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**Managing Rock Art World Heritage Sites**  
**22<sup>nd</sup> of May 2007**  
**Valcamonica, Italy**

**Discussion Paper**







# Preserving World Heritage Rock Art Valcamonica

*by Nuria Sanz\**

The World Heritage Convention is an international agreement which encourages the State Parties which adopt the Convention to ensure the protection of their own natural and cultural heritage of Outstanding Universal value through inscription of this heritage on the World Heritage List, thus ensuring its preservation through a closer co-operation among nations. Until now, 22 major rock art sites have been inscribed on the List on all continents but more than 100 other cultural and natural World Heritage Sites are related to rock art manifestations. The number of rock art sites could however be increased because the formulation of a clear definition of Rock Art is as challenging as the dating of the rock art itself.

Despite the geographical universality of rock art manifestations, the significant number of sites inscribed and the multiple challenges that must be dealt with in terms of documenting or conservation, we would like to focus the attention of this workshop on raising the main issues in the implementation of management plans at major rock art World Heritage sites. The World Heritage Centre has selected a small number of case studies for a better understanding of the current management challenges on properties inscribed over past decades or properties inscribed over the past three years.

People working in the field recognize that there are still significant gaps in the understanding and implementation of management plans on rock art sites and as to how the World Heritage community could improve methods for:

- Rapid assessment of impacts affecting the cultural integrity of site;
- The understanding and responses to social, cultural and economic impacts on these sites;
- Ensuring that assessments are participatory;
- The Improvement of methodologies for data storage and sharing;
- Interlinking natural conservation values with cultural values of some properties which have been inscribed in the List as cultural landscapes, mixed or natural sites;

To build on the experience some case studies have been selected from around the World for different purposes, which range from sites which were recently inscribed and to others inscribed more than 20 years ago; from archeological sites where local communities (indigenous or not) are essential to preserve a significant cultural life of the site, to places where the visitors are the only significant community in the area; from well-known places in accessible areas to sites placed in some of the more extreme geographies of our Planet.

On this occasion, the World Heritage Centre has invited representatives from the Advisory Bodies to accompany the discussion and feed the reflection with practical suggestions as to improve and develop the

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specific management guidelines for Rock Art World Heritage sites, according to their vulnerability and singularity.

As reflected in the entire management bibliography, site management paradigms are changing and can now be described as an adaptative tool, which assesses effectiveness in a framework of a more proactive rather than reactive approach. The meeting will also discuss how to provide leadership and innovative approaches in the management of the site to establish financial sustainability and at the same time to improve social participation to develop human capital.

Rock art behaves as a worldwide language which speaks in terms of geographical universality, over the entire span of human existence. Rock art sites are currently not understood as a manifestation of subjective self-expression, but as shared cultural features, establishing bindings of cultural significance, joining people to people, to a place, and encompassing collective symbolisms.

The World Heritage List has a particularly rich record of rock art. Rock art speaks to the universal, this characteristic obliging the avoidance of peripheral interest in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention. The main purpose of this meeting is to examine how to address global issues of rock art preservation in terms of:

- The assessment of the state of physical conservation of sites (of both observable and non observable aspects);
- The weaknesses in the bedrock supporting rock art which accelerates erosion,
- The loss of blocks of a rock panel;
- The natural rock coating and other deposits that could stabilize or damage the rock,
- The score of the site in terms of its current vulnerability

All of these are worries for the site manager in his/her establishment of rational priorities on a daily basis. The meeting will exchange experiences on the new methodologies used to improve research on conservation.

The visual magnificence of rock art manifestations and its capacity to call to mind cultural human experience has been responsible for the overlooking of the archaeological-anthropological connections over the first fifteen years of the Convention according to the conceptual and theoretical frameworks of the scientific and associated disciplines. Primarily fine art based studies and its recording methods were understood as sufficient background to justify the authenticity, integrity, and statement of significance and the outstanding universal value (OUV) of sites. Today, experts responsible for the examination the OUV of sites before inscription examine methodological bridges between rock art manifestations, anthropology and archaeology and are helped by more comprehensive scientific research and recording practices.

A management system driven by outstanding universal values should be based on a more comprehensive approach which is couched in a new theoretical and methodological approach:

- the understanding of the territory (site/sites) as a cultural/social space, that should be described in its geological, geographical, geomorphologic, bioclimatic (past/present conditions) terms to explain the cultural intention to intervene in the landscape;
- the iconographic parallels to explain, if possible, the inter/intra cultural relationship;
- the extension, unity and coherence of the group cultural identity;
- the feasible hierarchy between rock art manifestations on the site;
- the topographical links;
- the visibility and expression at the time to define the limits of the site;

- the relation between the property and the communication routes;
- the access to biotic or non-biotic resources;
- the use of the art as a territorial threshold or marker;
- the ethnographical models of production art and meaning;
- the relationship with resource supplies;
- the agricultural and livestock raising potentialities (past and/or present);
- the role of traditional authority in respect to rock art manifestations and the decision making procedures adopted in the management strategy;

Unfortunately a large amount of this information is missing in nomination files. In the framework of the periodic reporting exercise for World Heritage sites, and the related retrospective inventory, guidelines for the rock art sites could be improved to be in accordance with the requisites of the management plan.

Rich in terms of integrity and complexity of meaning, the role of the cultural landscape is essential in discussing the statement of significance of rock art sites with the physical protection of the property. Occasionally, rock art sites have badly suffered from natural causes. The experience of art occurs very often in its natural environment and sometimes in unspoilt natural contexts. Outstanding manifestations of rock art are very often found in protected natural areas which have been inscribed on the List as natural properties; and their preservation should take into account both the natural and the cultural values of a site. This balance should be closely monitored to ensure that measures put in place to protect one aspect do not impinge on another.

Successful documentation of rock art is a collaborative effort requiring the contribution of research archaeologists, ethnographers, anthropologists, linguists, curators, volunteers, native people, international research centres and international technical expertise. Often the Aquila's heel of a nomination during the examination of the OUV of the site by an Advisory Body expert is the lack of information for a comprehensive comparative study. How could we establish an international commitment to produce a universal repository for rock art graphic documentation through inter-institutional cooperation, which serves to set-up international standards for recording which would allow the establishing of comparison between sites at the time of the submission of the nomination? These are some of the key questions that should be discussed at the round table.

Ethnography also points to other significant facts, demonstrating rock art to be an art which is situated within real life. The site manager should take into account the cultural significance of the manifestation's links with ritual practises, ceremonies or ritual pilgrimages, and should harmonize conservation and international agendas to accommodate the native heritage concerns/significance to the preservation of the site. Some of the selected case studies propose methodologies for consultations with local communities and contemporary native peoples to give them a voice within the framework of the management plan.

In respect to Protection and management (II.F), The Operational Guidelines of the World Heritage Convention (February 2005) highlight:

96. Protection and management of World Heritage properties should ensure that the outstanding universal value, the conditions of integrity and/or authenticity at the time of inscription are maintained or enhanced in the future.

97. All properties inscribed on the World Heritage List must have adequate long-term legislative, regulatory, institutional and/or traditional protection and management to ensure their safeguarding. This protection should include adequately delineated boundaries. Similarly States Parties should demonstrate



adequate protection at the national, regional, municipal, and/or traditional level for the nominated property. They should append appropriate texts to the nomination with a clear explanation of the way this protection operates to protect the property.

#### Legislative, regulatory and contractual measures for Protection

98. Legislative and regulatory measures at national and local levels should assure the survival of the property and its protection against development and change that might negatively impact the outstanding universal value, or the integrity and/or authenticity of the property. States Parties should also assure the full and effective implementation of such measures.

#### Boundaries for effective protection

99. The delineation of boundaries is an essential requirement in the establishment of effective protection of nominated properties. Boundaries should be drawn to ensure the full expression of the outstanding universal value and the integrity and/or authenticity of the property.

100. For properties nominated under criteria (i) - (vi), boundaries should be drawn to include all those areas and attributes which are a direct tangible expression of the outstanding universal value of the property, as well as those areas which in the light of future research possibilities offer potential to contribute to and enhance such understanding.

101. For properties nominated under criteria (vii) - (x), boundaries should reflect the spatial requirements of habitats, species, processes or phenomena that provide the basis for their inscription on the World Heritage List. The boundaries should include sufficient areas immediately adjacent to the area of outstanding universal value in order to protect the property's heritage values from direct effect of human encroachments and impacts of resource use outside of the nominated area.

102. The boundaries of the nominated property may coincide with one or more existing or proposed protected areas, such as national parks or nature reserves, biosphere reserves or protected historic districts. While such established areas for protection may contain several management zones, only some of those zones may satisfy criteria for inscription.

#### Buffer zones

103. Wherever necessary for the proper conservation of the property, an adequate buffer zone should be provided.

104. For the purposes of effective protection of the nominated property, a buffer zone is an area surrounding the nominated property which has complementary legal and/or customary restrictions placed on its use and development to give an added layer of protection to the property. This should include the immediate setting of the nominated property, important views and other areas or attributes that are functionally important as a support to the property and its protection. The area constituting the buffer zone should be determined in each case through appropriate mechanisms. Details on the size, characteristics and authorized uses of a buffer zone, as well as a map indicating the precise boundaries of the property and its buffer zone, should be provided in the nomination.

105. A clear explanation of how the buffer zone protects the property should also be provided.

106. Where no buffer zone is proposed, the nomination should include a statement as to why a buffer zone is not required.

107. Although buffer zones are not normally part of the nominated property, any modifications to the buffer zone subsequent to inscription of a property on the World Heritage List should be approved by the World Heritage Committee.

#### Management systems

108. Each nominated property should have an appropriate management plan or other documented management system which should specify how the outstanding universal value of a property should be preserved, preferably through participatory means.

109. The purpose of a management system is to ensure the effective protection of the nominated property for present and future generations.

110. An effective management system depends on the type, characteristics and needs of the nominated property and its cultural and natural context. Management systems may vary according to different cultural perspectives, the resources available and other factors. They may incorporate traditional practices, existing urban or regional planning instruments, and other planning control mechanisms, both formal and informal.

111. In recognizing the diversity mentioned above, common elements of an effective management system could include:

- a) a thorough shared understanding of the property by all stakeholders;
- b) a cycle of planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and feedback;
- c) the involvement of partners and stakeholders;
- d) the allocation of necessary resources;
- e) capacity-building; and
- f) an accountable, transparent description of how the management system functions.

112. Effective management involves a cycle of long-term and day-to-day actions to protect, conserve and present the nominated property.

113. Moreover, in the context of the implementation of the Convention, the World Heritage Committee has established a process of Reactive Monitoring (see Chapter IV) and a process of Periodic Reporting (see Chapter V).

114. In the case of serial properties, a management system or mechanisms for ensuring the co-ordinated management of the separate components are essential and should be documented in the nomination (see paragraphs 137-139).

115. In some circumstances, a management plan or other management system may not be in place at the time when a property is nominated for the consideration of the World Heritage Committee. The State Party concerned should then indicate when such a management plan or system would be put in place, and how it proposes to mobilize the resources required for the preparation and implementation of the new management plan or system. The State Party should also provide other document(s) (e.g. operational plans) which will guide the management of the site until such time when a management plan is finalized.

116. Where the intrinsic qualities of a property nominated are threatened by action of man and yet meet the criteria and the conditions of authenticity or integrity set out in paragraphs 78-95, an action plan outlining the corrective measures required should be submitted with the nomination file.

Should the corrective measures submitted by the nominating State Party not be taken within the time proposed by the State Party, the property will be considered by the Committee for delisting in accordance with the procedure adopted by the Committee (see Chapter IV.C).

117. States Parties are responsible for implementing effective management activities for a World Heritage property. State Parties should do so in close collaboration with property managers, the agency with management authority and other partners, and stakeholders in property management.

118. The Committee recommends that States Parties include risk preparedness as an element in their World Heritage site management plans and training strategies.

#### Sustainable use

119. World Heritage properties may support a variety of ongoing and proposed uses that are ecologically and culturally sustainable. The State Party and partners must ensure that such sustainable use does not adversely impact the outstanding universal value, integrity and/or authenticity of the property.



Furthermore, any uses should be ecologically and culturally sustainable. For some properties, human use would not be appropriate.

Therefore, the management plan should describe the philosophy and direction to respect this spirit, to reconcile competing interests and to identify priorities for the allocation of available resources. The management plan should also:

- Precisely state how the natural and cultural features are to be protected and conserved;
- Specify any limitation or prohibition on the exercise of the institutional staffing responsibilities regarding research, protection, conservation, and all the means of regulation of prohibition;
- The regulation of the use of the sites included or not in a public use plan;

Principle issues to be discussed at the meeting include:

- The role of actors involved in management, mediation and decision making processes such as: employees of the organization managing the site, traditional or legal owners of the site, indigenous communities, government departments, local councilors, political leaders, developers, ministries involved in territorial development, tourism authorities, and NGOs;

- The co-involvement of local communities as an effective measure for providing comprehensive conservation of the outstanding universal value of sites and for an improved understanding of the meaning of place on these sites;

- The skills required for management on both technical and political levels;

- The improvements achieved or needed in terms of legislation on protected rock art areas;

- The involvement of scientific, technical and pedagogical actors in the management plan conception and implementation to build consistency to promote protected area values;

- The necessity of education and awareness-raising at a local level to facilitate both management and ownership relations on the site;

- The capacity of management to protect and conserve values, and to achieve goals and objectives, in a pro-active way within the international context for rock art sites;

-and, The feasible guidelines based on practical lessons discussed as case studies at the workshop to then be acted upon, mainly focusing on the possible impact on and contribution to community development and how to link preservation with local population involvement and eco-social prosperity.

The World Heritage Centre will publish the results of the meeting in the UNESCO World Heritage Series. This discussion is viewed as a milestone to develop an Action Plan on Rock Art sites inscribed on the World Heritage List or on Tentative Lists to improve international co-operation and to promote international standards for rock art recording, conservation and management on World Heritage sites.

# **Managing Rock Art World Heritage Sites**

## **22<sup>nd</sup> of May 2007**

### **Valcamonica, Italy**

Structure of the content of the case study chosen.

In order to facilitate the coordination and preparation of comparable conclusions, we ask that the following parameters and required basic information be taken into consideration, adapting your presentation accordingly:

Brief description: Country, state or province; city, town; year of inscription on the World Heritage List. Cultural characteristics and existing heritage values (focussed on Rock Art presentation) on the basis of which the site was included on the World Heritage List. Size of the population surrounding the archaeological site; general socioeconomic details of the area. Year of inscription on the World Heritage List. Brief description of the site. Total surface listed: maximum protection and buffer).

Conservation of the Site: principal vulnerabilities in relation to the preservation of the tangible and intangible values associated with Rock art representatively of the site.

Problems detected in relation to tourism practices at the site.

Management Plan for the World Heritage Site

Participating institutions: Technical and executive coordinating institution(s). Decision making process ; participating institutions (public and/or private); Legal support of the site management.

Institutional position of tourism management within the Management Plan: players, decision making.

Identification of local players: Mechanisms for bringing players together; for decision making. Seminars, workshops or other mechanisms used for arriving at a consensus and agreements with the local players: local population, local interest groups.

Design of the tourism planning project (if any): Identification of the case; Brief description of the geographical, social and historical context in which the tourism planning project presented is set. Objectives of the tourism planning process; methodology applied; participating professionals (professional profile/ times). Description of components: objectives/ actions/ amount of financing/ chronogram/ results.

Monitoring/Evaluation of the state of conservation of the site: Kinds of indicators.

Reflection on the management process; strong and weak points. SWOT

Awareness-raising campaigns on sustainable ways to visit the site. How to convey the vulnerabilities of the site in relation to its values.

Lessons learned, recommendations with respect to the management planning process for Rock Art World Heritage Sites.



**PRESENTATIONS (POWERPOINT/VIDEOS)**

- a) Duration of the presentation: A time limit of 30 minutes has been established for each presentation. The time will be controlled by the table coordinators.
- b) Equipment, programmes or other requirements: please indicate the exact technical requirements for your presentation. All presentations must be delivered on a CD for making copies.
- c) Oral and written language of the presentation