature may have been more helpful in creating them than she was in the great menhirs of Brittany. One of these is the *Prèta Nzitàta*, roughly translatable as "Bride Stone," meaning the stone that has the power to make a girl a bride. It is about 15 meters high and about four meters away from the cliff of which it was once part. On the summit, a small basin is cut into the stone. Before the military base was built in 1964, on the first Sunday after the Feast of the Assumption (August 15), a procession would come up from the south, circle the chapel three times and proceed to the top of the cliff near which the *Prèta Nzitàta* stands. Each woman who hoped to have a child would throw nine stones on top. If all nine remained on top, it was a sure sign the child would come within the year. Very similar traditions surround the menhirs of Brittany, so that we may safely say that the *Prèta Nzitàta* was a functional menhir, however it may have been made.

Also on Monte Stella is the *Prèta ru Mulacchio*, "*Stone of the Illegitimate Child*" where several stones lean together to form a narrow passage which opens to the east towards Monte Sacro (= Monte Gelbison), behind which the sun rises at the summer solstice. A woman wishing a baby walks through

³ Paul Blanchon and John Shaw, "Reef drowning during the last deglaciation: evidence for catastrophic sea-level rise and ice-sheet collapse," *Geology*, January 1995, v.23 no. 1 p. 4-8.

the passage, necessarily scraping her abdomen on the stone. The child that results is “illegitimate” because its true father is the stone or the spirit in the stone.

The Appennine culture is also present in the Noglio grotto at Marina di Camerota. An interesting floor was made by putting sea pebbles on hot embers and covering them clay, so that the clay was baked by the embers. Other findings included: two hearths, many pieces of pottery with a designs made of points, a small obsidian blade, two grind stones, and a polished stone hatchet. Perhaps even more striking than the human artifacts are the animal remains. The bones testify not only to animals of classical times such as the wolf, fox, hare, and wild boar, but also lynx, lion, roebuck, wild goat, jackal, rhinoceros, and hippopotamus.



Prèta ru Mulacchio (author's photo)

This culture has been found also at Velia, Sapri, Punta Licosa, and, especially, on the Agropoli promontory. We know that at Agropoli the inhabitants lived in wooden cabins, stored food supplies in large ceramic vases decorated with a smooth, ribbon-like design, and cooked their food on clay stoves. The women spun wool on drop spindles with terracotta spindle whorls and wove on looms with clay weights. The men fished from small boats with triangular stone anchors.

There are many other small bronze age sites in the Cilento. Three factors seem to have influenced location: (1) on the coast, good harbors, (2) in the inland, ease of defense, and (3) everywhere, the availability of a year-round spring of good drinking water.

During the late Bronze age and early Iron age (1,000 - 600 BC), the most striking development in Italy was the invasion of the Po valley by the Villanovans, (F. Braudel, *Memory and the Mediterranean*, p.168.) The Cilento was relatively little touched by this development. Some hundred tombs of people of this culture have been found at Arenòsola on the right bank of the Sele north of Paestum. Others were found at the springs at Capodifiume, about six kilometers northeast of Paestum. These people cremated their dead and buried the ashes in urns with an arrowhead or spearhead placed beside the urns of men and a bowl beside the urns of women. Later, the men's urns were accompanied by an iron clasp or sword while those of women had spindle whorls or loom weights. The burials were covered with a tumulus of stones. From around 600 BC, there was also found at Paestum a burial including a fibula or brooch of iron. It is possible that the earliest use of iron was for ornaments and that it only later came to be used for weapons and tools. Also from this age, there have been found near the temple called the Basilica at Paestum a number of small idols and vases, apparently offerings to the divinity of the place.

At this point, we begin moving from prehistory to mythical history in this part of the world. The next people to move into the Cilento were the Oenotrians. (The Italians write *Enotrian*; the Greeks, *Oinotrian*.) We can find these people not only archaeologically, as with the early peoples, but also in Greek tradition. Herodotus tells us, as we shall see, that the Greek settlers of Velia acquired the site from Oenotrians. Where did the Oenotrians come from? This tradition is relayed to us by Pausanias, a Greek traveler writing in the second century AD. In describing Arcadia, an area in the northwest of the

Peloponnese, he writes:

The Arcadians say that Pelasgus was the first inhabitant of this land. It is natural to suppose that others accompanied Pelasgus, and that he was not by himself; for otherwise he would have been a king without any subjects to rule over. However, in stature and in prowess, in beauty and in wisdom, Pelasgus excelled his fellows, and for this reason, I think, he was chosen to be king by them. Asius the poet says of him:--

The godlike Pelasgus on the wooded mountains
Black earth gave up, that the race of mortals might exist.

Pelasgus on becoming king invented huts that humans should not shiver, or be soaked by rain, or oppressed by heat. Moreover; he it was who first thought of coats of sheep-skins, such as poor folk still wear in Euboea and Phocis. He too it was who checked the habit of eating green leaves, grasses, and roots always inedible and sometimes poisonous. But he introduced as food the nuts of trees, not those of all trees but only the acorns of the edible oak. Some people have followed this diet so closely since the time of Pelasgus that even the Pythian priestess, when she forbade the Lacedaemonians to touch the land of the Arcadians, uttered the following verses:--

In Arcadia are many men who eat acorns,
Who will prevent you; though I do not grudge it you.

It is said that it was in the reign of Pelasgus that the land was called Pelasgia.

Lycaon the son of Pelasgus devised the following plans, which were more clever than those of his father. He founded the city Lycosura on Mount Lycaeus, gave to Zeus the surname Lycaeus and founded the Lycaean games.... My view is that Lycaon was contemporary with Cecrops, the king of Athens, but that they were not equally wise in matters of religion. For Cecrops was the first to name Zeus the Supreme god, and refused to sacrifice anything that had life in it, but burnt instead on the altar the national cakes which the Athenians still call pelanoi. But Lycaon brought a human baby to the altar of Lycaean Zeus, and sacrificed it, pouring out its blood upon the altar, and according to the legend immediately after the sacrifice he was changed from a man to a wolf (Lycos).

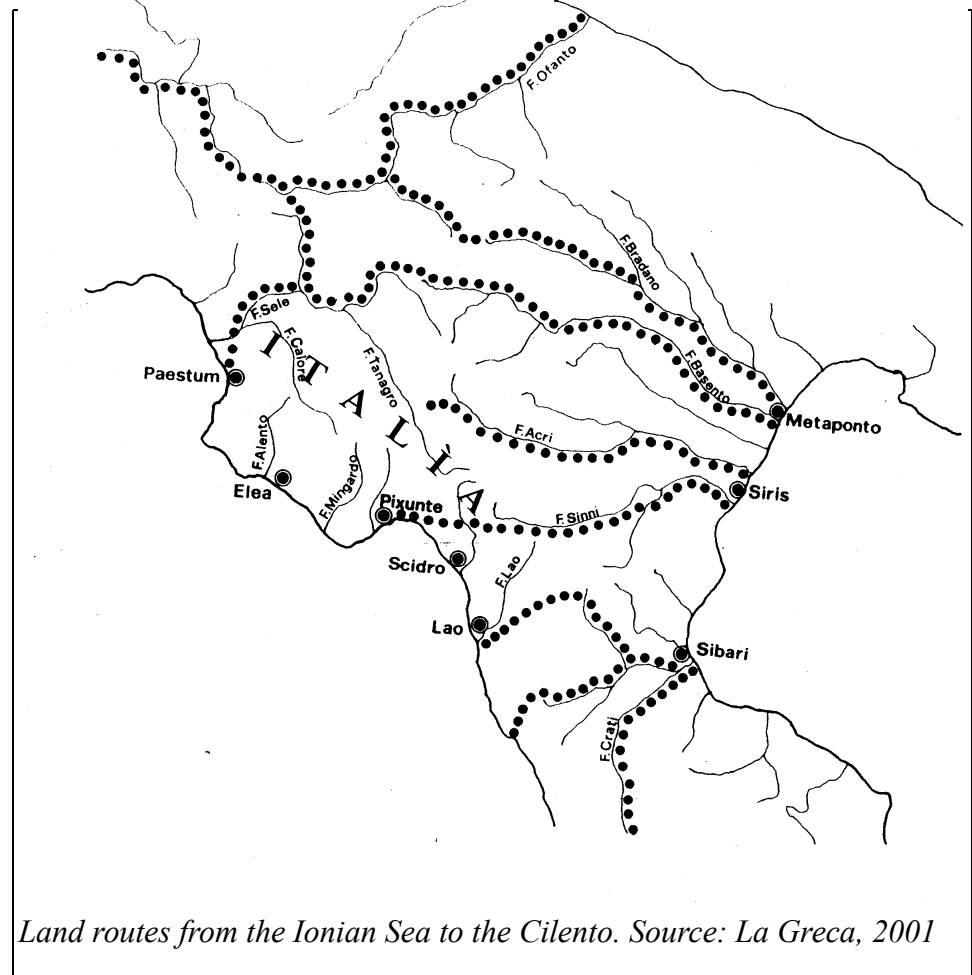
In the third generation after Pelasgus the land increased in the number both of its cities and of its population. For Nyctimus, who was the eldest son of Lycaon, possessed all the power, while the other sons founded cities on the sites they considered best. Thus Pallantium was founded by Pallas, Oresthasium by Orestheus and Phigalia by Phigalus. [In all, some 21 sons and cities are enumerated.] But Oenotrus, the youngest of the sons of Lycaon, asked his brother Nyctimus for money and men and crossed by sea to Italy; the land of Oenotria received its name from Oenotrus who was its king. This was the first expedition despatched from Greece to found a colony, and if a man makes the most careful calculation possible he will discover that no foreigners either emigrated to another land before Oenotrus.

Dionysios of Halikarnassos is a little clearer on Oenotrus's course:

The first beach of Italy they reached was the promontory of Apulia; but Oenotrus, with the greater part of the army arrived at on the western shore of Italy called Ausonia [the Gulf of Salerno] now called the Tyrrhenian Sea. Here he found much good land for pasture and cultivation, in part unpopulated and in part sparsely populated. He drove away these inhabitants, founded many small cities on the mountains, as was the practice of the ancients. This vast extent of land was called Oenotria.

It is thought that this passage refers to a land crossing from the “instep” of the “boot” of Italy up the Basento or Agri rivers into we hear more later. Many artifacts found along these routes testify to the presence of the Oenotrians from the 9th to the 7th century.

Around the middle of the 8th century, two other groups arrived. One, called the Morgeti (that is, “rock dwellers”) went from Siris up the Sinni river and down the Mingardo (in the southern part of the Cilento) to settle the area along the coast. The second, called Italo with Italo as leader and the bull as the totemic animal, seems to have gone up the Agri, down the Tanagro, up the Calore, and down the Alento to what is now the promontory of Velia. It seems that Italo united all the inhabitants of this region that the Greeks



Land routes from the Ionian Sea to the Cilento. Source: La Greca, 2001

originally called Oenotria and then, beginning in the 7th century, *Italia* with the *Itali* (*italici* in modern Italian) as inhabitants. The Greek colonists who arrived in the area beginning in the 6th century were called, to distinguish them, the *Italioi*. According to Aristotle, Italo made all of his people adopt agriculture, whereas some had still been nomads. Among the laws that he gave them, the first was that of public festivals. These were solemn feasts of a partly political, partly religious character that culminated in a ritual banquet in a sacred place around a totem common to neighboring people.

The name *Italia*, originally designating only this area around Velia, of course, gradually spread to cover the whole peninsula south of the Alps, and finally the modern country. According to one explanation, *Italo* came from *Vitelio*, the word for bull or calf (the totemic animal) in the Oscan language of the Samnites. (Oscan was written in the Etruscan alphabet, itself borrowed from the Greek.) Since the Greeks had no *v* sound, they left off initial *v*'s so that *Vitelio* became *Itelo*, just as *Velia* became *Elea*. The modern Italian word for both calf and veal is *vitello*. Similarly, the Oenotrians would seem to be people of the vine. Tradition also credits them with the introduction to the area of *focaccia*, an unleavened bread cooked between two hot stones.

An Oenotrian village of the 6th or 7th century was discovered at Palinuro and a second a little further east at Molpa on a height that would have been an island at the time, the island, it is said, where

the siren Molpa died. The foundations of the houses were rectangular or circular and still had the remains of the carbonized wood of the stakes that had supported, presumably, a structure of clay and straw. Sun-dried clay and vases with geometrical designs were also found. A third village, that the Greeks of the 8th century called Pixoes has been found at the mouth of the Bussento. There are remains here of a massive polygonal or “Cyclopiian” or “Pelasgian” wall built of closely fitted non-rectangular stones.

At Velia, Herodotus says that the Greeks “acquired” the land from the Oenotrians, using a word suggestive of a business deal rather than a seizure. Firm archaeological evidence of Oenotrian settlement at Velia, however, has not been found.

Finally, we cannot leave the Oenotrians without mentioning their foremost claim to literary fame. The island of Licosa, Pliny the Elder tells us, bears the name of the Siren Leucosia. Another myth tells of the daughter of Cadmus, pursued by the jealous Hera, who threw herself from the cliffs but was changed into a siren, Leucothea, by the sea divinities. Both sirens are connected with the island of Licosa. No other island is connected with *two* sirens. Now Homer tells us in Book 12 of the *Odyssey* (lines 154 -190):

Then verily I spoke among my comrades, grieved at heart: “Friends, since it is not right that one or two alone should know the oracles that Circe, the beautiful goddess, told me, therefore will I tell them, in order that knowing them we may either die or, shunning death and fate, escape. First she bade us avoid the voice of the wondrous Sirens, and their flowery meadow. Me alone she bade to listen to their voice; but do ye bind me with grievous bonds, that I may abide fast where I am, upright in the step of the mast, and let the ropes be made fast at the ends to the mast itself; and if I implore and bid you to loose me, then do ye tie me fast with yet more bonds.”

Thus I rehearsed all these things and told them to my comrades. Meanwhile the well-built ship speedily came to the isle of the *two* Sirens, for a fair and gentle wind bore her on. Then presently the wind ceased and there was a windless calm, and a god lulled the waves to sleep. But my comrades rose up and furled the sail and stowed it in the hollow ship, and thereafter sat at the oars and made the water white with their polished oars of fir. But I with my sharp sword cut into small bits a great round cake of wax, and kneaded it with my strong hands, and soon the wax grew warm, forced by the strong pressure and the rays of the lord Helios Hyperion. Then I anointed with this the ears of all my comrades in turn; and they bound me in the ship hand and foot, upright in the step of the mast, and made the ropes fast at the ends to the mast itself; and themselves sitting down smote the grey sea with their oars. But when we were as far distant as a man can make himself heard when he shouts, driving swiftly on our way, the Sirens failed not to note the swift ship as it drew near, and they raised their clear-toned song:

“Come hither, as thou farest, renowned Odysseus, great glory of the Achaeans; stay thy ship that thou mayest listen to the voice of us *two*. For never yet has any man rowed past this isle in his black ship until he has heard the sweet voice from our lips. Nay, he has joy of it, and goes his way a wiser man. For we know all the toils that in wide Troy the Argives and Trojans endured through the will of the gods, and we know all things that come to pass upon the fruitful earth.”

True children of the Cilento can harbor no doubt that Odysseus was just off their coast at this moment.

3. Coming of the Greeks to Elea-Velia

The history of Velia begins with the first writer of anything like history in our sense of the word, Herodotus. He was born during the 480's in Halicarnassus, a Greek city near the south western corner of Asia Minor (present day Turkey, but the Turks did not arrive for another 1500 years.) As a young man in the 450's he was involved in a political uprising and was expelled by the tyrant of city. He began travels around the eastern end of the Mediterranean, and went on to Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, Ionia, the Black Sea. As he went, he wrote about what he learned. He called these writings *ιστορια*, or "inquires". Around 440, he lived for a while in Athens and read in public from his writings with great success. He participated in the colonization of Thurii, in the "instep" of the Italian boot, in 444/3. He seems to have died not long after 430, probably in Thurii. At the end of his life, he put his writings together into a continuous story that comes down to us remarkably intact. A later editor added divisions into books and paragraphs.

The broad theme of the book is the wars between the Greeks and the Persians, though with many interesting digressions, which, as he says, were part of his plan. He traces the rulers of western Asia minor back to the descendants of Herakles, who ruled for 505 years through twenty-two generations, before the last of them was murdered by a certain Gyges, who assumed the throne. The fifth ruler in the line of Gyges was Croesus, who became king of Lydia in 560. Croesus gradually forced nearly all of the Greek city states along the coast to pay tribute to him. He amassed great wealth and apparently ruled well enough that other Greek settlements, such as Sparta, had treaties of mutual aid with him. Then, around 547, in far away Ecbatana (in Modern Iran, about 200 miles southwest of Tehran), the king of the Medes, Astyages, was overthrown by his grandson, Cyrus.

Cyrus was the son of Astyages's daughter and a Persian prince. When she was expecting him, Astyages had a dream that a vine grew from his daughter's body that covered the whole world. He interpreted it to mean that the child would grow up to be a mighty king who would overthrow him. So he ordered one of his nobles, Harpagos, to kill the child. Harpagos could not bring himself to the murder and gave the child to one of the king's herdsmen. At just that moment, the herdsman's wife had a stillborn child. They kept Cyrus and gave their own child as evidence that he had been killed. When Cyrus was ten, all this came to light, and he was sent to his parents further east in Persia. To punish Harpagos, Astyages invited him to dinner, abducted his son, killed the boy, cooked him and served him to an unsuspecting Harpagos. When Harpagos had eaten heartily, the boy's head was revealed to him. Harpagos masked his anger at the time, but when Cyrus was of age, he engineered the overthrow of Astyages by the young Cyrus.

Cyrus moved quickly to consolidate the empire of the Medes. Croesus became apprehensive and considered whether he should attack Cyrus. The oracle at Delphi told him that if he did, he would destroy a great empire. Croesus failed to note the ambiguity in the answer, gathered an army and set out from his capital in Sardis for the east. About halfway across Asia Minor, he met Cyrus. Though Cyrus had superior numbers, a daylong battle was indecisive. When Cyrus did not attack on the next day, Croesus decided to break off the engagement, march back to Sardis, and gather forces from his allies the Egyptians, Babylonians, and Spartans. Never dreaming that, after so close an engagement, Cyrus would follow him, he released the extra mercenaries he had hired for the expedition. But Cyrus followed on his heels. The armies met on the plains in front of Sardis; the Lydians fought well, but were forced to retire into the city, which, after two weeks of siege, fell to Cyrus. Cyrus then put Harpagos in charge of the army in Asia minor and returned to Ecbatana to look after other matters. And here begins our story.

This man [Harpagos] was now made general by Cyrus. When he came to Ionia, he took the cities by means of earthworks; he would drive the men within their walls and then build earthworks against the walls and so take the cities. Phocaea was the first Ionian town that he attacked. These Phocaeans were the earliest of the Greeks to make long sea-voyages, and it was they who discovered the Adriatic Sea, and Tyrrhenia, and Iberia, and Tartessus. not sailing in round freightships but in fifty-oared vessels. When they came to Tartessus they made friends with the king of the Tartessians, whose name was Arganthonius; he ruled Tartessus for eighty years and lived a hundred and twenty. The Phocaeans won this man's friendship to such a degree that he invited them to leave Ionia and settle in his country wherever they liked; and then, when he could not persuade them to, and learned from them how the Median power was increasing, he gave them money to build a wall around their city. [4] He gave it generously: for the circuit of the wall is of not a few stades, and all this is made of great stones well fitted together.

In such a manner the Phocaeans' wall was built. Harpagus marched against the city and besieged it, but he made overtures, and said that it would suffice him if the Phocaeans would demolish one rampart of the wall and dedicate one house. But the Phocaeans, very indignant at the thought of slavery, said they wanted to deliberate for a day, and then they would answer; but while they were deliberating, Harpagus must withdraw his army from the walls, they said. Harpagus said that he well knew what they intended to do, but that nevertheless he would allow them to deliberate. So when Harpagus withdrew his army from the walls, the Phocaeans launched their fifty-oared ships, embarked their children and women and all their movable goods, besides the statues from the temples and everything dedicated in them except bronze or stonework or painting, and then embarked themselves and set sail for Chios; and the Persians took Phocaea, left thus uninhabited.

While getting ready for their voyage, they first sailed to Phocaea, where they destroyed the Persian guard to whom Harpagus had entrusted the defense of the city; and when this was done, they called down mighty curses on any one of them who should stay behind when the rest sailed. Not only this, but they sank a mass of iron in the sea, and swore never to return to Phocaea before the iron should appear again. But while they prepared to sail to Corsica, more than half of the citizens were overcome with longing and pitiful sorrow for the city and the life of their land, and they broke their oath and sailed back to Phocaea. Those of them who kept the oath put out to sea from the Oenussae.

And when they came to Cynus they lived there for five years as one community with those who had come first, and they founded temples there. But they harassed and plundered all their neighbors, as a result of which the Tyrrhenians and Carthaginians made common cause against them, and sailed to attack them with sixty ships each. The Phocaeans also manned their ships, sixty in number, and met the enemy in the sea called Sardonian. They engaged and the Phocaeans won, yet it was only a kind of Cadmean victory;¹ for they lost forty of their ships, and the twenty that remained were useless, their rams twisted awry. Then sailing to Alalia they took their children and women and all of their possessions that their ships could hold on board, and leaving Cynus they sailed to Rhegium.

167. As for the crews of the disabled ships, the Carthaginians and Tyrrhenians drew lots for them, and of the Tyrrhenians the Agyllaioi were allotted by far the majority and these they led out and stoned to death. But afterwards, everything from Agylla that passed the place where the stoned Phocaeans lay, whether sheep or beasts of burden or men, became distorted and crippled and palsied. The Agyllaeans sent to Delphi, wanting to mend their offense; and the Pythian priestess told them to do what the people of Agylla do to this day: for they pay great honors to the Phocaeans, with religious rites and games and horse-races. Such was the end of this part of the Phocaeans.

Those of them who fled to Rhegium set out from there and acquired that city in the Oenotrian country which is now called Hyele (and later Elea and Velia) ; [4] they founded this because they learned from a man of Posidonia (Paestum) that the Pythia (priestess of the oracle of Delphi) had told them to establish rites in memory of Cynos, the hero, not to colonize Cynos (Corsica), the island.

To make sense of the last sentence, one needs to know that Cynos could mean either the son of Herakles (Hercules in Latin) or the island of Corsica. The same verb, κτίσαι, has been translated as both “to establish rites for” and as “to colonize.” In fact, it has both meanings. The Pythia seems to have been up to one of her standard tricks of ambiguous statement, here a pun on the double meanings of both Cynos and κτίσαι. The man from Paestum tells them that they had misunderstood the oracle; they should have founded a settlement in honor of the hero, the son of Herakles, not colonize Corsica. Apparently, he also suggested that they found the settlement at Velia, near his native city where he would have been glad to have other Greek settlements.

Velia seems to have always been the name of the place in Italic languages, but when Greek settlers arrived about 535 B.C., they called it Hyele or Elea, because there was no *v* sound in Greek.

4. The Eleatic Philosophers and Medicine at Velia

Xenophanes, a Greek rhapsode and sage, though born sometime around 570-560 BC at Colophon in Asia Minor, is associated with Elea. We have no complete work but only fragments quoted by later writers. In some of them, speaking as a rhapsode, he evokes the mood of an ancient feast:

1 For now the floor is clean as are the cups and hands of all.
One puts on the woven garlands;
another passes along a fragrant ointment in a bowl.
The mixing bowl stands full of cheer
and another wine, flower fragrant in the jars, is at hand –
which says it will never give out.
In the midst, frankincense gives forth its sacred scent,
and there is cold water, sweet and pre.
Goldern loaves lie near at hand and the noble table
is loaded down with cheese and rich honey.
An altar in the centre is covered all about with flowers
while song and festive spirit enfold the house.
But first glad-hearted men must hymn the god
with reverent words and pure speech.

....

Sometimes he expresses himself on public expenditure policy:

2 But if by swiftness of foot one were to gain a victory
or in the pentathlon, there by Pisa’s stream in Olympus in
the sacred grove of Zeus,
or again the painful art of boxing

or the fearsome sport they call pankration,
 he would appear more glorious to his townsmen
 and win the front-row seat of honor at games.
 And there would be food for him from the city's stores
 and a keepsake gift for him.
 And ever if he were to win with horses he would get all these,
 not being as worthy of them as I.
 For our expertise is better than the strength of men and horses.
 But this practice makes no sense nor is it right
 to prefer strength to this good expertise.
 For neither if there were a good boxer among the people
 nor if there were a pentathlete or wrestler
 nor again if there were someone swift afoot –
 which is most honored of all men's deeds of strength –
 would for this reason the city be better governed.
 Small joy would a city have from this –
 if someone were to be victorious in competing for a prize on Pisa's banks –
 for these do not enrich a city's treasure room.

But he is best remembered for his theological challenge to popular religion:

- 11 Homer and Hesiod have attributed to the gods
 All sort of things which are matters of reproach and censure among men
 theft, adultery, and mutual deceit.
 14 But mortals suppose that gods are born,
 wear their own clothes and have a voice or body.
 15 But if horses or oxen and lions had hands
 or could draw with their hands and accomplish such works as men,
 horses would draw the figures of the gods as similar to horses, and oxen as similar to oxen
 and they would make the bodies
 of the sort which each of them had..
 16 Ethiopians say that their gods are snub-nosed and black;
 Thracians that theirs are blue-eyed and red-haired.
 17 Indeed, not from the beginning did gods intimate all things to mortals,
 but as they search in time they discover better.
 23 One god is greatest among gods and men,
 not at all like mortals in body or in thought.
 24 ... whole he sees, whole he thinks, and whole he hears.
 25 ... but completely without toil he shakes all things by the thought of his mind.
 26 ... always he abides in the same place, not moving at all,
 nor is it seemly for him to trave to different places at different times.

- 27 ... for all things are from the earth and to the earth all things come in the end.
- 34 and of course the clear and certain truth no man has seen
nor will there be anyone who knows about the gods and what I say about all things.
For even if, in the best case, one happened to speak just of what has been brought to pass
still he himself would not know. But opinion is the lot of all.

(Quoted from James H. Leshner *Xenophanes of Colophon* (Toronto, 1992). Numbers to the left are fragment numbers.)

Among the first generation of Greeks born in Elea was Parmenides son of Pyres whose fame as a philosopher and lawgiver made Elea known throughout the Greek world. When Plato need a teacher for Socrates, he invoked Parmenides in the dialogue of that name. Parmenides is depicted there as a venerable man of 65 and Socrates as an enthusiastic youth of 18 or 20. Socrates is eager to talk and Parmenides leads him quickly into self contradiction. The others then prevail on Parmenides to show Socrates how an argument should be made. Parmenides then becomes the mouthpiece of Plato as he examines the idea of “the one” in a long work which has defied translators and challenged exegetes. Whether this meeting ever took place or not is unknown, but it presumably could have.

Parmenides was an astronomer of the first rank. We are told that he was the first among the Greeks to teach that the earth was a sphere, that the morning and evening star are the same, and to give the correct explanation of the phases of the moon. In the rhymed translation by Karl Popper, he wrote of the moon:

Bright in the night with the gift of his light,
Round the earth she is erring,
Evermore letting her gaze
Turn towards Helios' rays.

In both the evening-star-morning-star identity and the phases of the moon, Parmenides saw behind the appearance of change a constancy of *being*. This vision became the keynote of his philosophy.

As with Xenophanes and all the philosophers before Plato, we have only fragments of Parmenides's work as quoted by later writers. He seems to have written one major work, a poem in the style of Homer called *Peri Physeôs* or *On Nature*. We have the beginning:

Fragment 1.

The mares that carry me as far as longing can reach
rode on, once they had come and fetched me onto the legendary
road of the divinity, the road that carries the man who knows
through the vast and dark unknown. And I was carried
as the mares, aware just where to go, kept carrying me,
straining at the chariot; and young women led the way.
And the axle in the hubs let out the sound of a pipe
blazing from the pressure of the two well-rounded wheels
at either side, as they rapidly led on: young women, girls,

daughters of the Sun, who had left the mansions of Night
for the light and pushed back the veils from their faces with their hands.
There are the gates of the pathways of Night and Day,
held fast in place between the lintel above and a threshold of stone;
and they reach up into the heavens, filled with gigantic doors.
And the keys – that now open, now lock – are held fast by
Justice: she who always demands exact returns. And with
soft seductive words the girls cunningly persuaded her to
push back immediately, just for them, the bar that bolts
the gates. And as the doors flew open making the bronze
axles with their pegs and nails spin – now one, now the other –
in their pipes, they created a gaping chasm. Straight through and
on the girls held fast their course for the chariot and horses straight down the road.
And the goddess welcomed me kindly and took
my right hand in hers and spoke these words as she addressed me:
‘Welcome young man, partnered by immortal charioteers,
reaching our home with the mares that carry you. For it was
no hard fate that sent you traveling this road – so far away
from the beaten track of humans – but Rightness and Justice.
And what is needed is for you to learn all things, both the unshaken
heart of persuasive Truth and the opinions of mortals,
in which there is nothing that can truthfully be trusted at all.
But even so, this too you will learn – how beliefs based on
appearance ought to be believable as they travel all through all there is.
(Translation of Peter Kingsley, *In the Dark Places of Wisdom* (Inverness, California, 1999, pp 53-54)

Clearly, Parmenides claims to have had a supersensible experience that was the source of his teaching given in the following two parts of the poems, usually labeled Truth and Opinion. As we read his words, we can almost see him, having set out on foot from the lower town in Elea for the temple on the ridge, meditating as he goes, suddenly feeling picked up by the chariot of the Daughters of the Sun and carried upward, horses straining and wheels squealing as they wind up the steep road to the acropolis, encountering the Guardian of the Threshold at the top, and then coming into the presence of the Divinity. She is, of course, Athena, and needs no introduction in her own temple. For me, this picture combines the very similar excitement I feel in reading the words and in climbing the hill of Velia. (Others, in particular Kingsley whose translation I have used, have seen a journey into the underworld and an encounter with Persephone, but that interpretation is inconsistent with the description of the straining horses. Also, Persephone does not seem to have been otherwise connected with Velia.)

Of Truth, the next part of the poem, we have extensive fragments; of Opinion, only scattered snippets, one of them being the verse on the moon quoted above. Plutarch tells us that the part on Opinion was extensive and very interesting and astute. The Truth fragments establish Parmenides as the father of logical argument. Modern material monists have claimed him as their forerunner. But he is clearly no materialist, for he places his whole teaching in the spiritual world, as we have seen. But before we consider those teachings, we need to put Parmenides into context.

Most modern readers would probably assume that the prolog given above was metaphorical and just designed to catch the attention of readers, or in those days, of hearers. In a most surprising way, modern archeological evidence points to a much more literal understanding. The connection is through healing. Strabo, the geographer of the Augustan age, gives a good account of the method of healing known as incubation. Speaking of a cave near Nysa in Asia Minor not far from Phokaia, he says:

The place is quite amazing. For what they say is that people who fall ill and are willing to submit to the methods of healing offered by these two divinities [Hades and Persephone] come here and live for a while in the village together with the most experienced among the priests. And these priests lie down and sleep in the cave on behalf of the sick, then they prescribe treatments on the basis of the dreams they receive. It is these same men who also invoke the healing power of the gods.

And often they lead the sick into the cave instead and settle them down, then leave them there in utter stillness (*hēsychia* ησύχια) without any food for several days – just like animals in a lair (*phôleos*). And sometimes those who are afflicted by illness have dreams of their own, dreams that they take very seriously. And yet even then they still rely on the others, as priests, to perform the role of guides and advisors by introducing them to the mysteries. For anyone else, the place is forbidden territory, and deadly. (Translation by Kingsley, *ibid*, p. 42)

Many such temples of healing were found in the ancient world. There is one in Paestum and possibly one in Velia. They were usually associated with Asklepios, a son of Apollo and a mortal mother, a healer deified after his death. The serpent used by Asklepios is the symbol of apothecaries to this day; statues of Asklepios are marked by the presence of a serpent.

In 1958, P.C. Sestrieri excavating a covered passageway in the lower town at Velia found a statue of a man in a toga. On the base was carved:

Ουλις Ευξίνου Υελητησ ιατροσ φωλαρχος ετει τοθ

Oulis son of Euxinos, citizen of Velia, healer *phôlarchos* year 379

Nearby were found the bases of two more statues with the inscriptions

Ουλις Αριστωνοσ / ιατροσ φωλαρχος / ετει σπ

Oulis son of Ariston/ healer *phôlarchos* year 280

Ουλις Ιερωνυμοσ/ ιατροσ φωλαρχος / ετει υμς

Oulis son of Hieronymos healer *phôlarchos* year 446 ⁴

All three of them contain the word ιατροσ, healer, as is *psychiatrist* or *podiatrist*. So we clearly have to do with something medical. The next to last word on each stone is "year" while the last is a date written in numerals. The first two words on each line are names. The first is the given name of the man and the second, his father's name in the genitive. Thus, their names are Oulis son of Ariston, Oulis son of Euxinos, and Oulis son of Hieronymos. The name Oulis is found nowhere else in the Greek world except at Marseilles, the other colony of Phokaia. It is clearly the name assumed by a man when he took on the office of φωλαρχος. It may be connected with Apollo Oulios, Apollo who makes whole, or it may be related to the Greek pronunciation of Velia, for, *gens Velia* translated into Greek would be

⁴ To write numbers and dates, the Greeks used the alphabet including three letters which had otherwise gone out of use by classical times, thus: α = 1, β = 2, γ = 3, δ = 4, ε = 5, stigma = 6, ζ = 7, η = 8, θ = 9, ι = 10, κ = 20, λ = 30, μ = 40, ν = 50, ξ = 60, ο = 70, π = 80, Ϟορρα = 90, ϖ = 100, σ = 200, τ = 300, υ = 400, φ = 500, χ = 600, ψ = 700, ω = 800, σαμπι = 900. With this information, you should be able to read the dates right off.

Ουλις . In other words, just as the pope today takes a name different from the one by which he was previously called, this dignitary seems to have taken the name of his city or of Apollo as his own. (The discussion of these inscriptions is based almost entirely on Alfonso de Francis "Sculture connesse con la scuola medica di Elea" [PdP 1970, p.267-284].)

But what is that word φωλαρχος? It occurs nowhere else in the Greek world. Its second half, *archos*, is a common Greek combining form meaning "master, chief" as in "architect" – master builder. The first half is clearly from precisely the φωλεος (*phôleos* -- lair) that we met in the quotation from Strabo. A careful study of its use shows that it referred to a place where animals lay in a lethargic state, exactly as Strabo describes the patients lying in the temple. Thus, these men were the "master of the lair," the chief priests of a healing temple of Asklepios, an Asklepion. They were dream healers.

A stone was also found with the inscription

Ουλιαδης
Ιατρομαντις
Απολλων

The first word, Ouliadês, means something like "those of the line of Oulis." The middle word, *iatromantis*, has two roots: *iatro* = healer and *mantis* = prophecy. The last word is, of course, Apollo. In other words, this line of Oulis healers were priests of Apollo, god of healing, and healed through prophecy, that is, by letting the divinity speak through them.

What does all this have to do with Parmenides? In September of 1962, Mario Napoli found in the same building where the Oulis inscriptions had been found a marble base for bust. It was of similar stone and, in letters of a similar style, bore the inscription [PdP 1966, p 330]

Πα[ρ]μενειδης Πυρητος
Ουλιαδης φυσικος

Parmeneides son of Pyres
Ouliadês physikos



Parmenides

The Ουλιαδης was clearly intended to tie Parmenides to the Oulis priest-physicians; they claimed him as one of them. The absence of a year may well mean that he was regarded as the founder of the line. What did the *physicos* mean? Some thought it meant "physicist" or one concerned with the ultimate nature of reality. Some thought it meant "physician," and a recent discovery near Vallo supports that reading. Presumably both were right, for Parmenides was all of that.

Not far from where the inscriptions were found, Napoli found a statue of Asklepios clearly identified by the serpent rising up the edge of his garment on his left. A headless feminine statue was found, presumably Hygieia, goddess of health. Close by there was also found an idealized head of a philosopher. Microanalysis of the connecting surface of the head and the base for Parmenides has now shown that they definitely belong together. Unlike the head of Oulis son of Euxinus, which is clearly a portrait of a particular man, the head of Parmenides shows what the sculptor thought a sage should look like.



One may, of course, object that these dream healers may have simply appropriated Parmenides for their own purposes. But it is also quite possible that they honestly continued a tradition going back to Parmenides. Thus, it is at least worth considering the possibility of seeing Parmenides as a prophet dream healer. If he were, then from first-hand experience, he knew not only the way into the spiritual worlds but the essence of those worlds. What distinguishes him from the countless other priests is that he *thought* about those experiences and tried to convey the result in a logically way. Perhaps he would have said that the goddess thought within him. But it those thoughts which he tries to convey in the sections “Truth” and “Opinion.”

The fragments of “Truth”, though fairly extensive, do not come to us in any particular order. Scholars have tried to arrange them in a sensible order and have produced several. The one they usually put first is one of the most puzzling because the goddess uses the verb “is” without a subject. What must always be the subject of “is”? A being. And if none is named, then is must be Being itself.

*Asklepios of
Velia*

If a divinity whispered the secret of existence to us, would we understand it? It would surely be infinitely simple and infinitely profound. It might be something like, “Being is.” Or to go a little further, “Being is and is accessible to your thinking. You can participate in the fundamental Being of the world with your thinking.” Here then is my translation of what the goddess says to Parmenides in Fragment 2, with “Being” inserted as the subject of “is.”

Come now, I will tell -- and you listen and carry away my story --
What routes of inquiry alone there are for thinking.
One holds: Being is and Non-being is not.
On it, persuasion attends upon Truth.
The other holds: Being is not and cannot be.
That I point out to you is a path utterly inscrutable,
For you cannot know nor point to what is not.

Do you think that is obvious? Many think it not only not obvious but false. Perhaps with Kant they argue that we cannot know the “thing itself” for between it and our thinking are our sense organs. Perhaps they argue with the nominalists that all we know are names, not realities. Perhaps they merely echo Pilate’s cynical question, “What is Truth?”

All of these views amount to the second path, which might also be phrased, “Knowledge is not and cannot be.” The goddess points out to Parmenides that this path is self-contradictory. Take the Kantian argument for example. If we cannot know anything external to our minds because we can access it only through our sense organs, how do we know that we have sense organs or that they are the only way we can know the world?

So far, however, the goddess has said nothing about thinking and knowing. That comes in Fragment 3:

... το γαρ αυτο νοειν εστιν τε και ειναι

To understand this succinct and isolated fragment correctly, one needs to recall that the verb νοειν, usually translated “to think,” in early Greek had the sense of “to know the truth of a situation through instant apprehension.” The syntax is puzzling; here are several recent translations:

... for the same thing can be thought as can be. (Kirk and Raven)
... because the same thing is there for thinking and for being. (Gallop)
... for what exists for thinking, and being, are one and the same (Kingsley)
... for the same thing can be thought and can exist (Taran)
... denn dass man es erkennt, ist dasselbe, wie dass es ist. (Mannsfield)

The sense is that our perceptive thinking can participate in the being of the world. We are not cut off and isolated. There is a reality, and we can participate in it through our perceptive thinking. This Being, this Reality, is continuous, everywhere, a oneness, as Parmenides illustrates in Fragment 4:

Look upon things which, though far off, are yet firmly present to the mind;
For you cannot cut off Being from fast-clinging Being
Since Being neither disperses itself in some order
Nor gathers itself together.

In the second century, some 600 years after Parmenides, Diogenes Laertius reports that Amenias, a Pythagorean, led Parmenides to practice ὀσυχία, inner stillness or contemplation. Perhaps it is this stillness, closely akin to the practice of the dream healers, which allowed him to experienced this Oneness of Being and hear the goddess. She continues (Fragment 6) with her opinion of that ordinary thinking that on the one hand supposes that we cannot really know true Being, but on the other continually acts as if we do.

χρή τί λεγειν τε νοειν τ' εον εμμεναι εστι γαρ ειναι
One must say and think Being to be, for indeed [it] is to be.
Nonbeing is not; be clear about that.
You shall begin⁵ from that first route of inquiry
And then also from this one, on which mortals, knowing nothing,
Wander, two-headed, for helplessness in their
Breasts guides their distracted mind; and they are all carried,
Deaf and blind alike, dazed, uncritical tribes,
Believing that Being and Nonbeing are both the same
And not the same, on a path that goes nowhere.

Fragment 7:

For never can it be forced to happen that what is not is.
On the contrary, hold back your thought from this route of inquiry
Nor let habit force you along this much-experienced route
To ply an aimless eye and ringing ear
And tongue; but judge with reason (λογος) the much-contested disproof
Which I have spoken.

5 The word meaning “You shall begin” is not in the manuscripts; editors usually supply a Greek verb that means “I hold you back.” The result seems to me to be nonsense, since the goddess wants Parmenides to explore both the ways of Truth and of Opinion, as indicated by supplying a verb that means “you shall begin.”

So far you may well have been wondering why Parmenides is regarded as the father of logical argument. The grounds are in Fragment 8:

It remains only to describe the route of Being.
Along this way there are many, many signs that it is birthless and deathless,
Whole, *sui generis*, steadfast, without end.
Nor was it once, nor will it come to be, for it is now, all together.
One and continuous. For from what could Being come into being?
And how could it grow? I won't let you say or think
"From what is not," for "what is not"
Is not. And what could have made it grow
Later rather than sooner if it began from nothing?
Thus, it must be completely, or not at all.
Neither could Persuasion allow that it came into being out of
Non-being alongside it. And therefore Justice does not allow
Being to come to be nor to perish; rather, she holds it fast.
....
Thus coming to be is extinguished and perishing is unheard of.

The power of Parmenides's argument tends to get lost in translating the poetic verse in which it was expressed. Put in more modern way, he argues,

Being could not come into being, for what could it come from? Not from NonBeing, for
NonBeing doesn't exist, and not from Being, for if it did, then Being already existed.
Being cannot perish, or cease to be. (Parmenides leaves the proof to the reader as an exercise.)

In the next passage he will argue:

Being is one and continuous. What could separate it? Only NonBeing, but NonBeing does not exist.

Being is motionless. Whither could it move? Only to where NonBeing is, but NonBeing is not.

Fragment 8 continues:

And also, there is no dividing it, for it is all alike.
There is nothing more here that could stop it from holding together with itself
Or less there. But all of it is full of being, So it is that
Everything is continuous with everything because
Being draws near to being. And what's more: it is motionless
In the bonds of great fetters it has no beginning or end
Because creation and destruction have wandered far, far away.
And True and Persuasive evidence is what has driven them out.
It stays just the same, in the same unaltered state,
Lies by itself on its own and so remains constantly where it is.
For mighty Necessity holds it fast in the fetters of a bond that shuts it in
From all around; and this is why it is not right for it to be incomplete
For there nothing that it wants or lacks.

But non-being would lack everything.

(Translation of Peter Kingsley, *Reality*, p. 171)

If you come at these arguments abstractly, they seem like the emptiest of tautologies. But if you have once experienced *oneness* with the spiritual worlds and with their manifestations in nature, then they become a wonderful expression of a most powerful feeling: *Being is!*

Parmenides clearly recognized not only a world of the senses but behind it a world perceptible by thought. If we throw a stone, our senses show us the stone in flight, our thinking shows us the parabola it follows. We tend to suppose that the “ethereal” parabola of our thought and the heavy stone are two different things. Therefore we are willing to admit, with Kant, that we cannot know *die Ding an sich*, the thing in itself. We come to suppose that we cannot *participate* in the being of the world with our thinking. The goddess tells Parmenides that there mortals go astray; at the end of the passage on Truth, she says, [Frag 8, lines 50-59]

Here I stop my trustworthy speech to you and thought
About truth; from here onwards learn mortal beliefs,
Listening to the deceitful ordering of my words;
For they [i.e. mortals] established *two forms* in their minds for naming,
Of which it is not right to name one -- wherein they have gone astray –
And they distinguished opposites in body and established signs
Apart from one another: here, on the one hand, ethereal fire of flame,
Which is gentle, very light, everywhere the same as itself,
But not the same as the other; but on the other hand, that one too by itself
In contrast, dark night, a dense and heavy body.

She is contrasting, it seems clear, thought and physical bodies. Mortals separate them and thereby go astray. They should recognize that it is not the nature of the world that makes the separation but only our way of knowing. In the view of the goddess, as we have seen [Frag 3]:

...το γαρ αυτο νοειν εστι τε και ειναι

Thinking *can* participate in being.

I should add that a lot has been written about Parmenides by those who profess no awareness of the oneness. The existing translations are made, it seems to me, often without an understanding of the experience he is trying to convey. It has been often asserted, for example, that he denied the possibility of change or of motion. But we have seen that this denial is of change or motion of Being itself, not to be confused with objects. Ask yourself Does anything change as the moon waxes and wanes or as Venus leaves the evening sky for the morning? You will probably answer, “Yes, at a superficial level; but no, not at a more profound level.” Parmenides would take you further along that route to recognize coherence in apparent change. And to realize our capacity to participate in the *being* of the world.

5. Velia in Roman Times

Between 438 and 424, the Italic people of the inland, the Lucani (or Leucani), a branch of the Samnites, captured all the Greek cities of the coast except Velia. In 387, it was allied with Rome against

Dionysius of Syracuse. Livy recounts briefly the capture of the town by the Romans about 300 BC (book 10, chapters 44-45). Since he says that it was taken in a single day, one may well imagine that it was taken more by diplomacy than by siege. Livy also speaks of the town as belonging to the Samnites; since it was certainly still Greek speaking, it is more likely that it merely had some association with the Samnites which it was happy enough to transfer to the Romans. In 275, after the Romans defeated the Samnites, Velia concluded a treaty of alliance with Rome. From the archeological evidence, this alliance ushered in a period of prosperity and monumental building. The city, however, remained Greek-speaking well down into the Roman empire. Velia became a Roman municipality in 88 BC. It supplied Greek-speaking priestesses for the temple of Ceres in Rome. Marcus Brutus, of "*Et tu, Brute*", had a villa in Velia, which he used as a base following the assassination of Caesar. Cicero knew the town well, met Brutus there, and mentions it frequently in his letters. Antonius Musa, physician to Augustus and other prominent Romans, recommended cold water treatments at Velia to Horace. Horace wrote (in verse) to a friend asking how the weather and food were in Velia. We have the letter, but what the answer was and whether he took the recommended cure we know not. Strabo, writing at about the same time, mentions Elea's fame for Parmenides, but says that the town was in his time reduced to fishing and drying of fish. The silting up of the port and the disappearance of the two off-shore islands which had sheltered it contributed to its further decline.

The first site Christian worship in Velia was probably the *domus* of the rich and powerful *gens Gavina*. What are thought to be the ruins were found in 1962 near the entrance to the excavations. Gavius commanded the Roman fleet against the Britons in 370 and brought back what he had been told and believed to be the body of St. Matthew the Evangelist and placed it in his house in Velia. During the first half of the 5th century, a little basilica was built where, under the altar, were placed the remains of the saint. This soon became the goal of pilgrimages from all of the Greek-Byzantine world and was probably the origin of the Greek-Italian monasticism in the Cilento. The first recorded bishop of Velia was Agnellus near the end of the 6th century.

6. From Barbarians to the Present⁶

Visigoths, Vandals, Ostrogoths

After their sack of Rome in 410, the Visigoths of Alaric headed south, sacking as they went. They seem to have reached Paestum, where, discouraged by the wall and by the rugged terrain along the coast, they turned inward along the course of the Sele, Calore, and Tanagro. Their intent was to move down the Bussento and then sack Velia from the south. But Alaric died en route; legend says they diverted a river, buried him in the river bed, and then turned the river back into its bed, thus protecting forever his tomb. In any event, when they were met by their fleet at the mouth of the Bussento, they headed off to Africa and the Cilento was spared.

But the reprieve was not for long. The Vandals under Gaiseric moved down through Spain into Africa, where they took Hippo in 431 after a two-year siege in which the bishop, Augustine, died. In 439 they took Carthage and began raiding the coast of Sicily and southern Italy. In 455 they sacked Rome with a thoroughness that has made their name synonymous with senseless destruction. Many of the inhabitants of southern Italy were captured and sold as slaves. Licosa, Erculum, Sapri, Velia, and Bussento were sacked between 440 and 460. The first three went out of existence; Velia and Bussento, organizing themselves around their bishops, survived at the margins of existence. In 475, Romulus Augustus, who was to be the last emperor in the west, recognized Sicily as Vandal territory in return for the Vandals stopping their raiding in Italy. The next year, Romulus surrendered to the Herulian chief Odovacer at Ravenna and the Roman Empire in the West came to an end.

The Herulians never came further than Salerno before Odovacer was defeated by Theodoric, chief of the Ostrogoths in 493. Theodoric admired the best of what Rome had been, and his rule until his death in 526 brought some measure of peace to the peninsula. Velia enjoyed a brief period of prosperity. We know, in particular, that its shippers (*navicularii*) carried grain for the new rulers from the Vallo di Diano where it was abundant to Gaul where there was famine. And the relics of St. Matthew continued to attract pilgrims.

Byzantines

In 533, Justinian, the new emperor in Constantinople, as part of his dream to re-establish the empire in all its glory, dispatched his general Belisarius to retake Africa and Italy. He was quickly successful in North Africa, but in Italy the “Gothic War” dragged on twenty years. Belisarius would win, be recalled by Justinian and replaced by incompetents, the Goths would reorganize, drive out the Byzantines, and Justinian would send Belisarius back and the cycle would begin again. Ultimately, the Byzantines won, but country was utterly destroyed. Rome, once a city of a million, was reduced to 40,000.



Chapel of the Virgin Odogitria (author's photo)

⁶ This section draws heavily on Amedeo La Greca, *Appunti de Storia del Cilento* (Centro di Promozione Culturale per il Cilento, Acciaroli, 2001). Will Durant's *Story of Civilization* and other standard sources were used for the political history of Naples.

A Greek invasion of the Cilento of an altogether different sort began in the 5th century. Monks and other faithful who came to shrine of St. Matthew in Velia found the country sparsely inhabited and stayed. Many who had come as military chaplains during the Gothic war remained as settlers. They sought to lead a life of prayer, meditation, and study. Some were married and lived in small groups; some chose a celibate life and lived in huts connected with one another by narrow paths. All refused to bear arms. One of their early centers was around the chapel of the Virgin Odigitria (Odigitria – a guide or one who points out the way) built by the Greek monks on the south side of the acropolis of Velia, just below the summit.

Lombards

After a scant 13 years of peace, in 568 a people who claimed to come from Scandinavia invaded Italy from the north. The Italians called them Longobardi -- long beards -- from which the English “Lombards” comes. They quickly swept down Italy as far as Benevento. At first, the coastal areas, including Velia, remained Byzantine. But in the course of a century the Lombards penetrated south through the interior river valleys, then to the coast via the Bussento, and then struck north taking the Byzantine fortress of Lucania on Monte Cilento, now called Monte Stella, just north of Velia. From there, they took Velia about 670.

These Lombards were Arian Christians and gave no allegiance to the pope. They were, however, new to any type of Christianity, and the northern gods, warlike figures like Wotan and Thor, remained alive in their souls. One of the signs of this continuity was the rise of the cult of the warrior Archangel Michael in their territories. Up until Lombard times, the Archangel had hardly been noticed in Christian worship. His earliest appearances at Gargano were later placed at the end of the fifth century, but the earliest references to them all come from later, Lombard times and Lombard areas.

The Byzantines held onto Agropoli and Paestum and a strip of coastline. But in the 8th century, a new invader arrived from the sea, the Saracens. At first, the Byzantine duke of Naples welcomed their help against the Lombards and gave them bases at Camerota and Licosa. The alliance was short-lived, and in 846 the Saracens launched their first drive for Naples. Agropoli and Bussento fell, and even Lucania, the bastion on Monte Cilento (Monte Stella) fell in 879. When Agropoli fell, the bishop in Paestum moved inland to Capaccio. Soon the Saracens were threatening Rome. In 882, however, the Christians rallied under the bishop of Naples and drove the Saracens out of their base on Vesuvius. They withdrew to Agropoli, where they constructed a *ribat*, a bridgehead, and raided and plundered, putting an end to a number of villages. The Christian counter offensive continued. Bussento was recaptured, fortified, and renamed Policastro – fortified city. In 915, Pope John X took personal command of an army that dealt the Saracens a bloody defeat at Garigliano. They took refuge in Agropoli, but in the night between June 23 and 24, they sallied forth for one last nocturnal raid on exhausted Paestum, then turned south, joined up with the Saracens of Licosa and Camerota, sacked Policastro, and sailed away to north Africa. From there, they continued sporadic raids on the coast but never again occupied territory in Italy. In 929, the Lombards took control of the last Byzantine territory in the Cilento.

The rest of the tenth century was a relatively peaceful time that saw a modest economic revival. Much of the population of the Cilento remained Greek-speaking, followed the Greek rite in worship, and lived in monastic communities dedicated to a simple life and spiritual growth. As before, some of these communities were celibate, but many of them were groups of married couples with children.

The economic revival that then began in the tenth century is evidenced in a curious way. Amid the turmoil of the Lombard and Saracen invasions, the presumed body of St. Matthew at Velia was almost

completely forgotten. With the return of peace, a monk of the area, one Atthanasius, went looking for it and believed – or at least claimed – that he found it. Twice he tried to sail away with it to the east to sell it at great profit. But he was driven back by contrary winds and came to believe that it was God’s will that it should remain in the Velia area. He hid the body near the mouth of the Alento where he and his mother lived as anchorites. But the bishop of Capaccio got wind of the discovery and ordered the monk to hand over the body to him. With much festivity, the body was moved to Capaccio; but the prince in Salerno learned of what was happening and sent an abbot to bring the body to Salerno. It arrived May 6, 954 and was placed in the church of the Virgin Odogitria. In the next century, the Normans erected the great cathedral which stands today. It is dedicated to the evangelist and in it are venerated the remains of this body. The economic relevance of this story is that it describes a country at peace, capable of such festivities and processions and soon of building an imposing cathedral. On the other hand, the name “Velia” is no longer mentioned in these or subsequent medieval documents relating to the place. The memory of the Greek and Roman city had vanished from the memory of the local people.

Normans (1077 - 1189)

The year 1000 saw some degree of peace and prosperity in the Cilento under the Lombard prince of Salerno Guaimario III. The city was known throughout Europe for its celebrated medical school. In 1001, some forty Normans – Norsemen who had settled in Normandy in what is now France – were passing through Salerno on their way home from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land when the city was attacked in a Saracen raid. The Normans came to the rescue. The prince much appreciated their valor, covered them with gifts and urged them to return. He even sent agents to Normandy to recruit soldiers. In 1054, Guaimario IV of Salerno was assassinated by agents of the nearby city of Amalfi. His brother, Guido Duke of Sorrento,



La Capella Palatina, chapel of the medieval court.

with the aid of Normans under the command of the brothers Umfredo and William d’ Hauteville, reestablished Guaimario’s son Gisulfo II on throne. Gisulfo, however, made the enormous mistake of not giving the Normans the recompense due them. They stormed into his lands and occupied a large part of them between 1053 and 1054. They then proceeded to build a number of castles including the one whose ruins stand on the hill of Velia. It was referred to, however, as Castellammare della Bruca, for Velia, as already noted, had been forgotten. The whole area from about halfway between Paestum and Salerno down almost to Policastro was organized as a Norman duchy under William as a vassal of his older brother Umberto, Duke of Apulia. It looked like it would soon be all over for Gisulfo. But then in 1057 Umberto died and was succeeded by a younger brother, Robert Guiscard. William refused allegiance to Robert and allied himself with Gisulfo by marrying Gisulfo’s sister Sichelgaita.

Gisulfo also allied himself strongly with the Pope and began pressing the Latin rite on the churches in his area which had remained largely Greek. He made, and encouraged others to make generous gifts of estates to the recently founded Benedictive monastery at Cava just north of Salerno near where today the railroad and autostrada cut through the mountain chain that makes the Amalfi peninsula.

Meanwhile, Robert Guiscard made no secret of his designs on the lands of the Pope, and the Pope replied by excommunicating him. In 1076 – a date easily remembered by its relation to another Norman conquest ten years earlier – in answer to pleas by the citizens of Amalfi for protection against Gisulfo, Robert laid siege to Salerno with an army composed of Greeks, Saracens, and Normans. The city held out for nearly a year, but fell in the summer of 1077. Four centuries of Lombard rule in southern Italy were at an end.

Under the Normans, feudalism after the French fashion, with baronies and fiefdoms, was spread into these lands of free men who knew nothing of vassals, fiefs, and serfdom. In addition to the lay baronies, the abbey at Cava grew so rich in lands that it constituted almost a separate barony interpenetrating the others.

Up until this point, Southern Italy had been the relatively richer and more prosperous part of the peninsula. The institution of feudalism by the Normans with its consequent long-term sapping of initiative and responsibility is often seen as the beginning of the relative backwardness of the South. This effect, however, was outweighed in the short term by the improved defenses against Saracen raids.

Even before the fall of Salerno, the Normans had begun the construction of watch towers along the coast. The first, built about 1041, was at Paestum. Others followed at points well situated for watching possible landing points: San Marco di Agropoli, Tresino, Licosa, Acciaroli, Velia, Ascea, Polinuro, and San Giovanni a Piro, almost to Policastro. Most of these were isolated towers; the one at Velia, however, was within the castle.

This effective defensive system encouraged, of course, agriculture, the clearing of new land, establishment of communities, and with them, of building churches by lay people. The construction of the chapel of San Quirico on the acropolis at Velia, just above the theater, belongs to this period; it is first mentioned in 1144, having been built using materials from an earlier Greek edifice.

The Swabians (1189 - 1266)

In 1152, in Germany, Frederick I, "Barbarossa," from the Swabian town of Hohenstaufen, was elected Holy Roman Emperor. He took seriously the idea that he was the successor of Augustus and Charlemagne and had himself crowned emperor in Rome in 1155. He made five campaigns to Italy to give reality to his claims to rule the country. His son Henry VI married Constance d'Hauteville, posthumous daughter of the Norman King Roger II. William II, the Norman king but without heir, designated his aunt Constance to succeed him. Her son by Henry, therefore, inherited both the Norman kingdom and the Holy Roman Empire. This son, Frederick II, was emperor from 1212 to 1250. Known as *stupor mundi* (Wonder of the World), he was an excellent linguist, scientist, poet, administrator, and general. The popes, however, were alarmed at being surrounded on both north and south by Hohenstaufen power; when Frederick was having trouble with Lombard league of cities in northern Italy in 1237, the pope excommunicated him. He replied by seizing the papal estates. The pope fled to France and declared Frederick deposed. Frederick died with his position against the league still insecure. His natural son, Manfred, took control of the government while his heir, Conrad, came from Germany. There were numerous rebellions against Manfred. Conrad arrived, but immediately died of malaria. The pope took this opportunity to invite Louis IX of France to become King of Sicily and southern Italy. Louis declined, but allowed his brother Charles of Anjou to accept.

The Angevins (1266 - 1441)

Charles marched south with 30,000 men and defeated Manfred, who was killed in the battle at Benevento in 1266. The Germans sent Frederick's 15-year-old grandson Conradin to reclaim the

kingdom. But he was defeated by Charles and beheaded on a market square in Naples. Charles put the French in charge of the court, the army, and the church. At first, he wooed the local nobility by restoring fiefs to their heirs, but it soon became apparent that the new overlords were worse than the Swabians in exacting tribute and forced loans. In Sicily, French arrogance led to a bloody but successful revolt against Charles in 1282 known as the Sicilian Vespers; Palermo then called in a king from Aragon, Peter III, whose wife was a Hohenstaufen. The Aragonese mercenaries, the Almugavari, quickly took Sicily and soon crossed the straits into Calabria and headed north. The Angevins responded with a campaign of fortification that built many of the towers and castles that dot the area today. They fortified the entrances to all the rivers of the Cilento, the Bussento, Lambra, Mingrado, Alento, and Calore and towns along the coast as well as on the routes leading inland. The final form of the castle on the Acropolis at Velia is from this period.

But all in vain. The Almugavari took Policastro, at the southern end of the Cilento coastline, in 1285; they swept north taking Molpa, Camerota, Agropoli, and Castelabate. But then the Angevins struck back and retook all these towns. The battle then surged back and forth with great destruction. Even the great fortress on Monte Stella was destroyed never to be rebuilt. Towns changed hands frequently, and both navies raided the coastal towns whenever they needed victuals. By the time a truce was signed in 1302, the population of the Cilento was reduced to a quarter of its size twenty years earlier.

The Aragonese soldiers, finding themselves then unemployed, took up piracy against the Cilento area, which they knew well, from bases in Spain. And if foreign piracy was not enough, we know of three ship owners in Amalfi who bound themselves together to attack ships off the coast of the Cilento and to share the spoils. Angevin administration could hardly have been worse. History has preserved one complaint of horrible, abusive mismanagement that received a bureaucratic answer after twenty years! Outlaws operated openly. In 1357, for example, at Castelabate, a guardian of the fortress who had lost his job employed the bandit Nicola Vulture of Rocca Cilento. Nicola and his gang scaled the walls of the castle, took the abbot prisoner, forced him to sign a document with various concessions, including giving the command of the castle to Nicola. (This story has, however, a proper medieval end: after a few years, Nicola repented, became a monk at Cava, and gave that abbey all his possessions.) The desperation of the population is illustrated by an incident in 1352. A Venetian ship was blown off course and ran aground on the beach at Velia. The inhabitants of the area ran quickly to the ship to sack it of its cargo of wine, honey, woolen clothes and arms. They then proceeded to demand a ransom for the captain. He managed to escape back to Venice and persuaded the Doge to intervene on his behalf with the queen of Naples to get restitution. The queen agreed and sent two different expeditions to extract recompense. Neither had the least success.

This queen was Joanna I. From this time until the unification of Italy, the political history of the Cilento is the political history of the Kingdom of Naples, or as it is sometimes called, the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. Because we need to refer to this history to understand what was happening in the Cilento proper, we will have to review the comings and going on the throne of Naples. The throne had passed uneventfully from Charles I (1268-1285) to his son Charles II (1285-1309), and on to his son Robert (1309-1343) known as The Wise, largely because he was a patron of scholars who saw to it that he was well remembered. Robert had no sons, so on his death, his daughter Joanna I became queen at age 18. When she did not have children, she blamed her husband and had him killed in 1345. One group of the nobility then urged the late husband's brother, king of Hungary and a distant Angevin relative, to come and avenge his brother's murder. He came and the whole kingdom of Naples was involved in a bloody and damaging civil war between factions, ending with the Hungarian king's

departure. Meanwhile, Joanna had married again, but when there were still no children, the second husband died in mysterious circumstances. When a third husband failed to produce children, Joanna adopted an Angevin relative, Charles Duke of Durazzo (in Albania), as her son and successor, but on soon falling out with him, she adopted Louis of Anjou, brother of the King of France. When she died in 1382, there was yet another war. Tomasso Sanseverino, the dominant feudal lord of the Cilento, supported Louis. So when Charles won, he promptly invaded the Cilento to take direct possession of the Sanseverino lands. He was repulsed and had to return to Tomasso the lands he had won. Charles died in 1386, and, learning of his rival's death, Louis arrived in Naples in 1390 – amid much celebrating organized by Sanserverino – to take over the kingship. Charles widow, however, aiming to safeguard her son Ladislao's claim to the crown, secretly called together the other barons and had them attack the Cilento to punish Sanseverino. The attack was unsuccessful, but four years later Ladislao, having come of age, raised a large army with the pope's help, took control of Naples, killed eleven supporters of the Sanseverini and fed their bodies to dogs. Ladislao was succeeded by his sister Joanna II, who, having no children, adopted Alfonso of Aragon but, suspecting that he was plotting to displace her, disowned him and adopted René of Anjou. Needless to say, when she died in 1435, these two went to war to become king of Naples. By 1442, Alfonso was the victor.

The Aragonese (1442 - 1504)

Alfonso liked Naples so well that he turned over the rule of Aragon to his brother and moved to Naples. Almost immediately, in 1443, he eliminated all old taxes but established a new one, the *focatico*, of one ducat per year per family, or more literally, per hearth (*focus* in Latin). This tax remained in force for 298 years. To establish how much tax was due from each area, a census was taken and repeated every 15 years. The results of these censuses are a fundamental source for the history of the region. While the one ducat was a substantial amount, the simplicity of the tax was appreciated by the poor. Other taxes were imposed principally on the merchants. Alfonso was a popular, well-liked king; he walked about Naples unarmed, unguarded, and unharmed. He also caught the humanist spirit of the times and employed a troop of scholars, poets, and artists, who conferred on him the epithet of The Magnanimous. Having no legitimate children, he was succeeded (1458) by his putative illegitimate son Ferdinand I, called Ferrante – putative because his mother was not be sure who his father was.

Ferrante's ambiguous paternity and certain illegitimacy opened the way for Angevin claims on the throne, but with support of Francesco Sforzo of Milan and Cosimo de' Medici of Florence, and over the opposition of Pope Innocent V, Ferrante won out. In a long reign until his death of natural causes in 1494, he employed tactics – including killing his guests at a wedding banquet – that mark him as one of the most cunning and unscrupulous of princes. His oldest son, Alfonso, succeeded him but died almost immediately, as did Alfonso's son, Ferdinand II. The throne then went back a generation to Ferrante's second son, who became Federigo III.

At this point, Charles VIII of France decided to reassert Angevin rights to the crown of Naples. With an army of 12,000 infantry and 18,000 cavalry he moved south in March of 1494. He had been granted passage through Milan; Piero de' Medici rushed out to meet him to surrender Florence and allow passage through Tuscany. Charles paraded half of his army through Florence and continued south. The Borgia pope, Alexander VI, let him pass through Latium, and so he arrived at and took Naples without resistance on February 22, 1495. He clearly liked the place and was prepared for a long stay in paradise, when he learned that the pope, and other northern princes were raising a large army to cut him off and destroy him. On May 21, he left Naples in the hands of a cousin and headed north with an army of 10,000. Near Parma, an indecisive battle was fought with the Italians. Charles got back to France with his skin, but realized that he could not hold Naples. The Spanish captain Gonzalo of

Córdoba, put Federigo III back on the throne.

In 1502, however, Charles's cousin and successor, Louis XII, decided to try again. In secret negotiations with Ferdinand of Aragon (the Ferdinand of Ferdinand and Isabella) Louis worked out a deal to split up the lands of Ferdinand's close relatives. They would unite to conquer Sicily and the Kingdom of Naples. Then Naples and Campania would go to Louis while Sicily, Calabria, and Apulia would go to Ferdinand. The invasion went according to plan; Federigo was easily overthrown. But when the two allied armies met, they began squabbling and then openly fighting over the exact division of the spoils. At first the French were winning and had the Spanish bottled up in one city. But then the Spanish got the upper hand and, led by the same Gonzalo, drove the French completely out. Louis was able to save face by marrying a French princess to Ferdinand (Isabella was deceased) and giving her Naples as a dowry.

Our sources for understanding the economic life of the Cilento gradually become more extensive in this period. We know, for example, that every year in June, July, and August thousands of farm workers migrated from the Cilento across the mountains to mow and harvest in Apulia. Their earnings allowed them to pay taxes and buy the grain, especially barley, necessary for the two annual bread bakings, namely at Christmas and Easter. The baking would be done in communal ovens; the use of the ovens was free, but the user had to supply the wood for fuel. The bread would be toasted and preserved in wooden barrels, somewhat in style of the American cracker barrel. Sometimes, the communities would have money enough to pay the *focatio*; more frequently they would pay in kind, sending to Naples wine, olive oil, and salt fish. Other exports included silk, cotton, dried figs, wild oranges, salt pork, sausage, and terra cotta utensils. Accounting records that come down to us suggest that the agents who loaded and unloaded the boats made high profits.

The mention of silk in the above list may have been surprising. Legend says the silk cocoons were brought back from China in the staff of a missionary. By the fifteenth century, raw silk was a major product of the Cilento, where labor was cheap and the mulberry tree grew well.

While the new styles in painting and architecture that were appearing in Florence did not spread at once into Naples and the Cilento, both Alfonso the king and the Sanseverini, the feudal lords of the Cilento, were great patrons of the arts and there are many fine works in older styles to be found in the Cilento.

We have mentioned several waves of Greek immigration into the Cilento. The last came in an unusual way in these years. At the time of the overthrow of the eastern Roman empire by the Turks in 1453, the thirteen-year-old Roger Paleologos, legal heir to the throne of Constantinople, was living in San Mauro on the western slopes of Monte Stella, where he was held in pleasant conditions as hostage guaranteeing the treaty of non-aggression between the Empire and Naples. When the Empire fell, he went on living in San Mauro, where he became quite prosperous in the production of olives. Many wealthy Greek families fled Constantinople and followed him to San Mauro.

The Spanish (1504 - 1705) and Austria (1705 - 1734)

For the next two centuries, from the time of Ferdinand until 1705, the Kingdom of the Naples and Sicily remained just an appendage of Spain. There was a Spanish viceroy resident in Naples but not a king. To distinguish this line from the previous Aragonese line, this later period is referred to as Spanish. Ferdinand and Isabella married their daughter and only child, Joanna, to Philip, a Hapsburg, and thus this Austrian house became the rulers of Spain, Naples, Sicily, and Milan. The first Hapsburg ruler of Spain and Naples was Charles (1516 -1546), who was soon called to be not only king of Spain but ruler of the Hapsburg empire, as Charles V. An energetic monarch, he devoted forty years to

seemingly ceaseless wars, mostly with France but also in North Africa, before abdicating and retiring to a monastery. The Spanish crown passed to his son Philip II (1556 - 1598), remembered by the English for the great Armada they destroyed in the English Channel. The sixteenth century was definitely the highpoint of Spanish influence, wealth, and prosperity. Philip III (1598-1621) was mainly interested in the Church; Philip IV (1621 - 1665) was an amiable prince uninterested in running the state. Charles II (1665 - 1700) came to the throne at age four. During most of his reign, Spain was engaged in conflicts with France, but nonetheless, as he was dying childless, he willed his kingdom to his great nephew Philip of Anjou, grandson of Louis XIV of France. Needless to say, there were other claimants; and a war, known as the War of the Spanish Succession, broke out between Austria and France. In 1707, the Austrians occupied Naples. In 1713, Philip of Anjou was recognized by the Austrians as Philip V, King of Spain, the first of the Bourbon line, while Spain ceded Naples and Sardinia to Austria and Sicily to Savoy. In 1720, Austria and Savoy swapped Sicily for Sardinia, so that Austria now controlled Naples and Sicily. In 1734, however, Charles of Bourbon, duke of Parma and Piacenza in northern Italy, took advantage of the War of the Polish Succession, in which Austria was deeply involved, to take over southern Italy. In 1735, Austria was forced to cede Naples and Sicily to the Spanish Bourbons on condition that Spain and Naples-Sicily should never have the same king.

In the Cilento, Spanish rule began with a smallpox epidemic in 1508 that reduced the population of many towns by more than a third. While such epidemics are certainly tragic at the time, the recovery is often a period of prosperity because the land-labor ratio in agriculture has increased and with it, labor productivity in agriculture. Thus, it is not surprising to see evidence of economic revival. Fairs and festivals are one sign of this revival. One of the largest of these was held each year from August 1 to 12 at the spot on the north eastern slopes of Monte Stella now called Mercato di Cilento (Market of the Cilento) precisely because of this Fair. Because it ended at the time of the feast of St. Laurence, August 10, it was called the Fair of St. Laurence. Because of its size, it was felt that the prices prevailing there were fair, so they then became the standard for transactions during the next twelve months. Transactions at those prices were said to be “according to the voice of St. Laurence.” On the evening of August 12, when the fair had closed, there would be a great pilgrimage to the sanctuary of the Madonna della Stella at the highest point of the mountain. Lay and religious alike would walk up the mountain where they would spend three nights at the top. On the third night, August 14, they would build great bonfires at the edge of the little plain at the summit to signal the beginning of the Feast of the Assumption to all those who, for many miles around, can see that peak.

There were many other fairs in the Cilento. The one at Gioi, going back to at least 1228, was especially famous for silk. Arabic, French, Florentine, Siennese, Genovese, and Hebrew merchants would be there. There were others specialized in agricultural products and agricultural equipment.

The fairs, it should be noted, were in the hills, not along the coasts. Danger arrived by sea. Saracen raids intensified and left the coast of the Cilento almost uninhabited. There were, in fact, only three populated coastal areas: Agropoli, Castellammare della Bruca (Velia), and Policastro. In 1489, Agropoli had 246 families; by 1532, they were reduced to 54. Castellammare della Bruca had 140 families in 1489; fugitives from small settlements along the coast to the well-defended castle brought to number up to 161 in 1535, but the raids of the mid century reduced them by about half. In 1532, Policastro still had 164 families; by 1595, only 5 remained. In 1533, a commandant of the Ottoman fleet, Ariodemo, began making a regular practice of not only sacking the coastal towns, where there was not much left to loot, but also penetrating further inland to the hill towns. In 1535, he carried off 500 slaves from a raid at Agropoli. In 1538, the emperor Charles V took note of the problem and made a raid on North Africa, but without positive results. In 1544, Ariodemo was back at Agropoli carrying off more prisoners.

This extremely precarious situation finally induced the viceroy at Naples to plan and begin construction (in 1563) of a major extension of the series of defensive coastal towers. In all, 59 towers were eventually built or restructured along the Cilento coast. They had various functions. Some were “horse towers” where a horse and rider waited to carry news of approaching danger to inland inhabitants and military bases. Some were defensive, heavily armed and capable of protecting those inside. Some were communication towers to keep contact between defensive towers which were not in view of one another.

The best defense, of course, is a good offense. Venice organized a “Christian league” against the Turks and won a great naval victory in 1571 at Lepanto. The news buoyed spirits across Christendom but especially in southern Italy. Piracy was sharply decreased, the resettlement of the coasts began, and the counter-reformation gained momentum. In particular, record keeping on parishioners – births, confirmations, marriages, and deaths – by the churches goes back to this time.

Nearly a century later, these records reveal the path and the damage of the plague that swept through the Cilento in 1656. Borne by the fleas of ships’ rats, it struck first in Naples, and the Spanish authorities tried to prevent its spread by forbidding people to leave the city. But exceptions were made for nobles going to their homes on their country estates. Along their inland routes south came the first outbreaks of the plague. Then it struck where those who came by sea landed, especially Castellammare della Bruca (Velia) and Ascea. The first, like nine other towns, was completely wiped out and never again populated. Its castle remained as a shelter for exiles and outlaws.

The Bourbons (1734 - 1860)

In 1735, the first Bourbon king, Charles IV (1735 -1759), son of Philip V, arrived in Naples as its first resident king in more than two centuries. An active sovereign, he reformed finances and taxation, restricted feudal privilege, reorganized prisons, reduced church wealth and power. He was an enthusiastic supporter of the excavation of Herculaneum (begun in 1738), Pompeii, Stabiae, and the recovery of Paestum (1751). In 1759, Charles was called to be King of Spain, and by the terms of the grant from Austria, he had to give up the crown of Naples. It was left to his son, Ferdinand I (1759 - 1825), who was nine and the time. By the time he was in command of his kingdom, he was much under the influence of his wife, a daughter of Maria Theresia of Austria. She is credited with reducing the influence of Spain and increasing that of Austria in the affairs of Naples. After a Napoleonic interlude (1805 - 1815), during which he fled to Sicily, Ferdinand was restored by the Austrians. He was followed by his son Francis I (1825 - 1830), who in turn was followed by his son Ferdinand II (1830 - 1859), and he, by his son Francis II (1859 -1860). It was Francis II whom Garibaldi overthrew in 1860 to make possible the unification of Italy.

While that recitation of the kingdom passing without conflict through five Bourbon kings over 125 years sounds peaceful enough, these years were anything but tranquil in the Cilento. Initially, the Saracen raids continued. The last one was June 24, 1796 at Marina di Ascea. The pirates arrived the night before and hid in a cove south of Ascea. When, as usual, a large merchant ship left the next morning bearing goods from the Cilento bound for Salerno, the pirates descended. The sailors put up a fierce resistance for three hours, but in the end were overcome and their ship captured. The greatest problem, however, were the bands of brigands who lived in woods but descended into the settled areas plundering houses and leading away cattle. The armed guards sent by the central authorities were often bought off by the brigands, who were also used as agents by the barons. Effective policing had to be organized locally.

The French Revolution had echos in the Cilento. In 1792, the Admiral La Touche arrived in Naples

to ask the recognition of the revolutionary French government by the king. Ferdinand IV didn't want to receive him, but there were mass demonstrations of enthusiastic support by young people. In the next few years, republics were created in Switzerland and Holland and then even in Rome. Ferdinand tried to march to the Pope's rescue, but his troops were stopped, driven back to Naples, and then in the first days of 1799, French troops, supported by local patriots, entered Naples, and on January 23, the *Repubblica partenope* was declared. Even some of the clergy joined in, planting "Liberty Trees", accompanied by singing of the *Te Deum*. A movement to democratize the Cilento began. But at the same time, Cardinal Fabrizio Ruffo went to Calabria and began organizing a counter-campaign to restore the king. His first supporters were the bishops of Policastro and Capaccio in the Cilento. Soon an army was raised, including many of the brigands, to fight for the Holy Faith against the forces of the Republic. After several months of great confusion and civil war, the conservatives won at the battle of Vallo on May 28, 1799. This first attempt at republican government brought only more division and bitterness to the Cilento.

Ferdinand was restored to power in Naples and naturally joined in the alliance against Napoleon. When the alliance was defeated, Naples was occupied by French troops in December of 1805, and Napoleon's brother, Giuseppe, was made king. Ferdinand fled to Sicily. The French immediately moved to eliminate the remnants of feudalism, while from Sicily Ferdinand organized the brigands of the Cilento, supported by the British Navy, into an effective resistance that did not hesitate to employ what today we would call terrorist tactics against the towns of the Cilento. With the defeat of Napoleon by the British in 1815, Ferdinand returned as king to Naples but to a kingdom deeply damaged by civil war.

United Italy

The political history of the Cilento from 1860 to the present is the history of Italy and need not even be summarized here. A good account is found in *Rome, the Biography of a City* by Christopher Hibbert. In the Cilento, progress was slow in the liberal era between unification and the fascist period. The central government contracted for the building of roads, and the contractors built the easy stretches but ran out of funds before building the expensive parts. Outlaws, brigands remained a problem. Land ownership was highly concentrated. Few families owned enough to live from what they could produce on their own property. World War I was followed by hopes of land reform, but little was accomplished. While the fascists eliminated the brigands, landownership remained extremely unequal. In 1934, a mere 21 landowners, out of about 100,000, owned about ten percent of the land.

A few details about the post World War II local history of the Cilento are revealing. In the referendum of June 2, 1946, in which Italy rejected its monarchy and became a republic, the Cilento area voted decisively the other way: 21,236 to change to a republic against 62,168 to retain the monarchy. This vote reflected the influence of the Church in the area. In Agropoli, the Church's position was so open that flyers were distributed in church saying "Monarchy and the Christian religion are a sacred and immutable pair. Whoever defends Religion defends also the Monarchy, which is the crossed breastplate of Religion." The reason for this extreme position was that most of the priests were younger sons of landed nobility. Their influence and position was guaranteed by the Monarchy and threatened by the Republic.

Land ownership remained a crucial issue. A decree of 1944 had authorized the taking of uncultivated land by groups of peasants. Three years went by without any actions in the Cilento, but then in 1947 a number of such occupations began. At first, the landlords mounted an armed opposition; but by the end of the year, about fourteen occupations had been successful. There was even one – but only one – led by a priest. The largest community created in this way had 250 members; the second

largest, 150. Further land reform in the late 1940's had beneficial results in the valley of the Sele, the northwestern corner of the Cilento, but little effect elsewhere.

Poverty was the rule among tenant farmers and workmen. Lack of money made barter common. Traditional crops such as cotton and linen disappeared because of competition from abroad and the new artificial fibers. Mildew destroyed vineyards. The olive fly invaded the area; its bite made the olive oil acidic and unsalable in the new international markets. Among the traditional crops, only dried figs remained exportable.

Emigrants poured out to the rapidly developing industrial triangle in northern Italy (Milan - Turin - Genoa) as well as to Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, the United States, and Mexico. In the late 1950's and early 1960's, some 30 percent of the population left the Cilento. Needless to say, these were the young and enterprising.

In this emergency situation, the Cassa per il Mezzogiorno (Fund for the South), created in the late 1940's, was finally funded and became active. Elementary schools and post offices were built in every town, many roads were paved, and even isolated villages reached by paved roads. By a law of 1963, a middle-school education was to be available for all children. These reforms were not always welcomed by the upper classes, who feared loss of influence and loss of cheap labor. For example, parents were encouraged to put their children to work rather than sending them to school. Local governments were little involved in this progress, and their capacities for managing any sort of change were poorly developed. In the 1960s, population in much of the Cilento was declining.

7. The Consorzio Velia

In this deplorable situation, a spark of hope appeared in 1964. In that year, for the first time ever, there were two slates of candidates for the Council of the Consorzio Irriguo di Miglioramento Fondario di Vallo (the Irrigation Association for the Improvement of Farmland in the Vallo area), hereafter the CIV. The CIV, a public entity, had been in existence many years but had accomplished little. Membership in it, as in many similar associations across Italy, was based on ownership of land. The force behind the new slate of candidates for the Council was a young lawyer by the name of Franco Chirico. He was one five children of a man who had emigrated to New York, worked several years, and come back to the Cilento in the early 1930s to buy a small farm, marry, and raise a family. Franco was born in 1934, studied at the classical high school at Vallo and then at the Catholic University of Milan, graduated in law from the University of Naples, and started a law practice in Salerno. He had read, marked and thoroughly absorbed an Italian translation of *TVA - Democracy on the March* by David E. Lilienthal, a director of the Tennessee Valley Authority from 1933 to 1946. He saw the strategic importance of water for economic development, especially in the Cilento, where there is ample rain in the winter and spring and then none in the summer when it is most needed for crops and for supporting tourism. In the 1960's, water was closely rationed, and there were towns in the Cilento which had to shut off public water supply for up to three days a week



Franco Chirico

during the summer. Clearly, dams were needed. In 1964, Chirico inherited a small piece of land which made him a member of the CIV. That fall, he organized an alternative slate for the Council of the CIV. It was elected, and Chirico was made president. The next forty years proved that he had not only the vision but also the infinite patience and determination necessary to deal with and overcome the hurdles of Italian bureaucracy. Chirico comments, "In Italy, it takes 26 permissions to build a dam."

The first hope was to obtain financing from the Cassa per il Mezzogiorno for a dam. But this was a vain hope, because the Cassa was limited to helping coastal areas and Vallo was considered internal. Chirico needed another instrument and saw it in the Consorzio per Bonifica dell' Alento (CBA). He bought two hectares in Casalvelino that entitled him to be a candidate for the Council of the organization. He was elected, and the CI and the CBA began working closely together. The CIV had the appropriate sites for dams and the CBA had the access to financing. The first project proposed by Chirico was dam on the Carmine, a tributary of the Alento, to be placed about four kilometers northeast of Vallo. Construction started about 1975. In that year, the previous president of the CBA, Francesco Alario, retired and was succeeded by Chirico, who was now president of both the CIV and the CBA. A formal accord and amalgamation took place in 1984 with the combination known as the Consorzio Velia (CV).

In the same year, 1984, construction began on a huge new project which would have far reaching effects on the Cilento: the construction of a major dam on the Alento. It is located in the region of Prignano a few hundred meters above the point where the Alento flows under the modern highway SS 18, and is clearly visible from the highway. Above this point, the Alento has been, in the rainy season, a rushing torrent carrying the rainwater of the west face of Mt. Gelbison, the highest peak in the Cilento. Construction was completed in 1994 with a dam 43 meters high, 420 meters long, and composed of 1.5 million cubic meters of earth. Besides the dam, of course, there is an extensive network of pipelines carrying water to towns and farms farther downstream.

Under Chirico's leadership, the CV went on to construct dams on four more rivers in the Cilento: the Fiumarella (which flows into the sea between Ascea and Velia), the Lambro and Mingardo that reach the sea just south of Cape Palinouro, and the Bussento. In 1999, at the Alento dam, the Iside (Isis) Center was created for the management of the dams and for research on dam management. The lake behind the dam and the area around it have become a tourist attraction with excellent opportunities for boating, fishing, bird watching, and walking. Recently, a golf course has been constructed nearby. Financing from the European Union has been involved in recent projects.

Until 2002, the politicians left the CV alone; but in June of that year, politicians in the government of the Campania Region told Chirico that it was time for him to step aside and turn the CV over to them. They dissolved the organs of government of the CV and sent in a commissioner to run it until new elections could be held, which they were sure they could win. In fact, they were soundly beaten, and Chirico returned with a large majority.

In March of 2003, the area of the CV, originally 6,254 hectares, was enlarged to 81,700 hectares to bring the benefits of its good management to the larger region. Initially, there was some concern that this enlargement might so dilute Chirico's electoral base that he would not win a seat on the Council in the elections of February 2010. Instead, he was chosen by a wide majority. The fact remains, however, that in 2010 he is 76 and a successor needs to be found.

It was mentioned above that Chirico succeeded Francesco Alario as President of the CBA. The association of the two men must have been amicable, because when Alario's daughter, Gaetana, realized that she would die without heirs, she asked Chirico to draw up her will and with her estate

create a foundation, to which she appointed him her representative for his lifetime. That is the origin of the Fondazione Alario in Ascea. Using the estate as a local contribution, Chirico obtained European Union financing for renovation of the Alario Palazzo for modern use and building nearby of a large auditorium, a guest house, and an outdoor theater.

The year-round availability of water has not only benefited agriculture in the Cilento, but has made possible the development of a large tourism industry. So far, it has been primarily a summer industry with magnificent beaches being a main attraction. Someday, presumably, elderly northern Europeans will discover the pleasant warm winters of the Cilento and then return to their homes to enjoy cool summers there.

On December 6, 1991, Italy passed a law providing for the creation of national parks and creating six of them, one being that of the Cilento e Vallo di Diano. The area has magnificent mountains and sea coasts but also many towns, villages, and much cultural heritage. The aim of the park is therefore not to eliminate human habitation within its area but rather to promote activities which build on its traditions, improve its environment, and enhance the enjoyment and appreciation of the cultural heritage. In the



Palazzo Alario, now part of the Fondazione Alario in Ascea Marinal
forefront of that heritage is the archeological park at Velia. Today, it is once again possible to walk the ridge of Velia along the walls built by the Phokaians, breathe the air they breathed, and behold the vistas that led Parmenides to find The One within himself and all Being.

8. The Story of Archeology at Velia⁷

The castle whose ruins now stand on the acropolis of Velia is slightly older than the tower. It was first mentioned in 1144 under the name of *Castellum Maris* (Castle of the Sea) [Velia 1999, p.42]; in 1212 and later it is referred to as Castellammare della Bruca (woods) from the nearby ilex woods. In 1474, about the time that the *Capella palatina* (2010,1100)⁸ was built, the village numbered 350 inhabitants; in 1648, only 60; and around 1670, it was, as we have seen, completely abandoned.

7 This section is based mainly on the article of Giuliana Tocco Sciarelli, "Storia degli scavi e nuove prospettive di ricerca" in Velia 1994.

8 Pairs of numbers in parenthesis are X,Y coordinates on the map at the end of this book. These coordinates are unusual in two respects: (a) the Y axis does not run north-south; rather the line X=2000 lies along the ridge between the temple and the Porta Rosa. and (b) the X coordinates increase to the left instead of to the right. This grid is marked on many recent archeological plans. Unfortunately, archeological writers seldom refer to them in the text, so that it is often impossible to locate on the map places discussed.

[Cerino 1993. p. 29]. Indeed, the exact location of the ancient Velia was forgotten. In 1571 and 1624, authors of books on ancient Italy completely missed the location. The first modern author to locate it correctly was the German Holstenius in 1661, but he had not actually seen it. The first first-hand report was from 1745. A family book records the visit of F. M. Lancilotti to the site in 1788. He saw a fountain with seats and a small "temple" with a vaulted roof with a circular opening in the center. Although he is fairly precise about where they were, it has not been possible to find any trace of them. They were probably destroyed by the proprietor to build a granary. Lancilotti and three other 18th and 19th century explorers of the ruins of Velia record an aqueduct which has not been found. Over these years a number of fragmentary Greek and Latin inscriptions were found and recorded. [Velia 1994, p.147]

In 1883, the French explorer and travel writer Francois Lenormant visited Velia, stayed with Gaetano Ferollo, the proprietor of the tower, ate well, and devoted several pages to Velia in his next book. In 1889, W. Schleuning of the German Archeological Institute, made the first map of the site. Only some of the walls along the ridge were exposed, and in some places the general trace of the walls was visible from the shape of the earth over them.

Modern archeological excavation at Velia began in 1927 with Amedeo Maiuri, who is best known for his work at Pompeii and the *Fora Imperiali* in Rome. He worked on the acropolis (2000,1000) and exposed the foundation of a temple there. He also worked at the "Castelluccio" (1780,2190) at the other end of the wall that ran along the ridge in a northeasterly direction from the tower. Most of this wall, however was covered over with earth, as were the other walls and nearly everything that one now sees in the archeological park except the tower and the medieval walls that rise nearby. The area was planted in olive trees and vineyards. P. Mingazzini, working in the same year on the north-eastern margins of the city, found on one side a road paved with stone and on the other a kiln and Hellenistic house.

We owe to Maiuri a beautiful statement of his fascination with Velia. "Velia will never be the land of great caravans of tourists. But whoever wishes to relive meditatively the Mediterranean adventure of a Greek city of metaphysical philosophers and daring navigators, of the sublimation of thought and of mercantile fortune, in the most austere purity of the Italian soil, he will turn his back on the fertile plain of Paestum and the marvels of its temples and will cross the mountains of the Cilento, ... will descend their gorges and follow the waters of the Alento ... to a deserted plain dominated by an imperious tower surrounded by a crown of olives, to Velia, to the ancient Elea." [cited in Cerino 1993, p. 3]



The area interpreted by Sestieri as the agora but now reinterpreted as an Asklepeion. The structure in the foreground is a fountain. (Author's photo)

After Maiuri, the site lay unworked until Pelligrino Sestieri turned to it in 1949. Between then and 1960, he discovered the sanctuary of *Poseidon Asphaleios* (1990,1300) or Poseidon the Securer or Unshakable, so called from an inscription found on the site. Returning to the acropolis, he found a "polygonal" wall at the southwest (1990,985) and northeast of the temple. This term is applied to walls whose stones are not rectangular but have been cut in irregular polygons to fit with one another. He

also found near (1780, 1380) a large terrace surrounded by a portico, that is, by a space covered with a roof supported by columns. He took it naturally enough to be the agora, or market place. He then moved down to the level area at the base of the hill and found a segment of wall and a gate (1610, 1210) which he called the Porta Marina Sud (South Sea Gate). By a series of probes between the agora and the acropolis, he ascertained that there were buildings in this area also. In 1956, the site was acquired by the state for archeological purposes. In 1960, Sestieri could write that the acropolis had been "almost completely cleared of the modern constructions which hid in large part the foundations of a grandiose temple of the 5th century BC, which was perhaps dedicated to Athena." [Velia 1999, p. 41, n. 19]. Today, a later date for the temple, around 300 BC, seems certain; though there are older and smaller temple foundations near or under the "grandiose" one. The dedication is still quite uncertain, but the best guess at present -- on the basis of a few letters on fragments of pottery found nearby -- would probably be Hera [Velia 1999, p. 51ff]. Sestieri's scant documentation has not endeared him to his successors.

In 1961, Mario Napoli became the Superintendent of Archeology for the Salerno province and laid out a comprehensive research program for Velia. Around (1950,1150), he found an archaic⁹ village built with non-rectangular, polygonal stones, which he therefore called the "polygonal village." On the basis of some pottery, he considered it to antedate the Phokaian settlement, but this opinion, as mentioned above, has now been rejected by the archeologists. On the north side of the acropolis at (2270,1570), he discovered a city gate which is called North Sea Gate (Porta Marina Nord). It was traversed by a road that led up to a saddle in the ridge line at (1990,1460). There he unearthed, in 1965, the most striking construction found at Velia, the majestic Porta Rosa. Some say that it was so called from its rosy hue at sunset; others say Napoli simply named it for his wife, Rosa. I have seen it near sunset, and there was no rosy hue. It is noteworthy that it appears to be a gate between two parts of the same town. It is natural to suppose that the part of the wall to the north, stretch D on the map, was built as a later enlargement of the city. That does not appear, however, to have been the case, for the walls were seemingly all built at about the same time around 500 BC. So the question remains as to why such an imposing gate was built *inside* the city.

Probably the Velians considered the northern portion of the town the most vulnerable to attackers coming down the Alento river. They therefore wanted a second, interior wall in case this part of the city were lost to invaders. However, in normal times, they needed to communicate between the northern and southern quarters, and the easiest place to cross the ridge was in the pass where the Porta Rosa stands. In my opinion, the purpose of the arch, therefore, was to allow the road below it to cross the ridge at lower level than the natural level of the pass, thus reducing the effort required to cross from one part of the city to the other. One can see exactly such a construction in the Arco Felice on the Via Domitiana near Cuma. At the same time, the arch structure above the road enhanced the defensive value of the wall along the ridge line.



Porta Rosa with Porta Arcaica in the foreground.

⁹The "archaic" period extends from about 750 to 490 BC. It is followed by the "classical" period down to the death of Alexander in 323 BC; the "Hellenistic" period then extends down to 30 BC.

Alas, however, the great Porta seems to have been a failure. When discovered, it had been walled shut on the north side in antiquity. The large stones with a semicircular trough cut in them which now lie on the south side of the Porta were found running through the center of the Porta at ground level with the trough inverted, like this \cap , as if to be a drain. The problem seems to have been landslides that blocked the road on the north side. This road is now held open by stout modern concrete retaining walls.

The Porta Rosa, as Napoli recognized, is datable to about 350 BC, which makes it one of the earliest arches to come down to us. Just to the east, inside the southern part of the city, Napoli found the remains of what he considered an earlier gate, datable to the second half of the 6th century BC. Accordingly, he called it the Porta Arcaica. Fritz Krinzing, who has directed the extensive Austrian studies of Velia, considers, on the basis of the construction, that the Porta Arcaica is actually contemporary with Porta Rosa, so that the area between the two formed a sort of vestibule. He believes also that the wall over the Porta Rosa had a battlement to enhance its defensive value. [Velia 1994, p. 38].

Anyone who has read the poem of Parmenides and sees this spot will be struck by the idea that the great portal he describes stood exactly here. Yet Parmenides wrote more than a century before the Porta Rosa was built. With the original dating of the Porta Arcaica, it would have been there in the days of Parmenides. This redating of the Porta Arcaica, therefore, raises the question of what stood at this point before the Porta Rosa was built.

Napoli then turned his attention to the lower city and in particular to the area called Insula II (1590,1260) already located by Sestieri. He removed the fill from the northeastern part and found remarkable statues and inscriptions mentioned above that point to an Asklepion at Velia connected with

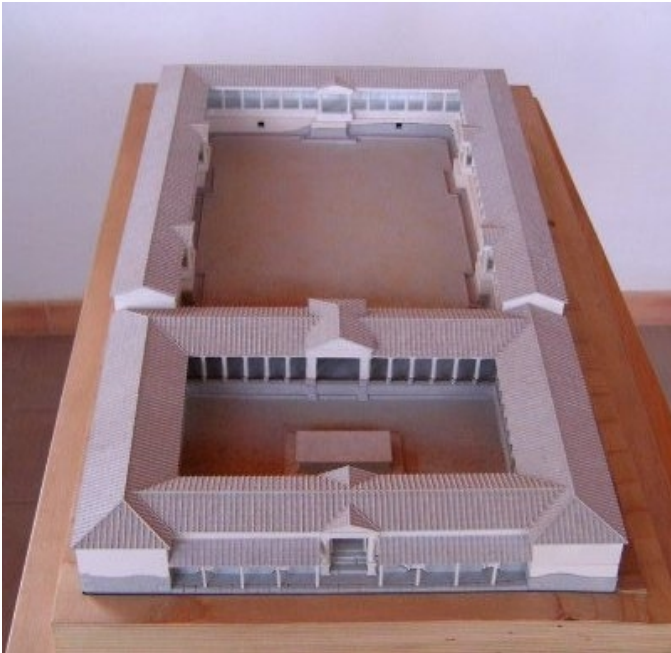


The lower town seen from the ridge. Insula I is in the foreground; Insula II is beyond it but before the modern road that cuts across the picture. North is to the left.

Parmenides. He was able to bring to light the original structure here datable to the first century BC and transformed in the time of Hadrian (117-138 AD) into a courtyard with a portico on three sides and an

altar in the middle. The southwest half of the insula, already discovered by Sestieri, was surrounded on three sides by a *cryptoportico*, that is, by a completely vaulted and enclosed passageway.

Nearby, at (1660,1280), he located and cleaned out the "holy well" that had been abandoned in the course of the substantial transformation of the area after an earthquake in 62 AD and in Hadrian's times. He then excavated the sturdy walls along the southwest end of Insula II. The lower parts, which he estimated went back to the end of the 6th century, he proposed to consider as the walls of a man-made basin for ships. In the round tower at (1640,1160) he saw a lighthouse that had once been free-standing. He added that, as sand filled the basin, the walls were converted into city walls by building them higher. This whole hypothesis, while not impossible, is out-of-favor at present. The current view is that the port was either around (1700,1000) or further southeast around (1400, 1100). [Velia 1994, p. 18]. The water's edge on the beach on which the Phokaians landed is thought to have been a hundred meters or so further inland from the railway [Velia 1999, p. 132], though the sandy beach extended at least another 150 meters further inland.



Model reconstruction of the Porticus of Insula II as it may have been. Author's photo of a model that was temporarily at Velia but without any identification.



Walls at the southeast end of Insula II and Porta Marina Sud at left. Napoli interpreted the walls as a boat basin. Although that now seems unlikely, they were probably for protection from stormy seas such as had previously covered the lower town with layers of sand.

These finds and interpretations by Napoli opened an extensive scientific discussion that led in 1966 to the first of a number of conferences on Velia. In the next three years, before the second

conference, a number of details were added. Napoli found under the agora material which he considered to date back to the 5th century. Morel found evidence that the south side of the acropolis had been inhabited in the bronze age. He was also able to state definitely that the houses of the "polygonal village" had been built by the earliest settlers and had been abandoned by the mid 5th century. Neutsch demonstrated that the houses of the polygonal village lay to either side of a central street and that there had been intense building activity in late archaic times, so much so that houses had been built on top of one another. Napoli worked on the Roman baths from the time of Hadrian at (1650,1300). He also discovered the theater on the acropolis at (2000,1100) and found that the area between the theater and the agora had been urbanized in the archaic period but had been organized into terraces in Hellenistic times.

After a pause of several years due to the untimely death of Mario Napoli, Johannowsky found a bath of Hellenistic date at (1820,1490). In 1977, exploration of Insula II was resumed. Deep probes showed many strata with alternation of deposits from natural and human sources. Krinzing, chief of the Austrian archeological mission to Velia, excavated deep pits in the courtyard of the northeast section of Insula II. Under layers of sand and alluvium several meters thick were found the foundations of houses of the late archaic period. There have even been found in several places stake holes going below the lowest levels of human occupation. These often occur in pairs. It is assumed that, on arrival, the first Phokaians drove the stakes into the earth to make simple huts for themselves. At some places, mud brick structures were also found on the lowest levels. [Velia 1994, p. 24. Figure 11 shows a pair of stake holes.]. Krinzing also explored the area of the "vignale" (vinyard) east of the agora and Roman baths. In particular, he found Roman baths of the Augustan era at (1420,1610).

In 1980, Tocco Sciarelli investigated carefully the agora and supported the conclusion of Sestieri that it dates from the 2nd century BC and that, contrary to Napoli's belief, there was nothing older under it. On the other hand, she rejects the idea that the area was, in fact, the agora (or market place) and believes instead that it was an *Asklepieion*, a temple of the god of healing. Some of the evidence is the good water supply, traces of a fountain, the statue (found in Insula II) of Asklepios and of a feminine figure presumed to be Hygieia.

In the 1990's, the Austrian team worked intensely on the acropolis with a view especially to establishing dates. It also worked in the eastern part of the town, the Vignale area, with similar aims. Most recently, it has returned to the puzzling question of the city walls. Meanwhile, the Italian team has worked on the *villa degli affreschi*, a Roman villa of the first century AD with painted walls located near (1900, 1100). In the summer of 2000, burials were found near the entrance (1750,1150).

9. Geological Evolution of Velia in Historical Times

Franco Ortolani of the University of Naples has studied the site of Velia carefully from a geological point of view. What follows is based on his article in [Velia 1999, p. 125-138], at times quoting verbatim from his helpful summary in English.

The first Greek town, established about 535 BC, included a settlement in the coastal zone of the holocene alluvial plain. Ortolani believe that the coast line was approximately where the railroad is today; subsequent excavation has established that it must have been much further back, quiet possibly back of the present outer wall. What was then beach is now several meters above sea level, strongly suggesting some bradyseismic action. The promontory of the acropolis provided protection from the prevailing northwest winds. The natural harbor made in this way may have been enhanced by a sandbar further out to sea to forming a lagoon. It may have also been improved by man.

Then over the course of the 5th and part of the 4th century, some four meters of alluvium was deposited on the plain, completely covering the previous town. There were also thick deposits of sea sand, indicating flooding from sea storms. This deposition of mud was not due to erosion caused by the settlers, for it occurred also in unsettled areas along the coast. Rather, it seems to have been caused by cold, wet climatic conditions documented elsewhere at the same time in the Mediterranean area.

The original, warm, dry conditions returned, and it was possible to build over the alluvium. This town of Hellenistic and Roman times continued until the 5th century AD. Between the 5th and 8th centuries AD, it also was buried beneath 4-5 meters of alluvium. From the 8th to the 11th centuries AD, the area of Velia was again partly built up and was then covered by sand dunes from the 11th to the 14th century.

On the basis of an analysis of the sediments, it is clear that in the 5th and 4th centuries BC the urban area of Velia was hit both by sand storms and by earthquakes. The eruption of Vesuvius in 79 AD showed up in the sands deposited at Velia.

Ortolani also contributes the information that the limestone used in Velia could only have come from the area between Palinuro and Camerota, some 20 to 30 kilometers away. Not only has a quarry been found, but the chemical composition of the rock matches perfectly. The sandstone, in contrast, is local.

The rock at the bottom of the promontory of the acropolis is of Miocene origin, that is, of the same age roughly as the shell beds at Calvert Cliffs in Maryland, and much younger than most of the rock formations in the USA.

10. Particular archeological findings

City Walls

To this chronological account, we may now add some details on particular subjects. We turn first to the defensive walls. The visible city walls are divided for convenience of reference into five stretches:

A. from the Castelluccio at (1780,2190), this wall runs southwest along the ridge running towards the Porta Rosa and the acropolis.

C. from the Castelluccio this wall stretches south along another ridge line.

D. from a point (2010,1780) on A about halfway between the Castelluccio and the Porta Rosa this wall extends northwest about 190 meters, then west another 300 meters, including the Porta Marina Nord near its western end.

B. from tower B1 (1760, 1350), this wall runs to tower B2, about 60 meters south, is then interrupted for 80 meters, and then starts again at tower B3, and runs 130 meters south east to the round tower, B6, at (1640, 1150), where it makes a 90 degree turn to the right for about 30 meters.

E. from a point on B between towers B4 and B5, this wall runs southeast some 100 meters, with an opening after about twenty meters and then another at the Porta Marina Sud.

The southwest half of wall A, including the Porta Rosa, thus lies *inside* the outer walls. In this stretch, wall A is a διατείχισμα, a partitioning wall separating one part of the town from another. Likewise, all of B and E are διατείχισματα. This rather strange structure naturally led to numerous questions about the purposes of the various walls and whether they were all constructed at the same time, or first one and then another.

The structure of the walls A, C, and D are all similar. The base, or socle, which is all that remains, is about 1.8 meters wide and is composed of two parallel exterior shell walls of local sandstone in either polygonal or rectangular shapes, with the interior between them filled with flysch, that is, thinly bedded sandstone or shale. This base seems to rise two or three feet above ground. Above it, the rest of the wall is imagined to have been of sun-dried mud brick, a building material found at a number of places in Velia. On the basis of this homogeneity in construction, it is assumed that all these walls were but at essentially the same time, namely, at the end of the 6th century or in the first decades of the 5th century BC. Walls with this construction are rare in this area; parallels can be found, however, in Asia Minor at Smyrna and Miletus. Walls A and C seem to follow naturally defensible lines, and their location was probably dictated by that consideration rather than by the need to enclose so large an area. Indeed, the built-up area seems to have been much smaller, especially when the walls were built. The walls of Velia total about 4 kilometers in length, only one kilometer short of those of Phokaia whose origins Herodotus recounts.

The wall B in the lower town has been particularly puzzling¹⁰. On the basis of objects found in deep sampling along wall B in 1997-1999, it is clear that this wall dates from around 400 BC, nearly a century later than A, C, and D, and that it does not rest on any previous wall. Moreover, a probe near Tower B4 (1650,1240) showed that in the 5th century BC this area was on the beach, so that any defensive wall would have to be sought further inland. And indeed, in 1998, such a wall was found in a cut southeast of Tower B3 and exposed for a length of 1.9 meters. In the following year, inside B3 was found about 3m more of this wall. The wall is 1.8 meters wide; it has an outer shell of mighty polygonal sandstone blocks, an almost equally monumental inner shell, and a filling of small flysch. The remaining outer shell is 1.1 meters high; the inner shell, 1.6 meters. The biggest stone is 1.1 by .60 meters. Above this socle rose a mud brick wall; the remains of it, mixed with fragments of roof tiles, charred wood, and large stones lies just to the south of the wall. The material in this debris gave a preliminary dating in first half of the 5th century. Note that the debris lay to the south of the foundation, so the wall was knocked over from the inside.



The Castelluccio, highest point of the city walls.

Over the remains of this wall another was built but running in the direction of the surviving wall B. This direction would suggest a terracing wall, but it also had a mud brick upper extension which suggests a defensive purpose, since it would make no sense for a retaining wall. It also had a short life since tower B3 was built over it about 400 BC. Inside Tower B3, a wall abuts this younger wall at a right angle; its purpose also remains unclear.

Under Insula II, at about (1600, 1280) there was found in 1991 a wall that looks very like the city walls we have just described. However, it runs uphill, the wrong direction to be a continuation of the wall we have just described. How it is to be fit into the picture remains open.

The highest point of the walls is the “Castelluccio,” the “little castle” where walls A and C meet. It

10 This section draws on a manuscript of Verena Gassner [Gassner, 1999] kindly sent by the author.

does not seem a likely place to find a spring. But, in excavations by A. Sokolicek in about 2002, strong evidence – including collecting basins, lead pipes, and drains cut into the rock – was found that, whatever else it was, the Castelluccio was a spring house. Today, no water flows from the Castelluccio and the water table is about six meters below it, but the ridge continues to rise to the east so there is no *a priori* reason that there could not have been a spring there. Moreover, a hollow (running off to the southwest) in the side of the ridge suggests that there was once a spring about where the Castelluccio stands. How it fit with water supply in the city remains to be clarified.

The Acropolis

Around the middle of the 2nd millenium BC, there was a bronze age settlement on the southern slopes of the acropolis. The site was then abandoned, and there is as yet no trace of any settlement before the second half of the 6th century BC when the Phokaians arrived. There are pieces of pottery of the from the first half of that century but always in a context of the second half. Herodotus says that the Phokaians "acquired (εκτησαντο) a city of the Oenotrian land ." This expression has naturally raised the question of whether there was a town on the site before the arrival of the Phokaians. The best candidate is the "polygonal village" (1980, 1150), but the professional archeologists seem quite sure that it came after the Phokaians arrived.



Foundation of the Hellenistic temple, seen from the west. The base of the medieval tower is at right. The polygonal wall is below the fence in the right foreground. (Author's photo)

In the sanctuary on the acropolis, the most striking construction of the archaic period is the beautiful polygonal wall already noted (1990,990). Krinzinger and Gassner [Krinzinger 1997] believe that it may well have been a terracing wall for a small, archaic temple that would have stood to its

northwest. Footings for walls cut into the rock under the cella of the Hellenistic temple may have been cut for this temple. No other trace of it remains, having been obliterated in the construction of the larger temple. As we have mentioned, the polygonal village is of archaic construction; indeed, the whole of the top of the hill seems to have been covered by private houses except for the small temple.

In early classical times, these houses were razed, and the monumental area enlarged. To do so, two terracing walls were built, the lower one, called number I, running some 142 meters northwest from (1930,1020). This wall shows evidence of having been built in two phases. The first 72 meters from the northeast corner in the first stage and the rest later. A second terracing wall, some 18 meters uphill from it, runs about 74 meters. In 1996, a pit was dug behind Wall I at (1950, 1031). At its lower levels it yielded many fragments useful for dating; the most recent were from the 5th century BC. At the bottom were found the remains of houses that had been torn down to build the terrace. The second wall was built presumably soon after. These walls created a space which must have been intended for a glorious classical temple on top of the acropolis. Whether this temple was actually built or not we do not know. In early Hellenistic times, about the time of the alliance with Rome, the temple whose foundations are visible was built.

Whether the temple was ever finished seems to me questionable. A number of the blocks that are still in place on its base still have on them tenons, tabs of stone jutting out from the side. These tabs were used as “handles” for lifting and moving the blocks. Exactly similar tabs are visible on the base of the temple at Segesta in Sicily, where they are interpreted as evidence that the temple was never finished, for in the finishing process, they would have been removed. To me, they mean the same thing at Velia. The incompleteness of the temple could account for its not being mentioned by ancient writers who visited Velia and for scarcity of stones that look like they had one been part of temple columns.



The stylobate of the Hellenistic temple, showing the tenons still on the stones. (Author's photo)

We turn to the theater. There are remains of a corner of a small theater at the northeast corner of terrace wall II. It was, however, demolished in the construction of the Hellenistic theater. The western end of the circle of seats, the *κοίλον*, remain as something resembling a theater. This side lay against the natural side of the hill. The eastern end, by contrast, rested on filled land or quit possibly wooden or stone supporting structure. What look like postholes 0.4 meters in diameter have been found where they should have been to support the back of the lower section of seats. A later phase of construction may then have filled in under these seats with earth and stone. Under the remaining seats on the west end, rubble was found with a rich collection of fragments dating from late archaic times down to about 300 BC, the presumed date of construction. Note that this date matches closely that of the temple. From the same period is the broad processional approach that led up from the upper end of the polygonal village, curved around 90 degrees and led, no doubt through an imposing *προπυλον* or gateway, into the *τῆμενος* or temple precinct, at exactly the point where the Cappella Palatina now stands. Thus we see that at this time Velia created for itself an impressive acropolis. The whole theater was extensively reworked in the first half of the 3rd century AD. Besides serving as a *τέατρον*, it may also have served

as a βουλευτηριον or meeting place for the town council. Possibly it also functioned as the εκκλησιαστήριον, meeting place of the εκκλησια, the assembly of the citizens, though it may well have been too small for this purpose. Because of its proximity to the temple, Napoli thought that it might also have served as τελεστηριον or place of initiation. In connection with the medieval fortifications, a trench was cut through the middle of the theater. The theater was completely dismantled to learn as much as possible about its construction and alterations. In 2002, it was restored so that its shape and general size are recognizable.

The Lower Town

Other than the Porta Rosa, the most striking ancient remains in Velia are in the lower town, in the areas called Insula I and Insula II. The structures today on the surface come from Augustan times. The entrance to Insula II is on the northeast side. Mounting a few steps brings one into a courtyard with a portico on three sides and an altar in the middle. Beneath this courtyard were found the archaic houses, post holes, and wall described above. Three phases of construction can be distinguished:

(1) the stake holes.

(2) above them, a strata with two complete houses and parts of two more. House I, measuring 4.7 meters by 6 meters, had one room with mud-brick walls above a stone socle, both plastered over. Under the floor of pounded earth was a wooden structure recognizable as black marks on the clear sand. The wooden grid structure may have been interwoven with reeds. It did not connect to the socle. No other example of such a structure is known. It may have been to stabilize the sand below it or to impart a slight springiness to the floor. A large piece of limestone in the central axis must have served as a roof support. The ridge roof was of tiles, found in large numbers, which were at least partly painted. The house lasted to about 470. House II, slightly larger, had two rooms, similar construction except for the wood subfloor, and an oven that opened on the outside of the house. Judging from the absence of household items and from sand in the corners under the debris from the collapse, this house was abandoned before its destruction by fire and flooding.

(3) above the level of destruction of phase two was found the massive wall mentioned above running in a northeasterly direction.

All of these structures were then covered around 450 BC by a massive layer of clean sea sand that put an end to habitation in this area for quite a while.

Crossing this courtyard brings one into a larger area surrounded by the enclosed walkway or cryptoportico. On the basis of tiles found there, the area was once thought to have been a swimming pool. The tiles are now recognized as landfill, and the area is presently thought to have been a garden. In the 1950's and 1960's, there were found here a number of portrait heads in marble of members of the Giulio-Claudia family, that is to say, of the imperial family. There were also found here statues and inscriptions considered above.

I have not found recent material on the Insula I area. The Austrian mission worked on Wall E in 1999 and described their findings [Gassner 2000], without, however, venturing an absolute date for the wall. They put it in the third of three periods spanning the third and fourth century BC, so that a date of 230 ± 30 would seem safe. They do not speculate on the function of this massive construction. Given the devastation by sea sand in previous years, my observations of the east coast of Florida makes me suppose that this stretch was a sea wall intended to breakup occasional giant waves before they could dump their load of sand on the buildings inside the wall.

The East Town or Vignale

With the clearing away of houses from the acropolis to make it into a monumental center, with the closing of the polygonal village, and with the natural destruction in the lower town, it was clear that some new area had to be found for residences. This seems to have in the East Town or Vignale (vineyard) area easily identified on the map by the grid of streets. In the 1980's, Neutsch had worked in the eastern part of the town known as the Vignale and found that this whole area was divided into city blocks by straight streets in a geometric grid. The house at (1590,1680) in the former Janicelli property is the most extensive. The upper end seems to have been some kind of workshop while the lower end was the living quarters. Because of the destruction through recent agriculture, attention turned in 1987 to the house at (1640, 1500) in the former D'Ambrosio property. In this house were found a room with a well, two amphora against a wall, another amphora without a neck, pieces of a broken $\pi\theta\omicron\sigma$, the largest kind of wine or water jar, a stone console -- a bracket-like architectural member that projects from a wall to support something -- with a beautiful profile, and a marble footstool with lion paws. Part of the floor was paved with glazed bricks. Apparently it was a room where water was used in work. In early imperial times, the house was destroyed by fire and the roof fell in. Soon thereafter it and the whole area were buried under a massive landslide. There had not been time for humus to form over the burned house before the landslide. The area seems never to have been rebuilt.

Markers Invoking Divinities

A number of markers two or three feet high with names and attributes of gods have been found in Velia. They have been nicely documented and interpreted in a pair of articles by Margherita Guarducci in [*Parola del Passato* 1966, p. 279-294 and 1970, p. 252- 261]. A selection follows. They are now in the two museums on the acropolis of Velia.

ΠΟΣΕΙΔΩΝΟΣ ΑΣΦΑΛΕΙΟΥ

Poseidonos asfaleiou

A marker with this inscription was found on the second of four piazze (1900,1280) which lie along the ridge that rises to the northeast from the acropolis towards the Porta Rosa. ΑΣΦΑΛΕΙΟΣ means "he who does not cause to fall" and, by extension, "he who lifts up and aids."

Originally ΠΟΣΕΙΔΩΝΟΣ ΑΣΦΑΛΕΙΟΥ protected against earthquakes, but as lord of the sea, he could also protect on long sea voyages, a divinity important for a maritime people like the Velians.

ZHNOΣ OPIO

Zenos orio

This and the following two markers come from the fourth and highest of the piazze, just southwest of the Porta Rosa. The form of the letters leads Guarducci to place all three not much after 450 BC. The Attic form would be Ζευς Ουριος Zeus Ourios, Zeus of the Winds, or Sender of Good Winds, again a most appropriate deity for a maritime people. This marker is very worn and the first two letters are gone. Our guide admits that it required "a little patience" to figure it out. The expression $\pi\omicron\mu\pi\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma$ ουρος occurs in the first Pithic ode of Pindar alluding to the wind "that accompanies." In the vicinity of a marker to Zeus who sends favorable winds, another to the god who accompanies the mariners, especially with fair wind, fits well.

ΟΛΥΜΠΙΟ ΚΑΙΡΟ

Olumpio Kairo

Kairos was the god of the happy moment. As a common noun, the word appears in Hesiod's *Works and Days* (line 694) but does not appear as a name of a divinity before the 5th century. Pausanias, in his *Description of Greece* (5.14.9), writes that in Olympia "Quite close to the entrance to the stadium are two altars; one they call the altar of Hermes of the Games, the other the altar of Kairos, I know that a hymn to Kairos is one of the poems of Ion of Chios; in the hymn Kairos is made out to be the youngest child of Zeus." At Olympia, Kairos would be the god of the happy moment of victory for the winner. Why would there be a monument at Velia to Kairos at Olympia? Could it be a form of well-wishing for athletes sent of from Velia? Or possibly a thanksgiving for a happy moment at Olympia?

[Z]ΗΝΟΣ Α ... ΚΑΙ ΩΠΙΟ

[Z]enos a... Kaiorio

This marker, also dated by Guarducci to around 450, was found just outside the Porta Rosa. The second part of the epithet is already familiar. The first stroke of the letter following the A is visible and suggests a Λ. A possible completion would be Αλαστος,, a known epithet of Zeus, meaning "the avenger" and hence one who wards off evil. It would seem to allude to the ability of Zeus to vindicate offenses, to protect victims, and generally to ward off evil. So in combination with ΩΠΙΟ it seems ask for protection and favorable winds.

ΗΡΗΣ ΘΕΞΙΗΣ

Heres thezies

"Hera Enchantress of Hearts" might be the translation. The verb θελγου (aorist infinitive θελξαι) means "to stroke with magic power, to charm, enchant, spell-bind." θελξινοος means "enchanting the heart." Hera, it will be recalled, is above all the goddess of marriage. Our marker can be read as calling on her to bind together magically the hearts of a married couple. (Guarducci has a far more complicated explanation that I cannot really understand.)

ZHNO[Σ] ΥΠΑΤΟΥ ΑΘΗ[ΝΑΙΟΥ]

Zeno[s] ypatou athe[naiou]

Zeus Most High (or of High Places) of Athens. Where the marker was found seems to be unknown. Pausanias (1.26.5) writes that on the acropolis in Athens "There is also a building called the Erechtheum. Before the entrance is an altar of Zeus the Most High on which they never sacrifice a living creature but offer cakes, not being wont to use any wine either." The stress on the connection with Athens is noteworthy. The presumed date near 450 matches closely the trip of Parmenides and Zeno to Athens.

TAKEN TOGETHER, these markers show that in the 5th century, the Olympians were not felt to be distant and uncaring, but as present, living spiritual beings quite able and willing to enter into the concerns of humans, whether they be safety at sea or fidelity at home. It is also noteworthy that the Eleans felt themselves connected thorough their divinities to Athens and Olympia and thus to the whole Greek world.

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