

NEW RESEARCH IN THE ROCK ART TRADITIONS OF THE ALPS

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Several rock art traditions are evident in the alpine areas of Europe, among the most known are those of Mont Bego and the Valcamonica-Valtellina engravings, although various other alpine valleys have evidence of engravings or paintings on rocks or within shelters or caves. Among these traditions similarities and differences in chronologies and themes have been outlined, however there are still many aspects that require further investigation.

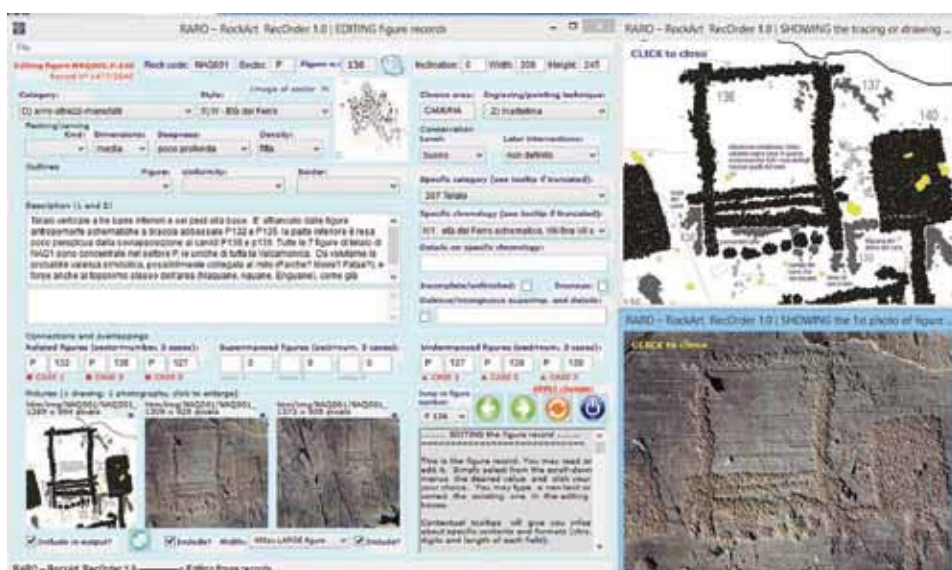
We welcome papers focusing on new discoveries of rock art sites, panels or figures; new interpretations of old data; new chronological proposals and perspectives; and the history of rock art research in the Alps.

The Great Rock of Naquane, Valcamonica, otherworldly things

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Keyword: Valcamonica, Naquane, Iron Age, mythology, salvation

A recent and complete study of the Great Rock of Naquane, one of the most important of Valcamonica rock art, was performed by the author. Based on transparency contact-tracings, combined with an ultra-high-resolution photomosaic of the entire surface, 2043 figures were catalogued, 1054 of them being significant. The engraving period demonstrates a late-Neolithic to 1942 time span, although the majority of the figures are concentrated within the VIII to mid V cent. B.C. The interpretative research reveals strong symbolic patterns, mainly expressed by the shovel, loom, deer and weaponed figures, which seem to be connected with female and male mythological characters – in some cases embodying deities – mostly acting over, or better under, an otherworldly stage. All subjects and characters are strongly connected with art which is contemporary to the early Iron Age, as expressed by the nearby situlae art or by the Etruscan funerary paintings, which may underpin a largely diffused belief in the salvation of the soul through the depiction of its otherworldly journey, till reaching the garden of Eden or the island of the blessed. Into this conceptual frame, a large part of the Great Rock Iron Age engraved items suggests the idea of a figurative funerary dedication.

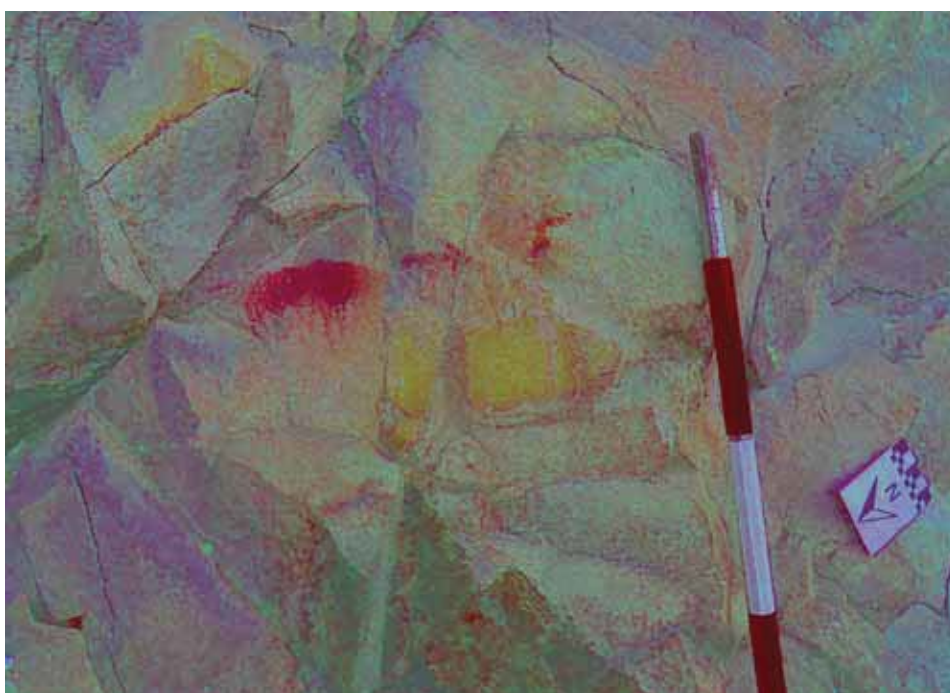


The rock paintings in the Alps: problems of chronology

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Keyword: rock paintings, Alps, Valcamonica, chronology

The presence of shelters and vertical walls displaying rock art paintings is a phenomenon that is known in the Alps even if less studied than the more common engraved rock art. The painted figures were mainly made using ochres of various shades, however, figures created using white pigment and even less common, black figures are also found. We find the same figurative themes in the painted rock art as those that are widespread in the engraved art found on open-air rocks. In particular figures such as: abstract figures (including solar motifs and those considered topographical), anthropomorphic (praying, warriors, horsemen, incomplete figures or with extra limbs), zoomorphs (deer, caprids, fishes and birds), ramiform (plants, trees, spikes). Current research indicates an element of paralleled chronology with some of the engraved figures. The dating of the painted figures has not yet benefited from direct dating methods but relies on a proposed chronology based on comparisons with the engraved art, predominantly from the Neolithic to the Iron Age. The current challenges rest in the chronology of the anthropomorphic figures and the schematic art. The authors examine examples from the central-western Alps with an in-depth analysis of the chronological problems posed by the Valcamonica paintings.



The Balma dei Cervi rock paintings at Crodo: recording, analysis and study

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Keyword: rock-paintings, recording, Neolithic, Bronze Age, virtual museum

The painted shelter of the Balma dei Cervi, the “Shelter of the deer” at Crodo (Piedmont, I), is one of the most important of all the Alps. The painted area is a vertical wall along an extensive and impressive rock shelter. The forty figures, executed in various shades of red, are characterized by a series of human schematic characters; they reveal a great dynamism, maybe representing movement and/or dance, and are likely to be associated with the series of dots arranged in rows. The iconographic comparison can follow two different chronological paths, linked to the latest phases of the Bronze Age or to middle Neolithic, in this case coinciding with the oldest processes of the Neolithic settlements. The Crodo municipality recently launched a recording project, under the scientific direction of the Archaeological Superintendency and the specialized contribution of the Footsteps of Man archaeological cooperative. The shelter, due to its fragility and access difficulties, cannot be turned into an open-air museum: as such, a virtual online museum is planned. An immersive virtual model will show a 360° panoramic gigapixel photo experience, combined with the rendering of the tracings and D-Stretched images. The virtual online museum will be enriched by 3D-SfM models.



Rock 116 of Bial do le Scale, Paspardo, Valcamonica

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Keyword: Valcamonica rock art, Paspardo, Iron Age, Warrior art

This work summarizes the research undertaken for my thesis on rock 116 of Bial do le Scale, Paspardo, and contributes to the study of the 4th style (Iron Age) rock art of Valcamonica. The area is characterized by the presence of several engraved rocks dating from three main chronological horizons: the end of Neolithic, represented by topographic figures, the Bronze Age, represented by schematic human figures and the Iron age, the larger proportion of engravings. As a result of the complete tracing of rock 116, undertaken during the fieldwork organized by the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart of Brescia in collaboration with the Footsteps of Man Society, it was possible not only to catalogue all the engraved figures on the rock, but also to research their representations, chronology and relationship to other rock art in the immediate area. Of the 95 figures identified so far: the majority represent anthropomorphs, but there are also animals and, due to the condition of the rock, unidentifiable figures. The identifiable engravings are all ascribed, as are most of the figures of Bial do le Scale, to the Iron age, especially to the period between the 7th and the 1st century BC.



Fig. 1 - Tracing of rock 116, Bial do le Scale, Paspardo. (tracing Footsteps of Man Society and Catholic University of Sacred Heart)

Fig. 2 - Bial do le Scale, Paspardo, rock 116. (photo Jessica Bezzi)

Game' figures in Valcamonica's rock art

Among the figures that make up the corpus of Valcamonica's rock art, there are a number that represent games, or rather board games such as those similar in form to the contemporary games of Nine Men Morris, Alquerque etc. These types of figures are well known and widespread throughout the Alps and have already been the subject of research, but no specific investigations have been carried out with a focus on the area of Valcamonica; the possibility that these figures may represent a function beyond game play has also been explored, touching on the possibility that they may have also taken on a symbolic value at some point in the chronology of their use. The purpose of this work is to present a contextual view of these 'game' figures within the Valcamonica region and to draw on the current broader research on these types of figures to offer a chronological and interpretative hypothesis.

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Keyword: Valcamonica, games, board games, symbols, Alps



Fig.1 - Rock n. 49, Rock Engravings National Park of Naquane, Capo di Ponte, Italy. (photo Linda Bossoni)

Fig.2 - Rock n.49, Rock Engravings National Park of Naquane, Capo di Ponte, Italy. (photo Linda Bossoni)

Rock 5 of Castello (Paspardo, Valcamonica) an extraordinary topographic composition from the 4th Millennium BC

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Keyword: topographic map, engravings, Paspardo, rock art

Regional and international research on representations of maps in rock art demonstrate their widespread importance within several societies in the past. From larger area, cartographic representations to more specific localised topographic maps they form a physical representation of what is known, perceived or imagined within the landscape. The recent discovery of an ancient topographic map composition on rock five in Castello (a residential area of Paspardo, In Valle), has been uncovered and recorded. The region has several examples of topographic maps including similar engraved geometric images within their compositions. Comparing Rock 5 to the known examples in the literature, such as the Bedolina rock, and drawing on the particular elements of Rock 5 in Castello, it is possible to build on the current knowledge of petroglyphs in the valley. The possible interpretations for these compositions have been explored in the past (e.g. Anati 2009, Arca 1994, 1999, 2004, 2007, Delano Smith 1982, Fossati 2007). This composition not only contributes to the data of the existing known topographic map images of the area but extends the research within the interpretative sphere.



Fig.1 - Topographic composition. Rock 5 of Castello, Paspardo, Valcamonica. (photo Marisa Giorgi)

Fig.2 - Recording of the topographic composition. Rock 5 of Castello, Paspardo, Valcamonica. (photo Marisa Giorgi)

Rock art and oral transmission in the Central Eastern Alps

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Keyword: Oral traditions, Valcamonica, Laces, rock art, Iceman

There is remarkable evidence from Val Venosta and Valcamonica, demonstrating the central role of rock art in the formation, preservation and transmission of historical memories. Among other engravings, the stele from Laces in Val Venosta exhibits a very unusual scene. It appears to be a hunting scene, but the archer is not chasing an animal such as a deer, his bow targets another human figure. What event does this chase remind us of? Perhaps the killing of the Iceman from Similaun, not far from Laces? The mummy of this authoritative man, as witnessed by his tattoos and certain objects found on his person, proves his murder was due to an arrowhead lodged under his left scapula. Such a death could not be long forgotten. In the so-called Middle Val Camonica we can find three places of worship dedicated to three saints, Cristina, Fermo and Glisente, recalling the protagonists of a medieval legend. This legend presents some extraordinary similarities to the rituals represented on the Camunian steles from the Calcolithic period. The anthropomorphic triad of the Ossimo stele with two male and one female figure cannot go unnoticed.



Fig. 1 - Laces, Alto Adige, Italy. Copper Age stele. (drawing by A.E. Fossati & A. Pedrotti)
Fig. 2 - Ossimo, Valcamonica, Italy. Copper Age stele n. 9. (photo A.E. Fossati, Coop. Le Orme dell'Uomo)

Neolithic rock art at the Rocher du Château site (Bessans, Savoy, France): research on pigments

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Keyword: rock art, Neolithic, schematic paintings, Raman spectroscopy, pigment analysis, in-situ analysis

The Rocher du Château (at 1750m. a.s.l.) is one of the ten schematic rock art painting sites in the Alps. Thanks to archaeological surveys and excavations, the occupation of the site is attributed to the Neolithic period. Among other artifacts, the presence of pigments and associated pigment fragments point to aspects of the production of rock art on the serpentinite rock. By combining in situ (Raman spectroscopy) and laboratory methods (scanning electron microscopy, X-ray diffraction), the study of the pigment evidence from excavation and the paintings has been carried out. The study of rock art is challenging because of the thinness of the painted layer, the mineral deposits below and above the painted layer, and the requirements for micro-sampling. Integrated methods are essential to understanding the taphonomy of the surface bedrock and to gain insights into the composition of the pigment used. The analysis of the pigment compositions raises questions regarding the preparation and of the supply of the raw materials used. Understanding the association of various minerals and the identification of the anthropic mixtures is crucial to enable comparisons between the pigment mixtures used, the associated pigment fragments or powdered pigments deposits on a surface.



Fig.1 - Macrophotographies of coloring and colored matters (EDYTEM): a) RDC01, b) RDC03, c) RDC06 and d) RDC07 (black scale represents 2 mm). (E. Chalmin)

Fig.2 - In situ Raman spectroscopy device on the front of the Deer panel (Rocher du Château, Bessans, France) (MONARIS). (E. Chalmin)



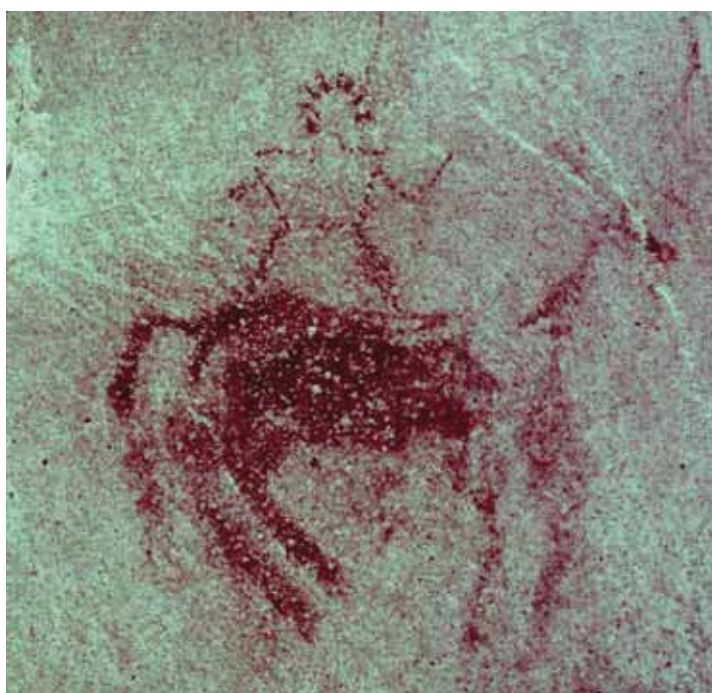
**«Pitoti dipinti»:
recovering the lost
prehistoric paintings
of Valcamonica,
Alpine Italy, with
digital colour
transforms - a new
aspect to studying
ancient European art**

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**Keyword: Valcamonica, rock-
art, rock-painting, Colour
transforms**

A comparatively new discovery amongst the pitoti rock-engravings of Valcamonica is ancient painting on exposed surfaces. Faded and faint, these pitoti dipinti, known since 1992, have not been studied closely. The digital technology of colour transforms allows us to recover crisp images. From the main panel, the method recovers them from four faint figures, and discovers two “invisible” figures where the naked eye notices nothing. These six figures are mostly of horses with riders; one is two overlapping images. At another site, painting and pecking (rock-engraving) techniques occur together. The dangers of confident recovery with the powerful graphic tools of colour transforms are explored to answer the question: are the pictures “made” by our image transforms really correct? A distinctive type of axe dates one figure to the Late Iron Age. The emergent manner of this painted art is described, and how it both repeats and differs from the manner with which similar subjects are depicted in pecked figures of comparable dates. The value of analysing Valcamonica art, and rock-art generally, in terms of the three aspects of “subject”, “manner” of depiction and “technique” is demonstrated, as likely to be more productive than the habitual idea of studying “style”.



The Mont des Fourches of Saint-Vincent, a new rock art complex from the Neolithic period in Valle d'Aosta

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Keyword: Valle Aosta, Mont des Fourches, Neolithic rock art, ibexes, Megalithic art

In June 2014 two engraved rocks with figures of ibex were discovered during surveys conducted by the Société Valdôtaine de Préhistoire et d'Archéologie of Aosta at Mont des Fourches, Saint-Vincent (Aosta). This area was already known for the presence of rocks with non-figurative art (cup marks and grooves). The ibex are mostly depicted with large horns in a lateral view (one is represented in a frontal view), but without the annual horn growth and beard found on the real animals. On the rock that is jutting out over the river Dora there are also 5 fringed figures, U-shaped signs and two schematic praying figures with arms depicted in different positions. The dating for the ibexes and U-shaped figures and fringed figures can be provisionally proposed as being from the Middle Neolithic due to the possible comparisons with the megalithic art of Brittany. In particular compared with the figures located on a large menhir from the Locmariaquer site, which depicts two animals with big horns in frontal and lateral views. Moreover, it is also necessary to consider the proximity of this site to the engravings complex of the Montjovet Chenal shelter, which has megalithic art motifs dating to the same phase.



Fig. 1 - Mont des Fourches, Saint-Vincent, Aosta, Italy. Rock 1. The ibex with horns seen in frontal view. (tracing A.E. Fossati)

Fig. 2 - Mont des Fourches, Saint-Vincent, Aosta, Italy. Rock 2. Grids, ibexes, U-shaped figures. (photo A.E. Fossati)

The cancellation of some figures in the rock art of Valcamonica: in search of a possible interpretation

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Keyword: cancellation, iconoclast, *damnatio memoriae*, Valcamonica

One of the least studied phenomena of the rock art in Valcamonica is that of figures that have been defaced, obliterated or damaged on purpose. We are not dealing with the intentionality of overlaps between the figures or the gender changes of the stele from the Copper Age and the gender competition for rock art sites overlapping female on male figures or vice versa. Conversely, the phenomenon of cancellation appears to be more widespread, especially during the warrior art period, from the Final Bronze Age onwards, in almost all the known sites. We find animal, human and object images that exhibit percussions only on certain areas, widespread deep strokes, or whole figures deleted through percussive action. Given the number of effected figures what can be deduced in regards to the significance of this activity? Concerning the complete erasure of human figures, one may suppose '*damnatio memoriae*'; In other cases, these may represent actions that reaffirm the past ritual act related to the image or a later related ritual affirmation somehow connected to the image. Further research will be required to reach a more comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon

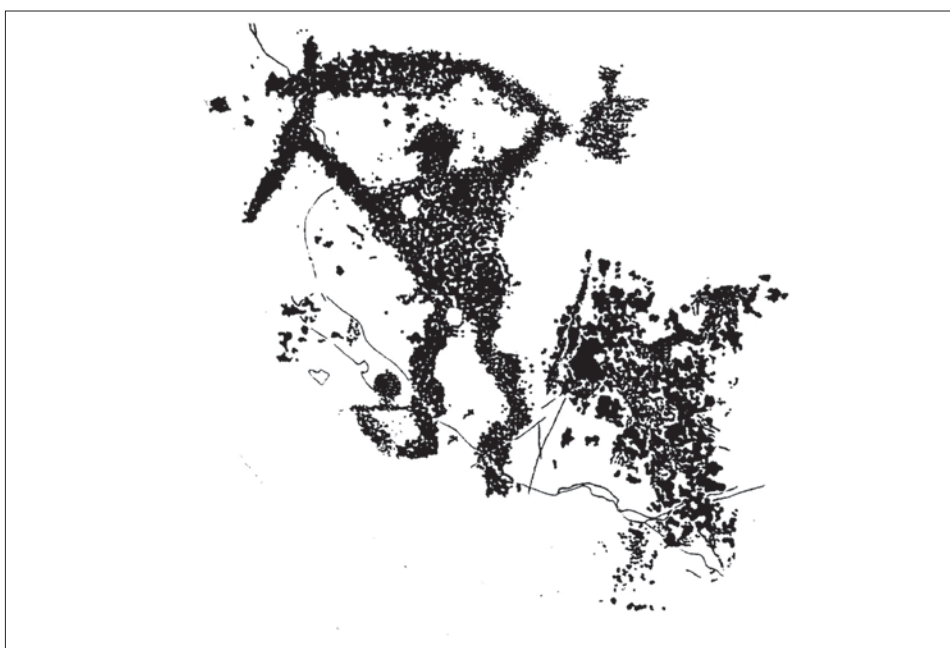


Fig. 1 - Capo di Ponte, Naquane rock 50. Warrior figure completely deleted through percussive action. (drawing by A.E. Fossati, *Le Orme dell'Uomo*)
Fig. 2 - Capo di Ponte, Naquane rock 35. A bird figure exhibits percussions only on certain areas of the body. (photo A.E. Fossati, *Le Orme dell'Uomo*)

Use and reuse of externals imagery in the Iron Age Rock Art of Valcamonica

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Keyword: Iron Age, Valcamonica, iconography, engravings, rock art

Past cultural exchange between communities in the Alpine area and the Po Valley is nowadays an accepted fact. In this paper, the research aims to clarify the links between the rock engravings and imagery derived from the Etruscan, Raetic and Celtic iconography. Beginning from at least the seventh century BC, the warlike aristocracies of Valcamonica enjoyed showcasing themselves within the engravings in a rich set of scenes referring to the lifestyle and fashion shared by the wealthy élites of the Alpine area and Po Valley. Hence equestrian games are shown in which Etruscan-style acrobatic skills are tested; tribe leaders are represented with signs of power related to Celtic culture; hybrid and unusual animals are engraved recalling Raeto-Celtic themes. Through new interpretation of some engraved scenes the authors intend to offer further insights in order to enhance the understanding of the complexity and richness of Valcamonica rock-art.

Weaving in the alpine area through Valcamonica rock art

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Keyword: looms, Naquane, rock art, weaving, Bronze Age, Iron Age

This research began with the aim of confirming the data already obtained and consolidated regarding the so-called “figure of the loom”. Only seven such figures are known, that can be seen amongst the thousands of images on the rock surfaces in the National Park of Naquane at Capo di Ponte in Valcamonica (Northern Italy), and these have been left out of the current debate regarding rock art engravings. A second aim was to broaden the horizons of research with comparisons, both archaeological and iconographical, concerning the area of Northern Italy and Continental Europe. Lastly, the main purpose was to expose new elements related to the research object and also to suggest a new analysis and perspective for the chronology of these enigmatic images.

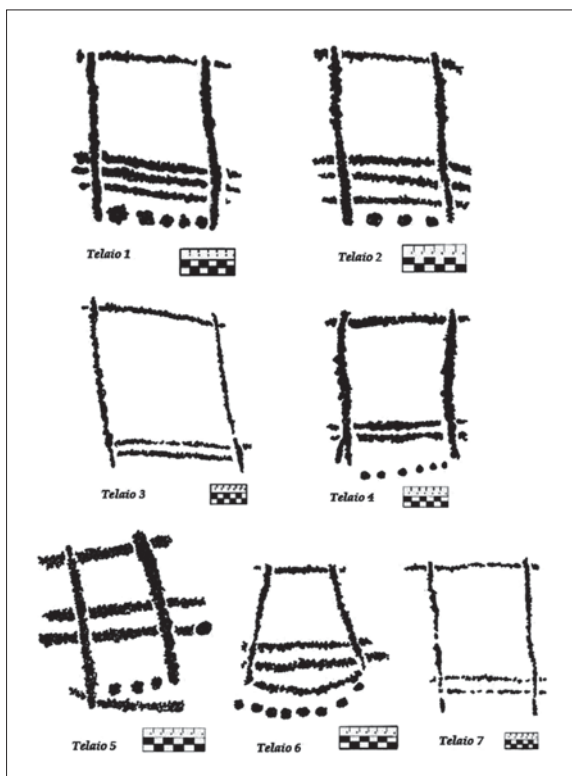


Fig.1 - Naquane National Park (relief drawn by photogarhy)
 Fig.2 - Rock 1 Naquane National Park (image kindly offered by SABAP BG-BS)

Rock art research in the Northern Limestone Alps of Tyrol, Austria

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**Keyword: rock art research
in Austria, engravings, Raetic
inscriptions, Tyrol**

Austrian Archeological reports scarcely mention rock art in the western federal states of Austria. During the past four years, rock art has been a focus of documentation by the Institute of Archeology at the University of Innsbruck in particular recording rock art in the Northern Limestone Alps of Tyrol.

Selected steep surfaces of rock boulders in the forests of the Northern Alps display unique rock art. 24 Raetic inscriptions (roughly dated between the fifth and the first century B.C.) have been identified in the area of Achensee. They represent the oldest known inscriptions in Tyrol and 12 % of the known Raetic inscriptions. Furthermore, some rocks from the same locality exhibit additional engravings and indicate a use from late Hallstatt HaD/Latène LTA period of approximately 500 BC to late medieval times until the modern ages.

The rock art of the area was documented using archeological methods including diverse digital 2D- and 3D- visualizations. Despite attempts to interpret the various rock art images from the different time periods, it will remain open for discussion. This comprehensive archeological documentation and analysis of the rock art of Tyrol contributes to rock art research generally and to the cultural heritage of Austria.



Fig.1 - Achenkirch - AK 1.1 - 1.3, raetic inscriptions. (© Ilsinger)

Moving beyond the god Bego

Since 1868, when the scientific community began to research Mount Bego (Tende, Alpes-Maritimes, France) and its 35 000 rock engravings dated from the Prehistoric times, the area has been the subject of numerous symbolic interpretations, most of which identify the site as a sanctuary dedicated to one or more deities of the Neolithic and the Early Bronze Age. Our theoretical and critical approach aims to identify and expose the main weaknesses of these interpretations, which are often based on inadequate comparisons and hasty observations, sometimes unrelated to the chrono-cultural context of the engravings. Frequented from the early Neolithic period, the region of Mount Bego is above all a high-altitude environment, first of all linked to pastoralism and the practice utilizing summer pastures, as well as the exploitation of raw materials and hunting activities. From an anthropological perspective, we take into account the diachrony in the creation of the different cycles of engraved motifs and thus discuss the identities and the functions of the prehistoric engravers in order to renew the debate about the meaning of these rock images and their relation to the profane and the sacred.

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Keyword: Mount Bego, rock engravings, Neolithic, Early Bronze Age, symbolic interpretations, pastoralism



Fig. 1 - View of Mount Bego from the Fontanalba valley. (© J. Masson Mourey)
Fig. 2 - The famous engraving of the « Sorcerer » in the valley of Wonders, supposed image of the Bego god. (© J. Masson Mourey).

Similarities and differences in chronologies and themes in the rock art of Valcamonica

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Keyword: rock art, Valcamonica, themes, chronology, environment

Valcamonica has been the focus of research since the 1960s with a continuing improvement on the use of technology and digital resources. The introduction of a database, digital photos, GIS and other technologies have improved the documentation of the rock art, environmental data, rocks and engravings. In light of the detailed research and the publication of new data, it is now possible to start defining the different features of this phenomenon, analysing the chronological diffusion and recurrent themes in different areas. The connection between sites with a high proportion of rocks with rock art and densely engraved panels, and environment, both natural and anthropic, is now visible and it is possible to define recurring models. For each chronological phase, the choice of sites has clearly considered the natural landscape context, the presence or not of water, the territory and surfaces morphology, the proximity or distance of settlements or areas of production, as well as other factors no longer archaeologically visible. The analysis considers the context of the middle Valcamonica, focusing on the left orographic side. The research presented will put forth a synthesis of the distributive features of rock art sites taking into consideration different characteristic such as chronology, recurrent themes, and engraving density.

Cruciform anthropomorphs in the Alps

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Keyword: cruciform, anthropomorphs, Alps, rock art

The pre-Christian cruciform symbol arouses controversial debate because of the difficulty of differentiating them from Christian crosses. There are limited academic studies on the subject and this conceals the fact that when we investigate further these figures appear to represent a significant universal memory. Several tens of thousands of these engravings are distributed in the massifs between Switzerland, Italy and France. Following a detailed study of thousands of these signs in the Alps and the Massif Central of France, my research focuses on what is known about these engravings, the way they evolved over time and their subsequent variations. Among the schematic signs the one with the most variants carries an anthropomorphic explanation, and it represents a significant geographical and temporal marker. The most accepted meaning for these engraved cruciforms is an anthropomorphic representation. It appears to be a particular evolution of the representation of human prayer. These schematic representations are likely to have appeared in Europe from the beginning of the Neolithic period. The cruciform anthropomorph is a highly simplified form, featuring only a horizontal line for the arms and a vertical line for body and legs. They have a strong affinity with cup marked stones.



Fig.1 - Cruciform rock art at Traversella Municipality (TO-I), along the "Path of the Souls", local name "Mont 'd Rivelle" Italia. (photo A. Arcà - GRCM 1995 - <http://www.rupestre.net/archiv/2/ar14.htm>)
Fig.2 - Cruciform rock art at Feissons-sur-Salin Savoie France. (photo Michel Pellicier)

The Goddess Isis in Valcamonica. The evolution of an ancestral local cult of fertility from prehistoric Rock Art onwards?

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Keyword: Isis, fertility, Mother Goddess, Valcamonica, worship

The echoes of a local pre-Indo-European religion reverberated for millennia in the remote alpine valley of Valcamonica. Recurrent contents are locally worshipped with new expressions in a continuous iconographic line from Prehistory until the Middle Age. In the 17th century, some local sources still recall the veneration of Isis, the main honoured deity on the Latin Inscriptions of Cividate Camuno, the administrative centre of Valcamonica under Roman rule. Local art expression from Middle Age onwards seems to have strong connections with the ancient cults. In this context, Isis Regina – Great Mother, cosmic principle, goddess of fertility and healing, moonlight goddess – could be the Roman interpretation of a prehistoric deity of fertility. Aesthetic forms and styles changed through time, but the social value of a local devotion to a goddess of fertility persisted. The solar disc of Isis could have inspired the polysemic syncretism in Valcamonica, where we find great evidence of an ancestral worship of the Sun. The female stelae in Valcamonica's rock art will be analysed taking also into account as comparative materials prehistoric figurative expressions of religious beliefs in other parts of Europe, like the Baltic States and Scandinavia, where the Sun is linked to female deities of fertility and regeneration.



Fig.1 - Stele of Borno 1. (photo courtesy of the Centro Camuno di Studi Preistorici)

Fig.2 - Latin Inscription of the Goddess Isis at the Museo Archeologico of Cividate Camuno (Inscr.It. X, V 1168). (photo by Monica Pavese Rubins)

Piancogno: a rock art sanctuary from Prehistory to History

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Keyword: Piancogno, Valcamonica, rock art, engravings, scratched figures, Tène culture

In Valcamonica, which is mostly noted for its engraved images on the glacially polished bedrock surface, the discovery of a unique area exclusively decorated with fine scratched images on vertical walls importantly hints towards more complex ritual scenarios than those hypothesized on in the past. The vertical cliffs above Piancogno are difficult to reach, highly exposed to the sun and dominate the valley below. My research has revealed the presence of a large quantity of very detailed figures. Dated to a relatively recent period, between the 3rd and 2nd century AD, and are culturally linked to both the La Tène culture and to the Romanization phenomenon, which flourished with the erection of the Civitas Camunnorum at the foot of the engraved site. Symbols of Christianization were also added in historical times. The iconographic repertoire is very similar to that found in other Valcamonica sites, particularly in the central area of the valley. Nonetheless at Piancogno there is a special preference for figures of weapons, animals and inscriptions in the local pre-Roman alphabet, with mixed cases of inscriptions in Latin alphabet as well. The analysis of this great iconographic complex, which is still being researched, makes it possible to re-read the classic engraved Valcamonica rock art in a new light.



Fig. 1 - Piancogno, Valcamonica. (photo A. Priuli)

Fig. 2 - Piancogno, Valcamonica. (photo A. Priuli)

Cross-dating in rock art. A case of study for the definition of the chronology of real finds

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**Keyword: cross-dating,
Introbio knives, Late Iron Age,
rock art, Valcamonica**

In my PhD research, discussed in 2015 at the Universidade de Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro in Vila Real (Portugal), I examined a series of knives belonging to the family of knives with sinuous blades. These knives are made of iron, with a sheath of composite material (wood and iron). They are known in literature as Introbio or Lovere types and are characteristic of the late Iron Age in Northern Italy, in Alpine and Peri-Alpine areas. The same knives are known in Valcamonica rock art. The focus of this paper is the application of an anomalous kind of cross-dating. If in fact we usually use archaeological finds from closed associations (mainly tombs) to date well recognizable objects in rock art, I propose to use cross-dating in the opposite way. While the dating of Introbio knives from tombs is restricted to the LT D2 (50-25 a.C.), the stylistic rock art phases in which the type appears extends its circulation chronology until the second half of the 2nd century BC. Therefore, rock art can allow to better define the dating of finds rarely attested in dating contexts.



Fig. 1 - Lecco (LC), Museo Archeologico.
Knife from Introbio (LC, Valsassina).
(photo F. Roncoroni)
Fig. 2 - Foppe di Nadro (BS), r. 24
(relief F. Roncoroni)

The project “Quattro Dossi” (Four Hills): new discoveries at Dos dell’Arca (Capo di Ponte, Valle Camonica)

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Keyword: Prehistoric rock engravings, Valle Camonica, Prehistoric Alps, Rock Art, Dos dell’Arca

In 2015, the Università di Pavia, in collaboration with Soprintendenza Archeologia della Lombardia, initiated a research project in Capo di Ponte (BS), in the locality, for the first time examined at a macro-area level, and named “Quattro Dossi”. This area includes the sites of Dos dell’Arca, Pié, Piciò, along with a fourth rocky hill that only recently drew archaeological interest. The place has been known since the 1950s, thanks to the presence of several prehistoric rock engravings and archaeological evidence, while Dos dell’Arca was studied in 1962. The excavations, directed by Emmanuel Anati, uncovered a site of great importance, with two main settlement phases dated to the Medium Bronze Age and to the Late Iron Age and the occurrence of engraved rock surfaces covered by archaeological stratigraphy. The 2015-2017 research has revealed a wealth of previously unknown rock art, along with a new documentation of the archaeological structures still standing at the site. This research highlights the work undertaken at Dos dell’Arca, where the new finds have tripled the total number of engraved surfaces known and substantially increased the recorded iconographical features, offering a new and more complex understanding of this central, pre-protolithic, area of Valle Camonica.



Fig.1 - Capo di Ponte, Dos dell’Arca.
(photo Paolo Rondini)

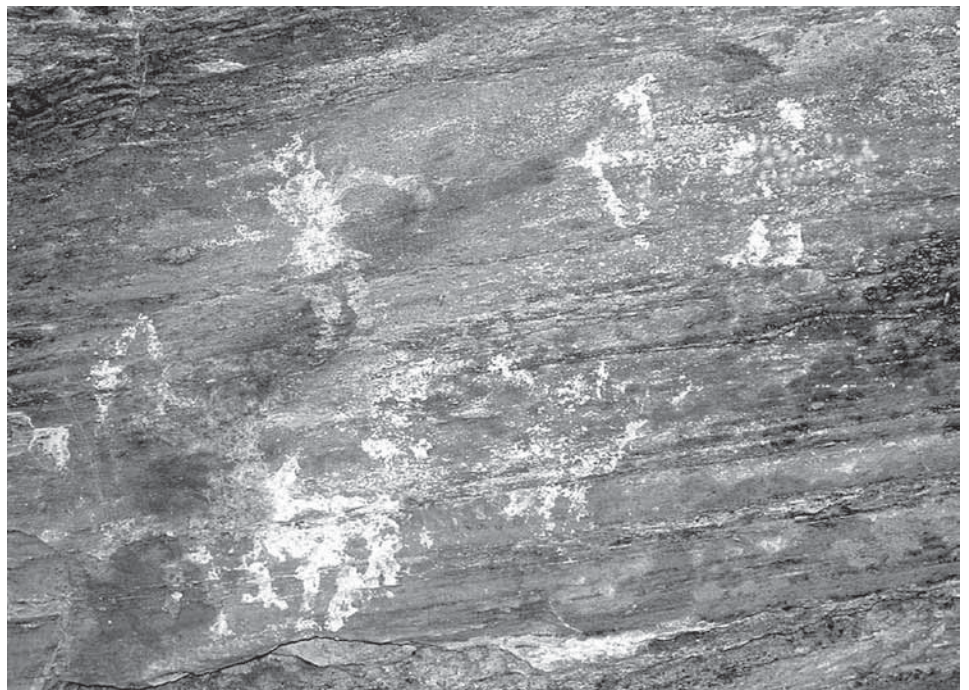
Fig. 2 - Capo di Ponte, Dos dell’Arca -
3D model processed by Paolo Rondini

Mounted bowmen in the rock art of the Alps

Although rare within the rock art images of the Alps, mounted bowmen have occasionally been recorded: engraved in Seradina (Val Camonica - I) and Carschenna (Graubünden - CH) and painted images in Mompantero (Val di Susa - I). These mounted bowmen have been attributed to the Iron Age period. This current research attempts to analyze these images and assign them precise dating. These will be compared to ones associated with archaeological evidence, the iconography of mounted bowmen on contemporary Greek painted pottery and on Etruscan and Italic bronze vessels. This research also aims to explain this method of fighting: are they representations of Scythian warriors, moving from Pannonia in late 6th-early 5th century BC, as occurred in the 10th century AD with Magyar knights travelling towards western Europe through the Alps?

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**Keyword: Alps, Scythians,
mounted bowmen, painted
rock art, Seradina**



Analysis of the overlapping elements of rock engravings on the cast of the rock called “Altare” (region of Mount Bego). Several relevant techniques compared

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Keyword: Mount Bego, cast, superimpositions, engravings, recording techniques

Fig.1 - Cast of the rock called “Altare”.
(© CD06 - Musée des Merveilles)

Fig.2 - Detail of overlapping elements.
(© CD06 - Musée des Merveilles)

The rock called “Altare” (the Altar) is one of the most significant engraved rocks of the rupestrian archaeological sites of the Bego region (in the French Maritime Alpine area). There are approximately 1400 engraved motifs (e.g. weapons, bovinds, grids, completely pecked areas) and there are numerous cases of superimpositions worthy of a specific study. The resin cast of a portion of this rock is exhibited at the *Musée départemental des Merveilles* (Roya valley) and the authors used the data from this cast to compare different restitution and drawing techniques, analyze the results for the understanding of the superimpositions, and for evaluating their advantages and disadvantages. The three techniques compared are: the “classic” contact tracing, the 3D photogrammetry and the 3D Laser Scanning. In light of the results obtained, the authors compare, contrast and evaluate the different techniques to assess their efficacy both individually and in combination as a “case study” useful for the research of the superimpositions of engraved figures and the application of new technologies in the research of alpine rock archeology.



Is there rock art in Slovenia?

Rock art is present worldwide and over considerable time periods, in a variety of forms. Paintings and engravings in caves or open-air sites have been used as indicators of human activity, often linked to evidence of ritual and belief, from the Paleolithic onward. Found across Europe and from the Iberian Peninsula to Russia, in the Paleolithic, Neolithic and Bronze age. However, there are regions in Europe where there have been no reports of rock art. Often these regions devoid of rock art are limited to within the national borders of a certain country. One of such rock art “black holes” is Slovenia. Despite the numerous engravings and paintings that mark human existence throughout the Apennine peninsula, the first, and so far, last, prehistoric painting site was found in 2009 in the cave of Bestažovca. The fact that the Val Camonica rock art park, with one of the largest collections of prehistoric petroglyphs in the world, is located only 370 km from the border of Slovenia, makes it is hard to believe that the paintings in Bestažovca cave and two undated petroglyphs from a cave near Trnovski studenec, are the only cases of rock art in the entire country which covers an area of 20,273 km².

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Keyword: Slovenia, rock art, absence of rock art, Bestažovca, Trnovski studenec