



Themata 5 E-learning Archaeology, the Heritage Handbook



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E-learning Archaeology

the Heritage Handbook

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Images of the past *by Anders**Gustafsson & Håkan Karlsson*

→ **LU** Images of the past *by Anders Gustafsson & Håkan Karlsson*

sco Introduction

In this module we present a critical and ethnographical comparison of how the World Heritage listed rock carvings in Tanum, Sweden and Val Camonica, Italy are managed and accessible to the public. The module – which is provocative in its nature – focuses upon a case study concerning how the Swedish and Italian heritage management cultures views the rock carvings as an authentic (i.e. genuine) phenomenon that firmly, and solely, belonging to the past and how this contemporary embedded and constructed narrative leads to specific ways of manage, construct, organise, present and stage these places to the public.

The module stresses that even if the rock carvings are produced in the past their authenticity is in parallel a product of their role in contemporary negotiations of interpretative supremacy, control and power between the culture of heritage managements and the public. An ethnographical approach, and ethnographical methods, are used. This approach has implications for archaeology, and its relationship with the public, on a general level since in the light of this approach activities and phenomena that seem to be completely normal, present themselves instead as examples of the specific culture of contemporary archaeology/heritage management and its striving for interpretative supremacy, control and power. It is stressed that this culture and its rituals need to be further examined from an ethnographical point of view.

The module – and its provocative ideas – can lift forward some themes, issues and dimensions connected to how images of the past are structured and constructed and hopefully it can help heritage managers across Europe to reflect critically around their own situation as heritage manager irrespective of which European country they are active in. It takes less than 60 minutes to work through the module and it the examination consist of a reflection on one's own situation and attitudes towards some of the themes presented in the module.

sco An ethnographical approach> **Animation**

During the period 16/5-4/6 I was stationed in Tanum with the purpose of cleaning and painting rock-carvings, amongst others, at Aspeberget and Vitlycke. All rock-carving surfaces had been exposed to damage through casting with latex, and through paintings and reconstructions of partly weathered carvings /.../ At Aspeberget a casting with latex had been accomplished, and as a consequence the coating [of the rock surface] had disappeared on an area c. 0.5 x 1 m. Attempts were made to remove the sharp borders between this area and the coated, natural surface, with the help of a strong lye consisting of caustic soda. This attempt was only partly successful/.../ At the Vitlycke-surface a number of castings had been carried out, and this had resulted in 0.5-1 m² huge, bright spots, where the rock surface, Åds coating had disappeared. Latex from the castings had also been spilled on the rock surface. The attempts to remove the borders between the coated surface and the areas where castings had been made, with the help of caustic soda in different concentrations and with nitric acid, were only partly successful. During the work on the Vitlycke-surface, 5-10 school classes per day visited the site. All the children wanted to run on the rock and some of the youngest boys tried to slide down it. After the cleaning and the painting, on several occasions I observed school groups that ate their lunch on the rock, and the children dropped sandwiches and ice-cream, threw sausages and slices of cheese, and spilled milk on the rock – all of which left ugly grease spots. (ATA, our transl.). This quotation, dating from 1965, is from a PM written to the county antiquary of Bohuslän, Sweden by a heritage manager stationed in Tanum. The argument concerning the dangers of grease spots from ice-cream, milk, sausages and slices of cheese may seem strange in the light of the chemical excesses with caustic soda and nitric acid carried out by the manager when cleaning (and preserving, sic!) the rock surface. It clearly shows that some odd activities and reasoning took place within the framework of heritage management 40-years ago but quite needless to say, there are activities and reasonings within contemporary heritage management that are as strange and peculiar as the one presented if one approaches them in an ethnographical way.

If we try to turn inwards our outward-looking gaze and to re-encounter our everyday activities it can be concluded that archaeology (not least in the form of the practical management of the cultural heritage) contains a tremendous amount of unusual and socially strange culturally



embedded rituals and activities. These produce not only material culture (artefacts) in various forms, but also specific social relationships between different actors. During recent decades various aspects of these socially and culturally embedded archaeological activities and their material remains have been studied within the framework of different reflexive approaches and methodologies that on a general level can be said to have a common ground in ethnographical ideas and methods, even if this is not explicitly evident in all cases.

If one approaches heritage sites (such as the rock carvings in Tanum and Val Camonica) in an ethnographical way, the everyday activities carried out by contemporary heritage management practitioners at a number of these sites can seem very strange. However, if we only look at these activities as archaeologists, we also undoubtedly run the risk of becoming culturally and contextually blinded. Some activities have been carried out in the same way for decades, and via archaeological culture one is socialised to view them as completely 'natural'. However, if we leave the well-trodden and traditional paths of archaeology, we may well be convinced that an ethnographical approach, and ethnographical methods, if applied to archaeology on a general level, can teach us something about ourselves and about archaeology as a social, cultural and existential activity carried out in the present. An ethnographical approach can provoke and shock our thoughts and let them run in different and new directions – directions where archaeology, its familiar activities or our fixed social role, cannot be taken as something self-evident.

The approach is embedded in (self-) criticism and reflexivity, and it enables us to consider archaeology as a specific social and cultural activity carried out within the framework of a specific historical, ideological and socio-political context, i.e. a specific cultural activity approaching and acting both towards the past and the present, as well as towards the future. Even if an ethnographical perspective primarily focuses on the culture of contemporary archaeology, on its activities and its material culture, this does not mean that the past and its peoples are ignored. Rather, it is the other way around, since such an approach lets us view archaeology and its material culture as a cultural phenomenon and enables us to study it in the same way as we as archaeologists study the past – and in some cases the present – cultures and their material culture. This method leads to new ways of looking at and understanding the past through the recognition that archaeological interpretations of the past are always embedded in the contextually and socially dependent archaeological processes of the present.

When using an ethnographical approach towards our own cultural practice and everyday activities at heritage sites a number of methods that are quite unconventional for archaeology are used, for instance:

- > participatory observation,
- > analyses of the socio-geographical movements of visitors,
- > questionnaires,
- > interviews,
- > text-analyses of information and information-boards.

Even if some of these methods are quite common, for instance within museum studies and the analysis of visitors/public, exhibitions and their construction etc, so far, and with few exceptions, they are seldom used when approaching the everyday activities carried out by contemporary heritage management at heritage sites (cf. Joyce 2002; Ravelli 2006). Needless to say, the results from ethnographical analyses of heritage management activities at heritage sites constitutes fruitful, and empirically based, examples of the relationship between heritage management and the public and can as such have important contributions to more overall questions and discussions within the growing field of public archaeology (cf. Jameson ed. 1997; Bender 1998; Skeates 2000; Karlsson & Nilsson 2001; Carman 2005; Hems & Blockley eds. 2006; Merriman ed. 2004; Public Archaeology). This is the case, for instance, when it comes to questions concerning the intertwined issues of: public access, the use of cultural heritage, the democratic dialogue and cooperation between heritage management and the public concerning the constitution and content of the cultural heritage, preservation and local ownership etc.

sco Objectives of the module

With this background the purpose of this module is to use the ethnographical approach, briefly presented above, when approaching the World Heritage listed rock carving sites in Tanum, Bohuslän, Sweden and Val Camonica, Brescia, Italy and when discussing, comparing, and analysing how:

- > the Swedish and Italian heritage management culture's contemporary embedded and constructed narratives of the rock carvings as an authentic (i.e. genuine) phenomenon firmly, and solely, anchored in the past leads to specific practical ways of managing, constructing, organizing, presenting and staging the actual sites to the public,
- > the narratives and the practical conditions this fosters at the sites are interacting in a way that are crucial for the relationship between the heritage management and the public as well as for the public's mental and physical access to the rock carvings,



- > the narratives are a product of contemporary negotiations of interpretative supremacy, control and power between the culture of heritage managements and the public, and how it limits, and partly denies, the public mental and physical access to the rock carvings in line with the heritage managements desire for control and power,
- > the ethnographical approach can be valuable and fruitful when reflecting critically around our archaeological activities and our place and role in contemporary society.

sco The construction of authenticity

Before approaching how the concept of authenticity is understood and put into practice by the heritage management in Tanum and Val Camonica, let us briefly engage ourselves with the concept itself and some discussions based around it, since it is situated at the centre of our discussion.

The content of the concept of authenticity is problematic and it can be – and has been – interpreted in a number of ways in different contexts. In a narrow definition of the term, authenticity refers solely to the genuineness of, for example, a rock carving.

> Animation

UNESCO

The fact that the above definition is simplified, generalising and anchored in Western traditions have, amongst others, led to two UNESCO-sponsored conferences where the search for an appropriate definition of the term (that could be used worldwide) was focused. The results of these conferences are presented in the 'Nara Document on Authenticity' and in this it is for instance stated that authenticity can mean different things in different cultural contexts.

ICOMOS

After its construction in 1994 the Nara document has influenced the discussions. Even if not explicitly using the concept of authenticity the Burra Charter – produced by the Australian National ICOMOS Committee in 1999 – do also presenting interesting themes concerning the issue of authenticity. For instance when discussing in-depth the relationship and differences between maintenance, repair and reconstruction of a place and its fabric, and when focusing on the existing use of places, its present cultural significance, the dialogue with people for whom the place are culturally significant, and the co-existence of cultural values and interpretations (www.nsw.nationaltrust.org.au/burracharter.html). Also in this case it is obvious that authenticity – in line with the Nara document – is something that can be interpreted in different ways. At the

moment the ICOMOS committee ICIP (International Scientific Committee on Interpretation and Preservation of Cultural Heritage Sites) is working on a charter concerning the Interpretation and Presentation of Heritage sites that amongst others indirectly will approach the theme of authenticity since one of the committee's aims is to change the present use of one way communication towards the visitors in the form of 'Presentation' at the sites towards 'Interpretation where the public are stimulated to reflection and dialogue (icip.icomos.org/eng/about_missionstatement.html). Such a change does of course also have indirect impacts on how the authenticity of the sites is viewed.

Despite these theoretical efforts and the rather flexible views of the content of the concept that have materialised in various official documents, it is no exaggeration to state that the traditional and narrow definition of the concept of authenticity as genuineness is the one still held by most heritage managers in the Western world today. Thus, there is still an epistemological problem if one interprets the content of the concept of authenticity in the sense of genuineness – a problem directly related, for instance, to the studied rock carvings' status as part of the world heritage. According to UNESCO, which has handled and managed the world heritage convention since 1972, there are a number of criteria that must be fulfilled if a phenomenon is to be classified as world heritage. The criterion of authenticity (in some cases obviously interpreted plainly as the genuineness of the phenomena) is among the central criteria. This explains why UNESCO has been interested in finding an appropriate definition of the term. If a phenomenon is classified, the host country has an obligation and a responsibility to preserve, protect and take care of the phenomenon in such a way that it remains unchanged (i.e. is genuine) for forthcoming generations (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext>). In UNESCO's convention the epistemological problem if considering authenticity solely as genuineness, is therefore obvious. How does one protect, manipulate, tend and take care of something that receives its value from being unprotected, un-manipulated, untended and uncared for? However, for the heritage managers in both Tanum and Val Camonica this dichotomy seems not to be problematic since the rock carvings authenticity seems to be regarded solely as inherent in the rock carvings themselves (i.e. authenticity defined narrowly as genuineness). This is at the same time as the managers seems to neglect any notions that this authenticity partly is a consequence of present meanings, manipulations and negotiations of various kinds. However, from a different perspective, it can be argued that even if the rock carvings in Tanum and Val Camonica

(as elsewhere) initially are produced in the past, they are not firmly and solely belonging to the past since their authenticity and genuineness are in parallel, and as such, something that is negotiated and constructed by specific cultural processes and activities in the present. At the moment, these cultural processes and activities performed within the framework of cultural heritage management create a contemporary embedded and constructed narration of the rock carvings as authentic (i.e. genuine) remains anchored firmly and solely in the past. From this it follows that archaeologists and heritage managers – embracing this narrow view of authenticity – constantly construct the past and its authenticity within the framework of a contemporary narration. It can be further stressed that this heritage management narration leads to specific practical ways of managing, constructing, organizing, presenting and staging heritage sites and that the narration is a product of the contemporary negotiations of interpretative supremacy, control and power between the culture of heritage managements and the public. Negotiations where the narration of authenticity give the heritage managers interpretative supremacy and lets them keep their role as experts at the same time means the public's psychical and physical access to the rock carvings are limited and partly denied at the sites. Let us see how this is done in practice on an empirical and practical level.

sco The sites at Vitlycke-Aspeberget and Naquane

The rock carving areas of Tanum and Val Camonica are situated c. 1400 km from each other, in very different environmental contexts (lowland coastal areas and high altitude mountains), but despite this there are some similarities between the rock carvings when it comes to motifs etc. This fact has been used as providing grounds for some researchers to discuss, for instance, their common cosmology and the diffusion of ideas and people within Bronze Age Europe etc. These are interesting paths of discussion but they are situated outside of the scope of this text, which rather discusses the eventual common cosmology of the heritage managements at these places.

> Animation

Val Camonica

The rock carvings in Val Camonica, a province of Brescia, northern Italy, were listed as World Heritage in 1978 and the sites constituting the World Heritage are in various forms owned by the Italian state, the regional county, villages and private owners. At the moment, the state owns 70% of the central rock-carving area of Naquane. The rock carvings in Val Camonica, spread over some distance along the Val Camonica valley and the central part of the area,

are situated in and near Capodi Ponte, where sites such as: Bedolina, Seradina, Naquane and Massi di Cemmo are organised with sign-posts, information-boards, ramps etc. The National Park site at Naquane, that opened as a 'park' as long ago as in 1954 – is the central site – and it has circa 80,000 visitors each year. In accordance with contemporary interpretations, the carvings are interpreted to stem from a period stretching from the Palaeolithic to the Middle Ages and thus are produced within different societal contexts. Despite the fact that the carvings are presented to the public at a number of sites such as Bedolina, Seradina, Naquane and Massi di Cemmo, it is the situation at Naquane we will focus on.

Tanum

The rock carvings in Tanum, province of Bohuslän, south-western Sweden, were listed as World Heritage in 1994. The rock carvings in Tanum have circa 100.000 visitors each year and these do mainly visit the four major areas with carvings Vitlycke, Aspeberget, Litsleby and Fossum that are organised to meet the visitor, i.e. sign-posts, information-boards, ramps etc. In accordance with contemporary interpretations the carvings are interpreted to stem mainly from the Bronze Age 1800-500BC and they are seen as produced within a farming society. However, both the dates and the context of the production of the carvings are put into question within recent research. The carvings are primarily presented to the public at a number of surfaces at the sites Vitlycke, Aspeberget, Litsleby and Fossum and in this text we will concentrate our discussion around the situation at Vitlycke and Aspeberget.

The reason for choosing to discuss and compare the sites at Vitlycke-Aspeberget, as the Swedish example, and Naquane, as the Italian one, can be found in a number of reasons: the sites are central and highlighted in their respective World Heritage areas, they are quite important and have a high number of surfaces with rock carvings, they have an impressive number of visitors each year (100,000 and 80,000) and they are organised to meet these visitors. Thus, the overall similarities between these sites make them a good choice, and a good source-material, for comparison.

sco The sites at Vitlycke-Aspeberget and Naquane: criteria of comparison

We approached the sites briefly presented in an ethnographical way, where the everyday activities, as well as the material artefacts, of the heritage management, were viewed as specific cultural activities, and as material remains of the specific

culture of the contemporary archaeology/heritage management. Instead of concentrating on viewing the rock carvings as most visitors do, whether as archaeologists or not, we studied the actual staging of the sites, the physical access to the rock carvings surfaces, the underlying content of signposts, and the psychological access to the carvings with regard towards the background of the content of the texts on the information-boards etc.

In a structured way the observations from our visits to the two places can be presented as in the table below.

> **Animation**

Staging and physical access
 Criteria of comparison Vitlycke-Aspeberget Naquane
 Signposts at the highway are leading the visitor to the site
 Signposts at local roads are leading the visitor to the site
 Entrance fee to the site
 Entrance fee to the site
 Always possible to visit the site
 The site locked during non opening hours
 Paths/roads at the site
 Signposts leading the visitor along the paths at the site
 Signposts that are forbidding some activities at the site
 Stairs
 Ramps
 Fences/wires in front of carvings
 Possible to walk on surfaces with carvings
 The site's vegetation arranged as a park
 The site is presented as a park
 Drainage of surfaces with carvings
 Drainage of areas surrounding carvings
 Surfaces covered off season
 Surfaces covered permanently
 Painting of carvings
 Cleaning of surfaces
 Souvenir shop adjacent to the site
 Museum adjacent to the site
 Guards patrolling the site
 Information boards and psychological access
 Info-boards as main information source
 Info-boards presents a map of possible paths
 Info-boards concentrated on hard facts
 Info-boards isolate the carvings in one period of the past
 Info-boards presents information with secure voice
 Info-boards leaves room for own interpretations
 Info-boards encourage own interpretations
 Info-boards are making references to preservation laws
 Info-boards are presenting a list with do's and don'ts

Needless to say, there are a number of other aspects, other phenomena and material artefacts that we could have taken into consideration when visiting the sites, but the ones (32) presented here are the ones that were the most obvious during the time of our visits as well as when recapitulating them afterwards. Let us now discuss the similarities and differences at the sites in a more profound way.

sco Staging and physical access: similarities – ramps, stairs, fences

In this section we will compare both sites using the following criteria:

- > Paths/roads at the site
- > Signposts that are leading the visitor along the paths at the site
- > Signposts that are forbidding some activities at the site
- > Stairs
- > Ramps
- > Fences/wires in front of carvings

- > Exercise: look at the photographs taken at both sites and answer the question that follows

> **Animation**

Are there any ramps, stairs or fences at the sites?
 Concerning the similarities of the sites when it comes to their staging and the visitors physical access to the rock carvings, it can be concluded that at both sites ramps, stairs, fences, paths/roads, signposts, as well as the wires/fences in front of the carvings, lead the public around the rock carving surfaces in a well designed odyssey. It is a controlled odyssey – with signposts guiding the way, as well as telling what it is possible to do, or rather not to do, at the sites – and where the possibilities for the visitors to physically approach the rock carvings – that are numbered etc. – from different directions, and in unexpected ways, are quite limited. It can be stressed that this staging is done to strengthen the public's access to the carvings, but this argument can be turned upside down. In most cases the actual carvings are accessible even without ramps, paths/roads, signposts etc. and perhaps these phenomena are rather actually a way to control the public and their access to, as well as their experience of, the carvings.

sco Staging and physical access: similarities – vegetation

There are similarities between the sites when it comes to the manipulation of the landscapes surrounding the rock carving surfaces. At both places the landscapes are arranged in the

way of a park, where roads, gravel roads and paths direct the public's movement between the carved surfaces and leads them through a landscape where the woods and the vegetation have been domesticated, pruned and formed after specific templates – where, for instance, some trees are favoured in relation to others.

However, it is only at Naquane that the site is called a park, while this is not the case at Vitlycke-Aspeberget. At both sites there are also small museums as well as souvenir-shops.

sco Staging and physical access: differences – drainage

There are some important similarities between the sites but also differences – one of them is the drainage.

- > Exercise: look at the photographs taken at both sites and answer the question that follows
- > **Animation**
Concerning the differences, it can be stressed that at Vitlycke-Aspeberget more profound efforts have been directed at the surrounding landscape as well as at the rock carving surfaces when it comes to the question of water and drainage. In some places the visitor may stumble over ditches, drain-pipes, or tubes and hoses that lead the water away. Draining water is often argued to be an important factor for the localisation of the rock carvings, but at Vitlycke-Aspeberget the water is conducted away from them. At Naquane no such conducting is carried out.

sco Staging and physical access: differences – access to the site

There are also differences when it comes to the access of the sites. We will compare them using the following criteria:

- > entrance fee to the site
- > whether it is always possible to visit the site
- > whether the site is locked during non opening hours
- > guards patrolling the site
- > Exercise: look at the photographs taken at both sites and answer the question that follows
- > **Animation**
At Vitlycke-Aspeberget there is free access to the site while this is not the case at Naquane, where an entrance fee is requested for visiting the site – since fences are surrounding it. This is followed up by the situation where it is always possible to visit Vitlycke-Aspeberget, whilst at Naquane there are certain opening hours. At Naquane the visitors are also watched by guards patrolling around the site.

The differences between the sites concerning the entrance fee as well as the guards are clearly anchored in different traditions within the two countries and in view of the free public access to the cultural heritage.

sco Staging and physical access: differences – the possibilities to view rock carvings

In this part we will concentrate on the possibility to view rock carvings. We will check if they are covered (permanently/off-season) or not.

- > Exercise: look at the photographs taken at both sites and answer the question that follows
- > **Animation**
It is possible to view all the surfaces with rock carvings when visiting Naquane, but this is not the case at Vitlycke-Aspeberget since here there a number of surfaces which are covered permanently and some which are covered during off-season periods. This covering is said to be done in the name of preserving the carvings from weathering by acid rain, but the coverage does of course create a dichotomy between preservation and accessibility, and thus between access and control. In this case the Swedish heritage managers mean that it is unethical not to cover the paintings. Needless to say, this argument can be turned around. Is it ethically defensible to limit the public access in this way?

sco Staging and physical access: differences – the possibilities to touch rock carvings

There is also one difference that is striking – concerning the visitors' possibility to physically touch the carvings.

- > Exercise: look at the photographs taken at both sites and answer the question that follows
- > **Animation**
At Vitlycke-Aspeberget this is strongly forbidden – as stated on a number of signposts and information-boards of various sizes – while at Naquane it is possible to walk on the carvings (without shoes). Further differences can be found in the fact that at Vitlycke-Aspeberget the rock carvings are painted with the colour red. This seems to be a specific Scandinavian tradition – going on since the 1920s in Sweden – that is despised in the rest of the world, not least in Italy. The argument for painting the carvings (at tourist sites) is pedagogical, i.e. the carvings are more visible for the public. The arguments against the method

revolve around themes such as that it can damage and destroy the carvings and their authenticity. It is peculiar that the grave dichotomy between the rock carvings authenticity – defined as genuineness – and the painting of them, does not seem to bother the heritage management in Tanum.

Drawn together, it is obvious that both sites are manipulated, and well staged, and that the visitors' possibilities to move freely, as well as their physical accessibility to the rock carvings' surfaces are controlled in certain ways and with certain methods, such as, for instance, paths, roads, stairs, ramps, fences, guards etc. There are differences between the sites, but at a general level these differences are variations of a common theme.

At Naquane, the visitors are dependent on the opening hours to get access to the site, while this is not the case at Vitlycke-Aspeberget; on the other hand, it is possible to physically access the carvings at Naquane by walking on them, while this is strongly forbidden at Vitlycke-Aspeberget.

The common underlying theme of all these forms of manipulation and staging of the sites is – despite their differences – the rocks, i.e. the heritage management's view of the rock carvings as authentic, i.e. as genuine, and, as such, also as sacred surfaces: surfaces that obviously need to be protected from the present generation on behalf of the future, and yet unborn, generations. The question is, thus, in what way the present constructions and phenomena at the sites of Vitlycke-Aspeberget and Naquane, utilising such things as: ramps, stairs, roads/paths, entrance fees, fences, drain-pipes, pruned trees, ditches, signposts, wires, paint in the carvings etc. have something to do with the past or with some kind of authenticity of the past? This material practice strengthens the narrative and vice versa. At these sites we do not see anything of the ambivalence and recognition of authenticity as something that can be viewed in a number of ways and approached from different perspectives as stated in, for instance, the Nara document. The control over the public's physical movement and access to, as well as their experience of, the rock carvings is of course a fruitful way for the heritage management to practice interpretative supremacy, control and power.

In the ICOMOS Charter concerning Heritage tourism from 1999 it is stated that visitors to a heritage site '...should be able to experience the place at their own pace, if they so choose.' (www.international.icomos.org/charters/tourism_e.htm). At the same time this charter is double edged since it also states that:

'Specific circulation routes may be necessary to minimise impacts on the integrity and physical fabric of a place...' (ibid.).

This means that the charter contains a dichotomy between access and control, and that the heritage managers always can lean against the second quotation when limiting the public's physical access to the cultural heritage. However, the staging of the sites is just one part of the construction since there is also another ingredient, namely the information boards and their textual content.

sco Information boards and psychological access

The sites are very similar regarding their use of information-boards as the main – and in fact the only – source of information for the visitor. There are also similarities concerning the technical construction and the levels of information of the boards, as well as when considering the content of the information-texts.

> Animation

Vitlycke-Aspeberget

Concerning the information-levels, it can be concluded that at Vitlycke-Aspeberget the information-boards function on three levels of information. The first level consists of a trisected metal board that gives a general background to the carvings through a presentation of their chronology and unique character. There are also some admonishing passages of text telling the visitor that the carvings are threatened and protected by law. The second level consists of two-sided metal boards in the form of an open book; and the third level consists of one-sided metal boards that present the carvings at specific sites.

Naquane

At Naquane, on the other hand, the information-boards function on two levels of information. The first level consists of an impressive information-board in connection to the entrance that presents the visitor with a general background to the carvings as well as with a list of do's and don'ts at the site. There are also some passages informing the visitor that the carvings are protected by law. The second level consists of one-sided metal boards, in connection to a number of surfaces, that contain information about the specific surfaces and that present specific examples of them.

sco Information boards and psychological access: similarities – content of the texts

There are also similarities between the content of the texts as presented by the information-boards at the two sites. There are no insecurities – or any presentation of a number of possible interpretations of the carvings – since the archaeological 'experts' present the interpretation (in singular) of the

carvings with self-confidence and a clear and loud scientific voice.

> **Animation**

Naquane

In Val Camonica, with its woods and meadows, deer played an important role in the Camunnian society /.../ In primitive societies, every exploit had a precise meaning, often linked to religious rituals. A particularly important one was their initiation practice: the adolescent did not become a fully-fledged member of the community and was not introduced to the sacred truths until he had passed certain tests. /.../

Vitlycke-Aspeberget

A THREATENED WORLD-HERITAGE. The existence of the rock-carvings is threatened by environmental pollution. They are carved in granite and have resisted the influence of the weather and the wind for 3000 years. Now, however, the air of Europe is saturated with sulphur from factories and cars, and different minerals in the granite are starting to break up. When the rocks start to weather, they lose their resistance to night frost, changes in temperature, and to trampling feet /.../ DO NOT WALK ON THE ROCK-CARVINGS. (Aspeberget, information-board, level 1. Our translation)

This means that – at both sites – the texts of the information-boards leave no room for the visitor's own reflections, interpretations and understandings. These kinds of reflection are also directly suppressed since the texts do not encourage them among the visitors. Thus, the communication between the archaeologist/heritage manager speaking in the texts via the information-boards and the visitor at these sites is a communication taking the form of a one-sided monologue where the archaeological 'expert' provides the visiting 'amateur' with some of his/her wisdom. This is exactly the type of one-way communication in the form of 'Presentation' that the ICOMOS Scientific Committee on Interpretation and Preservation of Cultural heritage Sites (ICIP) is trying to transform towards a form of 'Interpretation' communication, where the public instead are stimulated towards reflection and dialogue (*icp.icomos.org/eng/about_missionstatement.html*). According to ICIP's mission statement, the 'inter-pretative approach': '...denotes the totality of activity, reflection, research, and creativity stimulated by a cultural heritage site. In this respect the input and involvement of visitors, local and associated community groups, and other stakeholders of various ages and educational backgrounds is essential to interpretation and to the transformation of cultural heritage sites into places and sources of learning and reflection about the past, as well as

valuable resources for sustainable community development and intercultural and intergenerational dialogue.' (*icp.icomos.org/eng/about_missionstatement.html*),

'...the interpretation of cultural heritage sites can be contentious and should acknowledge conflicting perspectives, and their open and honest recognition can enrich contemporary reflections about the significance of heritage.' (*icp.icomos.org/eng/about_missionstatement.html*).

We can only agree with ICIP's intentions and argumentation in the quotations above and conclude that these arguments automatically tend to lead to a more open and reflective view of the content of the concept of authenticity since the cultural heritages are viewed as part of contemporary cultural processes and not as being isolated in the past. At least, it is hard to advocate the limited view of authenticity inherent here if accepting these arguments. However, despite these general developments, and good intentions, the view of authenticity at Vitlycke-Aspeberget and Naquane are of another, different kind.

sco Information boards and physical access: differences – content of the texts

> Click on the links to learn about similarities and differences between the sites when it comes to the texts on the information-boards.

> **Animation**

References to the law

In approaching the differences it can be concluded that at Naquane there are references to the law and to what the visitor can and cannot do at the site solely at the impressive information-board at the entrance. This is at the same time as this theme is present at all board levels at Vitlycke-Aspeberget since the visitor the whole time meets text passages such as: 'do not walk on the surfaces', 'forbidden', 'absolutely forbidden', and 'do not touch anything'.

The rock-carvings belong to us all, and therefore it is our common obligation to preserve them for future generations. It is absolutely prohibited to damage the rock-carvings. This prohibition is also valid for all forms of reproductions that touch the rock, as well as painting without special permission from the county administrative board. (Aspeberget, information-board, level 1. Our translation)

Concentration on the threats

Another theme present at all levels at Vitlycke-Aspeberget and non-existing at Naquane is the profound concentration on the threats that the rock carvings are facing, mainly in the form of acid-rain. At Vitlycke-Aspeberget this is also

'pedagogically' shown through the burial of a surface with carvings, and via an information-board telling the visitor that:

HERE A ROCK-CARVING IS PUT TO FINAL REST. Here we have been forced to bury a seriously damaged carving. It is one of the most interesting in the area, and it now lies under a protective cover consisting of earth and sand /.../ On some occasions there may be sensitive technical equipment on or adjacent to the cover. Please do not touch anything (Aspeberget, information-board, level 3. Our translation.) As we have seen above, this 'dramatic' coverage does create a dichotomy between preservation and accessibility, between access and control, and between heritage managers and the public.

Temporality of the rock carvings

There is also a difference when it comes to the handling of the temporality of the rock carvings. At Naquane it is stressed that carvings have been produced at the same surfaces since the Palaeolithic era up to the Middle Ages. The depictions on Val Camonica's rock surfaces span a great length of time, from the Epi-Paleolithic period, some ten thousand years ago, through the arrival of the Roman army that conquered the Alpine region during the reign of Augustus in the first century before Christ. The Romanisation of the valley did not entirely end the custom of engraving the rocks, as the Latin inscriptions bear out. Figures like the castle engraved on a rock in Valle in Paspardo, or the portrayal of crosses, keys and churches on surfaces at Campanine in Cimbergo, prove that the practice persisted into Medieval and more recent times. At Vitlycke-Aspeberget, on the other hand, it seems to be important to 'lock' the rock carvings solely into a Bronze Age context. This is the case even if contemporary research is quite critical towards this interpretation. Drawn together, it is obvious that at both sites the heritage management have chosen a method for the information it gives to the public that is based on the existence of an active 'sender' and a passive 'receiver', i.e. the joint method of using information-boards. The content of the texts on the information-boards are in a secure and scientific language that leaves little room for the visitors' own interpretations, reflections and/or unexpected ideas. It is also obvious that this monologist voice deepens the dichotomy between the past and the present, control and access, and between 'experts' and 'amateurs' in a number of ways. These secure interpretations do also limit the visitor's experience of, and psychical access to, the sites in various ways, since the texts on the information-boards set the frames for, and control

of, what it is possible to think about the rock carvings, and how it is possible to interpret them. The question is also in which way the secure interpretations of the experts have something to do with the past and some kind of authenticity (i.e. genuineness) of the past at all. Rather these interpretations and the way in which they are presented contribute – together with the staging of the sites – rather to a 'construction' of a narration where the rock carvings are regarded and presented as authentic, i.e. genuine originals from the past – and where the materiality strengthens the narrative and vice versa.

sco Summary

Have a last look at the comparison of Vitlycke-Aspeberget and Naquane from an ethnographical point of view. Put the appropriate photos in the empty places.

- > Animation
- > Exercise

sco Conclusion

In summing up the observations and arguments, it can be concluded that the heritage management's narrative of the rock carvings as authentic (i.e. genuine) phenomenon that are firmly, and solely, anchored in the past, leads to specific practical ways of controlling, managing, constructing, organizing, presenting and staging the sites of Aspeberget-Vitlycke and Naquane.

- > **Animation**
Manipulation

A manipulation, for instance, in the form of: constructions where some carvings are covered by installations, the draining of the surrounding landscape, guards keeping an eye on visitors, the limiting of the public's physical access to the carvings with the help of ramps, stairs, wires, fences etc., that forces the public to move in certain ways at the sites, and information-boards where the texts in a secure scientific voice mediate the traditional narration concerning the authenticity of the rock carvings. The narrative and the organisation of the materiality, information etc. at the sites interacts and strengthen each other in a simple circular rhetorical manner: the public meets the argument that the rock-carvings are authentic (i.e. genuine) phenomenon solely from the past and that they need to be protected etc. and since the rock-carvings are protected by fences, chains etc. they must be exactly what the heritage managers stress, i.e. authentic (i.e. genuine) originals solely from the past. Thus, the staging and the content of the information-boards hampers and suppresses the visitor,

Ãs own physical and psychical possibilities to approach, experience and understand the sites and thus also his/her reflections, interpretations and understandings of the rock carvings.

One-way communication

It is obvious that this staging of the sites, and the information presented, does not leave any room for the visitor's own reflections, but rather their possibilities to reflect are directly suppressed since their physical and psychical access to the rock-carvings are limited. The communication between the archaeologist/heritage manager and the public at the sites is exactly the type of one-way communication, in the form of 'Presentation', that ICOMOS, the Scientific Committee on Interpretation and Preservation of Cultural heritage Sites (ICIP), is trying to transform towards a form of 'Interpretation' communication, where the public instead are stimulated towards reflection and dialogue (icp.icomos.org/eng/about_missionstatement.html). At the analysed sites there are no forms of interpretative communication and the pacification of the public creates a specific social relationship between the heritage managers and the public.

Division

This relationship is unequal since there is a clear division of power between the heritage managers as 'experts' and the public as 'amateurs', where the former have the interpretative supremacy, control, authority and power over the latter. From our point of view, this is the cornerstone for the heritage management's position of authority and power over the public. We mean that even if the rock carvings are produced in the past, they are not firmly and solely belonging to the past, since their authenticity and genuineness is in parallel, and as such, something that is negotiated and constructed by specific cultural processes and activities in the present – in this case, the heritage management's striving for interpretative supremacy, control and power. It is a striving for power both on the disciplinary as well as on the personal level; i.e. if heritage managers do not show society that they are indispensable 'experts', they risk losing both economical support as well as their employment. On the other hand, perhaps it is all about a traditional disciplinary socialisation into a – long-lived – specific epistemological view of the relationship between the past and the present, and a traditional modernist view of our own role as shamans who know all about, and control, the past.

Our argumentation is provocative and we are well aware of the trends within the different state directed heritage management organisations, for instance in the UK and Sweden, that point in alternative directions, where there is a re-orientation going on concerning the role of the heritage management (and heritage managers) from that of unquestioned authority to facilitators enabling a number of views to be expressed and heard, and where an interpretative cooperation enabling the critical reflection of the public is sought. There are also a number of examples of fruitful co-operations between archaeologists/heritage managers and the public from various places around the world. However, many of the latter examples are to be found on the personal/departmental level and not within the state directed heritage management sector. Indeed, the UK and Swedish cases are examples of this and there are good intentions but due to the negotiations of power and authority as well as the existential dimensions inherent in such a re-orientation, this is not a simple issue, not, at least, when it comes to putting these intentions into practice. It is, therefore, no surprise that these ideas are criticised by the contemporary establishment. The sites analysed in this paper are thus good examples of the opposite since at these we do not see anything of the heritage managers acting as facilitators enabling a number of views to be expressed and heard. There is neither dialogue concerning the meaning of these places and reflections concerning the ambiguity of their authenticity, nor is there any cooperation between heritage managers and the public. Rather we meet a situation where the heritage managers control the public's physical and psychical access to, and their experience of, the rock carvings. In short, then, at these sites the heritage management does still practice interpretative supremacy, control and power.

We believe that if a democratic dialogical situation is sought, for instance, as stated in the mission statement of ICIP, and if it should be possible to deconstruct the authority and power of the heritage management, it is necessary to question the narrative concerning the authenticity of the rock carvings and its materialisation at heritage sites. From our point of view, it is obvious that the narration concerning authenticity and genuineness presented by the Swedish and Italian heritage management at Aspeberget-Vitylcke and Naquane, as well as the activities and material staging of the sites, have little to do with the past. Rather, most of it is a contemporary construction of the past put together within the framework of the specific culture of the heritage management and its striving for interpretative supremacy, control and power. We also wonder whether the rock carvings at the places discussed would be of lesser value – and to a lesser degree

authentic – if they were viewed as part also of the present. Would they no longer be interesting if their authenticity were recognised also as a product of present narrations, and if this was the case, why not? From our point of view, there is a value in the fact that the rock carvings are embedded in specific cultural processes in their present existence, and in the ways that this has shown itself during the years. Furthermore, if the rock carvings were viewed both as part of historical – and contemporary – cultural processes, the striving for the authenticity (as genuineness) could perhaps be abandoned, at the same time as the sacral view of the carvings could be left behind as an expression of a specific relationship in a specific horizon of time. One consequence of such an awareness – if put into practice – could be that the public's physical and psychical access to the rock carvings could be prioritised, above their preservation, at the same time as the archaeology/heritage management might be willing to open up a dialogue with the public. Awareness, and a discussion, of the cultural processes that influence heritage management and its relationship towards the past, its remains, and the public, seem to be necessary in the future. Perhaps the authoritarian role of heritage management (both over the past and over the contemporary public) should be abandoned in favour of various practices that encourage the public to reflect critically, and where the management is ready to meet the public in an open and democratic dialogue. Probably this would also be the fairest and most ethical way to handle the past, i.e., to recognise that there are no final answers.

Finally, it can be concluded that, as archaeologists, we are in most cases not used to approaching our own subject from an ethnographical point of view. Yet the interesting thing is that if we take this step – and approach our discipline and our activities as a specific culture fixed in a specific historical, ideological and socio-political context – we will find that an ethnographical approach has much to teach us about our subject, about ourselves, and perhaps also about the past. Activities that, with an archaeological eye, seem to be completely normal, present themselves instead as strange examples of the culture of the contemporary heritage management. For various reasons – not least ethical and democratic ones – this culture and its rituals need to be examined even further from an ethnographical point of departure. This perspective and the reflective critique inherent in it, is one way of moving towards a situation where the cultural heritage, indeed, contributes to a sustainable community development and an intercultural and intergenerational dialogue.

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