Management of Valcamonica’s Rock Art Sites (Italy)

Gestión de los sitios de arte rupestre de Valcamonica (Italia)

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ABSTRACT

The UNESCO Site “Rock Drawings in Valcamonica”, first listed in 1979, acquired in 2005 a Management Plan coordinated by the Archaeological Heritage Superintendency in collaboration with local authorities. After defining objectives and good practices, the Plan –administered by an Institutional Coordination Group composed of representatives from the promoting bodies– drew up a series of projects for conservation and development that are outlined, with descriptions of the most significant of those recently concluded: monitoring the preservation state of the archaeological heritage with georeferencing of all sites and engraved rocks; strengthening and networking the rock art parks; creating new display facilities and the National Prehistory Museum of Valle Camonica, a focal point for visitors to the UNESCO Site.

RESUMEN

El sitio “Arte rupestre de Valcamonica”, inscrito en 1979, desarrolló en 2005 un plan de gestión coordinado por la Superintendencia del Patrimonio Arqueológico en colaboración con las autoridades locales. Tras definir objetivos y buenas prácticas, el plan –administrado por un Grupo Institucional de Coordinación compuesto por representantes de las instituciones promotoras– definió una serie de proyectos para la conservación y el desarrollo que fueron esbozados, así como la descripción de los más significativos de los que han sido concluidos recientemente: la monitorización del estado de conservación del patrimonio arqueológico con la georreferenciación de todos los sitios y de los petroglifos; reforzamiento y puesta en red de los parques con arte rupestre; creación de nuevos medios expositivos y del Museo Nacional de Prehistoria de Valcamonica, un punto neurálgico para los visitantes de este espacio.

Keywords

Rock art, Valle Camonica, management, person responsible, conservation, development

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1. INTRODUCTION

Rock Drawings in Valle Camonica –a North Italian Alpine valley– was inscribed in the World Heritage List in 1979 (Fig. 1).

The first discovery of engraved rocks in the field occurred in 1909, when the two Cemmo rocks, engraved in the Copper Age, were reported1; now more than 180 localities are known, spread through 30 municipal areas in the valley, where the presence of rock surfaces worn smooth by glacial action has encouraged the practice of engraving. The number, spatial extent and altitude range (from about 200 to 2,400 metres a.s.l.) of sites with engraved rocks, the variety of figurative themes and the extremely long duration of the phenomenon –from the Upper Palaeolithic to the modern historical era– all contribute to the Site’s outstanding value2.

The studies of Emmanuel Anati, starting with the synthesis La civilisation du Valcamonica published in Paris in 1960, established the foundations of the evolution of Valle Camonica’s rock art and deduced its historical range (on the basis of overlapping engravings) as consisting of four main periods from the Neolithic to the Iron Age, followed by the “Post-Camunni” period, which continued until the modern historical era (Anati, 2004).

These periods were preceded by a Proto-Camunni phase, attributed by Anati to the Mesolithic, but which has recently been revised by Fabio Martini of Florence University, who attributes one of the large (previously known) animal engravings in the Luine Park - Darfo Boario Terme to the Upper Palaeolithic (Martini, Baglioni & Poggiani Keller, 2009). This is the figure of an equid engraved on Rock 34 (Fig. 2) and is among the rare artistic manifestations in North Italy belonging to the second part of the late Epigravettian, when the Franco-Cantabrian style was fading and that of the Mediterranean extending to the centre and north of the country. This attribution is confirmed by the discovery of a rare Upper Palaeolithic hut with Epigravettian lithics in the town centre of Cividate Camuno (Baglioni & Martini, 2009).

The Copper Age (4th–3rd millennium BC) saw the spread of monumental compositions on steles and menhirs which are laid out in lines within the open-air sanctuaries that have been widely investigated during the last thirty years (Fig. 3).

During the Bronze Age (2nd millennium BC) there was an interruption in the use of cult and ceremonial sites with monoliths; in general there was a decrease in rock engravings, in which weapons were prevalent, such as the series of depictions on various rocks at Luine (Fig. 4).

The Iron Age (1st millennium BC), was the time of the greatest flowering of Valle Camonica’s rock art and its development of a naturalistic and descriptive style, characterized by the progressively more detailed portrayal of anatomical detail and attempts to represent the dynamic nature of the actions illustrated. The figure of the warrior is dominant, engaged in various activities: duelling, on horseback and hunting, interpreted as initiation trials or rites (Fig. 5).


2. The complete bibliography relating to Valle Camonica’s rock art up until 2005 is given in Marreta, Poggiani & Keller 2005, published by the Soprintendenza per i Beni archeologici della Lombardia. For general information see also the website: http://www.vallecamonica.caunesco.it.
Several exceptional recently discovered and developed sites (or where development is still under way) belong to the Romanization period between the 2nd/1st century BC and 1st/AD -at Lòa di Berzo Demo and Piancogno-Annunziata, with hundreds of Camunic and Latin inscriptions in highly-visible locations overlooking the valley (Fig. 6:1).

The practice of engraving continued during the Roman period (Fig. 6:2), more frequently than is generally realized; it seems likely that traditional Iron Age figures were repeated. The phenomenon persisted during the Middle Ages, with the representation of towers, castles and Christian symbols (crosses), right up until the modern and contemporary historical periods (Fig. 6:3), a distinctive characteristic of the valley.

There are also painted figures (about twenty) preserved in rockshelters (Fig. 7) and on vertical rock faces on which a thin layer of calcite deposited by flowing water has favoured the images’ survival. Recently during conservation treatment of Rock 23 in the National Park, renowned for its figure of an Iron Age cart, the presence was detected of extensive traces of a red colouring agent in the pecked figures, evidence that their visibility was once enhanced by colour (Fig. 8). At present analyses are in course to identify the pigment’s composition.

3. Project for the creation of the multi-theme itinerary “Recupero di emergenze ambientali e storico culturali nell’area di Lòa in Comune di Berzo Demo”, promoted by the Adamello Park in collaboration with the Superintendency and jointly financed by the Lombardy Regional Authority (Marretta & Solano, 2014).

4. In recent years more attention has been paid to engravings of medieval and modern historical periods; specific studies have been linked to development projects for a number of areas: Campanine di Cimbergo, in the Riserva Naturale delle Incisioni Rupestri di Celob, Cimbergo e Paspardo, and Monticolo di Darfo-Boario Terme.

5. Such as the Cuel Rockshelter at Campanine di Cimbergo, occupied during the Bronze and Iron Age.

2. ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE UNESCO SITE

The great extension of Valle Camonica’s rock art has resulted in a number of development projects over the years which have led to the establishment of archaeological parks—eight for prehistory and protohistory—starting in 1955, when the first Italian archaeological park was founded: the Parco Nazionale delle Incisioni Rupestri at Capo di Ponte (Poggiani...
Figure 5 · National Rock Engravings Park, Capo di Ponte. Iron Age engravings (1st mill. BC): horseman, cart, running priest, hunting scenes, the god Chernunnos.

Figure 6 · 1-Berzo Demo-Lòa, Camunni inscriptions (Iron Age, 2nd/1st cent. BC); 2- National Park-Rock 99, Roman period inscription; 3-Monticolo - Darfo B.T., 19th cent. engravings.
In recent years (2006-2013) several smaller archaeological sites have been added, organized into itineraries: thematic (4th and 3rd millennium BC megalithic sanctuaries, early writing areas) or multi-theme (the Löa multi-theme itinerary). Networking – on a territorial and/or typological basis – and public access to archaeological areas, sites and parks makes use of the web of ancient routes and guarantees their conservation as essential features of the landscape.

This prehistory and proto-history hub complements the other important hub, that of Roman archaeology, consisting of national archaeological areas and parks linked to the Roman city of Civitas Camunnorum.

In 2005 a Management Plan (MP) was drawn up for this UNESCO Site, for the purpose of safeguarding its heritage and the cultural promotion and development of the site; it was published in 2007 (Poggiani Keller, Liborio & Ruggiero, 2007).

It was coordinated by the Lombardy Archaeological Heritage Superintendency, the local arm of the Ministry for Cultural Activities and Heritage, and Tourism (MiBACT), which in Italy is responsible for the study, protection and conservation of the archaeological patrimony, as well as its development (the latter responsibility is shared with the Regional Authority).

The MP was drafted in collaboration with the local authorities on whose territory the rock art parks were present (Lombardy Region and Province of Brescia; Valle Camonica Mountain Community; Valle Camonica Drainage Basin Council Consortium -BIM; the councils of Darfo Boario Terme, Capo di Ponte, Sellerio and Sonico; the Ceto, Cimbergo and Pasparado Regional Reserve consortium). Other participants were a Technical Secretariat, and a Technical and Scientific Working Party made up of cultural organizations that conduct research in the valley, or manage multi-council areas for the tutelage of landscape and environment (i.e. the Adamello Park).

Together, we defined goals, strategies, projects and implementation timetables for the Site’s protection, conservation and development, with the aim of integrating local identities and tutelage with the needs of socio-economic growth. The overall process of “valorisation” of the valley, in the wide sense, is the end result of a process based on the investigation, recording and conservation of the patrimony, and is founded on the following objectives:

- promote and encourage greater knowledge of the Site, with systematic and coordinated programmes of recording, research and study;
- develop the Site in suitable ways, using appropriate methods, with constant attention to the integrity and nature of the heritage and its environmental and cultural context;
- encourage its inclusion in the cultural tourism circuit and overall organization of tourism in the area; operate so as to render these priorities compatible with the sustainable development of the valley, for which the rock art site constitutes a factor promoting economic and social growth.

A number of plans of action were drawn up (10.1 Plan for the Completion of Establishment Procedures and Development of Rock Art Parks; 10.2 Plan for the Establishment of the Valle Camonica National Prehistory Museum, 10.3 Plan for the Development of Prehistoric and Proto-historic Archaeological Sites; 10.4 Plan for Mapping, Recording and Developing Additional Valle Camonica Rock Art Sites Not Included in the Rock Art Parks; 10.5 Historic Way Network Plan; 10.6 Valley Floor Landscape Renewal Plan), following a basic guiding principal: attention to and development of not only rock art sites, but all aspects of the entire territorial archaeological heritage –archaeological contexts, landscape, the historic ways network and more– with an overall perspective that was diachronic and multidisciplinary, and included attention to aspects of non-material culture.

Conservation problems, which concerned both individual rocks, and rock groups and their surrounding environments, were tackled in the conservation plan (11. Maintenance and Conservation Plan) which focussed on three different aspects: protection, maintenance and conservation treatment.

The series of plans, which from an operational standpoint were articulated with those regarding accessibility, visitor reception, personnel training and so on (Management Plan Part Four: Plans 14-22), involved the identification of Indicators which served to carefully monitor the effects of the strategies adopted and the validity of projects, with of course the underlying aim of preserving and enhancing the site; these were measured at various stages specified in the Scientific and Technological Research Plan (Plan 14).

The Management Plan, which is a tool providing technical guidance and practical directions for the numerous interested parties, thus followed an overall development strategy that presented a vision of Valle Camonica as the “Valley of the Engravings”.

In 2009 the MP was chosen as an example for study, monitoring and evaluation – together with other 7 Italian UNESCO sites – by the Higher Institute for Territorial Innovation Systems (SITI- Istituto Superiore sui Sistemi Territoriali per l’Innovazione) of Turin Polytechnic, and MiBACT. The results of the assessment were published in Re, A. (ed.), Valutare la gestione dei siti UNESCO. Monitoraggio dei Piani di gestione dei siti italiani iscritti alla Lista del Patrimonio Mondiale, Turin 2012.

The administrative organization entrusted with management. The Management Plan, approved by the component authorities on 8th July 2005, was subsequently adopted and made operative by a formal act in 2006 (with the Agreement Protocol for the implementation of the first stages of
the Management Plan for UNESCO Site 94 “Rock Art in Valle Camonica”, 11th December 2006) and the councils involved inserted it into their planning regulations.

After the Protocol was passed, discussions began—and continued for over a year— with legal experts concerning the establishment of an entity responsible for the site (should it be a foundation, a consortium, or what?). In the end it was decided to maintain the lightweight structure that had been set up after the signing of the Protocol: for the implementation of the planned operations the Mountain
Community was nominated as the leading body. Thus all decisions, then as now, are taken by the Institutional Coordination Group (GIC), which has the authority to request and receive funding for projects submitted. The GIC is composed of those regional authorities which contributed to the drafting of the MP (or subsequently undersigned it) and the Archaeological Superintendency, and utilizes the technical structure of the Comunità Montana (which itself operates in collaboration with the technical departments of single councils) and the technical and scientific backing of the Superintendency. Between 2011 and 2013 a further 3 councils adhered (Edolo, Borno and Ossimo), complementing the Plan’s aims with projects for the mapping and development of their rock art heritage.

This involves an integrated system of territorial management based on the universal values specified in the World Heritage listing, which identifies sustainable development objectives, adopts the plans and undertakes the actions necessary to achieve these in the short and medium term.

What are the critical factors in this management structure? I can see basically two:

- the prevalence of politicians, since the representatives of the local authorities in the GIC are always part of the administrations (mayors or councillors with specific roles);
- a lack of competent professionals as managers of local authority parks (whereas the National Parks run by the Superintendency have directors and technical backup).

This situation, which is counterbalanced only partially by the coordination of the Superintendency (which is responsible for protection, preservation and research with regard to archaeology), results in a bias towards development initiatives – rather than conservation treatment – and makes it difficult to develop a networked cultural strategy, which requires an adequate degree of professionalism that is free from parochialism.

3. GOOD PRACTICES AND PROJECTS

Good Practices. The actions undertaken by the Archaeological Superintendency and GIC have given priority to the following objectives:

1. the conservation and documentation of engraved rocks using up-to-date methods which record them in three dimensions in a way that may be used for study and for the evaluation of their state of preservation;
2. the tutelage of the landscape;
3. research into rock art’s archaeological contexts, and emergency interventions in advance of building work;
4. strengthening and networking facilities open to the public.

3.1. Conservation and documentation

During the preparatory work conducted for the Management Plan, it was emphasized that the preservation of the rock art heritage is crucial, and may be approached from three standpoints:

1- protection of the site (or indeed the cultural landscape – though this is not always easy in a valley with a tradition of manufacturing);
2- maintenance and conservation treatment, together with appropriate recording and cataloguing methods.

With regard to the matter of preservation and the causes of deterioration, since 1992 the Superintendency has developed an intense programme of analysis and study in cooperation with the most highly skilled national research organizations (the MiBACT Higher Institute of Conservation and Restoration; the National Research Council’s ‘G. Bozza’ Centre, for study of the deterioration of rock surfaces) so as to identify the causes of deterioration and establish treatment and systematic monitoring procedures (Poggiani Keller, 1996). This research was followed by a series of maintenance and conservation operations which had also
the purpose of spreading a conservation culture among local authorities and private subjects (but that achieved only partial success).

In 1997 the valley’s engraved rocks were studied as part of the national project to produce a Cultural Heritage Risk Map conducted by the Ministry’s conservation unit (ICR, Istituto Centrale per il Restauro). The scientific study of the factors responsible for degradation has made it possible to organize over the years a series of projects to document states of preservation, and carry out maintenance work and conservation treatment.

Climatic and atmospheric factors, together with direct human activities, threaten the rocks. We have seen the effects in the recent Salamanca conference on La conservación del arte rupestre. Sostenibilidad e integración en el paisaje, 15-17th October 2013; see the proceedings (now in course of publication) for this extremely important topic. I will mention only that the deterioration of engraved surfaces may be due to seasonal temperature variations, human action, the growth of microorganisms (in particular, due to climate change in the last 25 years, the more widespread growth of algae). Less frequent, but destined to increase due to poor woodland maintenance, is damage caused by fire.

When conservation work was conducted, care was always taken to record and date levels of human presence in each context. In addition, in order to prevent engraved surfaces being trodden on, protective structures were regularly built, especially walkways, in which our office has acquired considerable experience with regard to design, materials (always wood) and siting (always respectful of the surrounding environment and landscape, and always easily reversible).

Conservation work has need of a system of documentation that permits the periodic assessment of preservation state and constitutes a basis for study; privileging recording by means of digital photography, photogrammetry and laser-scanning (which produces accurate three-dimensional images), the Superintendency has developed the computerized cataloguing system IRWeb (Incisioni Rupestri on the Web) to facilitate study and conservation planning. The system, operational since 2003, has been publicly presented on several occasions; see the site http://www.irweb.it, which illustrates the project, its history, goals, methods and the techniques employed. The purposes of the system were to:

- make an inventory of engraved rock surfaces and boulders in Lombardy, using methods developed in accordance with the standards required by the Ministry’s Central Institute for Cataloguing and Documentation (ICCD);
- create a digital Rock Art Monitoring Catalogue (CIMAR, Catalogo Informatizzato per il Monitoraggio dell’Arte Rupestre), which enables the planning of wide-ranging conservation programmes on the basis of the recorded levels of priority;
- develop a widely-applicable recording method which, although it allows retention of individual cataloguing systems, permits the local acceleration of systematic, site-by-site cataloguing, the sharing of conservation programmes – and international discussion based on shared data categories.

The system was presented, as a proposed Good Practice, at international congresses (in 2006 at the UNESCO Gaudeloupe-Meeting; Poggiani Keller, 2008, and at the UISPP

The project has a long and well-meditated history (it first saw the light in 1989 as Petra, was reborn in 1996 as IR, which developed into the online version IRWeb in 2003) and was primarily created in order to record and monitor the preservation state of Lombardy’s rock art heritage by means of a thorough analysis of the entire surface (and other aspects) of engraved rocks. The inventory is based on a system of 7 recording sheets – Rock Sheet, Zone Sheet, Scene Sheet, Figure Sheet, Historical Background Sheet, Rock Conservation Sheet and Zone Conservation Sheet – which are made available to various user categories. Data recorded in the field include digital photos and the use of photogrammetry (now abandoned in favour of laser scanning), or more traditional methods for the 3D documentation of rocks.

3.2. Tutelage of the landscape

The second objective is to safeguard the landscape in the form that it has maintained during recent millennia. Engraved rock locations are mainly at altitudes of 300 to 600 m in environments that have (often fairly recently) become wooded due to the abandonment of cultivation and animal rearing practices (it is interesting to compare the area of the National Park as it is today with the situation in 1930) (Fig. 9). The uncontrolled spread of woodland creates problems: engraved rocks become hidden, the growth of vegetation may damage rock surfaces, there may be increased erosion and danger of wildfires.

Engravings are also widespread at higher altitudes: schematic art and inscriptions in the alphabet of the Camunni are found up to altitudes of 2,400 metres, associated with mining activities and seasonal pasture settlements. Conservation of the landscape – and therefore of the unique characteristics of the UNESCO site – presents numerous problems, as may be seen from this photograph (Fig. 10) showing the close juxtaposition of rock art and modern life:

- Many urbanized zones touch or are included within archaeological areas;
- Craft and industrial activities are quite widespread;
- The valley is a ‘technological corridor’ crossed by power lines of strategic national importance.

In addition to protection, when new parks are established the tutelage of the cultural landscape can also take the form of operations to restore the environment (when necessary). For example, the Cemmo Rocks National Archaeological Park involved the restoration of landscape which in the 1970s was disturbed by the construction of a sports field and a road; the situation was reconverted to that of the early 20th century and operations of environmental mitigation (tree-planting) conducted to improve marginal areas occupied by modern buildings (Fig. 11).

Sometimes the landscape was constructed in prehistoric times (Fig. 12). The clearings cut in the woods in this photograph date to the Copper Age (4th millennium BC), when a total of 4 open-air sanctuaries with engraved steles and standing stones were built: a ritual landscape in which the sanctuaries served as important territorial markers, visible from afar.

3.3. Attention to the territorial context goes together with attention to the archaeological context.

The strategy of the Superintendency in the Valle Camonica rock art site has been to encourage field research so as to stimulate study of the relations between rock art and archaeological sites and increase our understanding of the prehistoric and proto-historic population of the valley, in the conviction that this would throw light on the chronology and significance of the engravings themselves (Poggiani Keller,
The practice of conducting archaeological investigations in advance of all large-scale public construction work (in the last 10 years the valley has been crossed by two electricity lines and a trunk road) is of great importance. The results for safeguarding heritage have been positive: for example, excavations prior to the building of a new road led to the discovery of a rock face with engravings. Protecting these meant moving the road into a tunnel through the mountain, safeguarding not just the rock art, but also the hillside – the local landscape, in other words.

3.4. Strengthening and networking facilities open to the public

Commitment in this area has been strong and articulated. In accordance with the indications of the Management Plan, the development projects for the organization of new parks and sites (see below) were part of a strategic programme, agreed between the Superintendency, Lombardy Regional Authority and local authorities, in collaboration with and supported by private subjects (heritage owners and bank foundations).

This planning is based upon two regulations and agreements.

In addition to the Ministry’s three-year plans, which before the current financial crisis included specific annual funding for UNESCO Site 94, and projects financed by AR-CUS SpA (a company connected to MiBACT), the funds which have sustained these projects were largely based on two specific regulations and agreements, one national and the other local:

- Law 77/2006 “Misure speciali di tutela e fruizione dei siti italiani di interesse culturale, paesaggistico e ambientale, inseriti nella ‘lista del patrimonio mondiale’, posti sotto la tutela dell’UNESCO” (a measure which finances management plans, conservation measures and scholastic activities regarding UNESCO sites);
- The Agreement Protocol for the project “Conoscenza, tutela e valorizzazione di aree e parchi archeologici” (Knowledge, protection and development of archaeological areas and parks) signed in 2006 by the Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities (now MiBACT) – Regional Direction for Cultural and Landscape Heritage and Lombardy Archaeological Heritage Superintendency and Lombardy Regional Authority – Depts. of Culture and Identity, Town and Country Planning, and Environmental Quality (Abbiati, Minoja and Poggiani Keller 2007). The project consisted of 5 tenders which involved co-financing by regional and local authorities (70%) and private subjects (50%). Between 2007 and 2013, 9 projects for the Valle Camonica UNESCO site were completed, or are under way (for a total sum of over € 1,000,000.00).

4. THE PROJECTS

Since 2005, in addition to those already mentioned, many others have been carried out:

- for publicizing the Site (Website http://www.vallecamonicaunesco.it, 2012)
- for schools; the project Discover the signs and understand the landscape. Promotion of new services and tools for the educational use of Valle Camonica’s rock art heritage, (Scoprire i segni. Raccontare un territorio. Promozione di nuovi servizi e strumenti per la fruizione didattica del Patrimonio d’arte rupestre della Valle Camonica), which offered incentives for teaching activities in schools, the creation of the ‘Sportello infoscuola’ portal and production of teaching material for elementary schools; the project Discover the signs and understand the landscape. Innovation workshops for the improvement of the educational provisions of UNESCO Site 94 “Rock Art in Valle Camonica” (Mappare i segni. Comunicare il territorio. Laboratori di innovazione per il miglioramento dell’offerta didattica del Sito UNESCO n. 94 “Arte rupestre della Valle Camonica”) to improve the parks’ accessibility, and design sensory maps and workshops for teachers and pupils)
- for improved access (car parks serving the two National
Parks at Capo di Ponte and the National Prehistory Museum; pedestrian, cycle and road links between the centre of Darfo Boario Terme and the rock art sites of Corni Freschi and Monticolo; road-signs throughout the entire valley indicating sites and rock art parks etc.)

/uni2219visitor reception (hostels and an experiment with rural houses in the Rock Engravings Nature Reserve of Ceto, Cimbergo and Paspardo)

/uni2219conservation (in particular, the Project for monitoring…", see below).

I will discuss in more detail three projects, particularly significant examples of the different types of intervention:

1- the Project for monitoring of, and Good Practices for, the protection of UNESCO Site 94 “Rock art in Valle Camonica” (Progetto di monitoraggio e buone pratiche di tutela del Sito UNESCO n. 94 “Arte rupestre della Valle Camonica”), which for the first time compiled a complete survey of all the rock art sites in Valle Camonica that have been discovered in 100 years of exploration (over 180 sites in 30 municipal areas in the valley), with the georeferencing of individual engraved rocks (over 1500) and the recording of their state of preservation.

The project was conducted in 2012 and 2013 under the direction of the Superintendency (which also designed the project)\(^\text{11}\), and was funded, for the sum of € 270,000.00 (total expenditure € 330,000.00), by the Ministry’s Directorate General for Development under Law 77/2006 cited above.

The project’s goals were:

- personnel training by means of a Training course in survey techniques and digital manipulation regarding the preservation state of the archaeological heritage, a preparatory course for the project financed by a bank, the CARIPLO Foundation;
- survey of all the engraved rocks in Valle Camonica, with the recording of their preservation state and georeferenced position;
- the drafting of a Maintenance and Conservation Plan, as stipulated in the MP.

The project ran for 18 months, 10 of which were dedicated to fieldwork, and consisted of 4 operations:

1. Training, by means of a multi-theme course for workers of the Research Groups operative in the area: specialist organizations, universities and private subjects (firms/cooperatives/independent professionals) who work on Valle Camonica’s rock art in the context of study programmes or fieldwork directed by the Superintendency (a total of 14 archaeologists and specialists in the field).

During the course, which also involved field exercises, the workers became acquainted with and learnt to use the IRWeb cataloguing system. They had lessons regarding the Archaeological Risk Map, as well as in petrography and microbiology in relation to the causes of rock surface deterioration. Also included was rock georeferencing, with an explanation of the procedures necessary to guarantee the uniform gathering of data. The positioning information, collated in a GIS map of rock art localities, will be connected to the digital map of archaeological sites for all of Lombardy that is currently in preparation by

\(^{11}\) Coordinated by R. Poggiani Keller and M.G. Ruggiero.
the Superintendency in collaboration with the ICCD (the SigecWeb system).

2. Survey, recording and cataloguing of all the engraved rocks sited in 182 localities situated throughout the valley, for the purpose of monitoring their state of preservation (September 2012-May 2013). The project has produced the first ever map of all Valle Camonica’s rock art sites, found during 100 years of research (182 sites in 30 municipal areas), with the georeferencing of each single engraved rock (to date 1750) and the recording of its state of preservation. This information has permitted the Maintenance and Conservation Plan to be brought up to date.

This included:
- cataloguing using the IRWeb online cataloguing system (Fig. 13).
- compilation of a Site Sheet for each of the 182 rock art sites
- the georeferencing of each engraved rock. The GIS record contains both the position of sites (and their extensions) and of individual rocks (Fig. 14-15).
- This information has been passed to the councils involved for inclusion in their planning regulations.
- compilation of a Rock Sheet and Historical Background Sheet for each rock, with associated images
- compilation of Rock Preservation State Sheets. These were compiled by conservation specialists who supplied information regarding the state of preservation and also indications regarding programmed conservation treatment: the degree of damage suffered by the rock and the degree of treatment urgency. A vectorial preservation-state map was prepared using the terminology agreed with the ICR pertinent to the Cultural Heritage Risk Map.
- photographic records of engraved rocks and sites.

3. A Conservation Plan drawn up by conservation specialists together with the project coordinators. This included processing the data gathered during the systematic survey (previous operation) with use of a grid of Monitoring Indicators, already outlined in the MP and further refined and tested in the field during the project. For the identification and definition of damage to rocks, a contribution to the national project to prepare a Cultural Heritage Risk Map, the list formulated by the ICR-Normal was used (selecting only the appropriate terms).

4. Communication and public information concerning the project’s results

Information about the project is currently available:
- on the site http://www.irweb.it, where there is a page presenting the project;

Meetings will be arranged with local communities and schools, with field demonstrations open to the public and for schools. A volume presenting the results obtained is currently in course of publication (in 2014, in the series “Quaderni del Parco Nazionale”, n. 5).

These initiatives will be followed by the production of public information material, the organization of an exhibition and a study meeting.

2.3. The last two projects (parks and the museum) concern development.

Given that a large proportion of the rock art is external to the eight national, regional and municipal parks set up between 1955 and 2005, since 2005—with the definition of the UNESCO Site’s high-priority objectives in the MP—a strategy of developing new rock art sites has been pursued (Fig. 16).

These interventions have been conducted in collaboration with local authorities, together with the Regional Authority (through the 2006 Agreement Protocol mentioned above) and involve, firstly, the purchase of the relevant areas by public bodies.

Since 2009 we have been networking, by means of a Thematic itinerary, the Chalcolithic sanctuaries with stele lines: in addition to the two parks opened in 2005 (the Cemmo Rocks National Park and the Municipal Park of Anvoia di Ossimo) the sites of Corni Freschi, Darfo B.T., and Borno-Valzel de Undine have been opened to the public, with the Ossimo-Pat sanctuary soon to follow.

Furthermore, so as to promote a wider knowledge and understanding of the development of the valley’s cultural landscape through time, we are establishing Multi-theme Itineraries which connect together engraved rocks, archaeological sites, First World War military installations and areas of striking natural beauty.
The first Rock Art Recording Centre has also been opened at Lake Moro, an area when many come to swim in the summer months.

These itineraries make preferential use of the dense web of historical routes that cross the valley and constitute the network to which settlements were connected, along with all human activities including trade and commerce.

I will briefly describe a project begun in November 2013 (Project 2), with funding from the Regional Authority to the GIC, which will terminate by May 1st 2015 (the date the EXPO opens in Milan), it is entitled "Old signs and new signs. Combined project for redevelopment and the innovative use of UNESCO Site 94 “Rock art in Valle Camonica”. (Antichi e nuovi Segni. Progetto integrato per la riqualificazione e la fruizione innovativa del Sito UNESCO n. 94 “Arte rupestre della Valle Camonica”). Its aim is to present two themes - the first signs in the territory and the first writing – with regard to several rock art localities in the valley, so as to strengthen the network of parks and sites and establish new itineraries for visitors. This development is grounded in knowledge and documentation, involves conservation work and protection (both for the localities and the heritage itself) and concludes with the preparation of visitors’ information panels, proceeding therefore in accordance with the three objectives – knowledge, conservation, development– that underlie the tutelage of this UNESCO site.

The project involves six areas and concerns two topics; the first of these concerns the earliest signs in the landscape and aims to promote art from the Pleistocene period (to be found in the Luine Park - Darfo Boario Terme and recently re-evaluated), Copper Age megalithic sanctuaries (indicated by the green symbols), seen against the background of other Alpine megalithic structures, and high-altitude schematic art (light green symbols). This latter phenomenon, found not only in Valle Camonica but throughout the mountainous parts of Lombardy, has in recent years attracted much attention and been the object of systematic surveys and cataloguing which are beginning to reveal its extension and richness (proportionate to its long duration). Although not predominant, it constitutes an important manifestation of the use of mountain areas for pasturing livestock, and in the search for ore minerals, that continued up until the last century.

The first writing is the second theme that the project will use to create a new itinerary following the routes of the first writing. Recently an exceptional series of pre-Roman inscriptions on rocks have been found and studied; they are sited in unusual, specially-chosen places, which seem indeed to be cult sites and may contain tens of Camunni inscriptions dating between the 5th century and 1st or 2nd century BC, at times associated with subsequent inscriptions in Latin (though these are fewer in number).

Two sites especially contain inscription groups that are significant in terms of number and variety, and development of these is proposed: one is Berzo Demo-Loa, where the multi-theme itinerary set up in 200912 will be extended; the other is in the valley floor at Piancogno, in a dominant location along the route that joins Pian Borno to the 15th century Convento dell’Annunciata, a popular site with tourists.

12. The site was recently published, with reference also to the itinerary organization project:Marretta & Solano, 2014.
The last important new development concerns Project 3: May 2014 saw the inauguration of the National Prehistory Museum of Val Camonica (Museo Nazionale della Preistoria della Val Camonica, MUPRE for short) in Capo di Ponte (Fig. 17). Although the general public knows of the valley’s rock engravings, it is less familiar with aspects of daily life in ancient times— which have emerged only in the last 30 years thanks to the numerous emergency and research excavations carried out there.

The Archaeological Heritage Superintendancy took the first steps towards the creation of a new museum in 1997, situated in the historic town centre of Capo di Ponte, and central to visitors’ routes to the 3 rock art parks present within the same council boundary (the National Rock Engravings Park, the National Archaeological Park of the Cemmo Rocks and the Municipal Archaeological Park of Seradina-Bedolina), and indeed the focal point of information regarding UNESCO Site 94.

MUPRE was one of the essential components of the 2005 Management Plan, with a role to provide, for the first time, a permanent display illustrating the valley’s prehistory and proto-history seen in an Alpine context. It contains unique finds, such as statue-stelae and engraved menhirs from megalithic sanctuaries (still in course of excavation) that demonstrate the valley’s participation in the widespread phenomenon of European megalithism. More than 50 engraved monoliths are exhibited in the section dedicated to “Cult Manifestations. Copper Age Megalithic Sanctuaries”, a display which has direct links to the parks and sites spread throughout the valley: a sort of extended museum.

Also of great interest are the finds from settlements founded in the Late Neolithic (late 5th-4th millennium BC) and that in many cases lasted under the Romanization period, which are on show in another section of the museum. Other settlements seem to have been seasonally occupied in connection with the use of Alpine pastures and transhumance, or to have been linked to mining and metallurgical activities. These topics are developed in the “Workplaces” section, which is followed by those dedicated to Burials and Proto-historical Cult Sites.

The National Prehistory Museum, with its exhibits illustrating archaeological sites, complements Val Camonica’s heritage of rock engravings and thus offers visitors a unified vision of the valley’s identity.

I hope, in conclusion, to have given a sufficiently clear explanation of the method we have followed in recent years in our approach to rock engravings, which was explicitly stated in the Management Plan of UNESCO Site 94 “Rock Art in Val Camonica”:

- pay great attention to questions of conservation and recording;
- conduct research into the archaeological and territorial context, from a multidisciplinary and diachronic standpoint;
- connect together sites that are open to the public, with a systematic plan of operations that involves local authorities, and with a view to linking up with more extensive Alpine networks of sites, parks and museums – as well as the European rock art sites with whom we are able to dialogue at this International Symposium.

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5. BIBLIOGRAPHY


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