



XXIX Valcamonica Symposium 2026
ANIMALS IN ROCK ART
22-23-24 October 2026 - CAPO DI PONTE BS (ITALY)
CENTRO CAMUNO DI STUDI PREISTORICI

PRESS RELEASE 1

Valcamonica Symposium 2026: scholars from around the world gather to discuss animals in rock art

From **22 to 24 October**, Valcamonica will once again become an international point of reference for studies on rock art. The **Centro Camuno di Studi Preistorici**, which has organized the Valcamonica Symposium for more than half a century, is dedicating the 2026 edition to a topic of major scientific importance: **animal figures in rock art**.

The programme is now being finalized, and numerous paper proposals have already been received from Italian and international scholars, confirming the continued interest that this topic inspires within the international scientific community.

Animals are in fact the most recurrent subject in world rock art since the Upper Palaeolithic. Their presence reflects the deep and complex relationship established by human communities with the animal world: a source of sustenance, labour and transport, but also a central element of the symbolic, religious and mythological universe of past societies.

Rock art tells the story of this relationship through thousands of images engraved or painted on rocks, in which animals take on meanings that go far beyond the simple representation of reality. Depending on the geographical areas and cultural contexts, different species may express the same symbolic values, today offering valuable information about the social organization, economy, beliefs and landscapes in which ancient populations lived.

The study of these depictions is also a fundamental tool for reconstructing palaeoenvironments and understanding the climatic evolution of the different regions of the planet over the course of prehistory and protohistory.

The Symposium will offer a fascinating journey across the five continents, exploring an iconographic heritage of extraordinary richness: from the lizards, turtles, fish and birds of Brazil to the giraffes, lions, antelopes, hyenas, monkeys, elephants and rhinoceroses of the plateau between Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea; from vultures depicted feeding on carrion in the Algerian Sahara to

the deer and camelids of the Amazon, and the sea turtles of Oman. A scientific itinerary that crosses cultures, eras and continents, showing how the language of images has accompanied humanity since its origins.

For three days, Valcamonica will host researchers from numerous countries, once again confirming its role as one of the leading international centres for exchange and research on rock art and the cultural heritage of prehistory.

Event organized by



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DI STUDI
PREISTORICI**

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