

Camonica Valley Rock Art

Preliminary results of archaeological summer camp 2010

The traditional archaeological summer camp concerning the research, the tracing and the analysis of the prehistoric and medieval rock art has taken place in Camonica Valley, as every summer for 40 years. It was organized by *Dipartimento Valcamonica e Lombardia of Centro Camuno di Studi Preistorici* and it was directed by Umberto Sansoni and Silvana Gavaldo.

Even this year the valley has given new discoveries in spite of the camp has primarily fixed

Dos del Pater area. Rock no.9. Complete tracing.



the completion of the works in areas already analysed in 2005 and in 2007 by *Dipartimento*,

The fieldwork was set in two adjoining sites, *Pagherina* and *Dos del Pater*, which are situated on the east side of Camonica Valley, bordering on *Naquane* National Park (*Capo di Ponte*) north and on the *Campanine* area (*Cimbergo*) east.

The completion activities of the analysis on field have also scheduled the detailed exploration of the fringe areas, the photography work



Dos del Pater area. Rock. no.11. Tracing of a richly engraved panel dated back to different phases of Iron age.



Dos del Pater area. Rock no. 10. Anthropomorphic figure dated to Late Iron Age.



Dos del Pater area. Rock no.22. A panel full of superimpositions among "buildings" and anthropomorphic figures.



Dos del Pater area. Rock no. 22. An anthropomorphic figure with muscles in evidence.

(in particular through the use of grazing artificial light), the tracing of the engraved rocks (where it hasn't been made yet), the surveying of the surfaces in order to elaborate plans and sections and the mapping through GPS.

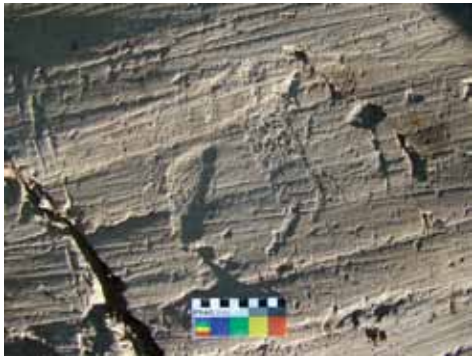
The data are now under processing and they will be included in the cataloguing system IRWeb, in order to integrate the Archives for the monitoring of the rock art which is present at the Archaeological Office of Lombardy.

The unexpected discoveries came to light as a result of control explorations made in the two research areas, which now are difficult to reach since the wood has been neglected

for decades and the vegetation has rapidly covered the paths, re-creating a very moist environment with underwood, shrubs and trees which has hidden from the sight rocks of considerable sizes.

The rocks were brought to light after re-establishing past paths.

Afterwards, the night exploration realized through artificial light, has allowed to locate new surfaces on which work. However, we run into difficulties to find engravings with natural light because of many zones in the shade and the presence of lichens which have made tough the reading of the engravings.



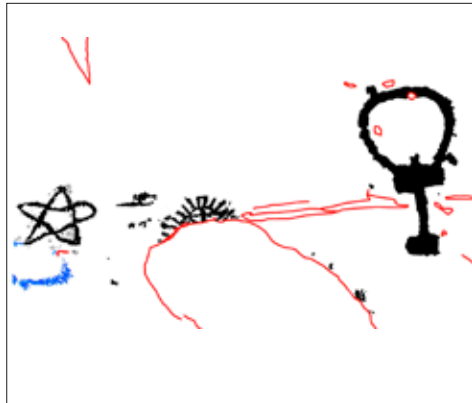
Pagherina area. Rock no. 22. A small footprint which is related to an anthropomorphic figure with weapons.



Pagherina area. Rock no. 22. A five-points star which is hard to date and a middle Iron Age building figure.



Dos del Pater area. Rock no.6. An anthropomorphic figure which is situated under a hut. It is comparable with the engraving of rock no. 10 of Dos del Pater.



Dos del Pater area. Rock no.22. Surface detachment on an engraved part.

As a first step, new engraved rocks have been analysed; six new surfaces have been detected in the research areas (5 in *Dos del Pater* area and 1 in *Pagherina* area) and at the same time the tracing work of the already known rocks has been completed.

The engraved surfaces are well-preserved, although surface detaching or detaching danger of small parts (in the southern zone of rock no.6 in *Dos del Pater* area, of rock no.10 and of rock no. 22 in *Pagherina* area, which unfortunately presents engravings) and zones worn by the treading, since they were situated

along ancient paths (rock no. 8, 9 and 14 in *Dos del Pater* area), have been reported.

The Iron Age, with its usual but always intriguing iconographic richness, has provided fascinating representations and unprecedented or infrequent details; the "Neolithic-Calcolithic I" period is well-documented too, in particular on the rocks of *Dos del Pater* area and on rock no.9 which represents the best example of this prehistoric phase: it is a long and rocky outcrop which forms a projecting prominence towards the valley and which follows the slope with a steep incline.

Rock no. 9 is richly engraved in its upper part and on two different sectors: in sector A there are cup-marks, patterns of cup-marks, schematic prayers dated back to Neolithic, spears made with *graffito* (scratching) and *polissoir* technique (most probably dating back to Bronze Age), simple anthropomorphic figures and armed characters which date back to the middle Iron Age, sharpeners, a five-pointed star and others carvings hard to define and date.

Most of the engravings, in particular the most ancient, seem place themselves in connection with a natural hollow; Sector B is more weatherworn and it presents two filled up rectangles (in all probability topographic elements dated from Calcolithic).

Thanks to its commanding position and thanks to the typology of the representations the rock should be considered in connection to the nearby rock no. 5 and to the overlying rock no. 10 of *Pagherina* area on which we can see a schematic prayer with big hands and two pairs of weapons; besides, it should be noted a connection with the rock no.21 of *Pagherina* area, a small panel full of engravings on which there are schematic anthropomorphic figures, prayers and other later carvings.

The Iron Age has grouped, during its different phases, most of the representations and it constitutes an emblematic range of the typical styles and subjects of middle Camonica Valley rock art, revealing similarities with areas already known and studied (as *Naquane* National Park and *Campanine* of *Cimbergo* area, which has been recently published and which is located inside the Rock engravings Regional Reserve of *Ceto-Cimbergo-Paspardo*), and peculiarities which allow to characterize and define it. For example, on rock no.22 (in *Pagherina* area) very small and anomalous "buildings" which don't have close comparisons stand out, although "building" representations catalogued in Camonica Valley are over 1.700 units and they make up a considerable group inside the analyzed zones.

On the same rock there is a tiny footprint which is probably the smallest image of the category and in connection with an anthropomorphic armed figure (Middle-Late Iron Age). Among the anthropomorphic figures is particularly interesting an armed character on

rock no. 10 of *Dos del Pater* area which has in evidence the fingers, a rectangular shield, a sword and a belt knife; there is an identical one on rock no. 7 of *Pagherina* area and a comparison on rock no. 6 of *Dos del Pater* area.

Extremely interesting are also the anthropomorphic armed figures and the pair of dotted circles joined by a line and which look supported by an anthropomorphic figure and a axe (dated to Middle Iron Age) on rock no. 11 of *Dos del Pater* area, a small and peculiar sandstone rock but richly engraved.

Rock no. 8 in *Dos del Pater* area is evidence of the custom of engraving on rocks also in historical age: on the horizontal surface there is an historical inscription which is organized in four lines and constructed by repeated syllables alternated by dots and even by a slightly separated eight-radiate asterisk.

The analysis and study of the area indicate its importance, its value and its centrality , but only the end of the research and documentation activities will allow us to set the exact value on a heritage which promises new and important data in order to understand exactly the life and the religiousness of people who lived throughout alpine prehistory.

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