



15th EUROPEAN G E O P A R K S C O N F E R E N C E

Natural Park Sierra Norte de Sevilla

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Geoparks



GLOBAL
G E O P A R K S
N E T W O R K

*Geoparks: memory of Earth,
future for People*



JUNTA DE ANDALUCÍA
CONSEJERÍA DE AGRICULTURA, GANADERÍA,
PESCA Y DESARROLLO SOSTENIBLE

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POSTER'S COMMUNICATIONS

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH IN THE POLLINO UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARK, ITALY: PROBABLY THE ANCIENT CITY OF “LAOS”

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Keywords: archaeological research, Pollino UNESCO Global Geopark, Lao-Mercure Valley.

The Pollino UNESCO Global Geopark is a large area located in southern Italy at the border of two administrative Regions: Calabria and Basilicata. In this area relevant geological and geomorphological features stand together with many natural and cultural assets. The Lao-Mercure Valley, in the central-west sector, is an important geosite of the Pollino Geopark. This valley was created by a wide tectonic depression and was occupied in the past by a Pliocene lake.

In the Mercure-Lao Valley is begun an interesting archaeological research, guided by Fabrizio Mollo, from University of Messina - Archaeological Mission of the Department of Ancient and Modern Civilizations, thanks to the concession of the Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage (MiBAC) and thanks to the collaboration with the Pollino UNESCO Global Geopark.

The first survey was carried out in October 2018, and the archaeological excavation started in July 2019. The area interested by archaeological activities is a large hilly territorial basin, located along the high course of the Lao River, in the municipality of Laino Borgo. All these toponomastic denominations (Lao, Laino) have an interesting assonance with Laos, the ancient Greek sub-colony of Sibaris, that is mentioned in the historical literature, but the real place where this ancient town was located is still undefined.

The research discovered a structured presence between the Archaic-Classical and Hellenistic phases. The Roman phase is clearly visible near the Lao River, in the area south of the Santa Gada river-lake terrace, near the village of San Primo, where already in the 1920s Eduardo Galli had documented conspicuous archaeological finds dated back to the Roman-Imperial age.

In the area of Santa Gada terrace (the site reaches in the N-S direction and it is large about 0.4 sqkm) we recognized a large settlement, structured and organized already from the second half of the 6th century A.C., to the 3rd century B.C. It is a very important settlement throughout the wide basin of Lao-Mercure: the site is very interesting also for its particular geomorphology and for its localization in the middle of Lao-Mercure Valley, in a dominant location along the river. During the first excavation we can identify two different phases of life: the first is dated back to the Archaic age (VI-V cent. B.C.), and it is characterized by indigenous or Greek finds (pottery, votive objects, coins). The second phase is identified by several structures dated back to the Hellenistic age (IV-III cent. B.C.), probably part of ancient Lucanian town, now not better identified.



