



ROCK-ART SITE ACCESSIBILITY THE CASES OF DOS SOTTOLAILOLO AND MASSI DI CEMMO, VALCAMONICA, ITALY



Concerns about accessibility in places of public interest is an issue that should never be forgotten. A person's physical, sensory or social condition should not exclude access to leisure and culture resources. The United Nations adopted the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on 13 December 2006. Ratified by 87% of the members, it came into force on 3 May 2008. The convention is the first comprehensive human rights treaty of the 21st century. Article 9 point 1 states,

"To enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life, States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas." (UN 2006)

Many public places and archaeological sites are a challenge. Its can be difficult to make them accessible. The natural location of some hinder access. For others, it is a simple lack of will and knowledge. The main problems are to resolve the physical problems, as well as management and financial issues. In many cases, it is only necessary to make simple adjustments to transform the site into a place capable of welcoming visitors with different special needs.

Dos Sotto Laiolo, Paspardo

In Valcamonica, efforts to make some rock-engraving sites accessible began in 2012. The pilot project was for Dos Sotto Laiolo, a small area in the *Riserva Regionale Incisioni Rupestre Ceto – Cimbergo – Paspardo*. The site was ideal because the engraved rocks were small with level or slightly sloping surfaces. Figures depict different sized warriors, animals, symbols like the "paletta" (a kind of shovel) and even two "Camunian roses" (R.1). Access was already relatively easy and the space around the area made it possible to create a car park a few metres from the carvings.

The first intervention was to improve accessibility for the visually impaired (JAFFE *et al.* Visually impaired people can use their canes to tap on a line of granite stones (about 5 centimetres wide and 80 metres long). The guide stones lie alongside the path to the engraved rocks. There are metal information panels close to the rocks, with text in English, Italian and Braille (JAFFE *et al.* 2014 and 2015).

Specialist accessibility advice and visitor feedback led to new adaptations in 2017. There is now a shelter at the site entrance (fig. 1) close to the parking area. Here there are panels with texts in Italian, English and Braille (fig. 2).

The blind or visual impaired visitor can touch a latex moulds that reproduces a part of rock n. 4 (so-called palette rock). From there, a substantially level and widened path that now allows more comfortable access for wheelchairs, including electric ones. A railing was added alongside the path and line of stones (fig. 3a). Children from the "Cooperativa Il Cardo" decorated the railing engraved drawings in low relief (fig. 3b) (MILZANI 2018). A large metal bell at the end of the rail reproduces the sound of hitting stone, as in ancient times (fig. 3c). As before, there were panels by the rocks that had their texts and images updated. They include a version in English, Italian and Braille, but the images in high relief disappear. QR code with an internet link gives an audio description of the site and rock in English and Italian. (fig. 4). The strategy followed in updating the site visitation improved its accessibility, but small changes could also be made such as creating a tactile site map with the location of the rocks. The texts allow deaf people to understand the site a bit better, but it would be interesting to create a sign language guide that could be downloaded to a mobile phone. It is still necessary to safeguard visitors. mainly blind, elderly, children. There is a risk of falling, mainly in the vicinity of r. 4/6 and r. 5. Visitors with accessibility problems should always be accompanied.

Massi di Cemmo (1 & 2), Capo di Ponte

The two boulders of Cemmo were the first discoveries of engraved rocks in Valcamonica. This happened in 1909. Over the years, this find was one of the most studied and visited sites in the valley. Several excavations during the last decades brought to light a true ceremonial site. Besides the two vertical engraved boulder (Massi 1 & 2), more than 20 statue-stele and fragments were found, transforming it in of the most important site of the Chalcolithic in Europa. Different finds from different periods show that the area was frequented from the Mesolithic period to the Roman period. In 2005 the Italian State decided to transform the area into an "Archaeological National Park" and opened it to the public. The Park is state-owned and managed since 2018 by the Museum Pole of Lombardy, a peripheral body of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities (Fig. 5a). This made possible to better prepare the area to receive visitors. The small valley of Pian delle Greppe, where the rocks are located, is quite flat and the engravings are only few metres from a road from Capo di Ponte do Cemmo made it an ideal area to transform in an easy place (fig. 5b) to visit, especially for people with walking difficulties, parents with baby pushchairs. It is even 100% accessible for wheel-chair users. The path includes a small ramp and railings. Panels with explanatory texts include images and reconstruction drawings both Italian and English (fig. 6). The nearby parking area also has places for disable people, but the site is not yet prepare for other visitors with difficulties, like blind people.

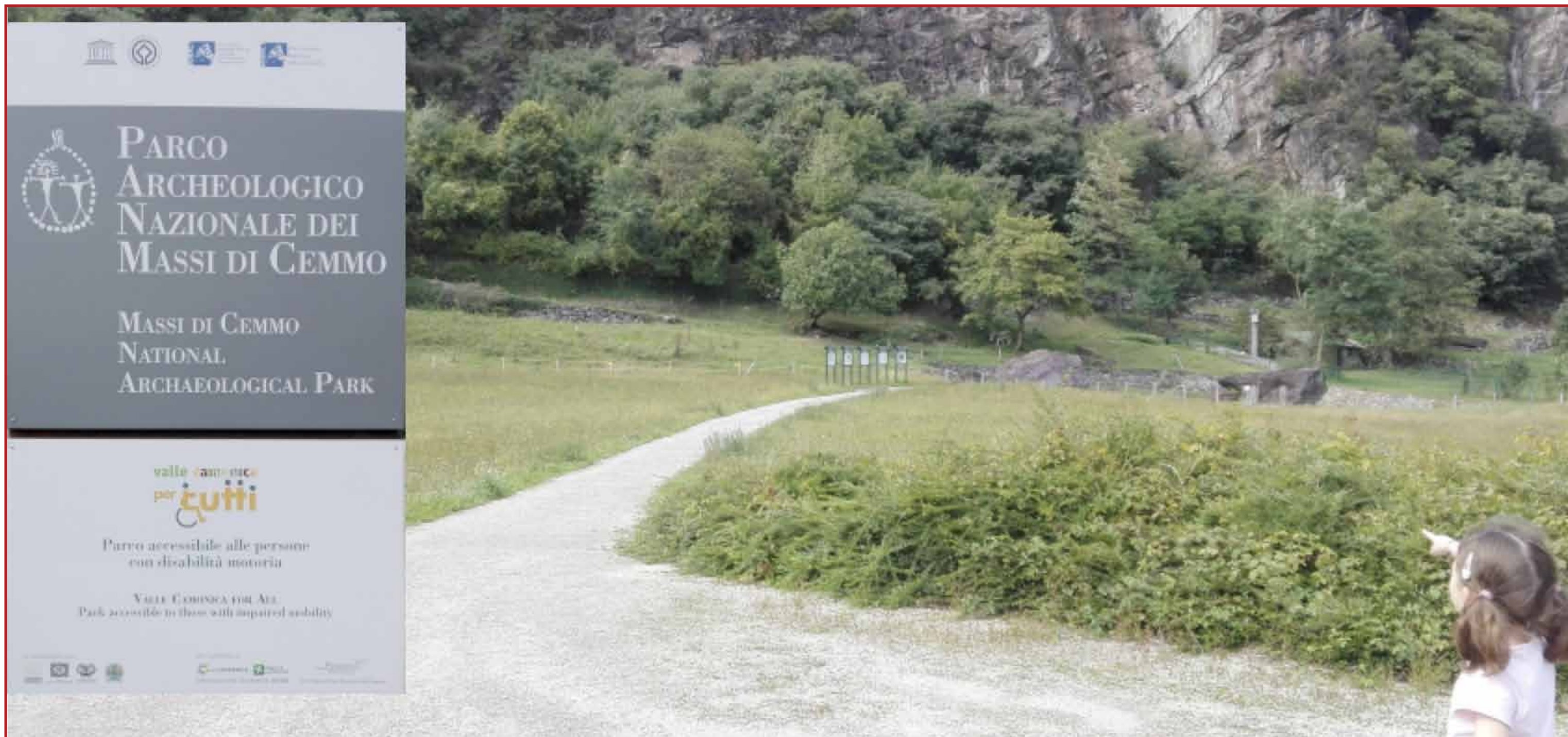
Hopefully these type of provision will become more common in future.

References

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MILZANI, M. (2018). Le Guide Mutanti di Zeus! Turismo Accessibile in Valle Camonica. *Anno XVIII*, n° 74, Il Cardo: Edolo, p. 2–35. United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) https://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/COP/cosp9_infographic.pdf



Figs. 1,2,3,4 - Dos Sotto Laiolo rock-art site



Figs. 5,6 - Massi di Cemmo rock-art site