
The religious landscape of the shepherds of Mount Cornón in the Fiemme Valley

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Résumé

More than 47.000 writings, made with red ochre during the centuries, have been painted on the slopes of Mount Cornón in the Fiemme Valley (northern Italy) at an altitude between 1200 and 2000 m asl. These writings of modern times were mostly made between 1400 and 1950 AD by shepherds engaged in the local short distance transhumance. Dates, signatures, initials, family symbols, herd accountancies, pictographs, sacred symbols, dedications and greetings are found, significantly concentrated along the steep trails to the highest pastures. The flocks had to be kept within an intermediate altitude, away from the fields and the meadows surrounding the village, and equally far from those on the highland on the top of the mountain, which could only be occupied after the last shearing of hay. The pastoral use of this mountain is therefore not connected with seasonal cheese production. This part of the mountain was only utilized to keep livestock far from the summer production area of the bottom of the valley and for exploiting even this part of land which couldn’t be cultivated because of the strong slope.

This paper analyzes the religious landscape that has been revealed on this mountain by the presence of more than 2.600 slopes with sacral depictions, with the intention of providing an interpretative model for proto-historic rock art.

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