

*Chapter 8*  
**FORMATIVE EUROPE**

Having examined the general path of an evolution which covers eight millennia, from its origins to the Roman conquest, some details which restore to Europe long-lost chapters of its history will now be discussed.

In the eighth and seventh millennia B.C. the Camonica Valley, just as in other parts of Europe, was inhabited by small, nuclear groups of humans who lived in rock shelters or in modest encampments. They used small instruments fashioned from flint, called microliths, and produced the rock art common to hunting peoples; large figures of animals often roughly executed. There was then a brief interruption in the archeological sequence in the Camonica Valley, probably due to a climatic episode of intense cold. After several centuries we find testimony to a new type of culture, of human groups dedicated to agriculture and to the domestication of animals, who utilized ceramic pots and a new types of instruments in chipped and polished stone such as axes and hatchets, and millstones used for grinding grain into flour as well as for pulverizing dyes and pigments.

For the moment, there are no elements of continuity in the Camonica Valley between the Proto-Camunian sub-naturalistic style and those of successive periods. Between the first bands of hunters and the agriculturists it seems that there was a clean cultural break, both in the style and thematic material of the rock art, and in the typology of the material culture. But from the sixth millennium B.C., that is from the Neolithic onwards, it is possible to follow an evolution in style and conceptual expression that, from the highly symbolic and hermetic compositions of the first phases, reached the descriptive, anecdotal scenes of the later periods.

New technologies increased over the millennia, a manifestation of the refinement of man's intellect. They are also the cause of minor

revolutions in daily life and in the economic and social structure. These changes are illustrated in the rock art, and it is informative to see how they are reflected in its themes. It is possible to identify some of the prominent conceptual stages which the population passed through; from the Proto-Camunian period, during which man, displaying a typical hunter's mentality, depicted the outlines of large animals accompanied by symbols and ideograms, through the stage in which man seems to become aware of himself, to that in which he is able to incorporate whatever nature has to offer into his artwork.

During the Neolithic, the animal figures almost completely disappear and man becomes the main topic of his own figurative creativity and interest. Not only does he become conscious of himself, he considers himself the center of the universe as well. He acquires the arrogance which from then on he has never lost. He also begins to worship his own image. These divinities and images with a human form are clearly expressed and have been present ever since.

At the beginning of the Neolithic period, around 5,500 B.C., one of the new innovations introduced was the bow and arrow. Previously, man had hunted mainly with the spear. Even with the use of a spear thrower, its thrust depended directly on the energy released by the human arm. With the bow, however, the arm's energy is transmitted and accumulated and then released suddenly. It is the first efficient use of mechanical force: an innovation in thought, which represents a new level of cognitive synthesis.

In the same period, we see another important technological breakthrough which allows man to make more efficient use of his resources: animals are domesticated and plants are cultivated. Previously, man had searched for and gathered wild fruit. There was a moment in time when, instead of leading a constantly nomadic life, he chose to move trees or shrubs, planting them near his dwelling. He was able to transform them, "domesticate" them, so that they became more productive. This was a turning point for man and his environment.

Previously, every time man needed meat, he hunted an animal, threw it over his shoulders, and carried it to his camp where his family awaited him. Then he learned that he could capture very young animals, keep them fenced in or tied up, and feed them. Thus, there was no longer the need to go out searching for hours and hours; he would simply choose an animal whenever necessary from those in

captivity. This is not merely a small step in evolution, but a new kind of existential relationship between man and nature, extremely important for everything that happened afterwards. Conceiving and planning the enslavement of other living beings as a reserve supply of food was an important change in the process of human thought.

The next step, from enslaving animals to enslaving other men in order to exploit their energy and recourses to his own advantage, is surely not much greater. In effect this began, in the Neolithic period, a chain reaction which spread throughout the succeeding periods. It was a new development of man, one which profoundly shaped the very essence of human society.

It should be noted that this control over plants and animals permitted a population growth that would not have been possible otherwise. The ease of having food at his disposal made it possible for man to proliferate, and the result was an enormous increase in the size of the human population. Has this been for better or for worse?

Another technological introduction which takes place in the Neolithic is the use of pottery. Man took clay, added water, molded and baked it, and thus transformed it into a new material which was neither clay, nor water, but pottery. He put clay and water through a process which he obviously did not scientifically analyze, but of which he saw the results. This is another way in which man took possession of a piece of nature by successfully transforming the elements. The human brain, by its very nature, first discovers things almost by accident, and only later coordinates them into "physical laws."

In the Chalcolithic period, between the end of the Neolithic and the beginning of the Bronze Age, (3,300-2,500 B.C., according to calibrated C.14 dating), a wave of ideological and religious influences linked some of the principal rock art zones together: the Camonica Valley, Valtellina, Alto Adige, the Swiss Vallese, and Val d'Aosta, and separated them stylistically from the other rock art groups, such as Mount Bego in the French Maritime Alps. Such developments are likely to imply the presence of external cultural elements which had entered the Alpine area. There are diverse hypotheses as to what brought about these new changes. The idea that a great migration of peoples took place at this time would appear in contradiction with other data that places such a movement in an earlier period. It has been suggested that the innovations were imported by travelers. They

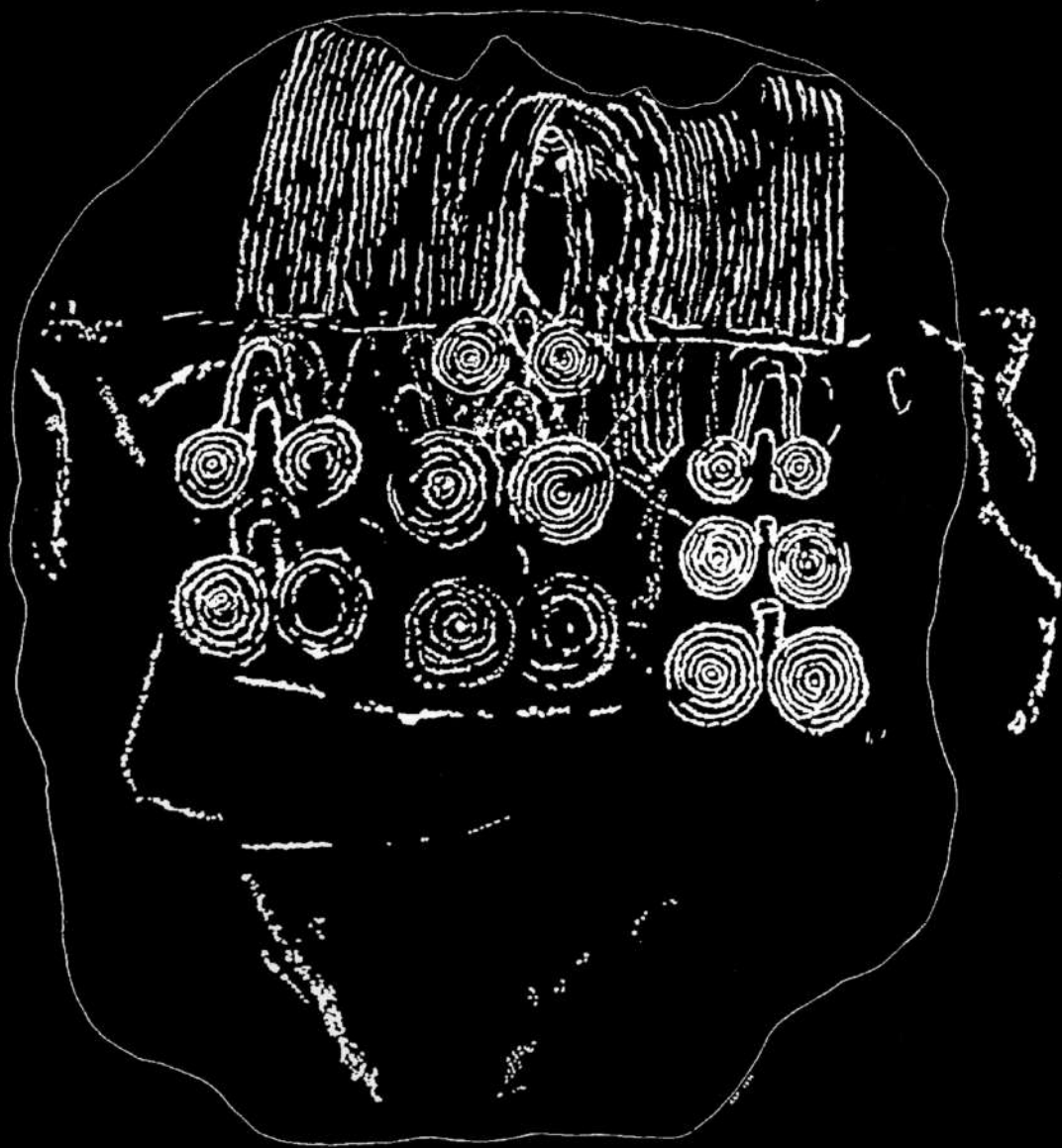
might have been wandering merchants, artisans with a life similar to that of the gypsies of today, or even missionaries. This is a question that remains unanswered.

Then, at the end of the Bronze Age, around the year 1,000 B.C., new external cultural influences came to unite the Central Alpine zones with the continental "Urn Fields" culture, so called because of type of necropolis which characterizes it. The Iron age populations in these zones, by their language and culture Indo-European, are directly descended from the Urn Fields culture whose center of propagation was spread through the Middle European area of Bohemia, Moravia, Austria, part of Hungary, and Northern Yugoslavia. Archaeologists therefore consider the culture of the Central Alpine zones to be Indo-European.

A surprise was emerged from our examination of the rock art of the Camonica Valley. Figures of divinities with many "arms" or weapons, were found to be engraved in monumental compositions and menhir statues along with symbols which appear to be traditionally Indo-European: spectacle-spiral pendants, solar symbols, triangular daggers with half-moon pommels, flat and perforated axes, halberds, and accompanying animals; these elements take us back to the epic world of cosmic ideas found in ancient layers of Indo-European culture. This would have seemed unlikely just a few years ago, but the research carried out in the Camonica Valley has made it possible to confirm that this wave of cultural influence, which reached the Alps at the end of the fourth and during the third millennium B.C., had a connection with elements which are clearly Indo-European.

The wave that brought these new symbolic and ideological elements to the zone also introduced two new features of primary economic and technological importance whose antecedents had come from Eastern Europe: copper-working and thus the first metal tools, and the wagon with wheels. It is not by chance that in the Camonica Valley, Valtellina and Alto Adige, the first appearance of metal daggers, axes and wagons, are documented in the engravings on the menhir statues and in the monumental compositions. These date to shortly before or somewhere around the year 3,000 B.C.

These iconographic elements which arrive in phase III/A of Camunian rock art seem to reveal the importance of religion and ideology as cohesive forces for the first Indo-European groups. Religion was probably one of the most important, if not the most



*Fig. 95.*  
*The front side of the menhir-statue Ossimo 1.*  
*Size of relief: 1.10 x 1.12 m.*



important element in bringing together groups from different zones who were not necessarily from the same ethnic matrix but who perhaps had, or were developing, common terminological-linguistic models or had other common cultural and social elements. Not to be disregarded is the hypothesis that together with the diffusion of new religious, conceptual, and social elements, an international language took hold, just as it would in later epochs with Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, and Swahili.

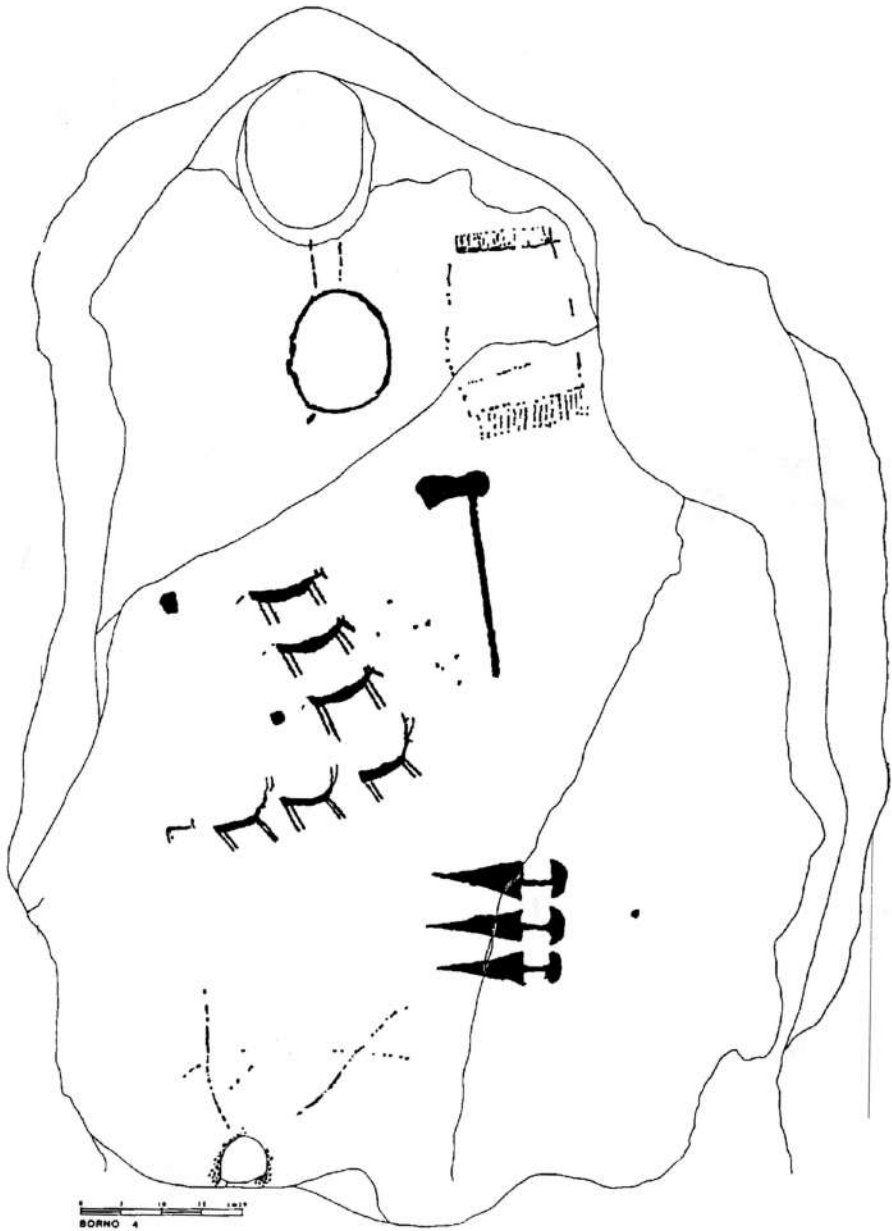


Fig. 96.  
 The menhir-statue Ossimo 9. A slab in the shape of an anthropomorphic profile, presenting an anecdotal scene of two masculine figures and one feminine, two axes and a solar disc. What story is hidden behind this composition?

Fig. 97.  
 The menhir-statue Ossimo 4. Such monuments from the Chalcolithic period contain hermetic, repetitive messages. Each grapheme seems to have a metaphoric significance.



*Fig. 98.*  
*Detail of the fragment of menhir-stature*  
*Cemmo 4. Two phases of decoration are*  
*superimposed. Size of relief: 35 cm.*



The ideas that were introduced at the end of the fourth millennium B.C. which provoked the changes in the stylistic and typological aspects of rock art did not eliminate the preceding tradition. On the contrary, it used and adapted them to new value systems and new forms in Camunian figurative art which mark the passage from Period II to phase III/A, or from the Neolithic to the Chalcolithic ages. There was no break between the two. There are, however, some changes in the types of objects depicted in the rock art in the beginning of the new period.

These factors give us a picture of a very ancient stratum of Indo-European religions and supply new data on the origins of Indo-European ideology while it was still in its formative stages. Material culture undergoes a process of renewal which indicates the existence of commercial and cultural contacts. As has already been mentioned, the first metal tools and the first carts appear in this period, but the objects used in daily life show the continuation of preceding local traditions. The tradition of creating rock art, already thousands of years old, persists. The same rock art sites continue to be used, and many traditions are maintained, so it is therefore difficult to hypothesize a change in populations. All of this seems to indicate that the first human groups in the Camonica Valley to show Indo-European traits must have been autochthonous. The process then would have been one of culturalization rather than migration.

However, numerous cultural characteristics came from extraneous sources and some ties undoubtedly existed with the Baden culture from the central Danubian area, including commercial contacts. Besides the wheel, the cart, and metalwork techniques, the very shapes of the tools pictured reveal the frequency of these encounters.

The question often arises whether or not the Indo-Europeans were a population or a cultural tradition. They were, above all, the conveyors of a lingua franca, a kind of "Latin" of that era which took hold, along with beliefs and traditions. They also introduced a new social organization, much more structured than previous ones. In the same period, in the Camonica Valley, we see the arrival of a series of new technological acquisitions.

As has happened in our century with populations who experience the effects of colonialism, the arrival of missionaries brought more than a new religion. During this later period of colonization, in parts of Africa, Latin America, and elsewhere, they also brought new



*Fig. 99.*  
*One of the most complex menhir-statues yet found in the Camonica Valley. Eight phases of superimposed figures have been*

*identified.*  
*This surface was the object of repeated carvings over a period of 400 years, sometime around 5000 years ago.*

technologies and a lingua franca, which in different parts of the world was English, Spanish, French, or Portuguese, among others. A similar process is seen in the Chalcolithic, where a period of colonization which was not necessarily due to the arrival of new populations and a displacement of the old, but, as is most likely, to the penetration of new cultural trends that followed a pattern probably similar to that which has been repeated in our age.

Language and habits overlap in various parts of the world. For example, Native Americans speak English. In a subcontinent with hundreds of languages, it is the only common language; therefore it is the language of books, laws, and the major newspapers.

In Tanzania, Swahili is spoken. It is a mixture of Bantu and Arab introduced by merchants to the coast and spread to a vast area during the last four centuries. Previously, many Bantu, Kushitic and Khoisan languages existed there, languages which are in no way Semitic. In our century, Swahili has been spoken by millions of people who, except for their language, were not Semitic by any means. Today, English is taking its place as the official language, and the local population does not claim to have Indo-European origins. The population of Tanzania has not changed; it is the same. However, changes have taken place in the lingua franca. All of this demonstrates one of the many possible ways culture can be diffused. It also casts a controversial light on the old theory that the Indo-Europeans were one race, one people; a group of people who arrived, colonized, and destroyed all the others.

It would be enough to look at the faces of a native of Madras and an Englishman placed side by side to realize how arbitrary it is to speak of the same population having the same close origins only because they both speak an Indo-European language. In the same way, it is humorous to think that the same ethnic derivation can be attributed to an Irishman and a Zulu, simply because they are both Catholic and use the same religious symbols. And yet, analogous hypotheses have been published on a presumed original Indo-European "race."

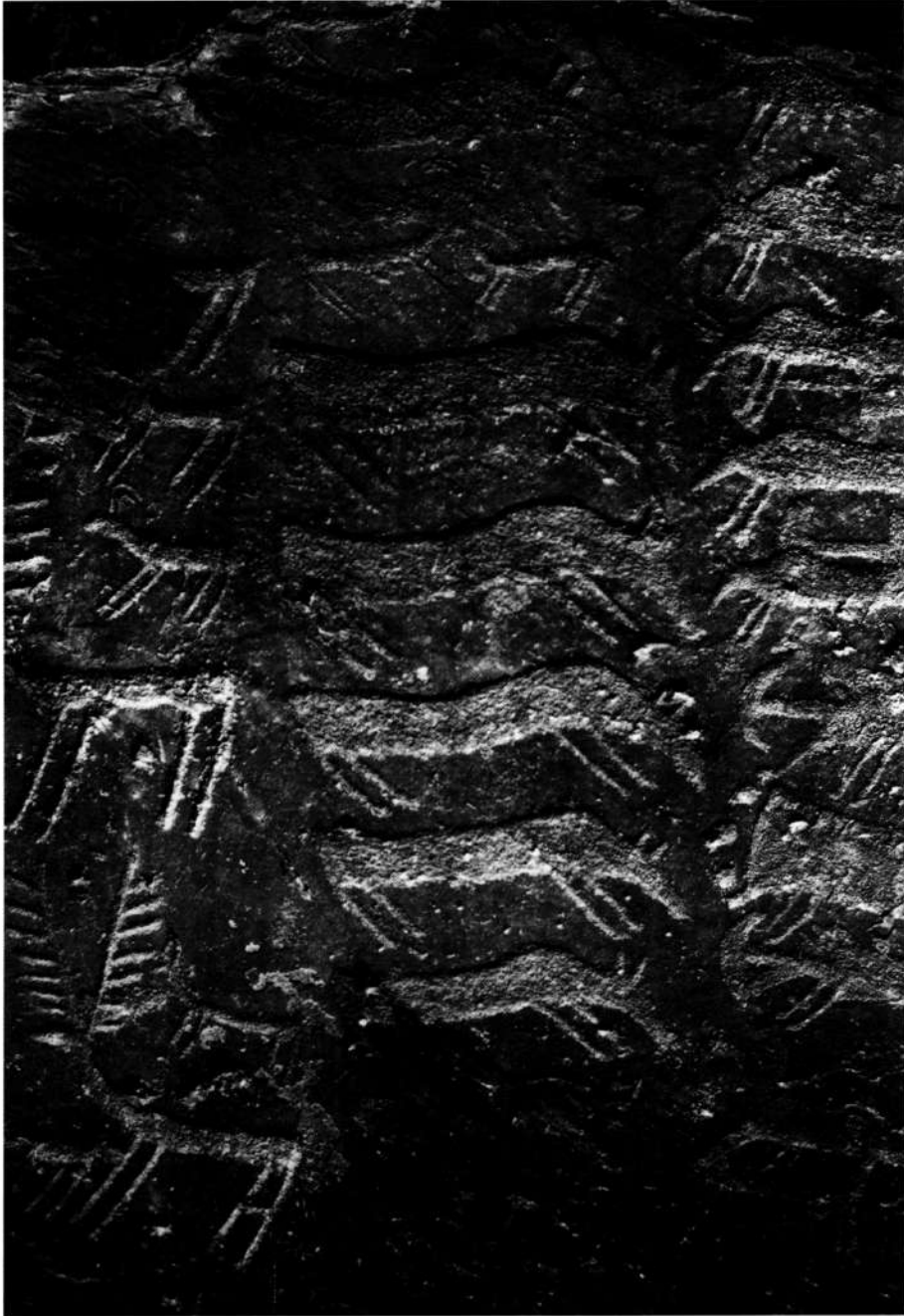
The introduction of Indo-European cultural elements into the Camonica Valley, as in the Valtellina, the Alto Adige, and in the Swiss Vallese, demonstrates an extremely interesting phenomenon. Contrary to the ideas that were popular several years ago, the author sees it in terms of a penetration, not by a new population, but rather by new



*Fig. 100.  
Deeply engraved deer figures from Rock 1  
at Cemmo.*

*Fig. 101.  
Reconstruction of the artist at work during a  
decoration ceremony. The engraved rock made  
up part of a megalithic complex (3200 - 2500  
B.C.) most likely a site of cult and worship.  
The engravings are being filled with color.*





*Fig. 102.*  
*Detail from side 1 of Rock 1 at Cemmo.*

ideas; an indoctrination or colonization of pre-existing populations through the efforts of a few merchants, missionaries, or guides.

From what is known today, it seems that this introduction of Indo-European ideas gained a foothold in the Alpine area before any other zone in Western Europe. Perhaps there were reasons for this. At that time, the Alpine area was at the periphery, and the tribes that inhabited it were small and weak in comparison to those on the large plains. Thus colonization or indoctrination was certainly easier here than in areas where the cultures were stronger and enjoyed more social interaction or greater economic resources. On the plains, there must have been political structures which were much more powerful, and therefore more resistant to new messages and new forms of culture.

As has been explained in the preceding chapter, two major families of populations existed in Europe during the Neolithic age; one being the native inhabitants, the other having come from the East. Oddly, though, the first groups to adapt the newer Indo-European doctrines, probably of an Oriental origin, were not those groups who had originally come from the East but rather those autochthonous ones.

This, then, is the context in which the new events took place, illustrated by the rock art of the late 4th millennium B.C., that reveal the beginning of a new era for Europe; we have come to what can rightly be called the Dawn of European Civilization.

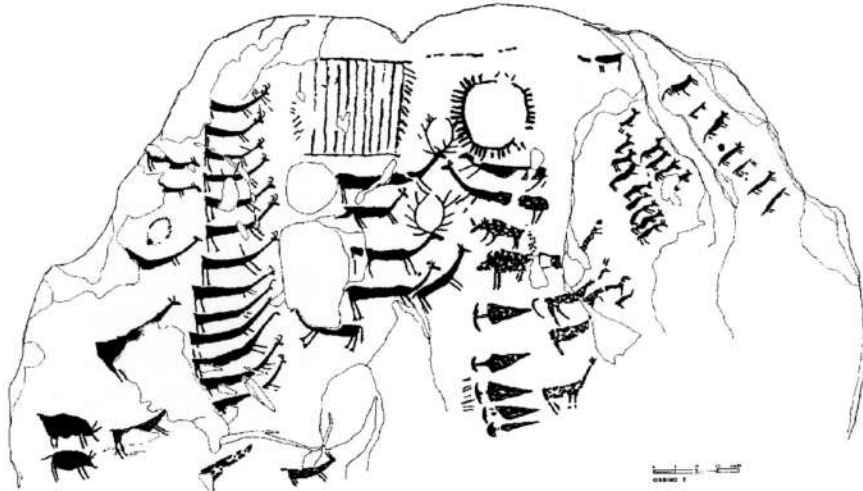


Fig. 103.  
Menhir-statue Ossimo 7. The engravings accumulated over the course of four different phases. The chronology of the group, from oldest to most recent, is: the rectangle and

solar disc in high center; the five daggers below the disc; the animals in the center; the groups of smaller animals which frame the composition on either side.



*Chapter 9*  
**THE DAWN OF EUROPEAN CIVILIZATION**

The preceding chapters have traced the historical journey of many millennia made by clans like those of the Camunians from their origins as semi-nomadic hunters to the time when they became a population of farmers and shepherds living in permanent villages. The Neolithic period in the mountainous region of the Camonica Valley was one of plenitude, tranquillity, and a great amount of artistic activity. As is demonstrated by the rock art, much thought was dedicated to religion and to research on how to communicate with the forces of nature, which man depended upon for survival.

At the beginning of the following period, the Chalcolithic, around 3,300 B.C., three elements appear suddenly among the many cultural acquisitions: the wheel and cart, metalworking, and the new type of monument known as the menhir statue, which perhaps constitute the fundamental causes of the changes we see in the historical and cultural processes. These three elements, as we have seen, arrived in the Alpine area together, amidst a cultural wave of Indo-European civilization of probable Oriental origin.

Whereas in the Epi-Paleolithic period the clans of hunters were in constant movement, the human groups of the Neolithic were sedentary. They almost never moved unless they were forced to, since they owned and depended on both personal property and land. Once they had settled down, they were conditioned by their material possessions to stay there as long as possible. Commerce during the Neolithic period was also limited in the Alpine area. At best, it could be called barter. This situation seems to reflect a general pattern in continental Europe, while along the Mediterranean coasts trading connections seem to have developed faster and more intensely. In continental Europe, the Late Neolithic marks an intensification of inter-cultural relations, probably due to an increase in commerce.

Amber beads from the Baltics have been found in archaeological levels in the Alpine area, and the rock art represents figures of axes and other tools with exotic shapes that show a Balkan influence. Some types of pottery reached a diffusion of more than 1000 kilometers, indicating connections between the two sides of the Alps.

Prior to this time, when a human group had to move by land, they could only take with them what they could carry. With the spread of that great invention, the wagon, huge new opportunities for the movement of people and things were opened up. It meant enormous commercial development and much greater mobility for families, clans, and even entire tribes. The impact that the wheeled wagon has had on human mobility is comparable only to that of the airplane in the last few decades. In the area of transportation no other revolution has been of equal importance. The idea of using wheels, of hooking an animal up to a wheeled structure and of loading the cart with a weight much greater than that which the animal could carry on its back, was a brilliant one.

Metalworking, like the cart, was not an invention of the Alpine area. It was imported: both the cart and metalworking techniques arrived from the Balkans. Often metal tools perform much better than those made of stone or wood, and the impact of this innovation can be clearly understood. Since then, metal has always been a source of political, military, and economic power.

Technological development led to changes in cultural and social standards. Those who had metal tools had physical supremacy over nearby populations who did not. When one group has physical supremacy, small temptations, which are inevitable in the human spirit, flourish. A few megalomaniacs' ambitions to subjugate other populations and have control over raw materials are not solely characteristic of the modern era. Perhaps, even then, some dreamed of possessing the "ultimate weapon."

The use of metal also led to a new type of trade, on a much vaster scale than the previous one. It created extensive economic, social, and political turmoil as well. Those who possessed mines had to defend them, and this required men and weapons.

Those who produced and traded metals accumulated wealth beyond their needs and soon found themselves possessing not only superior physical force but also superior economic power. Society itself changed because clans were no longer large enough to handle



the activities required to work and deal in metal: a more complex society was needed.

Finally, the menhir statues reflect another type of acquisition. They reveal the arrival of a new religion which quickly spread from the Caucasus to the shores of the Atlantic on one side, and to Siberia on the other. As it conquered sparse populations distributed over extremely vast areas, it could be defined as a universal religion. It is probable that proselytism existed on a grand scale; perhaps the first great missionary movement. It is almost certain that there were people who, in spreading this religion, saw it as an instrument of political and economic power.

These three factors; metal working, wheeled vehicles and the cosmological religion of the menhir-statues, are introduced at the end of the fourth millennium B.C. as a sort of packaged group, transforming the social, economic, and philosophical structure of various parts of Europe. The religion illustrated on the menhir statues implies a new type of social structure and human relationship. The new physical and economic power, commercial abilities, and the possibility of accumulating wealth brought about by the wagon and metal working, had enormously far reaching consequences.

Commercial and cultural expansion of a completely new type also occurred: the transmission of information which accompanied the wagons and the merchants. The accumulation of wealth produced a desire and a search for the superfluous. The need to contact other populations in order to develop commerce brought with it new dimensions to social relations. Man could no longer afford to keep to himself, to ignore or keep the nearby populations at a distance; he needed them for his market.

The search for metals led to exploration of the territory and a conscious knowledge of the soil and stone, which led to new cognitive orientations. "Stone" hid precious materials and had concealed powers not known until that time. A new type of philosophy as well as a new ideology would develop from this discovery. The new technologies did in fact reach the Camonica Valley at the same time as the new religion, which was adopted and then elaborated upon locally.

As has already been mentioned, mines, raw materials, and metalworking were all sources of economic and political power, just as they are today. The aim of every tribal chief was to defend his possessions of ores and raw materials, and expand them whenever

possible. In such a context, the development of specialized categories of workers is seen for the first time. Workmen were needed to extract the minerals and isolate the metals; in this way, the embryo of what today would be called the "working class" came into being.

At the same time, artisan and merchant categories developed as well. In order to defend the sources of raw materials, and to acquire others by force, military power was necessary and this probably led to the growth of a military class. Thus the foundations of those models which have characterized European civilization and which have spread from it were formed.

The chiefs, priests, merchants, artisans, military personnel, workers, and farmers, all constitute a new type of stratified society, which is reflected in the rock art. Between Periods II and III of Camunian art, the ideas behind the compositions change. While previously the rock artists did not seem to give much importance to the precise position of figures within a representation, at the beginning of Period III, series of weapons, symbols, and animals are arranged in rows in the monumental compositions. This displays a new attempt to use space rationally, an order prompted by a new kind of discipline. The embryonic phase of the spirit which will become that of European civilization, defining itself as rational and pragmatic, can now be recognized.

These same characteristics of figurative art are often divided into three registers which reveal a decisive cosmological symbolism, which is both religious and social: the universe is seen as a union of three *logoi*: sky, earth, and the underworld (E. Anati, 1967). Religion and lordship belong to the sky, usually symbolized by the sun, and were ascribed to the priests and chiefs, who were probably already forming what can be defined as the nobility. Man's works, and their defense are symbols of the earth, and are cared for by the artisans, merchants, and warriors. The third register, which in the menhir statues is partially buried, belongs to those who work the soil in the fields, those who enter the earth in mines, those who attended to the burying of the dead, and those worker-pariahs who were beginning to form the working class. This is the base of the social structure which will come to characterize European civilization for a good five millennia.

The new kind of symbolism and new mode of representation; of covering rock surfaces with rigidly conceived compositions, indicates

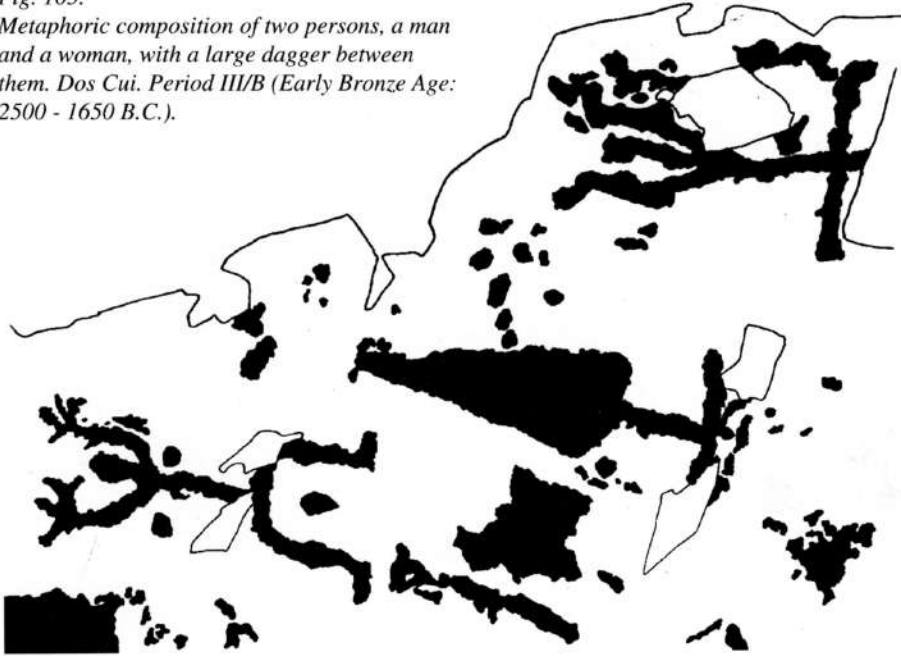


*Fig. 104.*  
*The monumental composition from Corni*

*Freschi, Darfo-Boario Terme, with nine*  
*figures of halberds.*

Fig. 105.

*Metaphoric composition of two persons, a man and a woman, with a large dagger between them. Dos Cui. Period III/B (Early Bronze Age: 2500 - 1650 B.C.).*



a fundamental change in the people's philosophy and social conditioning; an evolution in their way of seeing and thinking. The cognitive order revealed in the rock art is definitely a reflection of the new social structure which had developed. It is also the oldest known record of what Georges Dumezil (1952) called "the tripartite subdivision of the Indo-Europeans."

Later, in the second and first millennia B.C., during the Bronze and Iron Ages, the rise of political structures and the development of tribal societies can be detected, until finally the formation of true nations is reached. The dynamics of the distribution of cultures in Europe during the various epochs, from the Epi-Paleolithic to the Roman Age, is of great importance in the reconstruction of this process. It seems possible to trace a kind of developmental curve, both in the social structures and in the cultural ones, though the two are not always synonymous. It may well be, in fact, that the social entity is a tribe and the cultural entity includes a series of social entities, or vice versa, that the socio-political entity is a nation or a federation and includes various cultural or linguistic groups.

As already mentioned, between 8,000 and 5,500 B.C. there were a number of very broad cultural areas. A gradual limitation in the size of



*Fig. 106.*  
*Depiction of a plowing scene accompanied by two daggers: one has a triangular blade of Chalcolithic type, the other a sub-triangular blade of the Early Bronze Age. Transitional phase between period III/A and III/B (ca. 2500 B.C.). The plowing scene is super-imposed, maybe intentionally, over a preceding engraving showing the motif of two rectangles which signifies "territory."*

these areas takes place in the Neolithic. During the Chalcolithic, the Bronze Age, and the beginning of the Iron Age, smaller and smaller cultural units are formed, down to the smallest ever known in Europe which consisted of single valleys, creating different cultures, the development of different traditions, and cultural provincialism. Then the process was reversed. Following the political, social, and economic factors discussed earlier, some political entities expanded, spreading quite rapidly to the surrounding valleys, and at the same time, eliminating weaker cultural areas by conquering and incorporating them. When all the archaeological data from the late Iron Age as well as the information passed on to us by Greek and Roman authors is taken into account, names can be given to these cultural and political entities, names which are familiar; such as the Illyrians, the Etruscans, the Ligurians, the Venetians, the Gauls, the Rhaetians, and the Camunians.

The pattern of expansion that took place in the Iron Age, from the smallest cultural nucleus to the far reaching political entity, is repeated throughout Europe in later times, as can be seen even in Greek history, from the city-states to Alexander the Great. The most important example in history is the expansion of Rome, from a city-state to what

Fig. 107.  
 Luine, rock 57.  
 Composition with a pair of oculi faces of the "crossbow" type, surrounded by objects and symbols. At the upper left is an unclear sign, perhaps the blade of a scythe or halberd. In the middle left is a complex group composed of an axe, a boomerang and a club; just to its right is an upside down axe and two lines. Below are two more axes one of which is tied to a serpentine form. Period III/B. The axes help date the composition to the Early Bronze Age.



became the Roman Empire, which swallowed up all the populations it found in its path.

One of the principal causes of the process of expansion of certain groups and the suppression of others is the continual confrontation between the two types of societies which had developed by the end of the Chalcolithic period: on one hand was the introverted society which had dedicated itself to agriculture and animal husbandry, on the other were the groups which had given more emphasis to industry and commerce and which had accumulated a surplus economy. With the ever more frequent use of metals, this later group controlled the markets, made it so that other populations were economically dependent upon them, and then overcame them with relative ease. This process was probably not premeditated. It was not necessarily the



Fig. 108.

Composition of weapons which make up an idol form image. At upper right are three axes arranged to represent the arches of the eyebrows and the nose. To the left is a

spear, a small dagger, a scutiform and an axe, probably the gear of the warrior figure who is represented. Period III/B-C. Luine, rock 48-A. (0.90 x 1.25 m.).



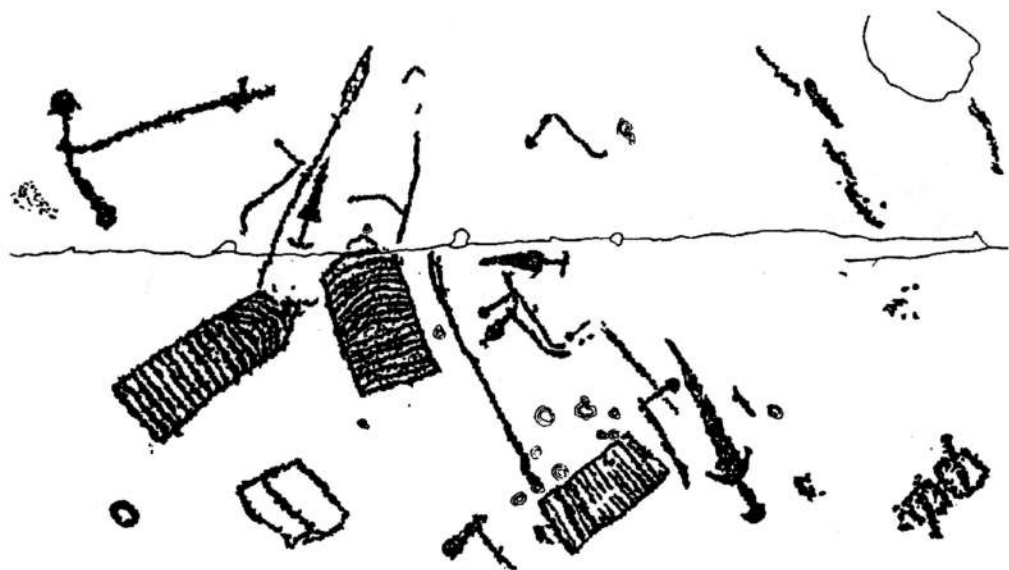


Fig. 109.

*Large composition of scutiforms and arms: battle axes, spears and daggers. Period III/B-C. Luine, rock 34. Dimensions: 1.80 x 0.90 m.*

mind of a great general which gave birth to the first empires of Europe, but rather the economic and environmental circumstances. In this way Europe acquired its political aspect in which the agreements and maneuvering between the more powerful forces brought about the need for diplomacy and strategy.

In rock art, factors which make it possible to reconstruct the influences and the processes of cultural integration and expansion are reflected in the style and range of subjects depicted in the different periods. Other details are provided by material findings such as habitation sites and graveyards. Cultural contacts and areas of expansion of certain styles, themes, and symbols can be recognized. Above all, there are for each period different concepts behind the compositions and the associations in rock art. There are also reflections of individual ideologies and beliefs. The range of ideas expands to incorporate an even richer palette of elements into the cultural heritage, and this is accompanied by ever newer technological and material acquisitions throughout ten thousand years. Eight





Fig. 110 - 111.

Photograph and relief of the Map of Bedolina, a large topographic composition from the Bronze Age. The figures of huts were added in the Iron Age. Dimensions: 4.20 x 2.30 m.



*Fig. 112.*  
*Rock engraving from Naquane improperly called "The dog-catcher," illustrating the relationship between man and the*

*domesticated dog, an animal that was also the focus of a cult. The axe held in the hand of the man at upper right allows us to date the scene to the Middle Bronze Age.*

which succeeding generations have preserved and developed the traditions which even now continue to influence daily life.

The long arm of Rome drastically modified the destinies of many native populations. The Romans found the Camunian tribe in the Camonica Valley, just as they found the Triumplini (the people of the Trompia Valley) and the Vennoneti tribes nearby. They were all small nations with chiefs, and by then, complex socio-political structures. There were differences in classes, groups with secondary and tertiary activities, and coordinating groups and managers. In other words, a structure was in force which western society has maintained since then, and with the expansion of the European hegemony in the last two millennia, has transformed into virtually a world model. The birth and structuring of these trends are vividly revealed in the testimony left by the Camunian civilization.

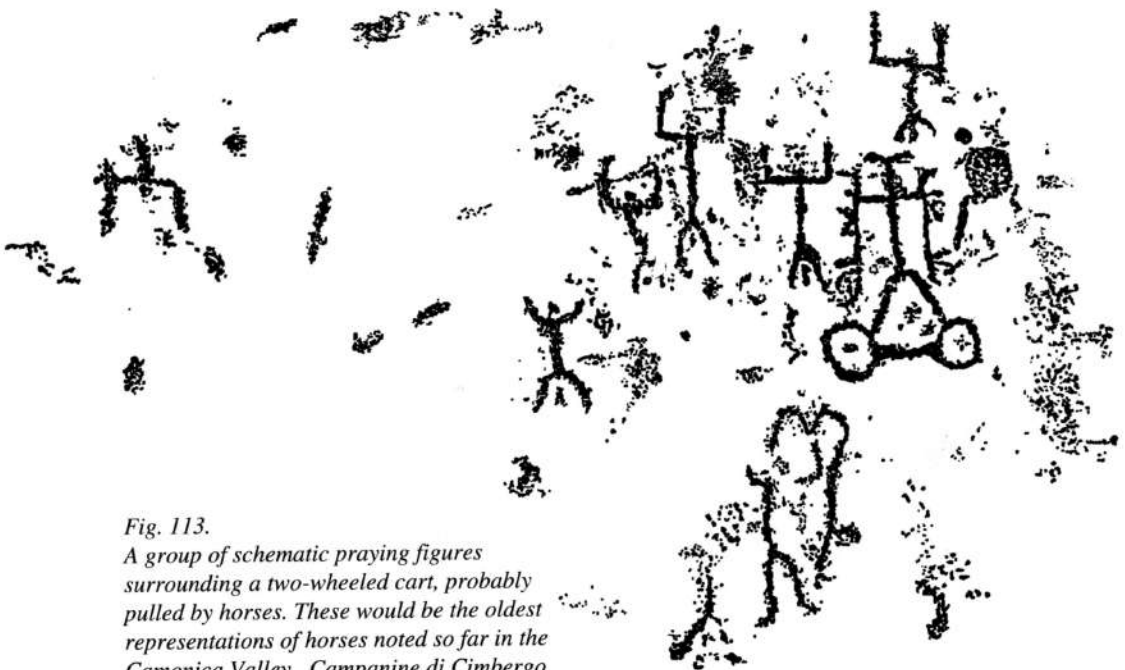


Fig. 113.

*A group of schematic praying figures surrounding a two-wheeled cart, probably pulled by horses. These would be the oldest representations of horses noted so far in the Camonica Valley. Campanine di Cimbergo. Probably period III/B or C (Early or Middle Bronze Age: 2500 - 1400 B.C.). Size of relief: 2.30 x 1.40m.*

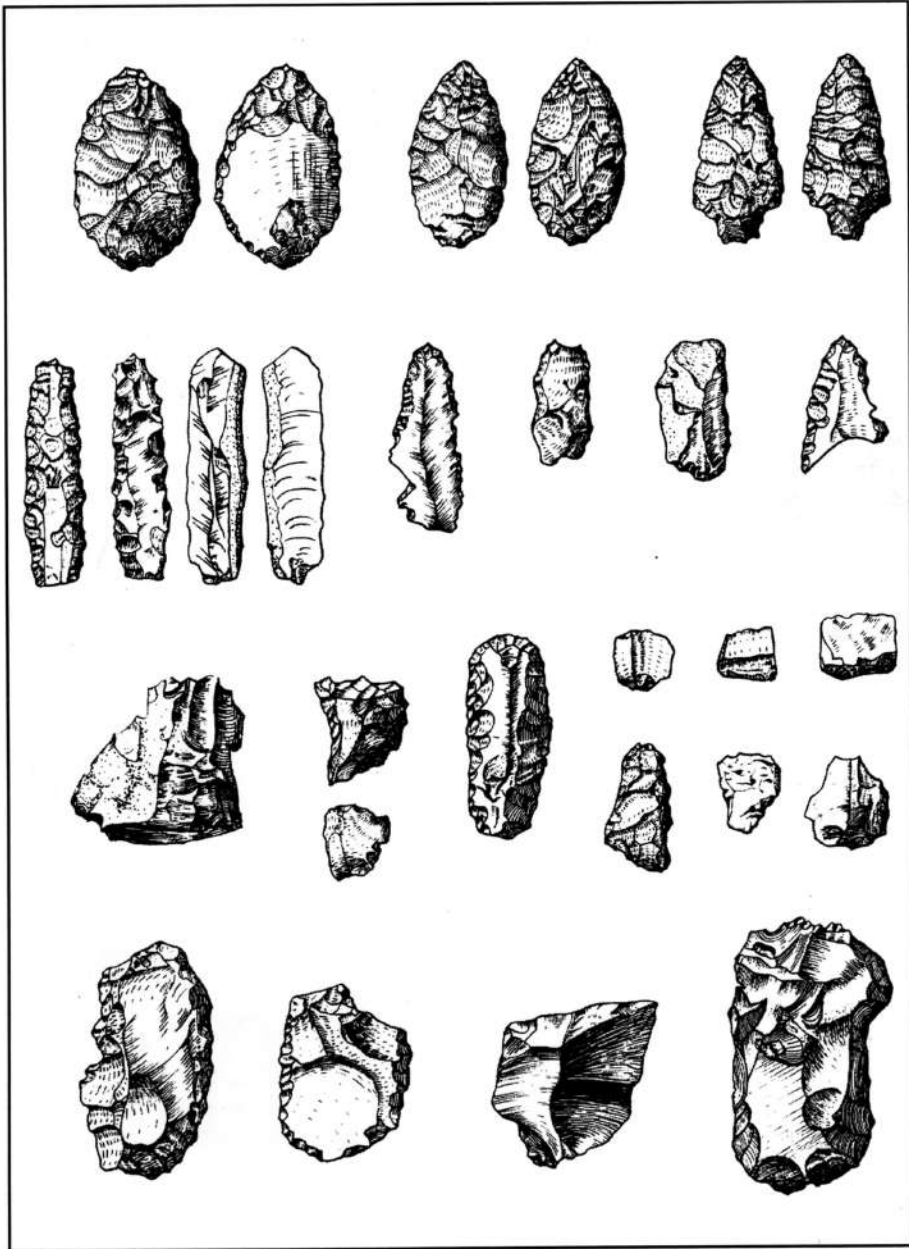


Fig. 114.  
 Flint tools from the Early Bronze Age found at  
 the hill-fort of Dos dell'Arca: arrow-heads,  
 retouched blades, scrapers on blades and  
 scrapers on core, scythe blades.

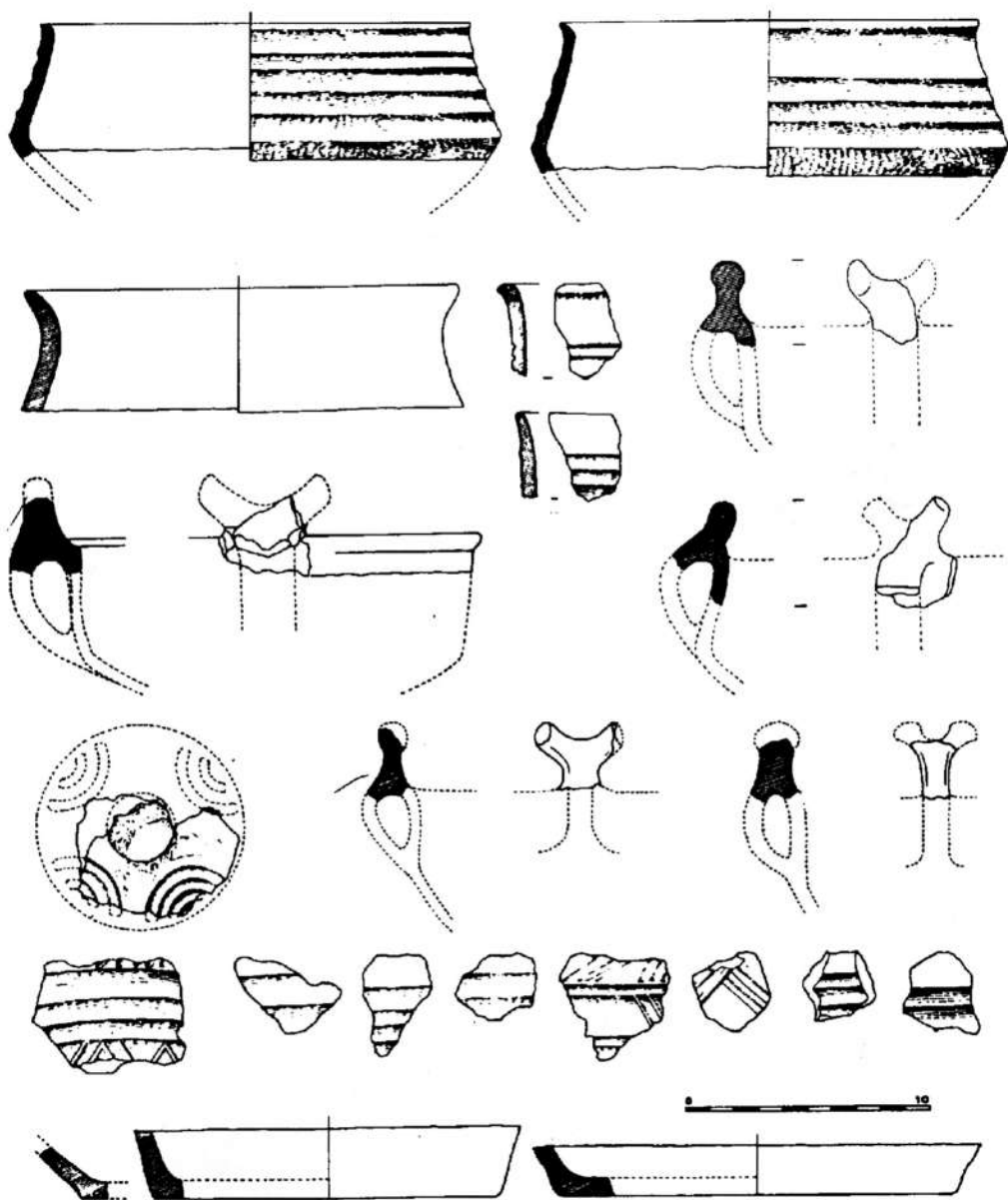


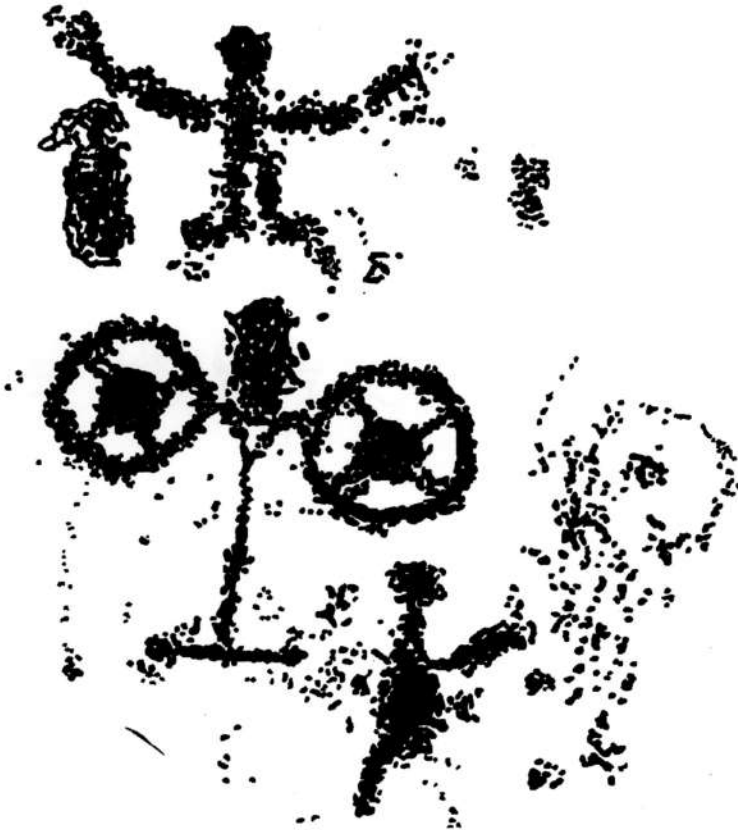
Fig. 115.  
 Ceramics from the Middle Bronze Age, of the  
 Terramara type, from the hill-fort of Dos  
 dell'Arca.



*Fig. 116-117.*

*Tracing of rock 94 at Naquane and a detail of the chariot group. The four-*

*spoked wheels are an indication that the scene likely dates to the Late Bronze Age.*



*Chapter 10*  
**EUROPE HAS 10,000 YEARS OF HISTORY**

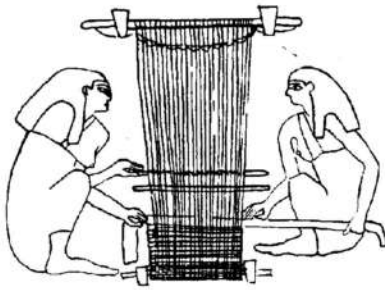
The very nature of the theme we are dealing with leads from the problems of reconstructing history to those of the history of religion and the history of art. They are aspects which complement one another and should be seen as a whole if the importance of the message to be drawn from rock art is to be fully understood.

The cycle of rock art from the Camonica Valley seems to demonstrate that it is not possible to recognize in art a linear process of constant stylistic evolution during the formative phases of European civilization.

On the other hand, from the Paleolithic to the Iron Age, it appears that in every period, the characteristics of the style derive from a search for expression, synthesis, simplification, or symbolization of the forms. In every period, they reflect the aesthetic and intellectual values of the time; in every period the style, the range of subjects depicted, the idea behind the composition and even the choice of the space of the rock surface, seem to reflect ideological and conceptual needs, as well as social, economic, and technological factors, and other aspects of the artist's cultural level in his own time.

Rock art is like a comic strip in which the economic, social, and historical processes by which European society was formed are rendered in visual images. In all of the periods, the natural environment, the climate, the flora and fauna, the landscape, and the economic resources influenced the level of technology as well as man's way of seeing, thinking and acting. Rock art becomes a part, as does every other intellectual artifact, of the whole of culture, as one of the expressions with which man reacts to the world surrounding him and to what happens to him as he moves about in that world.

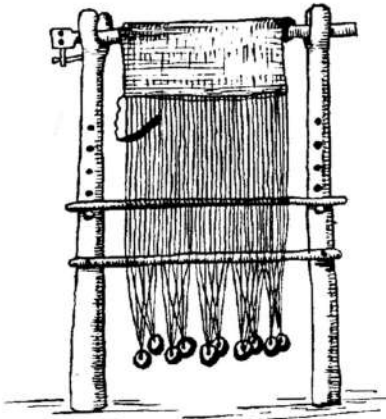
The variations that take place in the style and subject matter of rock art are a consequence of and concomitant to other material,



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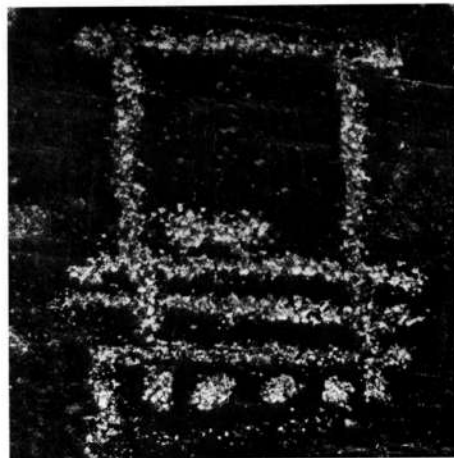
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4

Fig. 118.  
Vertical looms: 1. Beni-Hassan, Egypt; 2. Depiction on a Greek vase from the 6th century B.C.; 3. Reconstruction of an Iron Age loom from Poland (Kostrewski); 4. Schematic tracing of a loom from the Great Rock at Naquane.

Fig. 119.  
Photo of the actual rock engraving of the loom. Great Rock at Naquane.

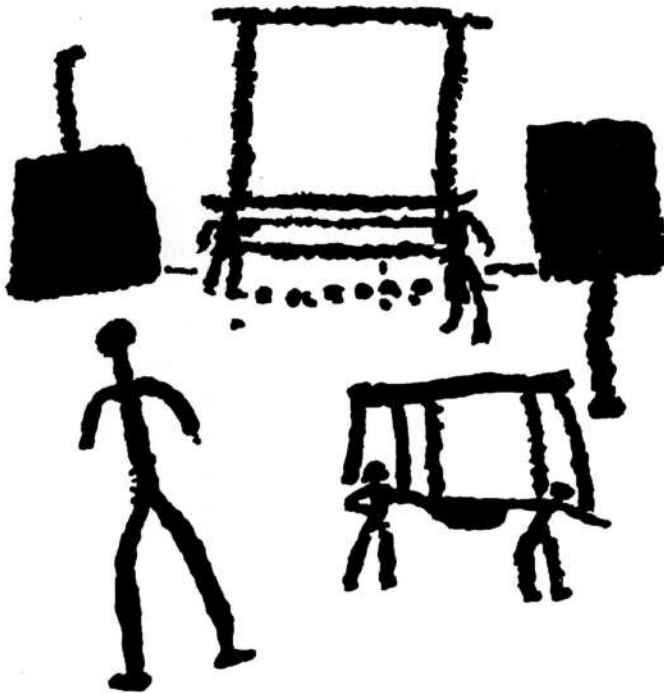






*Fig. 120.*  
*Photo of a section of the Great Rock at Naquane on which are depicted several looms.*

*Fig. 121.*  
*Another scene with a loom from the same rock. Based on the styles and typology, these figures can be dated to the Late Bronze Age. (Probably ca. 1200 B.C.)*



technological, ideological, and historical changes experienced by the human group. Some of these stylistic variations reflect widespread evolutionary models, others seem to be local or fortuitous phenomena.

The ethnological analysis, the study of the cultural context, takes into account the various aspects of every single phase and allows us to reconstruct the daily life of a people: the level of technology reached, the kinds of weapons and common tools used, the domestic animals raised, and the wild animals hunted.

On a more abstract level, we can read the economic activities, the beliefs, the mythology and religion, the family life, the division of work, activities within the group, and the socio-political structure of that particular culture. In brief, ethnological analysis attempts to reconstruct the life of a people in all cultural, social, economic, and ideological aspects in the various stages, which the archaeologist calls phases, historians call periods, and ethnologists call cultural horizons.

In analyses of this type there are two aspects which have to be taken into consideration, which in scientific jargon are called the "horizontal level" and the "vertical succession." At the horizontal level, all of the characteristics of each cultural horizon are analyzed. In the vertical succession, the dynamics which have led to changes from one horizon to another are studied, changes which lead to the historical evolution itself. Areas covered by this analysis are for the most part the same as those used in the chronological analysis, such as the scenes of daily life, the species of animals depicted, the pictures of huts, and those of weapons and utensils. The methods of study are different, however, because the goals are different.

The stone objects and fragments of pottery which have been found, along with the remains of dwellings and tombs, and all of the other remnants of material culture, (i.e. what man has made with his own hands) show how in different periods man used the raw materials at his disposal and the construction techniques of his time to work and support himself and adapt the environment to his own needs. These remnants are obviously of enormous value in corroborating what is revealed by the rock art. Nevertheless, in the particular context of the Camonica Valley, the rock art supplies far more varied, richer, and more incisive elements than all the other archaeological aspects of the zone combined.

By studying the data obtained through ethnological analysis, it can



*Fig. 122.*

*A science fiction cartoon in prehistory? A battle scene between three anthropomorphic figures and a monstrous being. One of the human forms, who is probably holding a*

*bow in his hand, is being attacked while the two others seem to be coming to his aid. Transitional phase between period III and IV. Seradina near Capo di Ponte.*

be seen how new elements entered into the culture throughout the millennia, which became more and more specialized and complex over time.

This study of the Camonica Valley has made it possible to reconstruct the evolution of a culture from its very beginnings, from the Epi-Paleolithic, semi-nomadic bands arriving shortly after the withdrawal of the glaciers, through the different stages of tribal life, each with their own innovations, activities, and beliefs, right down to the arrival of Roman civilization. It is an historical sequence which makes it possible to reconstruct the evolution of a people from the hunter-gatherer stage to a modern society. This sequence presents eighty centuries of history in which the series of consecutive phases separate modern civilization from the hunter-artists who created cave sanctuaries such as Lascaux and Altamira. This succession of rediscovered events seems to represent a fundamental heritage of European civilization, an essential part of its roots.

In these pages, a cross section of ten thousand years of history in a small Alpine valley in the heart of Europe is being examined. At times, the Camunian sequence appears to be a sample of a history covering much wider zones and reflecting, in several aspects, the events of the formative periods of European civilization. A journey is



Fig. 123.

*Scene of struggle from period IV/A. By this time the figures have acquired a new sense of movement and action. Seradina II, rock 19.*

made from the end of the last ice age to the coming of Rome and beyond. Contrary to the norm, the events of all of these centuries are here considered as *history* rather than *prehistory*. Having arrived at this point, the reader will have had the opportunity to evaluate the viability of this thesis. The pieces of the past, reconstructed, begin to form a vibrant picture of humanity during its long march. The ruins of buildings, the remains of material culture, and figures engraved in the rocks are messages from the past that must be understood in order to be read.

The rock engravings in the Camonica Valley have been particularly generous to researchers, supplying an exceptional amount of data and information about their authors. From the range of subjects depicted in the various periods, and from the changes found in the ideas portrayed in the compositions and associations, the motivations of the artists can be reached. This analysis proceeds from the effects to the causes, from the engraved figures to the hands that created them,

to the act of engraving itself, and from these to the minds that conceived the pictures and their motives. Behind the pictures, we begin to see the shadows of the men who were their authors.

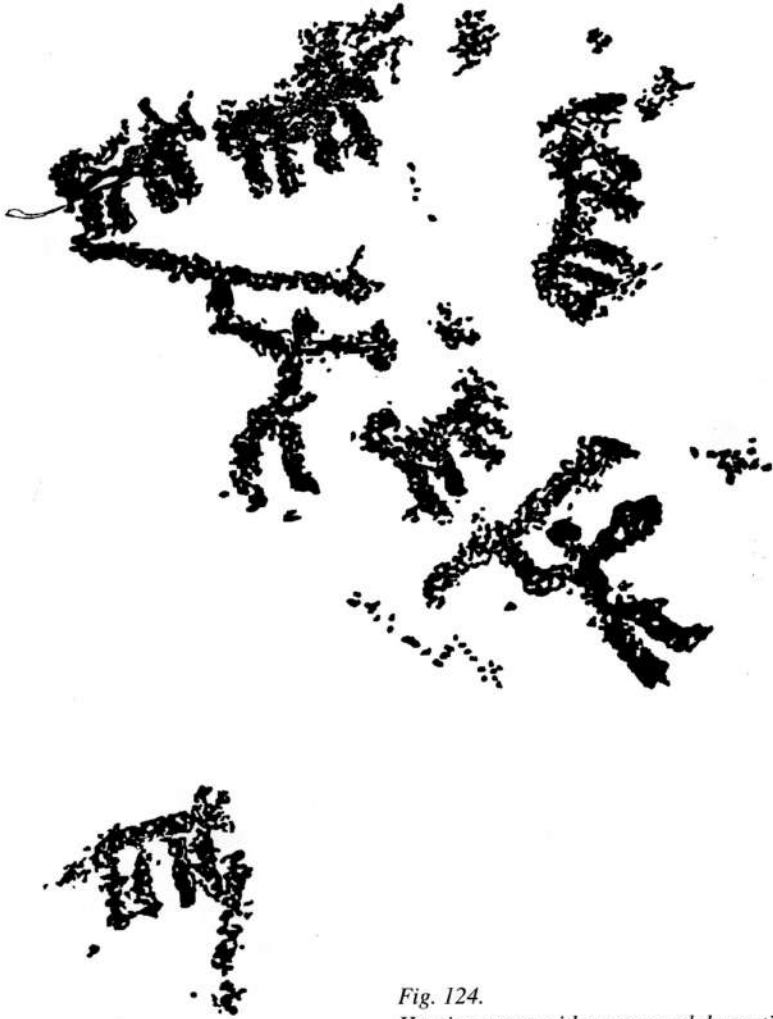
In terms of this history which encompasses thousands of years, classical Greece and Rome, which for generations marked the limits of our historical knowledge of Europe, are reduced to being a brief, albeit brilliant, moment in time. The works and the days of those who lived through these millennia give us a new awareness of ourselves because they take us back to our roots. As uncomfortable as this new awareness may be to some, it truly is possible to rediscover ourselves in the events of this rediscovered civilization.

By the time that the Camonica Valley became part of a broader cultural entity during the Roman period, the rock engravings had lost most of their deeper significance. The rock art engraved prior to this point reveals the development of a people through the course of a conceptual, social, and economic evolution. For the moment, no other cycle of rock engravings is known in Europe, and perhaps even in the world, which was executed over such a long period, with such a broad series of cultural horizons, and whose cultural stages can be followed with such clarity.

Rock art is the result of ideological and conceptual motivations, preserved in the landscape where it was produced; it is the expression of the culture, the society, and the individual who created it. It allows direct contact to be made with the artist who etched his figures into the rock surface some thousands of years ago, and at times reveals his thoughts, worries, and problems.

Besides being an expression of the human spirit to contemplate and enjoy, the rock art is, as has been demonstrated, a means of reconstructing history, of adding new chapters, new dimensions, and new depth. For the history of religion, it is a fundamental source of new data. For the history of art, it forms the first chapters and is the foundation for understanding what came later. For the knowledge of ecology and geography, it opens up new perspectives.

The rocks and groups of rocks studied thus far in the Camonica Valley are many in number, but are only a small part of what awaits scholars even now. To be understood, the rocks must be recorded and analyzed with great precision, and this takes time. The data obtained, even if classified by a computer, must be understood and assimilated by the human mind in order to acquire meaning and to enrich our



*Fig. 124.  
Hunting scene with spears and domesticated  
dogs. Period IV/B. Saradina 3, rock 28.  
Size: 0.50 x 0.70 m.*

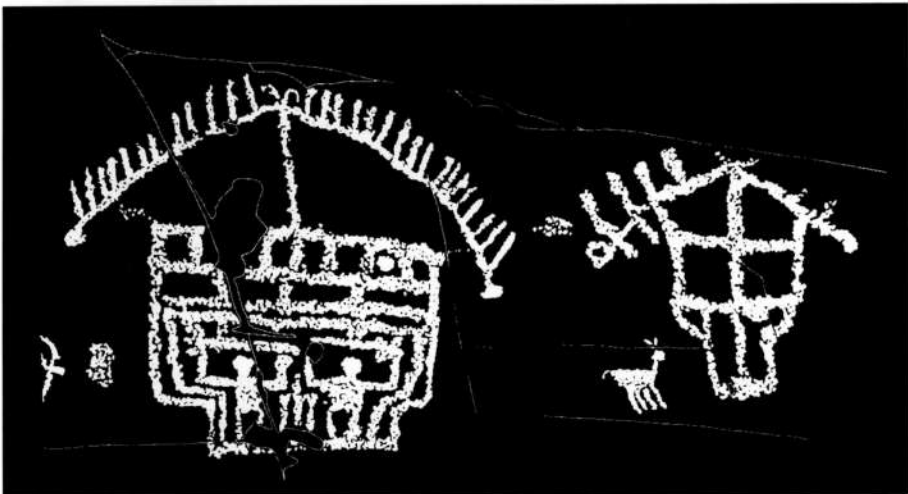
cultural knowledge. This source of information seems almost inexhaustible today. It will take perhaps decades to understand its full meaning, but even now the first results of research which offers a new perspective on the history of Europe can be seen.

Another aspect of the research that has been carried out in the Camonica Valley deals with the study of the artifacts of material



*Fig. 125.  
Foppe di Nadro, rock 6. Two huts and  
footprints from the Late Iron Age. These  
so-called "huts" appear to represent  
living structures, tabernacles, or temples.  
What the artists actually wanted to  
represent is, at this point, still the subject  
of debate. The footprints at upper right  
indicate worship or reverence.*

*Fig. 126.  
Ronchi di Zir, Capo di Ponte. Two ritual  
huts. Next to each one is placed an animal.  
Inside the hut on the left, particularly  
elaborate, are two persons holding swords  
next to a three-legged table which  
probably represents an altar. Size of  
relief: 60 x 90 cm.*





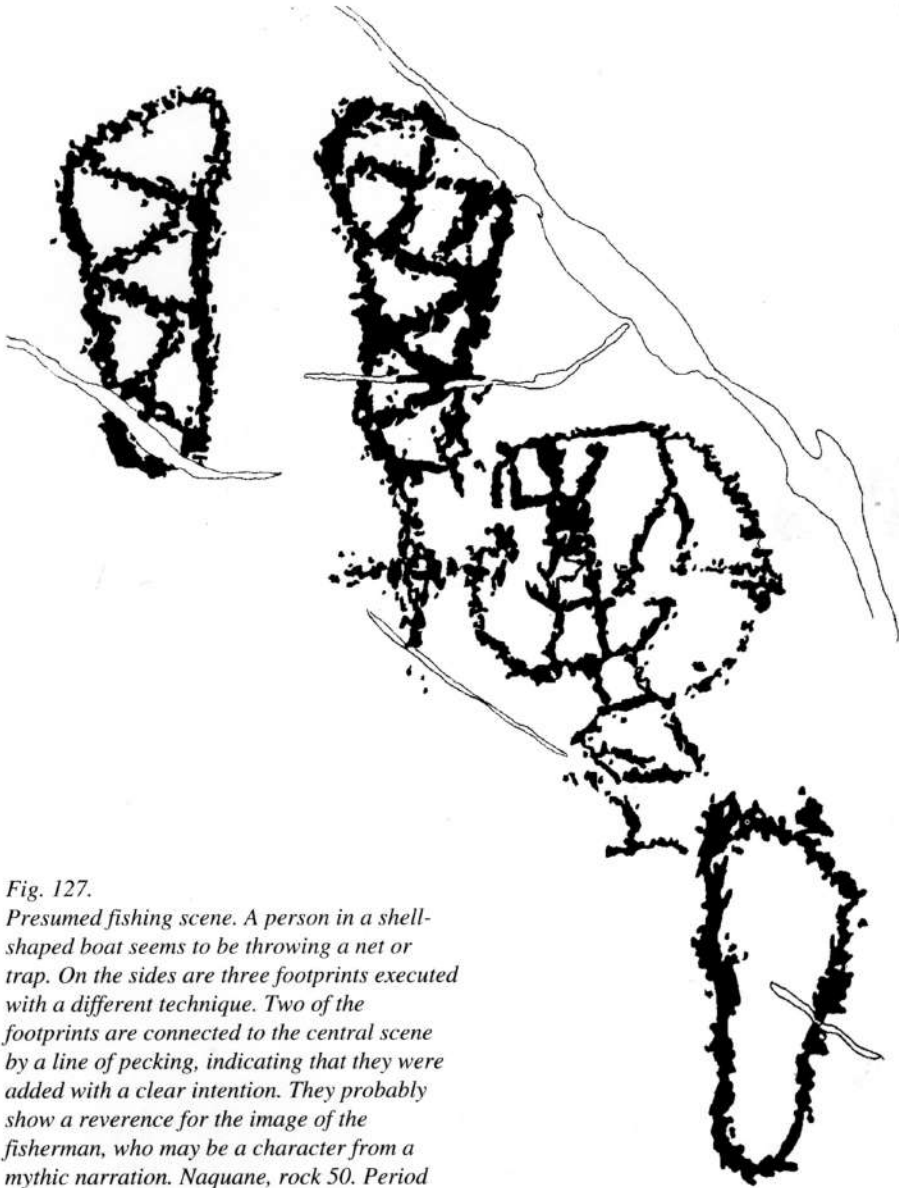


Fig. 127.  
*Presumed fishing scene. A person in a shell-shaped boat seems to be throwing a net or trap. On the sides are three footprints executed with a different technique. Two of the footprints are connected to the central scene by a line of pecking, indicating that they were added with a clear intention. They probably show a reverence for the image of the fisherman, who may be a character from a mythic narration. Naquane, rock 50. Period IV/C. Size: 60 x 80 cm.*

culture which have been found; the structures, the layers of settlements, and the insertion of the resulting data into the whole picture, together with the rock engravings. The richness of the rock art in the area and the lack of an adequate museum which would facilitate the collection, restoration, and elaboration of the material finds, as well as allowing the public to enjoy them, has, for the moment, caused



more importance to be given to the study of the rock art than to the human settlements in the valley. The locations of many of the sites are known and some systematic excavations have been carried out, principally at Castelliere di Dos dell'Arca and at the Castle of Breno. The material found remains for the most part in crates; the storerooms are full and more space is needed if work is to be continued. Much research remains to be completed, but it must be done in an intelligent fashion, in order to transform the archaeological discoveries into historical documents and carry out the process in a manner in which these "antiques" are transformed into cultural messages. The politics of education and culture must be changed, in order to make this field more appealing and more accessible for all people, making it more sensitive, above all, to the problems of education and culture.

The new view of the formation of European society proposed by recent studies has made ephemeral that arbitrary division between history and prehistory established in the last century, and has demonstrated that engravings by illiterates can be just as historically meaningful as written texts, and perhaps less laconic. The rock art of the Camonica Valley shows us the history of Europe in a light different from the customary one. It adds eight thousand years to the last two thousand full of emperors and generals, of "wars won" and "glorious anniversaries," which separate us from the day Augustus' monument at La Turbie was erected, when the Camunians become



*Fig. 128.*

*Four-wheeled cart, pulled by two horses; it has been superimposed over earlier animal*

*figures. Naquane, rock 23. Period IV/C (Early Iron Age: 850 - 700 B.C.). Size: 90 x 60 cm.*



Fig. 129.  
"Incantation scene." A person without  
arms or sex appears before two beings

with huge hands and exaggerated sexual  
organs. Period IV/D (Middle Iron Age:  
700 - 500 B.C.). Base of relief: 60 cm.

merely an historical footnote, dismissed with the dry definition of *Gentes alpinae devictae* (conquered Alpine peoples). The Romans did not speak of the cultural and artistic heritage that the Camunians left us. Perhaps they did not even notice it.

Undoubtedly, the Roman Empire enormously influenced the social and conceptual structure of Europe. Nevertheless, the depth and extent of this influence should also be considered in the light of the fact that, as soon as the Roman Empire fell, outside of the great urban centers many of the structures which had been established prior to the Empire resurfaced and in the Middle Ages, and there is a rebirth of social and economic models related to pre-Roman local traditions, that the Roman adventure had temporarily silenced, but not eliminated. Thus, the characteristics of local cultures are discovered, over which a blanket of obvious conventions and superficial conformism had fallen during the Roman period.

The peoples of the Iron Age were conquered by Rome, but when

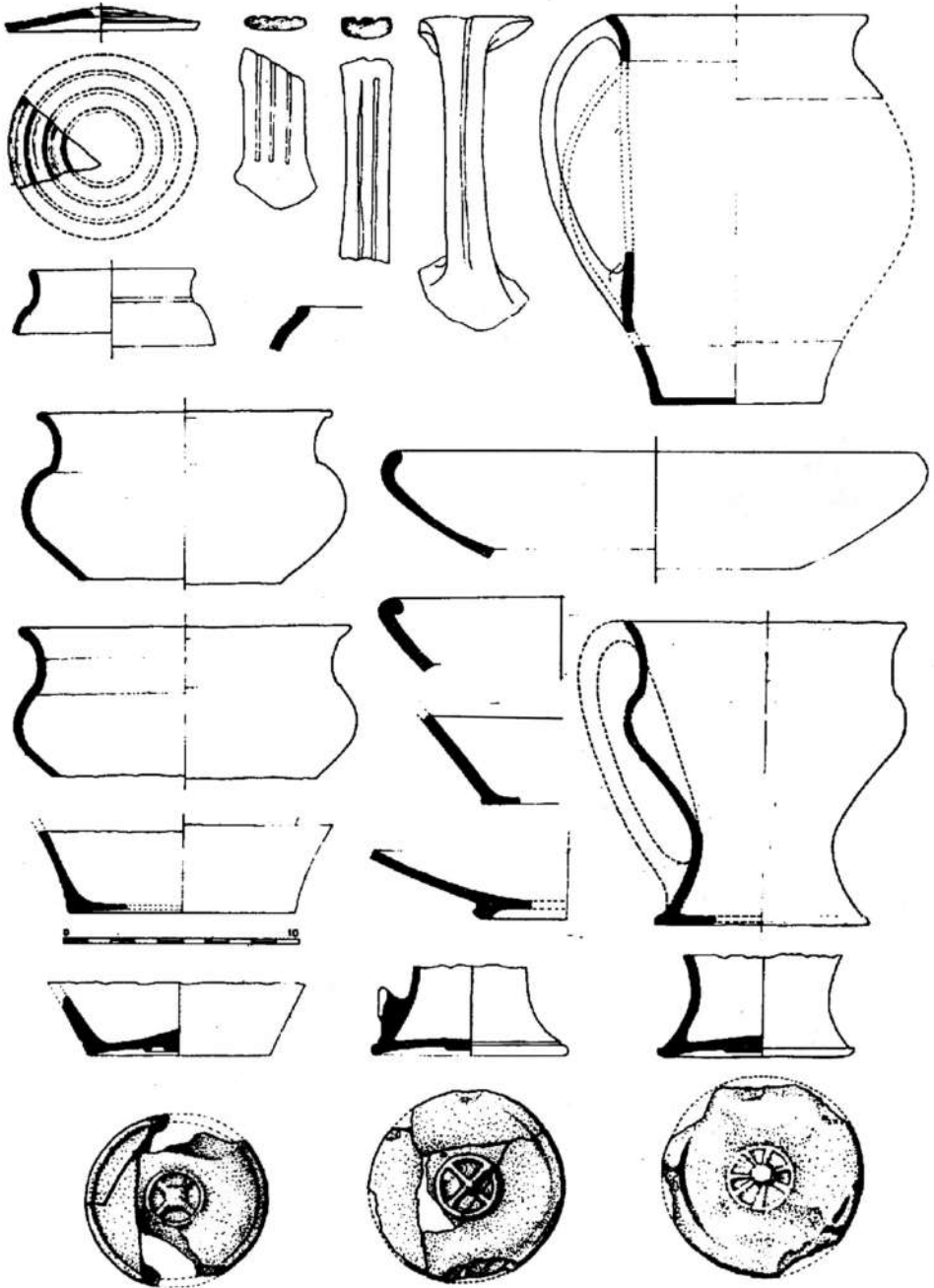


Fig. 130.  
 Group of pottery from the Iron Age, Dos  
 dell'Arca, West wall.





*Fig. 132.*

*The god "Cernunnos." Image of a deer-horned divinity, with a torque on his arm and a snake around his body. The right hand holds a dagger. Zurla. Period IV/E (Middle Iron Age: 500 - 400 B.C.). Size: 60 x 90 cm.*

Fig. 133.

*Deer caught in a trap, surrounded by  
palette symbols. The scene is probably  
connected with the magic of the hunt.  
Naquane, rock 50. Period IV/E  
(Middle Iron Age: 500 - 400 B.C.).*



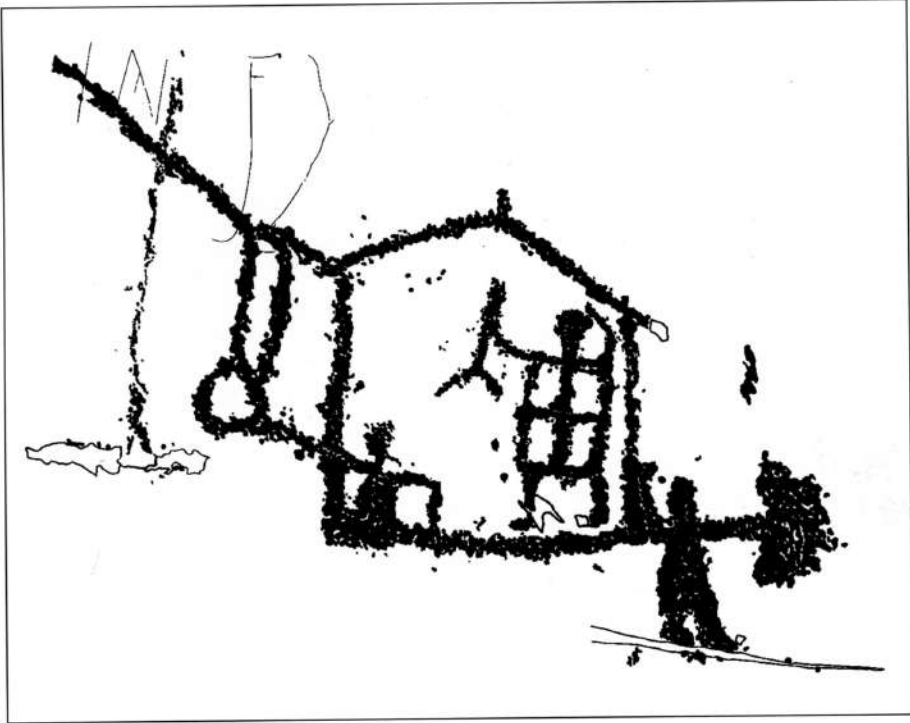
Rome extended her predominance over them, the destiny of Europe was already marked. The reasons for today's society and culture, the bases for modern civilization's well-being and malaise, the meaning of the modern era with its society, economy, beliefs, habits of daily life must be sought for in the millennia during which bands of hunters, having reached the Camonica Valley after the withdrawal of the Pleistocene glaciers, were gradually transformed into a stratified society with a diversified economy, with the ambitions and characteristics which are still present today, the development of which has been witnessed in the rock art.



*Fig. 134.*  
*Foppe di Nadro, rock 36. A person with one leg missing walks with a crutch. From the context of another scene found on the same rock, this figure would appear to be the victim of a duel. Middle Iron Age.*

*Fig. 135.*  
*Campanine at Cimbergo. Dialogue between two seated persons. One of them seems to be seated on a throne. Between the two figures is an ideogram which probably indicates the nature of the scene.*







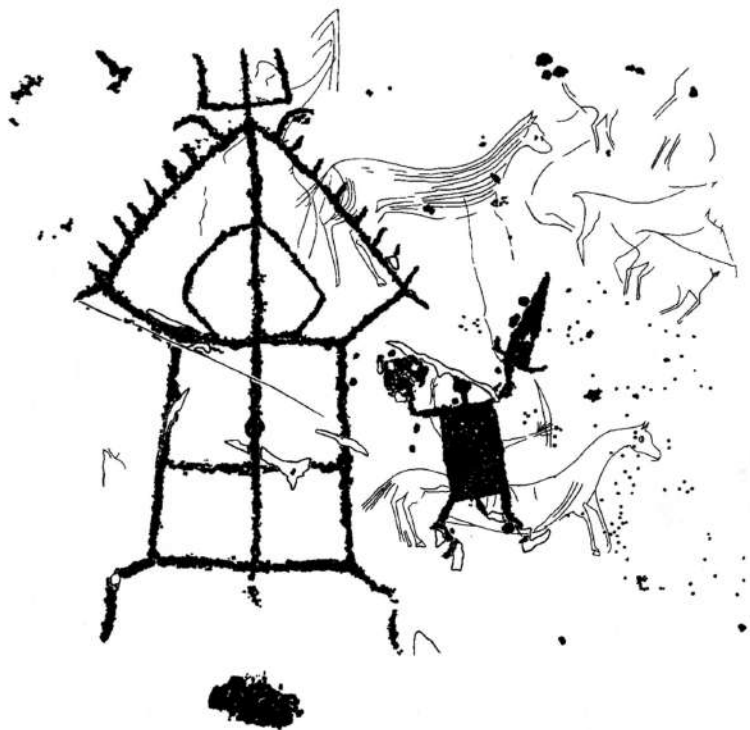


Fig. 136. (preceding page)  
 Sellero, Piè d'Ort, rock 1. The "House of the Artisan." Workshop with a canal for bringing in water and an external room with a bellows for stoking the fire in the stove depicted inside. On the other side is a large form that appears to be a hammer, placed over an earlier warrior figure, probably to ritualize it. The person inside the "shop" wears a crossed tunic and holds in his hand an object, perhaps tongs. A similar bellows technique was still being used in the "Valle dei Magli" in Biennio until just a few years ago. Late Iron Age. Period IV/F (Period of Celtic influence: 4th -1st centuries B.C.).

Fig. 137. (preceding page)  
 Luine, rock 34-K. Group of armed persons from period IV/E. The bodies are angular and the shields rectangular. At the center of the scene, above, is a disc. This repeats the disc/rectangle association from the preceding periods, but here the symbols

are more immediate and perhaps more recognizable, making the scene easier to comprehend. One of the figures has a serpentine form that grows of his arm or the shield.

Fig. 138.  
 Sellero, Piè d'Ort, rock 24. Composition of pecked figures over earlier, filiform incisions. A warrior with weapons raised turns to a dwelling which has an elongated base and, on the roof, a sort of trident or schematic praying representation. Is this a mythological scene? Late Iron Age, initial phase of Celtic influence. Period IV/E or F (4th century B.C.). Among the filiform figures is a horseman (partially covered by the warrior), the image of a horse with its body emphasized by long furrows and several other incomplete equines. Probably from the later phase of Etruscan influence; Middle Iron Age. Period IV/D (beginning of the 4th century B.C.).

