

ITALY

Rock Drawings in Valcamonica

Brief description

Valcamonica, situated in the Lombardy plain, has one of the world's greatest collections of prehistoric petroglyphs – more than 140,000 symbols and figures carved in the rock over a period of 8,000 years and depicting themes connected with agriculture, navigation, war and magic.

1. Introduction

Year(s) of Inscription 1979

Agency responsible for site management

- Soprintendenza for Archaeological Heritage of Lombardia
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2. Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria C (iii), (vi)

Justification provided by the State Party

The rock art of Val Camonica consists of more than 140,000 prehistoric drawings, carved on nearly 2,400 rocks; the group of sites is the most important example of this kind of expression of the human spirit known in the world. The carvings range from the Epipaleolithic period 8,000 years B.C., up to the beginning of our era.

This art represents an extraordinary achievement of human creativity. It goes back to a very distant past, and provides unique documentation on 8,000 years of human history.

As provided in ICOMOS evaluation

ICOMOS recommends that this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List, based on criteria (iii) and (vi).

(iii). The rock engravings of Val Camonica stretch back over the 8 thousand years which precede our present era. It is unnecessary to accent the

conspicuously invaluable nature of human renderings which are of so great an antiquity.

(vi). The rock engravings of Val Camonica constitute an extraordinary figurative documentation of prehistoric customs and mentality. The systematic interpretation, topological classification, and the chronological study of these configurations in stone have brought about a considerable contribution to the fields of prehistory, sociology and ethnology.

Committee Decision

The Committee made no statement.

- Statement of Significance does not adequately define the outstanding universal value of the site
- Proposal for text has been made by State Party: The Valle Camonica rock art constitutes the most important assemblage of this kind of manifestation of human thought in the world. The valley's rock art heritage, composed of over 140,000 engraved figurations distributed on about 2,400 rocks, is an extraordinary expression of human creativity over a period of more than 8,000 years, from the Epipaleolithic to the Roman and Medieval periods. The number, chronological distribution and variety of the engravings determine the exceptional value of this assemblage

Boundaries and Buffer Zone

- Status of boundaries of the site: adequate
- Buffer zone: The site is composed of an articulated group of rock-art sites (over 180) distributed in the territory of 24 councils in the lower, middle and upper valley, at an altitude which extends from 200m to 2,000m above sea level. In middle valley, which contains the 7 main sites already established Parks During the development of the Management plan, a buffer zone was established around the 7 rock-art sites. During the development of the Management Plan, the boundaries of the 7 Parks were drawn on maps in various and buffer zones defined

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- World Heritage site values have been maintained
- Since the inscription of the site in the World Heritage List its value has been increased by the identification of new archaeological remains strictly connected to the rock art and by the increasing number of studies concerning the

engravings. In addition, the integrity of the context has been safeguarded by means of careful control, which has led to services being moved (such as electricity pylons and the road "Strada Statale 42")

3. Protection

Legislative and Administrative Arrangements

- The site, since it is part of the national archaeological patrimony, is safeguarded by legislation ("Cultural Heritage and Landscape Code" 2004) which confers the responsibility for tutelage upon the Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities. In particular, all the rock-art localities belonging to the "Rock Drawings in Valcamonica" World Heritage Site are already operative, or under development, as Parks by specific administrative regulations, which are incorporated into local planning instruments. The regulations regarding the National Parks and Regional Reserves contain indications concerning the management of areas of archaeological, environmental, botanical and ethnographic importance. The Capo di Ponte council planning regulations were modified in 2005 in response to the coming into force of Regional Law which identifies "F Zones" in which the prehistoric rock art widely present in the territory must be safeguarded and developed, and allows normal life to continue in the town itself. Similar rules will be adopted by the other local authorities, with the coordination of the Soprintendenza for Archaeological Heritage
- Since 1979, important improvements have been made: some Parks have been extended, new rock-art sites have become public property and transformed into Parks, others (with joint public-private ownership) are under development as Parks
- The protection arrangements are considered highly effective

4. Management

Use of site/property

- Visitor attraction, national park, religious use, municipal park

Management /Administrative Body

- Steering group: set up 20/12/2004. Formally constituted. Function: a working party was set up to negotiate and develop a Management Plan; a Declaration of Intent was approved and signed in 2004. A technical and scientific

consulting group was set up. It includes, as a subcommittee, those involved in educational activities connected with the rock engravings. Mandate: to elaborate and initiate a Management Plan for UNESCO site

- Management by the State Party; Several Parks within the site are directly administered by local authorities; On the basis of current legislation all are subject to the control of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities
- Site manager to appoint
- Levels of public authority who are primarily involved with the management of the site: national regional; local
- The current management system is sufficiently effective

Actions proposed:

- Coordination between the site's Parks and museums; Creation of a coordinated system uniting the site's Parks and museums

5. Management Plan

- Management plan is being implemented
- Implementation commenced: 09/2005
- Very effective
- The Management Plan, recently completed, is now being put into practice, with the following priorities:
 - Modifications regarding administration, display and management in the Parks, especially in those with deficiencies in one or more of these fields.
 - Promotion of the site by means of appropriate forms of communication marketing.
 - Increased conservation work, until now only carried out by the Ministry-Superintendence;
 - Organization of scientific work according to an agreed programme, with emphasis on the archiving and publication of results

6. Financial Resources

Financial situation

- State Budget
- Regional Reserve and Municipal Parks; local authorities, sponsors
- European Union grant for the computerized cataloguing of the rock engravings and the creation of a rock art recording unit
- Sufficient

7. Staffing Levels

- Number of staff: 25

- The Superintendence for Archaeological Heritage has also technical and scientific staff for the planning, direction and supervision of work. Other cultural institutes and organizations which operate on the site also have personnel for rock art research and teaching. In addition, various types of associations carry out teaching activity, organizing guided visits, workshops and exercises in experimental archaeology
- Rate of access to adequate professional staff across the following disciplines: Very good: conservation, management, promotion; good: education; average: interpretation; visitor management
- Support of regular volunteers; especially in the field of rock-art reconnaissance and recording, partly conducted by universities and cultural organizations

8. Sources of Expertise and Training in Conservation and Management Techniques

- The Superintendence for Archaeological Heritage, is responsible for specialist activities and is in possession of the relevant personnel, active in the fields of archaeological research, maintenance, conservation, recording and development
- Training needs: it is necessary to train people, based in the valley, who can carry out constant monitoring and mapping of the state of preservation of the engraved rocks and collaborate in the recording of this information, together with conservation specialists and archive team based in the main Superintendence offices
- Training available for stakeholders

9. Visitor Management

- Visitor statistics: 415.589 (Parko Nazionale delle Incisioni Rupestri di Capo di Ponte, number of tickets), 2004
- Visitor facilities: teaching and information classes; Information and teaching aids (panels and leaflets). Park Bookshop; Service Centre; the specialist bookshop of Centro Camuno di Studi Preistorici is open to the public. Reception centres: at present there is not a centralized structure, but several Parks contain educational centres. Visitors must inevitably be directed along itinerarie.
- Visitor needs: those Parks which currently lack services need to be equipped, in line with a uniform display, education and publishing

strategy which identify them as belonging to the same UNESCO Heritage Site

10. Scientific Studies

- Risk assessment, monitoring exercises, condition surveys, archaeological surveys
- 1. Risk evaluation: specific measurements, analyses and studies on the preservation state of rocks with engravings, on the causes of deterioration and the level of pollution
- 2 - Studies concerning the value of the site
- 3 – Monitoring: In 1997 the Soprintendenza created the Rock Art Conservation Monitoring Archive, based on a computerized cataloguing system dubbed IR Web, a tool for mapping and recording the patrimony and its conservation history
- 4 - Recording the state of preservation: The IR WEB cataloguing systems, which are designed for conservation monitoring use modern techniques of photogrammetry and digital photography
- 5 - Archaeological field research: Field research aimed at discovering new rock engravings and archaeological sites has been carried out throughout the valley. New finds have been the subjects of excavation and recording work

11. Education, Information and Awareness Building

- Not enough number of signs referring to World Heritage site
- World Heritage Convention Emblem used on some publications
- Adequate awareness of World Heritage among: local communities, local authorities
- Need for awareness raising: it is felt that the recently developed Management Plan will have the effect of increasing awareness among local people and administrators, who will be motivated to suitably modify site development policy and in more widespread interest in this World Heritage Site on the part of visitors
- Heritage days: in 2005 on the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation was organized an international conference entitled “Arte rupestre della Valle Camonica. Storia delle ricerche: protagonisti, tendenze, prospettive attraverso un secolo”
- Web site available www.soprintendenza-archeologica.lombardia.it/parchivalcamonica/parco1. In addition, a Rock Art Portal is being developed by the Centro Camuno di Studi

Preistorici. There exist other websites which deal with rock art in general

- Local participation in the elaboration of the Management Plan which includes different actions to enhance the awareness of the local people about the UNESCO site

12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)

Reactive monitoring reports

- World Heritage Committee sessions: 28th (2004); 29th (2005)

Conservation interventions

- Heritage conservation (engraved rocks). Since 1980, annual rock conservation campaigns are carried out, which include cleaning, consolidation and preservation treatment. Principal excavations: Since 1980 greater attention has been paid to the study of archaeological sites, which have been excavated by the Superintendence itself or in collaboration with the Universities of Naples, Venice, Pisa and Trento; Elimination of risks for buried archaeological heritage: in areas considered at archaeological risk, all proposed building work is subject to preliminary archaeological checks. Engraved rocks in areas open to the public risk damage from the passage of visitors; this is eliminated by the construction of walkways. Re-use of historic buildings: a historic building, the eighteenth-century Villa Agostani, has been chosen as seat of the new Museo Nazionale della Preistoria della Valcamonica
- Present state of conservation: Patchy

Threats and Risks to site

- Development pressure, environmental pressure
- Specific issues: with regard to risks from socio-economic development, the buffer zones defined in the Management Plan should allow the situation to be adequately controlled. Environmental factors (increased pollution and reduction of soil stability leading to accelerated erosion) are responsible for serious deterioration of engraved rocks, and can be contained only by expensive and ever-increasing territorial management and campaigns of rock maintenance and treatment. Since the phenomenon is on the increase, in the future it may be necessary to periodically re-enter certain rocks in order to protect them from further deterioration

Emergency measures taken:

- Systematic monitoring of state of preservation; Monitoring of pollution levels for conservation purposes

13. Monitoring

- Formal monitoring programme; the Management Plan details specific indicators according to the nature of the site

14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions

- Main benefits of WH status: management
- Strengths/Weaknesses of management:
 1. Insufficient funding for the ordinary administration of the site
 2. The inadequacy of funding for the conservation of this patrimony, which requires both periodic campaigns of maintenance and conservation, and emergency treatment, without which this patrimony will be lost
 3. The insufficiency of surveillance personnel and, to a lesser degree, of technical staff for conservation recording and monitoring
 4. Poor coordination between those who administer the site, its workforce and its research staff

Future actions:

- Efficient resource use and fund raising. Organisation responsible: Management Plan Implementation Working Party. Timeframe: 2006
- Conservation Plan. Organisation responsible: Management Plan Implementation Working Party. Timeframe: 2008
- Training courses for teaching personnel and technical staff for conservation cataloguing and monitoring of the heritage. Organisation responsible: Management Plan Implementation Working Party. Timeframe: 2007
- Creation of computer network connecting the site's Parks and museums. Organisation responsible: Management Plan Implementation Working Party. Timeframe: 2007