



Branding the Copper Age.

A new framework for interpreting depictions of copper daggers on anthropomorphic stelae and rock art in the Alpine region.

Tom Medici

Cover: engravings of Remedello-type daggers at Cemmo site in Valle Camonica, Italy.

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on anthropomorphic stelae and rock art in the Alpine region.**

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Chapter 1

Introduction.

1.1 Copper daggers and the concept of 'branding'.

The number of copper daggers finds from the Alpine region is rather scarce. No more than 25 metal daggers have been recovered from burials at Remedello (BS) and surrounding areas in the Po Valley, Italy (De Marinis 2013, 326). Only 7 daggers are reported from Southern France (Courtin and Sauzade 1975) and just one dagger has been recovered in Switzerland. These numbers appear interesting when compared to the huge quantity of copper daggers depictions engraved on anthropomorphic stelae, menhirs, boulders and rock walls in the same regions. In fact, the proportion of Chalcolithic dagger engravings (1000 ca.) in the megalithic art of Northern Italy, Southern France and Switzerland is preposterously high when confronted with the few actual finds (40 ca.) (Fig 1).

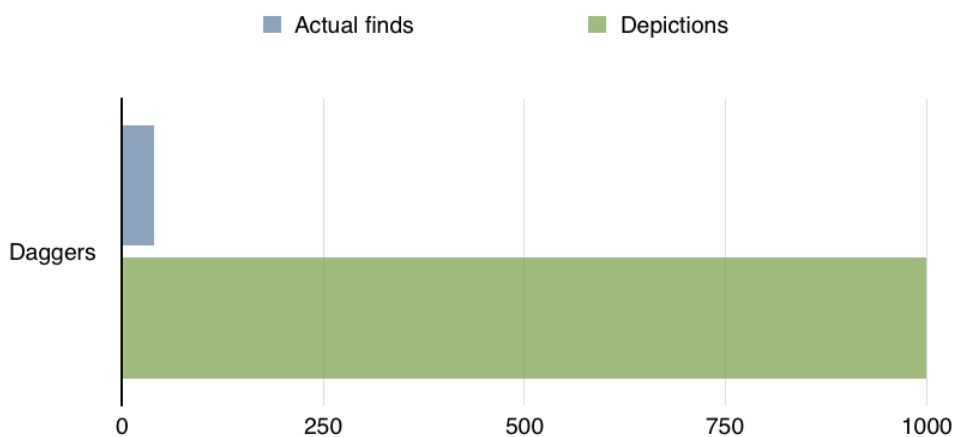


Figure 1: Number of finds of copper daggers in the Alpine region compared to the quantity of engraved depictions of dagger from the same area in the Chalcolithic (data from Pearce 2007, De Marinis 2013, Anati 1972).

Although these monuments show differences and stylistic distinctions, the type of daggers depicted on them constitutes a common feature which links megalithic art from the South of the Alps to its transalpine counterpart. The shape of the represented daggers recalls the one of the type called 'Remedello', after the name of the Italian village where they were first discovered in Copper Age graves. Only

two other Remedello-type daggers have been found outside of Italy so far; one in Provence (France) and one in Lüscherz, near Bern (Switzerland).

Due to their repetitive and numerous depictions during Copper Age, it seems that metal daggers acquired a prominent position across the Alpine region. Beside the few depositions in burials in the Po Valley and the other isolated finds, copper daggers were the protagonists of a conceptualisation process which led to their representation in megalithic rock art on different categories of monuments in various contexts both on the Italian Alps and on the other side with important examples in Switzerland and France.

The study of rock art in these particular region has been predominantly interested in investigating the value of the monuments (as far as statue-menhirs are concerned) and more focused on reconstructing the meanings of the depicted imagery (as regards rock art complexes) (cf. Pedrotti 1995a; De Marinis 2013; Fossati 2007; Poggiani-Keller 2009a; Saulieu 2013). Stelae and menhirs of anthropomorphic shapes all around the Alpine area have been studied more in relation to the possible significance of their human outlook rather than accordingly to the attributes they carry, such as elements of clothing and weapons, among which the daggers stand out. Few specific studies on dagger depictions has been carried out as regards their presence in rock art in famous sites such as Mont Bego in France and Valle Camonica in Italy. A noticeable exception is Emmanuel Anati's 1972 '*I pugnali nell'arte rupestre e nelle statue-stele dell'Italia settentrionale*', where a first comparative typological study and categorisation of depicted daggers of Northern Italian megalithic art is attempted. However, no research has been conducted on the possible ways in which the shape of copper daggers became formalised into a *conceptualisation* which is expressed in the form of engravings on particular monuments in various contexts spacing from the lower end of the Po Valley, across the Italian Alpine region, through the French sides, right to the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. These representations suggest an underlying cultural importance of this metal artefact which was the product of a newly established technology: metallurgy. Copper smelting can be considered a disruptive innovation which serves as a link between the end of the Neolithic and the beginning of the era massive metalwork, the Bronze Age (cf. Kristianssen 2015; Earle et al. 2011).

The hereby considered region presents a considerable geographical extension if we consider that the main centre of copper dagger finds lays in the Po' plain; we

are faced with issues of *transmission* of not only actual objects (the daggers themselves), but mostly of a concept, a design which occurs over thousands of kilometres in similar, but locally differentiated context of megalithic art during the 3rd millennium BC.

Assuming that these depictions could have had a direct, straight-forward meaning seems unlikely. In fact, a straight-forward first assumption could be that daggers acted as symbols, fostering the ideology of warfare. The representation of weapons may lead to the idea that they were connected to elite warriors, tracing the roots for Bronze Age social hierarchical stratification back to the end of the Neolithic. But how is it possible that such a symbolic meaning was the same across such a vast region and during a vast period of time (i.e. 500 years)? The nature of the evidence and the contexts of occurrence of dagger representations are varied, suggesting a more complex and multi-layered meaning was attached to these depictions.

To better understand such a process, it could be useful to consider the notion of **branding**. The idea of brands is exquisitely modern, a way of communicating through a certain symbolic image a set of ideas and characteristics. This is in order to make a product directly recognisable and linked to a specific company or institution. Such a concept has already been adopted in archaeology, particularly in David Wengrow (2008) and Sebastian Becker's works (2015).

The concept of *branding* appears to be relevant when considering the evidence of numerous depictions of daggers of the same type across the considered geographical area through the 3rd millennium BC. The repetition of daggers which often occurs on the same monument and the accuracy of the representation which recalls the shape of Remedello daggers suggest that this particular type of weapon fostered some information, which was communicated and transmitted in the form of a brand: the **Remedello-dagger brand**. The nature of the information laden on Remedello daggers' depictions is a complex and multi-layered issue which I will attempt to tackle in this thesis.

1.2 Geography and chronology.

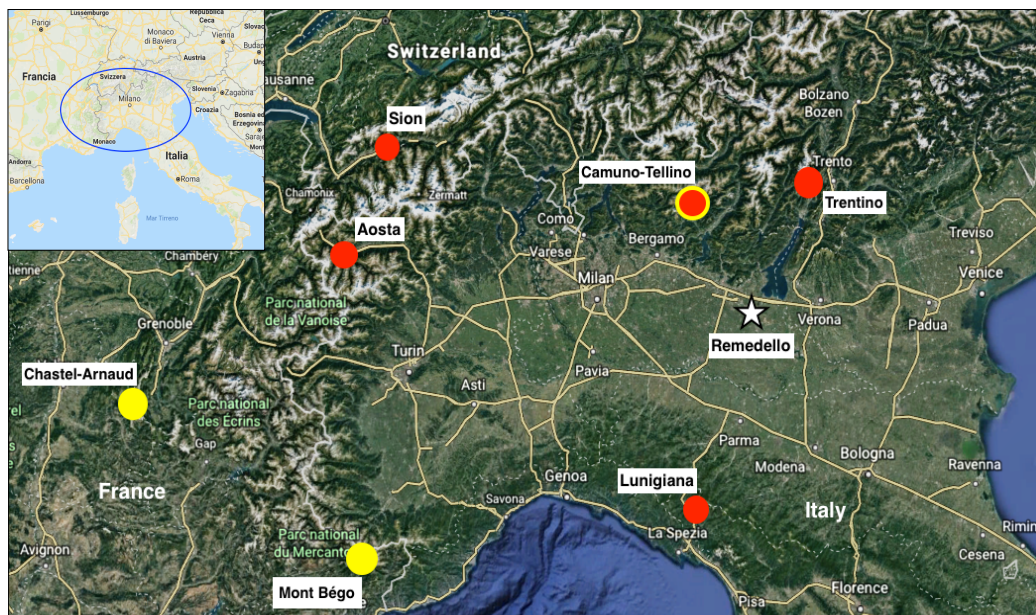


Fig. 2. Map of the area considered in this research. Red dots indicate sites of dagger engravings on statue-menhirs, yellow dots indicate natural rocks engravings sites. In the Po Valley, a star marks the area of the Remedello necropolis (own elaboration, original from Google Earth).

In order to engage in the various evidence of Remedello dagger depictions, it is necessary to delineate the precise geographical extension and the characteristics of the considered region together with a relative chronology (Fig. 6). In fact, the different monuments considered, i.e. menhirs and rock art complexes, occupy varied locations in the area in question according to their type.

The extent covered by the area spans from the Italian Oriental Alps, in the modern-day territory of Trento and Bolzano Provinces, at the border with Austria, right to the French Maritime Alps, in the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur administrative region, encompassing the Swiss side of the Western Alps. In addition to the mountains, the area also encompasses the large Po Valley plain, which originates at the feet of the Alps, and stretches out to the South encountering the Appennine mountains. A wide range of environments can be recognised; from high mountain plateaus, to middle-height hills, to the flat landscape of the Po plain.

Here, most of the actual finds of Remedello daggers took place. The Chalcolithic burials of the Remedello necropolis and the surrounding areas constitute almost the sole contexts of copper daggers recoveries, all from funerary

contexts. However, the Po plain has not yielded any example of megalithic and figurative prehistoric art. The monuments with dagger depictions are actually located at higher altitudes, in the Alpine valleys and at the beginning of the Appenines, as far as the Lunigiana case is concerned. In general, the distribution pattern of the evidence seems to differentiate between the positions of statue-menhirs and boulders and the one of engraved rock walls assemblages. The former occur in more open and accessible valleys, whereas the latter in more secluded locations.

Statue-menhirs with Remedello daggers depictions are found in the Alpine valleys of Aosta and Sion on the Western side and Valtellina, Camonica (with its boulder-menhirs), Trentino on the Eastern side; moreover, to the south on the Appenines, where a statue-menhir group is present in Lunigiana. In these areas the stelae were generally disposed in alignments, marking the surrounding landscape along with other manifestations of megalithic art.

Contrastingly the engravings on mountain walls occur in more secluded and steep locations, which in the case of Mont Bégo can reach till 2000 metres of altitude. The other cases of rock art comprise locations at around 500-600 metres of altitudes (Camonica Valley and Chastel-Arnaud). It seems that the geography of the Alpine region plays a role in determining which media are exploited to host the dagger representations, possibly conveying different meanings.

Most of the contexts which show Remedello daggers depictions show human activity over vast periods of time. This is especially the case of grand rock art complexes such as Camonica Valley and Mont Bégo, where engraving activities spanned from the late Neolithic to the Iron Age. This is also true for many statue-menhirs contexts, where there is evidence of stelae production, destruction and also reuse from the late Neolithic to the first millennium BC. However, such a large time frame is not all relevant to this research. In fact, the findings of Remedello daggers do actually work as a dating element for their representations.

For the Remedello type, the relative chronology was built through the archaeometric analyses of the burials at Remedello and the surrounding areas, especially through the radiocarbon dating of the human remains (cf. De Marinis 2013). The data retrieved from the Remedello necropolis gave the way to the formulation of relative chronology for the Italian Chalcolithic. Raffaele De Marinis proposes three different phases for the Italian Copper Age; Copper Age 1 spans

from 3400 to ca. 2900 BC, Copper Age 2 from 2900 to 2500 ca. and Copper Age 3, corresponding to the Bell Beaker Culture phase, goes from 2400 to 2200 ca. (De Marinis 1994). The first and the third Copper Age period are characterised by the presence of different types of daggers, namely flint daggers and metal Bell-Beaker ones (De Marinis 2013, 346). The burials associated with the particular copper dagger defined as ‘Remedello type’ are instead dated to Copper Age 2 (2900-2500 ca.), giving a relative chronology for this type of dagger which roughly covers the first half of the third millennium BC.

The representation of Remedello daggers is in some way chronologically related to the time of production and use of the actual artefacts. However, assuming a direct correspondence can be dangerous, since the circulation of imagery does not necessarily follow the circulation of the object depicted in it. Moreover, the time-frame obtained by the burials at Remedello do not account for the first appearance of daggers characterised by such a design, they merely offer the most numerous examples we currently have of these copper daggers.

Hence, a chronology spanning from **3000 to 2500 BC** can give us a general idea of the time-frame in which Remedello daggers were produced and used, but it does not have to be taken into excessively strict terms. A *terminus ante quem* can actually be seen in the spread of the Bell Beaker Culture, bringing to light new stylistic features also affecting the shape of weapons, daggers included. An actual example of Bell Beaker dagger was found near Remedello (cf. De Marinis 2013) and their depiction occurs in most of the context where Remedello daggers were engraved (Sion, Aosta, Camonica Valley).

1.4 The aims of the research.

In the vast area encompassed by the Alpine mountain-range the evidence of Remedello-daggers engraved and otherwise represented in the context of megalithic art spans over 500 years. This timeframe constitutes a very long time for the employment of the same imagery with a symbolic value especially across such a large area. A straightforward interpretation of the value of these depictions could be too far-fetched. Many of the past researches which has been conducted on the monuments and the contexts where we see Remedello daggers depictions have

interpreted such representations as male attributes in some way related to the sphere of warfare. This is essentially the case of studies concerning anthropomorphic stelae, where the presence of daggers (and axes) has always led to interpretations concerning gender and religion. Nevertheless, the evidence of engravings and other representations/allusions to the Remedello-dagger shape goes beyond anthropomorphic monuments, appearing in a diverse set of contexts.

The lack of a comprehensive theory on the daggers representations leads us to two main questions. Firstly, how is it possible that this particular dagger shape appears across such a vast area and during such a broad time-span? Secondly, why did Prehistoric people in the Alpine region choose the Remedello-type daggers as a pivotal image in megalithic art expressions? In order to tackle these queries, the concept of *brand* will be employed.

Applying the concept of *branding* to European Prehistory may seem rather far-fetched and anachronistic. When we consider brands nowadays we are immediately faced with names such as Coca Cola, Apple, Nike, Starbucks etc. They relate to standardised logos which are represented on different types of media, from electronic devices to food packaging. My argument is that the dynamics inherent to the conceptualisation and diffusion of a brand can be seen also in Prehistoric Europe, specifically, as far as Copper Age Remedello dagger engravings are concerned.

The various application of the Remedellian dagger implies the repetition of generic and standardised forms which are immediately recognised; but the actual interpretations of the latent meanings behind them can vary according to people's relation to them. When tackling this issue, Sebastian Becker uses the example of Coca Cola (Becker 2015, 74-75). The Coca Cola brand is nowadays immediately recognisable all over the world, but besides expressing some form of neutral information -the character of the drink itself- can be emotionally tied to different interpretations (Becker 2015, 75). In fact, in the Western World Coca Cola is usually embedded in a globalised capitalistic discourse, whereas among the Trinidad Indians the consumption of Coke is considered emulation of African practises, since the drink for them symbolises African population due to its colour (Becker 2015, 74). Thus, brands involve the creation of neatly bounded visual and material categorisations, but at the same time they imply discursive meanings that are far from being solid and objective (Becker 2015, 76). This aspect is of central

importance when considering the depictions of Remedello daggers as well. Although such imagery appears standardised and almost always immediately recalls the shape of the Remedello type daggers, the different contexts and media on which it appears across the Alpine region may determine differences in the information laden on such brand.

Therefore, the aim of this thesis is to investigate how the Remedello-dagger image acting as a *brand* occurs (and recurs) on anthropomorphic monuments and in other megalithic expressions across the Alpine region between 3000 and 2500 BCE. That is in order to understand the distribution of such imagery in accordance to the media chosen to be marked by it and to formulate hypothesis regarding the dynamics of the transmission of such imagery carrying cultural meanings.

In doing so, I will begin by defining the nature of the evidence and the characteristics of this brand. Then, I will move on to the analysis of contemporaneous evidence in different regions of the considered area. A final comparison of the gathered evidence will highlight the main features of the Remedello-dagger brand, enhancing the close relationship between Copper Age people and this metal artefact, which will be seen as a *material agent* within the societies of the Alpine region.

Chapter 2

Applying the concept of *branding* to the representations of daggers.

2.1 The nature of the evidence.

Besides the scarce actual finds of Remedello daggers, which are mostly traced to the area of the necropolis of Remedello and its surroundings in the Po plain (Italy), my focus will be predominantly directed to the evidence of depictions resembling this type of dagger. The lithic monuments with such engravings are varied and present locally-specific features. Two main groups can be delineated: engraved megaliths (1), such as statue-menhirs and boulders, and engraved natural rocks (2).

1. *Megaliths.*

The most numerous megaliths with Remedello dagger depictions in the Alpine region are statue-menhirs (Fig. 2). This name identifies a particular type of Copper Age monuments characterised mostly by a stele shape, with a variety of engraved attributes which on the whole recall an anthropomorphic shape. Usually the outlook of the face, arms and breasts (for stelae representing female individuals) are the most relevant features to convey their anthropomorphic character. The size of these monuments does vary, the average height spans from 1,2 to 2 metres.

The nature of these representations on the stelae is quite generic, there is no specific differentiation between them suggesting that they were not intended to portray distinct individuals, but they were rather stereotyped human figures. The only distinction is given by the presence of biological markers, namely breasts, indicating a differentiation between female and male stelae. Interestingly, the stelae lacking breasts, i.e. the majority of them, are considered to be male not due to the presence of male genitalia -which are always absent- but because of the presence of attributes; namely weapons engravings. Besides a considerable amount of axes and halberds, the predominant weapon attribute on male stelae is the dagger, which in the Alpine region takes the form of the Remedello type. Several groups of stelae are distinguished across the Alpine range: the Trentino-Südtirol group (Provinces

of Trento and Bolzano, Italy), the Aosta Valley group (Saint-Martin-de-Corléans, Aosta, Italy), the Valais group (Sion, Switzerland) and, to the South, the Lunigiana group on the other side of the Po plain, at the beginning of the Appennine mountains (Provinces of La Spezia and Massa-Carrara, Italy). An anomaly is represented by the Camuno-Tellino group, in Camonica Valley and Valtellina (Provinces of Brescia and Sondrio, Italy), where most the engravings were realised on unmodified boulders with less visible anthropomorphic features, rather than actual stelae. In this area we find other important types of rock art, which lead to the second class of monuments of my research.



Figure 3: Examples of engraved menhirs. From the left: anthropomorphic stela from Lunigiana (Museo delle statue-stele di Pontremoli, MS, Italy); anthropomorphic stela from Trentino (Museo di Riva del Garda TN, Italy) and a boulder from Camonica Valley (National Museum of Prehistory of Valle Camonica, Capo di Ponte, Italy).

2. *Natural rocks.*

This category mostly encompasses the imagery engraved on unmodified natural mountain walls, but also cases of unmoved glacial side rock detachments at the feet of a promontory. This type of rock art comprises a various range of imagery depending on the each and every context; the Remedello dagger depictions occur in Copper Age complexes both in isolation and among other figures (Fig. 4). Most of the times these engravings occur on multiple spots within a certain local context; for instance, in Camonica Valley, engravings dating from the Eneolithic to Iron Age occur on various locations along the Alpine rock slopes in the valley. Also, in France, at Mont Bégou, where copious dagger depictions are registered, the rock art

complex spans over a considerably extended location. The case of detached unremoved boulders is clearly exemplified by Camonica Valley Cemmo site, where two large boulders glacially detached from the above mountain show an outstanding number of Remedello dagger depictions.

The main feature of this type of evidence is that, compared to the first group, the nature of the medium is immovable and unmodified, differing from statue-menhirs, which are made of worked stone and deliberately positioned in the landscape. Moreover, the character of dagger depictions differs from the previous cases, since daggers are not directly related to anthropomorphic figures as their attributes, but are rather part of some other type of narrative, being in most of the cases represented in a pleonastic way with multiple Remedello daggers occupying the same surface.

The main groups of rock art dagger engravings that I will consider are the above-mentioned Cemmo site in Camonica Valley (Province of Brescia, Italy), the Mont Bégo site (Marcantour massif, Maritime Alps, France) and the engravings from Chastel-Arnaud (Drôme, France). The Camonica valley case is located in a context where Copper Age megalithic art occurs both on menhirs (stelae/boulders) and rock walls; whereas in both of the French contexts, no statue-menhirs were recovered in the context of the rock engravings, making engraved walls the only expression of prehistoric rock art in both Mont Bégo and Chastel-Arnaud (Fig. 5).



Figure 4 (left): reconstruction of the engravings on the Roche de l’Autel at Mont Bégou, France (from Huet and Bianchi 2015, 111).

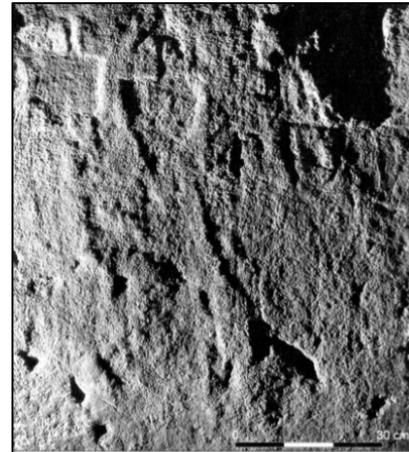


Figure 5. Rock wall engravings at Chastel-Arnaud, Drôme, France (from Morin et al. 2005, 346).

2.2 The origins of the term ‘brand’ and its applicability.

Most of the the literature concerning brands draws a paradigm which is essentially embedded in the capitalist system, where commodities are massively produced and companies need to market their products to differentiate them from the ones of competitors (Fioroni and Titterton 2009). This is also the idea behind the definition given by the American Marketing Association, “a brand is a name, term, design, symbol or any feature that identifies one seller’s good or service as distinct from those of other sellers” (American Marketing Association 1995). Based on such a definition, the history of brands cannot be seen outside the context of mass production (Becker 2015, 68). When tracing back the first occurrences of brands scholars’ emphasis is on the early times of industrial production (Kuenstler 2012). At that time the need for companies to make their products recognisable across North America and Europe arose. Branding was a strategy to differentiate

products making clear the provenance and giving the customers another factor on which they could base their decision (Becker 2015, 68). Nowadays the situation is more complex: companies use brand in terms of identity-building strategies, in fact Becker notices that:

“Nowadays companies create imagery, and from a managerial point of view, that process may be more important than the actual product to which the brand is attached. Again, it is not just the origin of a product that branding signifies; in the world of business solutions it has become an *umbrella term* for the ways in which companies can build an *identity* that will make their products more appealing than those of competitors” (Becker 2015, 68-69)

Nevertheless, the framework delineated so far, may seem impossible to apply to Prehistory due to the great relevance of massive production and competitiveness associated with branding. However, recent studies have tried to consider the concept of branding outside Capitalism and more in general terms, focusing on the dynamics in which repetitive imagery on objects can foster information about world views and their transmission through material culture. Recent definitions have been centred on the symbolic value of brands and their ability to foster information (Cayla and Arnaud 2008: 87) with attempts to apply the concept outside the industrial world. In this case, a special emphasis is given to the semiotic character of brands and to the discourse that goes beyond merely economic interests. In fact, it has been argued that brands do not only serve to locate their provenance market-wise, but also in terms of other *cosmological horizons* (Manning and Ullisashvili 2007, 640). Such definitions open up the scope of brands investigation, encompassing more cultural contexts rather than mere commodities.

In two recent publications by David Wengrow (2008; 2010), the concept of brand has been used in an archaeological context, with a focus on its materiality and the social meaning of marking commodities. Wengrow is interested in branding as a part of cultural biographies of things; he sees brands as likely to develop in any society in the history of humankind, provided the presence of the necessary ideological and institutional conditions (Wengrow 2008, 7). He argues that in 4th millennium BC Mesopotamia, with the rise of urbanism and the formation of hierarchical city state, the system of sealing showed similarities with the modern concept of branding, both as material and cognitive properties are concerned

(Wengrow 2008, 13). Interestingly, Wengrow argues that seals acting as brands ensured the qualities of the circulating products and may have had a role in favouring the expansion of the Uruk state in the 4th millennium BC, fostering ideas of shared identity (Wengrow 2008, 14-15).

It seems that similar concepts of brand were present also in Prehistory and they had pivotal role in categorising a range of objects, differentiating them and conveying sets of underlying information through materiality. From Wengrow's work, a particular connection between branding and the transmission of social and cultural phenomena seems to be established (Becker 2015, 72). These framework applies to Sebastian Becker's research as well, as regards the branding of metalwork with bird imagery in Bronze Age Europe (Becker 2015). A pivotal recurring feature characterises the considered branded materials in these researches and that is not shared by the evidence of Remedello dagger depictions: portability. Such a characteristic is inherent in the materiality of branded objects. In fact, these artefacts were easily movable and circulated. The nature of the media marked by Remedello daggers depictions is that of monuments; *they cannot be interpreted as commodities*. They represent deliberate manifestations which are not intended to be transported, but rather signify something in the place where they are produced. Therefore, the people producing Remedello dagger depictions did not need a brand to trace the artefact back to the place of production; instead, the transmission of such imagery must have had some meanings deep-rooted into these societies' cultures and cosmologies, creating a sense of shared identity.

An example of this way of perceiving brands can be seen in ancient and modern forms of religious imagery (cf. Einstein 2008, Kitiarsa 2008, Katz 2010). In fact, if we think about religious paraphernalia, they are the product of branding, since their purpose is to convey certain information through the transmission of repetitive standardised iconic designs (Becker 2015, 71). For instance, this can be seen in the crucifix for Christians. Also nowadays, the presence of a hanging standardised cross on a wall of one's residence or workplace delivers a message to the audience. This information is strictly related to beliefs, values and, particularly, sense of identity. Such sense of belonging may appear even more evident if we think about the crucifix hanging on necklaces. The people who decide to bring such imagery on their body are automatically associated with a specific community and set of

values, whichever the personal reasons behind the choice of wearing such object were.

It is in this horizon that the concept of brand can be helpful to analyse the evidence of Remedello dagger depictions across the Alpine region in the third millennium BCE. In fact, whereas the transmission of the actual copper daggers cannot be demonstrated due to lack of evidence, the numerous depictions show that the conceptualisation of such artefacts circulated over the Alps, taking the form of engravings realised in symbolic contexts. On the one hand, the daggers as attributes of male individuals represented on anthropomorphic menhirs in ritual and funerary contexts. On the other hand, in great complexes of rock art, where the daggers have a relevant place among other types of depictions regarding economic activities and other representations of social life.

In such a context, the fact that the shape and characteristics of the Remedello dagger come to be repeatedly represented on a certain set of monuments in specific contexts draws the attention to the possible meanings concealed by this particular brand. A brand encompasses in its visual character some sort of information regarding the objects which are marked by them. The particular sphere in which dagger engravings occur, which concerns contexts of megalithic art expressions, leads the attention to the capability of artistic imagery to influence people by transmitting some message. Useful in regard to the specific case of this brand can be Alfred Gell's concept of **agency** (Gell 1998). In his anthropological theory of art, Gell is not interested in aesthetic aspects, rather he focuses on the role played by the agent, the creator of such imagery, and the networks of relations that are built through their agency. Drawing from this concept, artistic objects such as the engravings we are considering function as mediators of agency, endowing networks between objects and people. Furthermore, the importance of human-thing relationships in this context is even more evident if we consider the content itself of the engravings: i.e. the dagger. Such an object must have had a pivotal role in these Chalcolithic societies, acting as an agent and establishing relationships between people who shared the inherent values represented by it. This process translated in an actual conceptualisation of the Remedello dagger, which was employed as a brand and depicted on lithic monuments all around the Alpine region.

2.3 The agency of daggers through *branding*.

The conceptual transformation which occurred from the copper daggers to their stigmatisation in repetitive depictions represented across the Alpine region suggests a special importance attributed to such artefacts. In such a context focusing primarily on stylistic characteristics defining the monuments and contexts in which these representations occur simply does not account for the social dynamics inherent in these forms of expression. The framework established by branding dives into the symbolism of these depictions due to the primary nature of a brand: transmitting a set of information through the visual recognition of a repetitive design.

In such a context, the concept of *agency* is key to understand the dynamics underlying the transmission of the Remedello-dagger brand. In particular, as mentioned above, the focus should concern the agency of artistic representations as described by Gell (1998). The idea that these engravings are placed in a social context in which relationships between humans and objects occur is fundamental to understand how the Remedello-daggers depictions functioned at a cultural level. This frame of intertwined relationships is the canvas on which the information laden on daggers representations can be recognised and transmitted. It seems that through the depiction of Remedello-type daggers these people wanted to refer to the values bore by the actual artefacts; making the depictions *mediators* (cf. Gell 1998). This suggests that copper daggers, in the shape described as ‘Remedello’, acted as agents actively influencing prehistoric people’s lives (cf. Boivin 2008). Such influence lies in the participation of copper daggers in a network of engagements which encompasses the actual artefacts, the technology implied to produce them and the people who created and used them. This is why Remedello-type daggers appear to carry significant social importance, entangled with the innovation brought by metalwork technology and the context in which these artefacts were employed. Hence, the conceptualisation and transmission of Remedello-daggers imagery through a brand appears to mediate the agency of these weapons, introducing them in the highly symbolic sphere of religion and cosmology.

2.4 Previous interpretations of engraved Copper Age daggers.

The researches previously conducted on daggers and other types of depictions in megalithic contexts and rock art complexes in the Prehistory of the Alpine region have rarely addressed the potential symbolism and social implications of such manifestations. Considering that forms of megalithic art develop as early as in the Neolithic and in various forms persist till the Iron Age, the main focus of scholars studying rock has been directed towards the character of the monuments.

As far as statue-menhirs are concerned, the fact that they are often recovered in alignments, mixing female and male statues, has led to a direct correlation to the representation of ancestors and elitist clans has been assumed (see De Marinis 1995, Leonardi 2013, Fossati 2007, Pedrotti 1995). The fact that Copper Age statue-menhirs are mostly found in contexts with no connection to funerary practises and burials led to the hypothesis that they must have been related to the worship of ancestors and/or mythical figures (De Marinis 1995, Leonardi 2013). The idea of ancestors' representation was also corroborated by the few examples of stelae associated with burials (in Sion and Aosta), implying that this type of monuments was *de facto* linked to dominant individuals within these societies, probably members of influential clans or elites (De Marinis 1995).

In such a context, the correlation between engraved imagery and material objects has been thoroughly investigated in order to reconstruct a relative time frame for stone artefacts such as statue-menhirs and different stages in rock art depictions. The comparative analysis of real artefacts and their depictions has proven to be helpful in cases where no other chronological information was provided. In fact, in only few cases such as the stelae from Sion, Aosta and some of the Camonica Valley menhirs alignments, contextual evidence has contributed to reconstruct chronologies due to the presence of organic datable materials (cf. Poggiani Keller 2009, Gallay 2014, Cattin et al. 2014).

Nevertheless, the focus has rarely been directed to the shared imagery which is represented on the stelae and which also appears in other contexts, such as engraved rock walls. Interestingly, Giovanni Leonardi coined the term 'dagger ideology' to account for the numerous representations of Remedello daggers which occur on Northern Italian statue-menhirs and their probable symbolic value (Leonardi 2013,

260). Leonardi explains the ‘dagger ideology’ in terms of representations of armed warriors and as indicator of the pivotal value attributed to warfare within these societies (Leonardi 2013, 255-256). Even though this theory could seem to account for the evidence of dagger depictions in the Chalcolithic, it is heavily undermined by the fact that it relies on two main assumptions. On the one hand, such a theory assumes that daggers are exclusively related to warfare and warriorhood in the Copper Age. On the other hand, it suggests that the symbolic meaning of dagger depictions was exactly the same everywhere regardless of the context and types of monuments employed. In the first case, the evidence of daggers in connection to warriorhood is quite scarce, since we have very little actual finds of Remedello daggers, and the few burials where these copper daggers are part of the grave goods assemblages are actually very different from what are generally considered warriors’ tombs mostly known from the Bronze Age. In the second case, assuming that the meaning of this standardised imagery was univocal simply does not account for the differences in the contexts where these depictions are employed across the Alpine region and their vast timeframe.

The main reason for the research of comparison between the engraved imagery and actual artefacts essentially lies on chronological issues. The problem of dating the monuments has been central in relation to the engravings of Remedello-type daggers. In fact, the daggers from Remedello have been attributed to Copper Age due to the radiocarbon dating of human remains in the graves where they were recovered (De Marinis 1994, 2013). Thus, the presence of Remedello daggers has been used as a feasible chronological marker for stelae and natural rock engravings (cf. Anati 1891, Ambrosi 1994, Acanfora 1952, De Marinis 1995). Hence, the necessity of developing a categorisation of prehistoric daggers arose and the first typology was postulated by Emmanuel Anati (1972). However, his monograph on dagger depictions in rock art contexts in the Alpine region was limited to the Italian borders and exclusively focused on the physical and material characteristics of different types of depicted daggers on anthropomorphic stelae, boulders and natural rocks. Anati notices that the type we refer to as Remedello is characterised by a relatively wide blade, often with a longitudinal ridge and a crescent-shaped handle (Anati 1972, 14-21). He also recognises patterns among different shapes and notices superimpositions of engravings, suggesting that different types of daggers were produced and used in different periods (Anati 1971, 89-90).

A broader perspective on engraved weapons can be found in Geoffrey de Saulieu's article (2013), where engraved imagery is considered not as much as in relation to typologies and style but rather in terms of the value that they could have had in the landscape. Saulieu concentrates on the concept of ostentation and applies it to the evidence of stelae and anthropomorphic menhirs in Copper Age Southern France and Northern Italy. The main argument lies on the connection of engraved weapons, among which Remedello type daggers, with male figures on anthropomorphic monuments (Saulieu 2013, 5). Saulieu is the first to recognise the importance of the media used to represent certain types of imagery, formulating a correlation between form and content and drawing the attention on the concept of visibility (Saulieu 2013, 15). Considering these aspects, he divides Copper Age rock art into monumental ('*art ostentatoire*') and discreet ('*art discret*') (Saulieu 2013, 16; Saulieu 2004, 14-19). The former is represented by stelae and boulders, which were deliberately placed in certain accessible parts of the landscape where they were immediately visible. The latter, instead, is represented by natural rock engravings, where the images are often hard to spot (Saulieu 2013, 16). Thus, he argues that weapons (especially daggers) were depicted more in visible contexts, whereas other themes prevailed in natural rock art. Drawing from this observation Saulieu formulates a social theory which interprets the engraved weapons as signs of inequality in terms of negotiation of power and hierarchy (Saulieu 2013, 19). This study is of pivotal importance since it considers for the first time correlations between form of the monuments and content of the engraved imagery over the whole span of the Alpine region, with a focus on the social meaning which they could have carried.

At this point, the introduction of the concept of *branding* appears useful. In fact, considering the symbolic value of such engravings, we need to highlight that the representation of Remedello daggers is characterised, just as modern-day brands, by a repetitive standardised design. This is easily recognisable and communicates some underlying information through the association with the medium characterised by it. Hence, in order to better understand the cultural value of such a brand across the Alpine region, we need to define its characteristics in order to be able to trace its presence in the archaeological record.

2.5 The characteristics of the brand and the methodology.

The concept of brand applies differently to the case of dagger imagery, since the nature of the materials differs from the metalwork with bird images analysed by Becker (2015) and from Wengrow's State-seals (2008). These were mobile objects, which could have been transported, exchanged, traded etc. Instead, the nature of the media carrying daggers in Copper Age is a static one: stelae and boulders are locally produced and can barely be moved. Rock walls are quintessentially immovable. In our case the transmission of the 'brand' cannot occur through the circulation of the objects carrying it, on the contrary it must have followed other routes, leading to its conceptualisation and representation (Fig. 6).



Figure 6: examples of engravings representing Remedello daggers. From the left: dagger on statue-menhir in Lunigiana; daggers on a boulder in Cemmo, Camonica Valley; three daggers on a menhir from Camonica Valley.

Raffaele De Marinis was the first to categorise the daggers recovered from prehistoric graves at Remedello and other sites in the Po valley surrounding areas (De Marinis 1994, 2004, 2013). Among the presence of flint and metal Bell-Beaker-Culture daggers, the material characteristics of copper daggers labelled as 'Remedello-type' are the ones which concern our study of engraved imagery. First of all, De Marinis recognises differences between various sub-types of Remedello-type daggers; he distinguishes between two different sub-groups defined 'Remedello A' and 'Remedello B' depending on the size of the blade (De Marinis 2013, 322-323).

On the one hand, Remedello sub-type A daggers (Fig. 7) are characterised by a short triangular blade (height= 2x base width). The blade is also extremely thin (no more than 1,4mm thick) and sometimes shows a lightly embossed central ridge (De Marinis 2013, 322). These features are shared for instance by the dagger found at

Remedello in tomb 79 and identical examples found at Volongo, Carbonara Ticino, Cumarola di Maranello, Forli-Calletta dei Passeri in the Po' plain and at Orgon (Bouche-de-Rhône, Provence) in France (De Marinis 2013, 322; cf. De Marinis 1994). On the other hand, Remedello sub-type B daggers are characterised by longer blades (4.5cm max.) both with and without a central longitudinal ridge (Fig. 8). Daggers of this type were recovered for example at Remedello in tomb 62 and in other areas such as Monte Bradoni, Mirabella Eclano, Forli-Calletta dei Passeri in the Po' valley and also at Lüscherz (Bern) in Switzerland. Both types of blades are characterised by a rectangular extension of the base, where a whole functioned as point of connection for the handle.

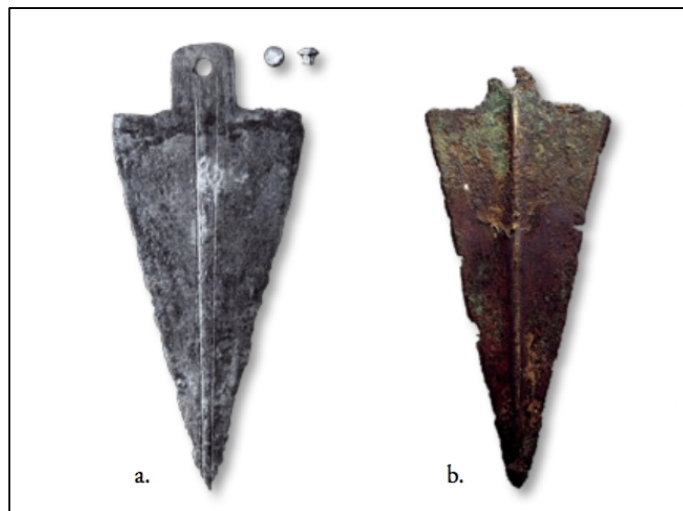


Figure 7 (top): Sub-type A daggers from Remedello (De Marinis 2013).

Fig. 8 (left): Sub-type B dagger with rivets possibly from the handle; from Remedello tomb 62 (De Marinis 2013).

The reconstruction of the handles of these daggers is complex, since they were realised with organic material which is not preserved in the archaeological record (De Marinis 2013, 321). Most probably, the handle was made of wood, which left evident signs of abrasion on the base of the copper blade (De Marinis 2013, 321). However, through the finding of copper rivets in connection with the blades, a plausible shape of the wooden handle has been proposed; that should have been similar to a crescent (De Marinis 2013, 324). This hypothesis actually finds a confirmation in the engravings and Anati in his typological classifications describes

them as ‘semi-disc’ and/or ‘crescent-like’ (‘lunato’) handles (Anati, 1972, 16) (Fig. 9).

It will also be useful to note that in tomb 79 at Remedello, near the chest of the skeleton a series of round copper hubcaps has been recovered (which have been considered part of some sort of belt or baldric (Fig. 10) (De Marinis 2013, 322). Therefore, it has been argued that copper daggers were kept hanging from belts, probably placed around the waist (Colini 1898 in De Marinis 2013). This can be particularly interesting when considering the evidence of daggers depictions on statue-menhirs, where the daggers are often placed as attributes of anthropomorphic figures.

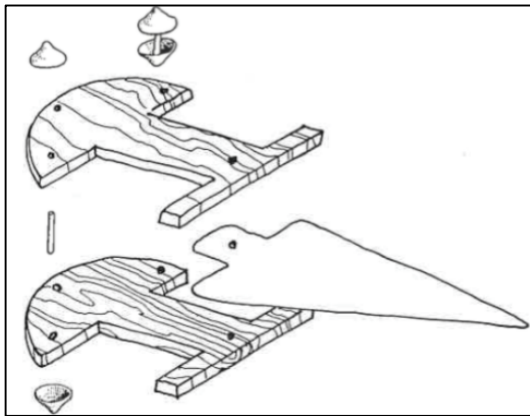


Figure 9 (right): Reconstruction of the different parts composing the Remedello dagger. The handle was probably made of wood and jointed to the blade through a rectangular extension originating from the base (Leonardi 2013).



Figure 10: hubcaps/rivets found in tomb 79 at Remedello. They were supposed to be part of a belt from which the dagger would have hanged (De Marinis 2013).

Therefore, for the purpose of identifying the Remedello dagger brand in rock engravings, we will need to look for depictions of daggers which take into account the following features:

- Triangular blades with a ratio of 2:1 or 3:1 between the length of the length and the width of the base.
- Presence of a rectangular extension originating in the middle point of the base and functioning as connection to the handle.
- Presence or absence of a central longitudinal ridge.
- Handle resembling the shape of a crescent.

Following these characteristics, a prototype of the Remedello dagger brand design can be proposed (Fig. 11), with some possible variations especially as regards the shape of the handles, of which we do not have any direct evidence.

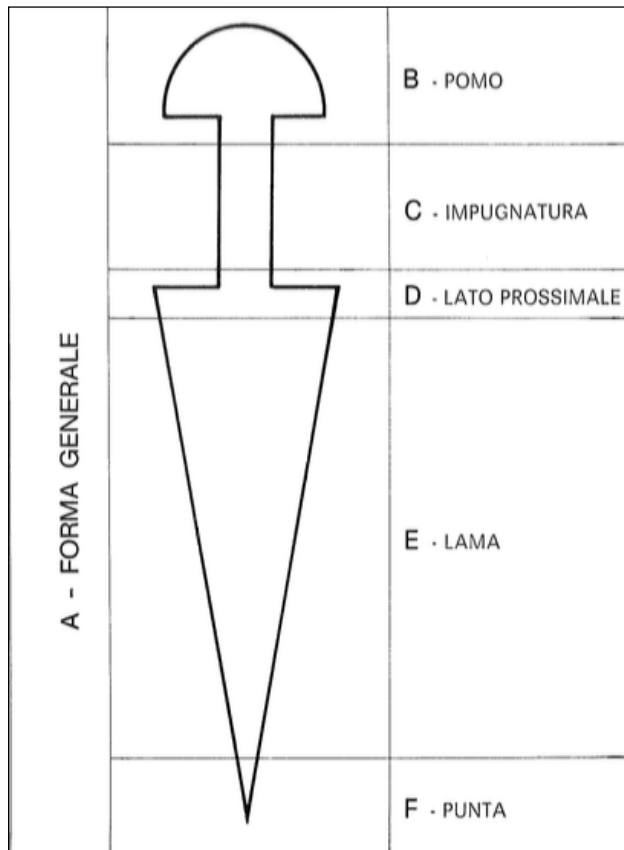
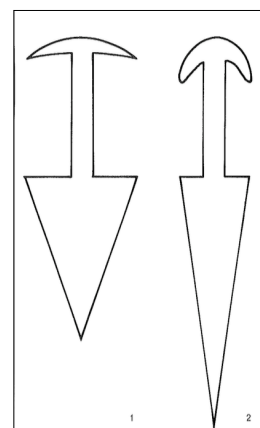


Figure 11a. Reconstruction of a prototype Remedello dagger useful to compare to the engravings to identify the brand (Anati 1972)

Figure 11b. Reconstructions of possible variations in the shape of Remedello daggers (from Anati, 1972).



Having described the main visual features characterising the design of the brand, it is now necessary to delineate a methodology for its research in the context of rock engravings. The approach will be essentially comparative and it will consist of considering similar figures in similar contexts across the Alpine region, from North-Eastern Italy to the Maritime Alps in France, encompassing the South of Switzerland. The time frame considered, as showed before, spans roughly over 500 years, from the end of the 4th millennium BC to 2500 BC. Unfortunately, considering the nature of the evidence, a stricter time frame would not be feasible (cf. Saulieu 2013, 6).

Nevertheless, this research does not aim to the sole recognition of the presence of this brand in various complexes of megalithic art; contrastingly, it aims to investigate the social and cultural reasons underlying the transmission and repetition of such imagery in Copper Age. With respect to this purpose, the formal recognition of the design constituting the visual aspect of the brand will not suffice. In fact, I am going to research the ‘packaged’ information laden on the Remedello dagger brand, as this is the very inherent character of branding.

To transcend the mere visual aspect of the brand and dwell into the agency of daggers, this research will need to deepen into the contextual evidence and the landscape where this brand was used and transmitted, focusing particularly on the characteristics of the monuments and rock complexes marked by it. In order to do so, an initial thorough examination of the main context where direct evidence of copper daggers was recovered will be necessary.

Chapter 3

The Remedello-type daggers.

3.1 The necropolis of Remedello in the Po Valley.

3.1.1 A general overview.



Fig 12. The location of Remedello in the Po plain, Northern Italy (From Google Earth).

The necropolis of Remedello (Province of Brescia) is the primary location where copper daggers were recovered in Northern Italy (Fig. 12). The specific type of daggers we are interested in were named after this village in the central area of the Po plain. The context of provenance of the Remedello-type daggers is funerary; in fact, they were part of grave goods together with other artefacts, mainly made out of stone (see De Marinis 2013). The archaeological area of Remedello covers roughly 2 acres and spans from the territory of Remedello Sopra towards the South until the boundary of the hamlet of Remedello Sotto; from West to East, it is enclosed by provincial road no. 76, on one side, and the course of the river Chiese on the other side (De Marinis 2013, 301). A large number of sites were discovered in this area, yielding hundreds of burials dated from the late Neolithic up to the end of Iron Age (De Marinis 2013). The timeframe was developed through the radiocarbon dating of the human remains (De Marinis 1997a, 1997b), which yielded an occupational pattern of the area spanning from 3500 BC to the VI century BC and then again in the La Tène period and in Roman times (De Marinis

2013, 306). In the area of the necropolis attributed to Copper Age, a total of 164 tombs were found (De Marinis 2013, 305); even though it has been argued that a great number of burials has yet to be discovered, with a total estimate of about 300 of them (De Marinis 2013, 305).

During the early phases of the excavations, in the middle 1800s, the presence of two mounds measuring almost a metre in height is reported, respectively at the North and South end of the necropolis (Bandieri 1885). Unfortunately, these possible man-made alterations of the terrain are not visible at the present time, probably due to the recent extensive agricultural activities conducted in the area (De Marinis 2013, 306). Following the written description, it is probable that the mounds were purposely realised to host the burials with a clear distinction between two areas, a Northern and a Southern one (De Marinis 2013, 306). Also, at the bottom South-West corner of the necropolis, a conic shaft was recovered. It contained oxen bones and black pottery fragments. Unfortunately, these materials have been lost and proving their contemporaneity to the Copper Age burials is not possible (De Marinis 2013, 306). In addition to that, due to the old age of the first excavations, the initial methods were rather non-scientific and a reconstruction of different layers according to the various occupational phases of the site cannot be attempted.

3.1.2 The burials.

The Copper Age burials at Remedello (Fig. 13) are individual inhumations in simple-shaped graves mostly oval. They were excavated in the terrain across clay, reaching the underlying layer of sand and gravels, about 80 centimetres under the current ground level (De Marinis 2013, 307). The costume of individual graves was widespread in Copper Age in Northern Europe in Switzerland and the Lowlands and throughout central and Eastern Europe (De Marinis 2013, 308). However, such a practice is different from what happened on the Alps and the rest of the Italian peninsula, where collective graves in caves and natural shelters seem to have been the rule (De Marinis 2013, 307). Burials of multiple individuals are the main practice in the areas surrounding the Po Valley, making the Remedello case an *unicum* for the area considered in this research. The only exception is represented by the site of Saint-Martin-de-Corléans (Aosta), where individual graves were

found, even though in this context they are accompanied by megalithic monumental structures (cf. Perréard-Lopreno 2009) (see Chapter 5).

For some of the Copper Age graves at Remedello reconstructing the original position of the bodies was difficult, due to the inattentive first excavations (De Marinis 2013, 310). Nevertheless, from the evidence recovered in more recent times, the most recurring position entails the placement of the body crouched on the side, followed by a particular corpse arrangement known as *Rüchenocher* (De Marinis 2013, 310; cf. Harrison and Heyd 2007). This practice consists of positioning the body supine with the head facing left and bent legs (Fig. 14). Such a position is typical of the bodies buried with grave goods assemblages, among which copper daggers were found.

It needs to be stressed that within the great number of prehistoric burials found at the Remedello site, only 59 tombs were accompanied by grave goods. A fact which has generally been interpreted in the literature as a sign of their quintessential elitist nature, connected with warfare prestige (cf. De Marinis 2013). Furthermore, the specific character of the body disposition in the *Rüchenocher* tombs at Remedello has led to establishing a link with the funerary practices of the Yamnaya people in the Balkans (Harrison and Heyd 2007, 193; De Marinis 2013, 312).



Fig 13. The location of the Copper Age necropolis at Remedello. Reconstruction from De Marinis 2013, 303).



Fig. 14. *Rüchenocher* burial at Remedello, tomb 83. Visible a copper dagger among the grave goods (De Marinis 2013, 323).

3.1.3 *Grave goods.*

The contexts in which the Remedello-type daggers were recovered encompass a variety of artefacts made of different materials. Besides the presence of copper daggers, weaponry of other kinds has been retrieved from the grave goods assemblages. This is the case of numerous flint daggers, copper and stone hand-axes and flint spearheads.

Copper axes were found in four tombs at Remedello. The biggest one was recovered in tomb 102 (De Marinis 2013, 328). Its shape resembles a trapezoid, with a flat base and the cutting edges slightly arched. Axes from tombs 76, 62 and 4 appear to be more typologically complex, showing raised edges obtained through the hammering (De Marinis 2013, 328). The general outline is still characterised by a trapezoidal shape, with flat base and arched cutting edge (Fig. 15). All the metal axes at the necropolis of Remedello are made of pure copper, with small traces of arsenic and silver; the cutting edge was cold-hammered, probably to augment the metal resistance (De Marinis 2013, 328). It has been noticed that most of these copper axes resemble the characteristics of stone axes generally attributed to the Neolithic (De Marinis 1992, 389). The surface of these metal axes appears quite wrinkled, sign of difficulties in the smelting process suggesting a primitive approach to metal technology (De Marinis 2013, 325; 1992, 391). Other examples of copper axes of this kind were found in the Eastern part of Northern Italy (De Marinis 2013, 329), with similar examples in the transalpine area. Similarities can be drawn with the axes from the Carpathian Basin especially in the area of Balaton-Lásinja Culture in the late Neolithic (contemporary to the early stages of Copper Age in the Alps) (De Marinis 2013, 330). Similar examples can be the axes from Zalavar Basasziget (Kalicz 1988, 81) and Gurnitz (Barfield 1992, 169). Interestingly, a similar copper axe from Welschnofen (Südtirol) found at 2000 metres of altitude, can be seen as a proof of exploitation of land at high altitudes in the Alpine region, probably areas of crossing for transalpine movements.

Also, a generous number of stone hand-axes was recovered in Remedello. Green stone polished hand-axes were recovered from 8 tombs at Remedello, plus few from destroyed graves. They have small dimensions (6 to 10cm) and their cutting edge is barely arched (Fig. 16). Most of them presents signs of usage, such as asymmetric cutting edge, abrasions and chips (De Marinis 2013, 341). Furthermore, arrowheads made of flint were part of the Copper Age Remedello

grave goods. Most of the arrowheads were recovered from burials destroyed by farming activities (De Marinis 2013, 333) and are therefore out of context.

As far as pottery is concerned, the number of ceramic vessels retrieved at Remedello is small. Only 16 Copper Age tombs have yielded ceramic materials (De Marinis 2013, 315). The majority of the pots are characterised by deep shapes, such as truncated conical vessels with slightly curved edges. It has been argued that the scarcity of pre-Bell-Beaker pottery in the Po plain area is remarkable. A fact which may be due to two factors: the lack of known domestic settlements and the likely habit of rarely depositing pottery in burials in this area (De Marinis 2013, 318).

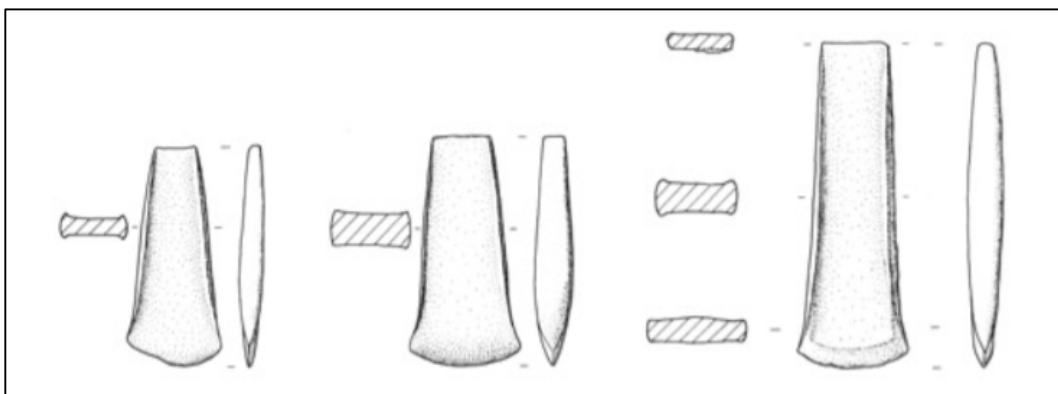


Fig. 15 (Top). Sketch of copper axes from Remedello. From left to right: axe from tomb 4, 62 and 78 (De Marinis 2013, 329).



Fig. 16 (Left). Polished greenstone axes from Remedello (De Marinis 2013, 332).

3.1.4 Flint and copper daggers.

The copper daggers on which the prototype of the numerous engraved depictions is based were found in five grave-goods assemblages at Remedello. It is due to the specific characteristics of these metal artefacts (as described in Chapter 2) that they were defined as ‘type Remedello’, defining a type of copper artefact which -as far as we know- is almost exclusively manufactured and employed in the

Po Valley area. Remedello-type daggers were found in tombs 62, 79, 83, 106, plus a smaller dagger blade (*pugnaletto*) from tomb 45 (De Marinis 2013, 345). The position of the metal daggers in the burials was linked to one of the hands of the corpses, which were all interpreted as male adults except for one case represented by a younger male individual (tomb 63) (De Marinis 2013, 342). Unfortunately, when describing the biological characteristics of the human remains in such tombs, it is not clear what the criteria used to determine sex were, possibly assuming that such burials are considered masculine not through osteoarchaeological analyses, but rather due to the presence of grave goods (cf. De Marinis 2013, 342). Due to the lack of further literature about these tombs and the inaccessibility of the human remains at the present day, we are here forced to trust De Marinis' interpretation.

Nevertheless, in the Copper Age burials of Remedello metal daggers do not play a substantial role, especially if we consider that a proportionally greater number of *flint daggers* was recovered at this site. Within the context of grave goods, 25 flint daggers were found placed in 22 tombs, plus 9 daggers from unclear contexts (probably again from graves destroyed by agriculture) (De Marinis 2013, 333). Flint daggers have been often found in the region, but in most cases they were recovered out of the original context, whereas at Remedello they are integral part of grave assemblages (Fig. 17). These daggers are all bifaced, hammered finely on the edges and can be divided into two typological groups: those with a distinct tang and those without.

Due to their high number, also when compared with copper daggers (25 vs. 5), the flint dagger appears to be the distinctive artefact in the Remedello Culture tombs (De Marinis 2013, 355). Stone daggers and copper daggers seems to be relatively attributed to the same period and never occur in the same grave together, as far as we know (cf. De Marinis 1995; 1997; 2013). That is one of the reasons why a straight-forward interpretations of daggers as symbols of warfare has been formulated to account for their presence in grave goods assemblages at Remedello (De Marinis 2013, 335). However, this hypothesis appears too simple when considering various aspects of the contexts where daggers occur. A first question is raised by the dagger found in the tomb of a teenager whose sex is undetermined (De Marinis 2013, 335); what would be the significance of this unique case? Furthermore, what is the difference between the deposition in a tomb of a copper dagger instead of a flint one? Raffaele De Marinis treats all the daggers in the same

way, forgetting the peculiarity of copper ones, which were not only deliberately placed in certain tombs but which also represented a widespread diffusion of its shape on megalithic engravings across the Alpine region. A peculiar symbolism attributed to copper Remedello-type daggers was established and evolved in their shape conceptualisation, making them extremely different from their flint counterpart.

Too many uncertainties and assumptions invest the evidence of copper daggers in the Po Valley; but their peculiar characteristic of agents transmitting some sort of social meaning through the dynamics of a brand let us suppose that copper daggers were not merely metal evolution of flint daggers.



Fig. 17a. Two flint daggers compared to spearheads from the same assemblages (tomb 65) at Remedello (De Marinis 2013, 334).



Fig. 17b. Two flint daggers from tomb 100 and 107 at Remedello (De Marinis 2013, 335).

3.2 Other finds of copper daggers in the Po Valley.



Fig 18. The locations of Remedello-type copper daggers findings in the South of Po plain and the Northern Appennines area (own elaboration from Google Earth).

Other copper blades attributed to Remedello-type daggers were recovered in the Po Valley area in the territories surrounding Remedello and further South. A few daggers were found in the necropolises of Cumarola and Spilamberto (Modena), about 100km south of Remedello. Isolated finds occurred in Santa Cristina (Brescia); Borgo Rivola (Ravenna), South of the Po towards the Adriatic coast and in two locations in Northern Tuscany in the context of the Appennine mountain range (Fig. 18)

The grave goods discovered at Cumarola Podere are located in the municipality of Maranello (Province of Modena). Intermittent amateur excavations were conducted throughout the end of the 19th century after the first fortuitous finds during road works in the area (Bagolini et al. 1982). Two Remedello-type copper daggers are attributed to this site, both with vertical centre ridge and quadrangular appendix on the base for the handle joint (Fig. 19). The characteristics of the burials at Cumarola show similarities and differences when confronted with Remedello. They were individual graves, defined as all oriented in the same direction (Bagolini et al. 1982, 63). Differently from Remedello, these tombs show consistence in the presence of grave goods; a fact that has been interpreted as a sign of less marked

social inequality (Bagolini et al. 1982, 63). Interestingly, no flint daggers were recovered from Cumarola (Bagolini et al. 1982, 64). The evidence from Cumarola is highly fragmentary and formulating reconstructions about the context of the burials may lead to far-fetched interpretations. For most of the materials is impossible to establish the original provenance and the absence of scientific excavations prevents us from drawing a comprehensive picture of the graveyard and the social practices connected to it.

Fragmentary knowledge concerns also the evidence from the near necropolis of Spilamberto (Province of Modena), just a few km West of Maranello. Here, individual inhumations were discovered, all oriented in the same direction as in Cumarola (Bagolini et al. 1982, 63). The grave goods encompassed ceramic vessels placed at the feet of the dead and, in two cases, copper daggers resembling Remedello-type shape (Bagolini et al. 1982, 66). Both of them are characterised by the absence of central ridge.

Four further examples of Remedello-type daggers lacking central ridge were found South of the Po Valley. Two Remedello-type dagger blades are exhibited at the Archaeological Museum of Bologna. These are reported as being found in the location of Borgo Rivola (Ravenna Province), located in the South-Eastern end of the Po plain, towards the Adriatic coast (Anati 1972, 40). The context is supposed to be funeral, but there is no clear information about their discovery.

Moreover, further South, two other copper daggers were found in the Northern Appennines area. In both cases the daggers were found out of context; one from the territory of Marina di Massa (Province of Massa Carrara) and the other one in the so called Cave of the Fairies in the hamlet of Calomini (Province of Lucca) (Bagolini et al. 1982, 66). Interestingly, the area of these two finds is close to the statue-menhirs group of Lunigiana (Province of Massa Carrara and La Spezia), where Remedello daggers are depicted as attributes on the stelae (see Ch. 4).

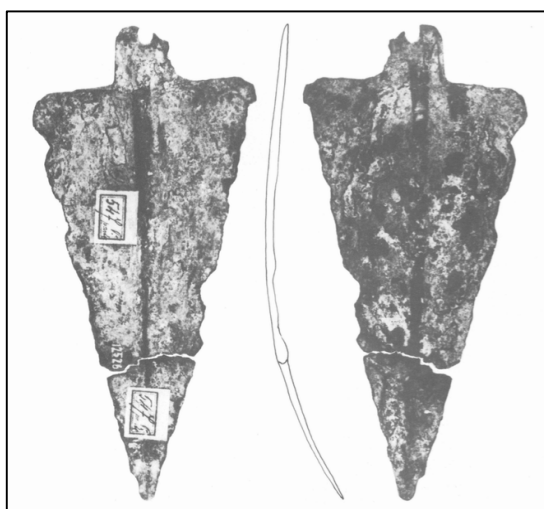


Fig. 19a, 19b. Remedello-type copper daggers found at Cumarola necropolis (Bagolini et al. 1982, 58, 61).

3.3 Remedello-type daggers in Switzerland and Southern France.

Scattered finds of Remedello-type copper daggers also occurred in the Swiss Alps and Southern France. Two Remedello daggers were recovered in Switzerland at Luscherz near Bern and at Saint Blaise (Neuchâtel). Another one was found in France at Orgon (Provence), the only Remedello-type dagger discovered in the country so far.

The Provençal copper dagger (Fig. 20) was found in a megalithic funerary context in the territory of Orgon (Bouches-du-Rhone). The tomb consisted of a long dolmen platform and a drywall (Courtin and Suazade 1975, 184). The grave has been tampered with by looters, but it has been possible to recover fragments of a copper blade akin to the Remedello-type (Courtin and Suazade 1975, 185). Other metal objects found in the grave are two points, two beads in some sort of small vessel (Courtin and Suazade 1975, 187). This dagger is the only example of Remedello-type daggers in Southern France, where engravings of this weapon occur in the Eastern side on the Alps at the boarder with Italy.

In Switzerland, the two Remedello-type dagger blades were recovered in similar contexts not far away from each other. One copper blade with central ridge was found in the territory of the city of Saint Blaise (Neuchâtel) (Fig. 21). The area has shown traces of occupation from the Neolithic until the La Tène period in the Iron

Age (cf. Evard 2002). The prehistoric settlements in the Neuchatel area developed by the lakeside (Neuchatel Lake), where already in the Neolithic the Auvernier Culture developed (Anati 1972, 38). About 30km East, the other Swiss Remedello-type dagger was found at Lüscherz (Bern) (De Marinis 2013, 324; Straham 1971, 19). Also here, the context of the finding was a lakeside settlement on Lake Bienne.

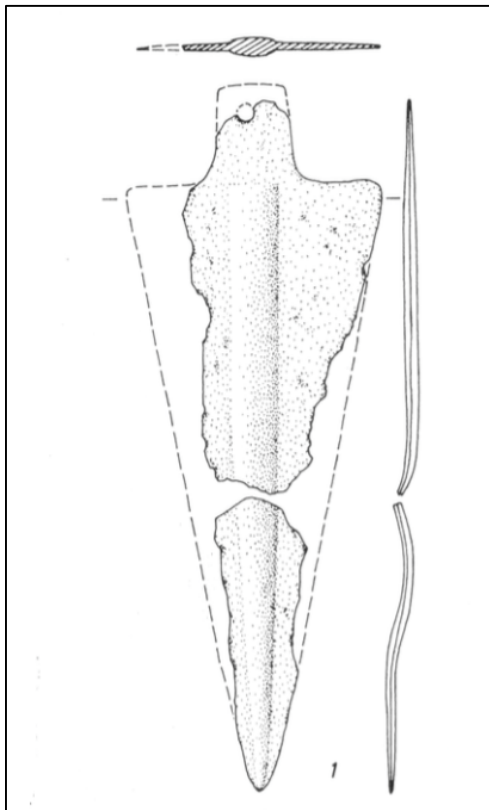


Fig. 20 (left). Refitting reconstruction of the copper blade fragments found at Orgon in the plausible original shape of the dagger (Courtin and Suazade 1975, 185).

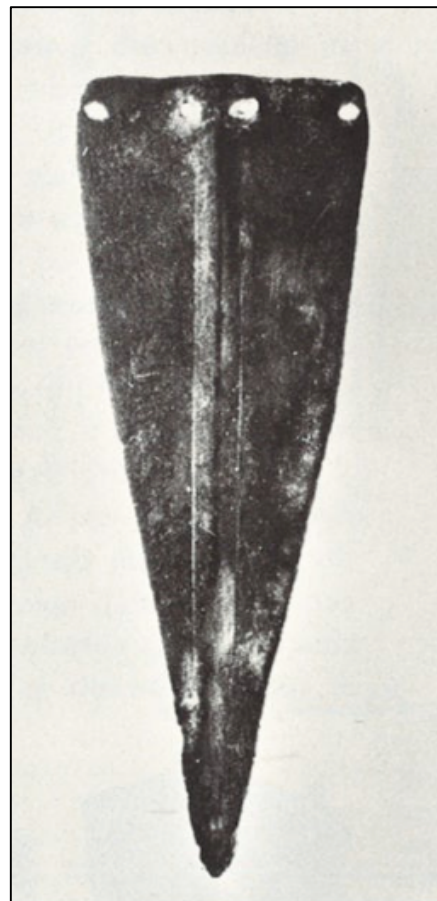


Fig. 21 (right). The Remedello-type copper dagger found at St. Blaise and now exhibited at Nauchâtel Archaeological Museum (Anati 1972, 39).

Thus, it seems that the the evidence of Remedello-type daggers on the other side of the Alps is even more scarce than in Northern Italy. Nevertheless, the presence of these few finds account for the circulation of this type of dagger also outside the Po basin. Interestingly, also in Switzerland and France the occurrence of actual daggers

does not seem related with the areas where the Remedello dagger brand has been engraved in monumental contexts. Besides the case of Orgon in France, no megalithic or rock art complexes are reported in Switzerland in connection with the two blades recovered. There seems to be a pattern of differentiation between the areas where actual copper daggers were employed and those where they were solely depicted. This is a common feature shared by the Italian, Swiss and French archaeological record. In order to understand the dynamics behind the diffusion of the Remedello-dagger brand, I will now move on analysing the evidence of daggers engravings.

Chapter 4

The evidence from the central Alps and Northern Appennines

4.1 Trentino-Südtirol statue-menhirs.

In the territory of Trentino-Südtirol region in North Western Italy about 20 engraved menhirs have been recovered over the past two centuries. The area of the findings encompasses the territory North of Lake Garda right to Brenner mountain pass, the modern state boarder between Italy and Austria (Fig. 22). Such geographical extension comprises the Province of Trento and the Province of Bolzano (the Südtirol area). Prehistoric megalithic activity in this region focused on the production of menhirs with anthropomorphic features. The individuals represented by these stelae – or statue-menhirs- are characterised by a variety of engraved attributes. Among these, a prominent position is given to Remedello-type daggers, often repeated multiple times on the same monument. Going through this evidence, I am going to see how these depictions could be understood in light of the Remedello-dagger brand phenomenon.

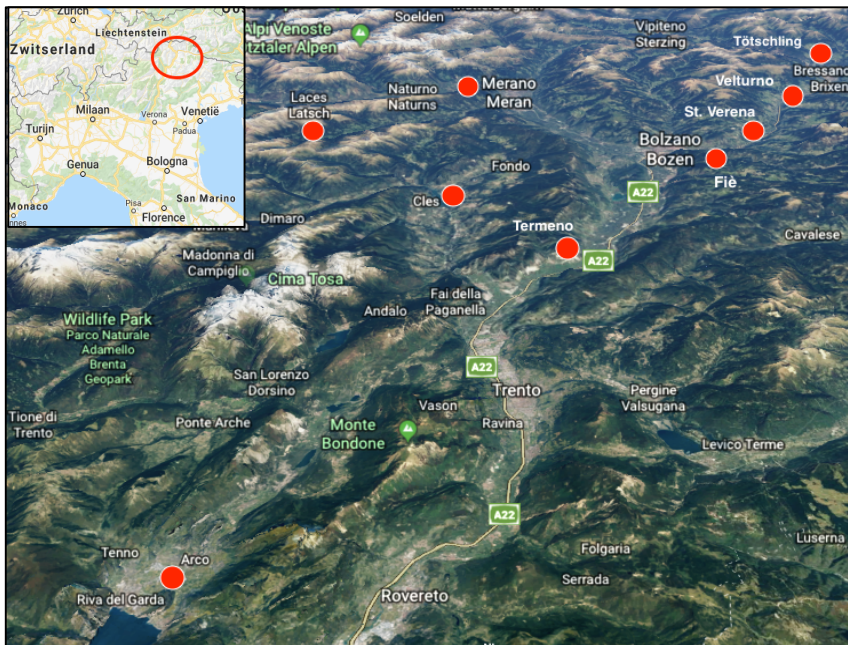


Fig. 22. Map of statue-menhirs finds in Trentino-Südtirol, encompassing the provinces of Trento and Bolzano (Bozen) (own elaboration from Google Earth; data from Pedrotti 1995a).

4.1.1 Formal characteristics, locations and chronology.

The stelae of Trentino have been described as ‘lithic monuments of large dimensions, engraved on more than one side and reproducing a human outlook’ (Pedrotti 1995a, 259). Such characteristics introduce these monuments in the category of statue-menhirs (see chapter 1), a widely accepted term in the concerning literature (Acanfora 1953, Pedrotti and Ciurletti 1994, Pedrotti 1995a, 1995b). The stelae from Trentino-Südtirol can be classified into three different types. Firstly, the stae considered to represent male individuals; secondly, those depicting female subjects; thirdly, those with no indication of sex (Pedrotti 1995a, 259). The majority of them (11 out of 17) has been interpreted as male individuals. This is primarily due to the contrast with the female ones, which present engraved breasts and the presence of specific attributes (Pedrotti 1995a, 1995b). As often happens, the identification of male sex draws from the presence of particular objects, such as weapons. Among these, a leading role is played by Remedello-type daggers, which have been interpreted indicators of masculinity (Pedrotti 1995a, 264; Anati 1972, 59).

The findings have occurred in most of the occasions by chance and scientific excavations have never been performed in connection with the stelae (Pedrotti 1995a, 259). The locations where these monuments were recovered are widespread along two trajectories which follow the valleys. One follows the course of the river Adige from Merano (Val Venosta) to the northern edge of Lake Garda (Val d’Adige), passing through the town of Trento. The other one from Brennero follows the course of river Isarco in Südtirol (Val d’Isarco) until it reaches the territory of the town of Bolzano/Bozen. Most of the findings are characterised by a single statue and only in two cases alignments of statue-menhirs have been recovered. Single finds occurred in Laces, Fié, Velturmo, Santa Verena, Temeno and Totschling (Fig. 22) (cf. Pedrotti 1995a, 1995b). The cases of multiple finds in the same location occurred in Lagundo (Merano), where an alignment of 4 stelae was discovered, and in Arco, where a group of 6 statues was recovered (Pedrotti 1995a, 1995b).

Two interesting aspects can be noticed about the locations of Trentino statue-menhirs. Firstly, there seems to be a connection with riverine courses. Rivers Adige and Isarco delineated the valleys where the stelae were produced and monumentalised. This aspect is even more evident if we consider that the area of

Arco, where the most numerous alignment of stelae was found, in prehistoric times must have been on the shore of Lake Garda. The Garda basin was in fact way larger than in modern times, meeting the river Serchia in the Arco territory (Pedrotti 1995b, 73-75). The choice of these location may have depended on raw material procurement, since the sandstone used for most of these statue-menhirs has a riverine origine (Pedrotti 1995b, 43).

Secondly, the spatial dimension of Trentino statue-menhirs is interesting when considering the main economic activities of these prehistoric societies. It has been argued that they practiced high-altitude transhumance and hunting (Pedrotti 1995b, 75). The hypothesis of regular movements of people from the lower river-basin plateaus uphill could help to understand the location choice for the statues arrangement, also in connection with the near mountain passes (Poggiani-Keller 2009, 207). This is also in light of the fact that the finding sites in Trentino never showed a connection with settlements (cf. Pedrotti 1995b), suggesting that the monumental areas must have characterised parts of the landscape which were not residential.

As far as the chronology is concerned, one particular finding plays a pivotal role. This is the fragment of stela recovered at Velturmo (Province of Bolzano). The statue fragment has been recovered in the context of a stratigraphic excavation (see Dal Ri and Tecchiati 1994). Interestingly, the fragment was found in reuse as part of an embankment covering the megalithic structure (Pedrotti 1995a, 265). At the base of this megalithic complex stone arrowheads, burnt human bones and pottery fragments traced back to the Bell-Beaker tradition (Pedrotti 1995a, 265; cf. Dal Ri and Tecchiati 1994). This context offers a good *terminus ante quem* to establish a chronology of the menhirs, considering that the defunctionalisation of this stela took place in a period prior or contemporary to the Bell-Beaker phase (2600-2300 BC). We must assume that the production of statue-menhirs with Remedello-daggers depictions began well before the Bell-Beaker period, since the Velturmo fragment shows depictions of daggers different from the Remedello prototype. The style of these daggers has been interpreted as typical of transient phase towards the Bell-Beaker horizon (Pedrotti 1995a, 265). A typological analysis has attributed to these dagger similar characteristics to the Ciempozuelos and Fontbuisse types (Pedrotti 1995a, 265; cf. Straham 1994, fig. 19). Nevertheless, the main dating system for Trentino statue-menhirs has been based on the typological recognition

of their engraved attributes. In fact, the high number of Remedello-dagger depictions led to their attribution to the Copper Age (Pedrotti 1995a, 275).

4.1.2 Remedello-dagger engravings.

The depiction of Remedello-type daggers on Trentino statue-menhirs concerns the stelae interpreted as representing male subjects. The dagger brand assumes the role of attribute on these statues, marking the represented individual along with other weapons and objects. Remedello-daggers are represented on 7 stelae, sometimes with a single occurrence, other times with multiple occurrence on the same statue. The cases of single occurrence of daggers depictions are characterised by stelae with no other weaponry, whereas the axes and halberds are represented, multiple Remedello daggers occur. The stelae with a single dagger are Lagundo 3, Lagundo 4 (fig. 21) (Pedrotti 1995a, 262). Stelae with multiple occurrences of Remedello-daggers are Lagundo 2, St. Verena, Laces, Termeno, Arco 1, Arco 2 (fig.) (Pedrotti 1995a, 263).

Lagundo stelae were found in the namesake hamlet just outside the Northern city-limit of Merano (Province of Bolzano/Bozen). The location of the finding was in the proximity of an ancient terrace of the river Adige (Pedrotti 1995a, 267). Of the four statue-menhirs of the Laguno alignment, the two with single occurrence of Remedello daggers stand out for their stylistic features. Lagundo 3 and 4 are rather simple stelae, where the human connotations are accomplished by a shallowly engraved circle in place of the head (more visible on Lagundo 3). The outline of a human body can be seen in the representation of an elaborated belt, which divides upper and lower body. On the back of Lagundo 4 stela, also a striped cloak is represented. The only other attribute of these stelae is a Remedello-type dagger engraved above the belt line. The typical crescent-shaped handle appears embossed due to the carving of two concavities in its proximity (Fig. 24). The other two stelae from Lagundo are characterised by a different design. Respectively, one is considered female due to the presence of breasts and no weaponry (Lagundo 1); the other one, Lagundo 2, shows a multitude of attributes instead. Besides the presence of a belt, Lagundo 2 (267x115cm) is characterised by numerous weapons. A great number of axes/halberds occupy the part of the stela corresponding to the chest, whereas 9 Remedello daggers are represented above and below the belt.

Interestingly, the ones below the belt are accompanied by the representation of a plough (Fig. 25). The anthropomorphic character of this stelae is given by a more elaborated face, with eyes, nose, mouth and a triangular beard on the chin.

A fragmentary stela was found at Laces, with depictions of clothing elements and weaponry. It was found reused, as a pillar base in the Church of Santa Maria al Colle (Pedrotti 1995a, 268). The design is complicated and the surface is not well preserved. A cloak on the back and a typical belt are easily recognisable. Among several axes, the engraving of at least 4 Remedello daggers with crescent-shaped handle are distinguishable (Fig. 26).

In the area South of Bolzano/Bozen, a single stela was found in the hamlet of Termeno (Fig. 22). This statue-menhir (183x62cm) presents a clear round-shaped head delimited by a necklace. A typical belt divides the upper from the lower body. Three Remedello daggers are represented on this stelae, with the crescent-shaped handle embossed like on Lagundo 3 and 4. Another triangular shape of larger dimensions, is engraved near the necklace, possibly another dagger blade (fig. 27).

Not too far from Termeno, in the chapel of Santa Verena at Renon (Bozen) (Fig. 22), a statue-menhir measuring 150x68x23cm was found. The stela was reused as construction material for the church building (Pedrotti 1995a, 268). On this stela (Fig. 28), similarly to Lagundo 2, multiple attributes are represented. Numerous axes occupy the upper part of the body, divided from the lower one by the typical belt. Concentric circles are engraved in place of the head, possibly representing some sort of necklace (Pedrotti 1995a, 268). Three visible Remedello-type daggers with central ridge and crescent-shaped handle are represented in the central part of the stela above the belt. One of them seems to be attached to the necklace, a position which reminds of other late Neolithic stelae with engraved daggers of different types in France and Spain (Pedrotti 1995a, 256). This dagger appears larger than the other two, and it is placed in a central position which captures the attention of the viewer.

Another interesting group of stelae with multiple engravings of Remedello daggers is the one from Arco (Province of Trento). At Arco an alignment of 6 statue-menhirs was recovered (Pedrotti 1995a, 263). Three of them are female statues, due to the presence of breasts and no weapons; one of them is asexual and of smaller dimensions. Numerous weapons are represented on the two male statues,

Arco 1 and Arco 2. The stela Arco 1 (Fig. 29) measures 215x94x23 and it is made of limestone of riverine/lacustrine origin (Pedrotti 1995a, 272). The attributes are a belt, 3 halberds and 4 axes. The head of the statue is given by a T-shaped engraving with a necklace. Above the belt, 6 Remedello daggers are engraved symmetrically, three on the left-hand side and three on the right-hand side. Another Remedello dagger is placed below the necklace, in a position similar to Lagundo 2 stela. The statue-menhir Arco 2 (Fig. 30) is characterised by smaller dimensions (170x58x14cm) and it is made of marble, like the female and asexual stelae of this alignment. This stela presents a belt and a checked cloak on the back. An axe is represented in the upper centre of the statue and three Remedello daggers are engraved below it. They are characterised by central ridge and the typical crescent-shaped handle.

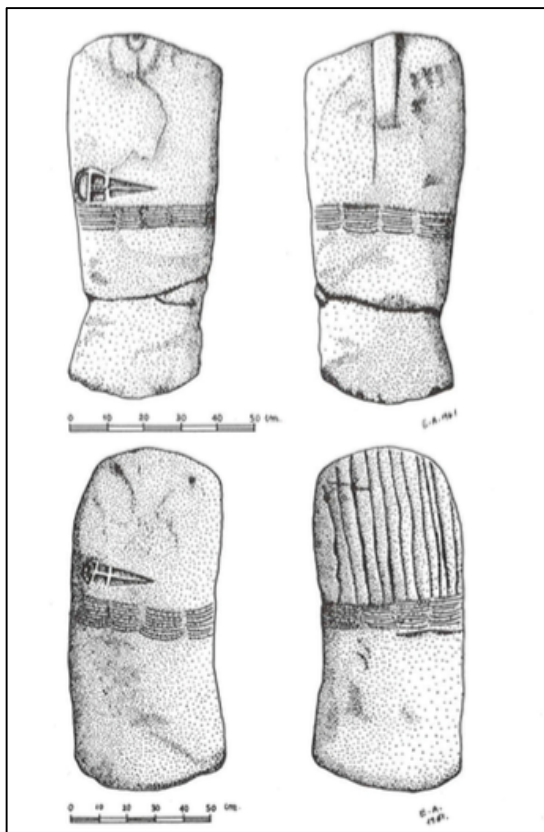


Fig. 23 (top). Lagundo stelae 3 and 4; reconstructive drawings (from Anati 1972, 60).



Fig. 24 (top). Remedello dagger on stela Lagundo 4 (Anati 1972, 61).

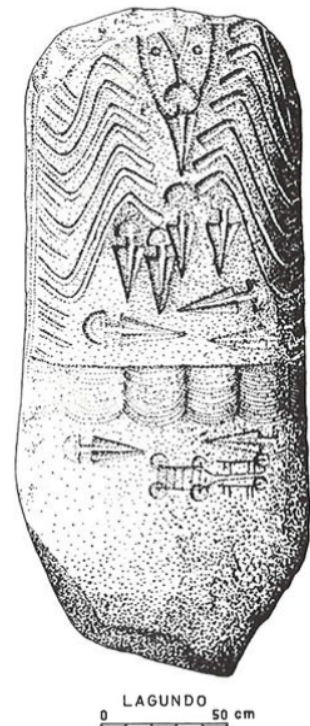


Fig. 25 (right). Lagundo 2 stela. Reconstructive drawing (Anati 1972, 65).

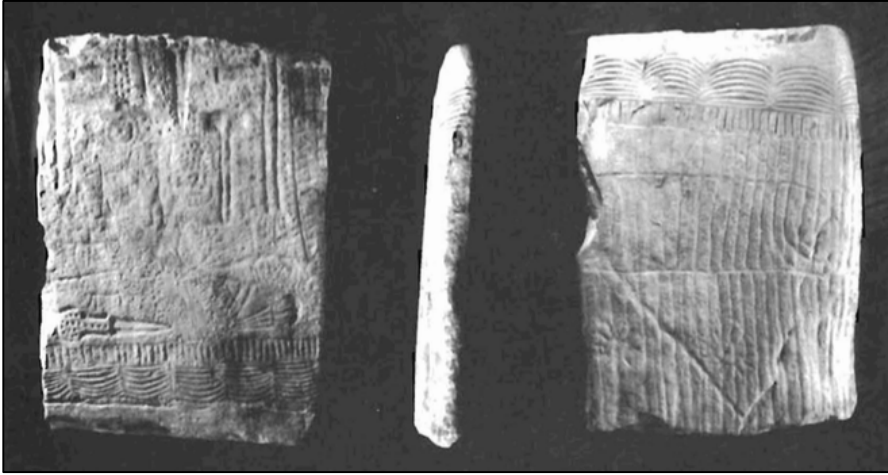


Fig. 26. The fragmentary stela from Laces (from Pedrotti 1995a, 268).



Fig. 27. Stela from Termeno. Three evident Remedello daggers and a possible larger dagger blade (from Anati, 1972, 69).

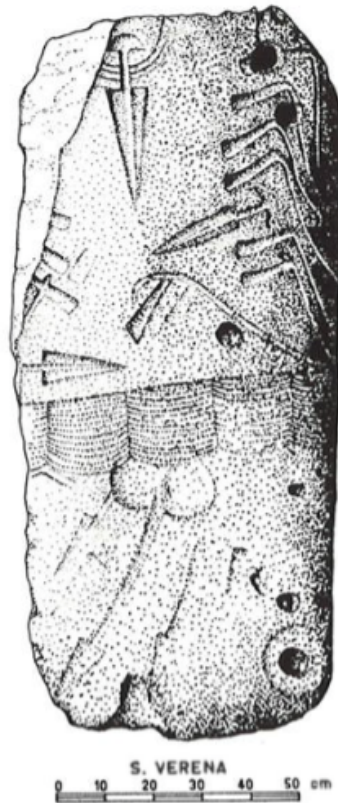


Fig. 28. Reconstructive drawing of the stela from Santa Verena (Anati 1972, 65).

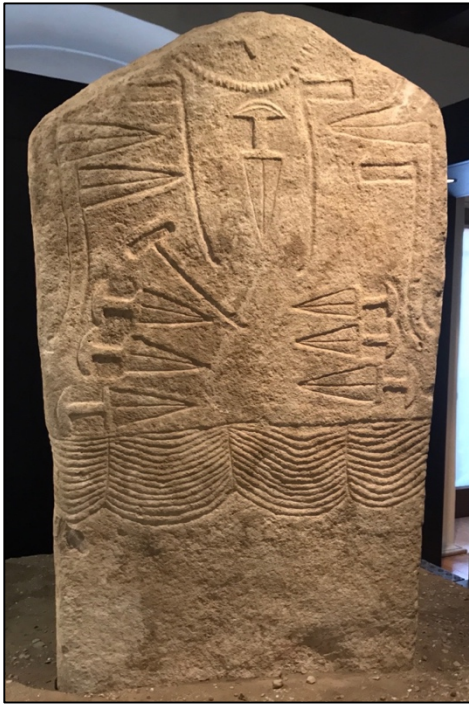


Fig. 29. Stela Arco 1 exhibited at the Alto Garda Museum in Riva del Garda.



Fig. 30. Stela Arco 2 exhibited at the Alto Garda Museum in Riva del Garda.

4.2 Valle Camonica and Valtellina.

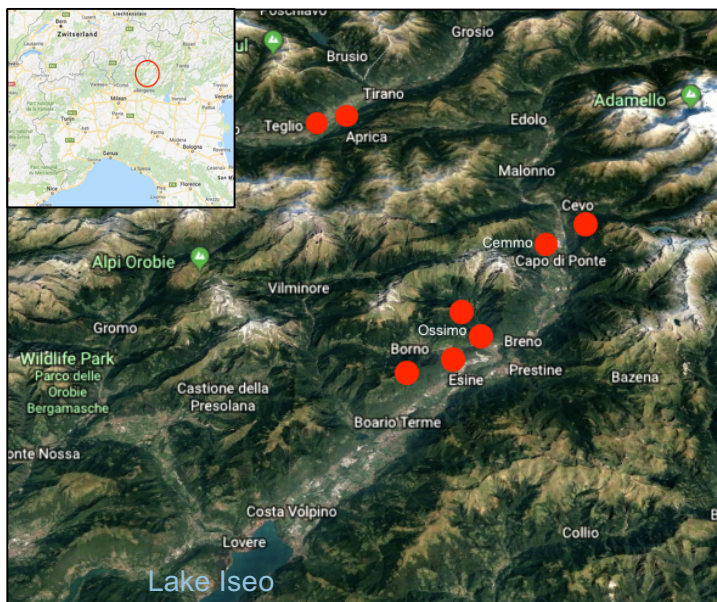


Fig. 31. Map of Copper Age sites (sanctuaries) of Valle Camonica and Valtellina (own elaboration from Googl Earth).

Valle Camonica is a valley in the Northern territory of the Provinces of Brescia and Bergamo in Italy. It follows the course of the River Oglio from Ponte di Legno southward until it merges into Lake Iseo. Valle Camonica is notoriously known for the rock engravings attributed to the Camuni people, who inhabited the area in the Late Iron Age (1st century BC-1st century AD). Besides these late prehistoric art manifestations, in Valle Camonica signs of human presence date back to the late Palaeolithic. An Epi-Gravettian engraving of an animal has been discovered at Luine (Boario Terme) (Martini et al. 2009a, 184). Not far, at Cividade Camuno, the rests of a contemporaneous shed have been retrieved (Baglioni and Martini 2009, 200).

The archaeological record of Copper Age in Valle Camonica is rich of monumental contexts. Engraved menhirs in this area have been recovered mostly in their original locations across the valley. The evidence of megalithic art is not limited to the Valley of the River Oglio, but it extends also to the adjoining Valtellina (Province of Sondrio). The access to Valtellina from Valle Camonica is easily achievable due to the presence of a large hilltop plateau, Aprica, which connects the two areas (fig. 31).

4.2.1 Rock art and anthropomorphic menhirs.

During Copper Age Valle Camonica and Valtellina underwent the production of numerous engraved menhirs. The character of these monuments is comparable to the category of statue-menhirs; however, besides the production of purposely-shaped stelae, here menhirs are also created through the engraving and rational disposition of unmodified boulders. This is why in the archaeology of Valle Camonica the term ‘boulder-menhir’ is often used alongside the more traditional ones such as ‘statue-menhir’ and ‘anthropomorphic stela’ (cf. Poggiani Keller 2009a; cf. Fossati 2007). Furthermore, the anthropomorphic character of these boulders is not straight-forward as in other cases, e.g. Trentino stelae. Valle Camonica and Valtellina menhirs suggest the outline of human bodies due to the disposition of the engraved figures, none of which has a 1:1 correspondence with depictions of actual body parts. The human figure is subtle, achieved through symbolism rather than direct representation. The peculiarity of Valle Camonica and Valtellina menhirs also lies in the great repertoire of engraved figures, definitely

wider than in any other group of Copper Age monumental art in Northern Italy and similar to the evidence from Mont Bégo in France (see below).

The contexts in which these stelae and boulder-menhirs were placed have been described in the literature as ‘megalithic sanctuaries’ (Poggiani-Keller 2009a, 203). This is in light of the fact that many monuments were recovered *in situ* in alignments, often along with other other monuments and artistic expressions. Valle Camonica findings are the best persevered in term of contextual evidence, with cases of recent campaigns of excavations also (cf. Fedele 2007; Poggiani-Keller 2009b, 2009c).

Remedello-dagger depictions in Valle Camonica and Valtellina often occur on menhirs in multiple numbers. The Remedello dagger depictions have been used to date the menhirs characterised by them to the Copper Age (Fossati 2007, 78). The Remedellian iconography here marks one of the first phases of megalithic art, whereas the occurrence of Bell-Beaker daggers identifies later menhirs, dating to to the Bronze Age (2400-2000) (Fossati 2007, 78).

The figurative repertoire in which the Remedello-daggers representations occur is quite varied and it encompasses objects, natural elements (e.g the sun) and living creatures (animals, human figurines). Reconstructing the themes of the engravings patterns of associated elements have been noticed (Fossati 2007, 79). These are the sun alongside weapons and necklaces along with double-spiral pendants (fig. 32). The menhirs which interest this research are primarily the ones representing the sun and various weapons (axes, halberds), among which the Remedello-type daggers seem to have a prominent role. Nevertheless, the Remedello daggers occur also in other contexts. An example of that is Cemmo (see below), where alongside a stela alignment, large natural rock surfaces were engraved with multiple Remedello-daggers figures. To better understand the occurrences of the Remedello-dagger brand in Valle Camonica and Valtellina, I will proceed analysing the evidence of engraved menhirs in their contexts.



Fig 32. Double-spiral pendant on stela Campolongo 1. Beamed sun-disk on boulder Bagnolo 1.

4.2.2 *Dagger engravings in megalithic sanctuaries.*

Statue-menhirs (and boulder-menhirs) in Valle Camonica and Valtellina characterised the so called ‘megalithic sanctuaries’. These areas are considered to have defined the ritual landscape of Copper Age societies in the region (Poggiani-Keller 2009, 203). Besides the alignments of engraved monoliths, these areas encompassed other types of ritual constructions, such as small *tumuli*, cairns and perimeter enclosures (Poggiani-Keller 2009a, 203). Such an architectural complexity in the Copper Age is rare in the Alpine region and a counterpart can only be found in the site of Petit-Chasseur in Sion (see below). 16 locations of megalithic evidence in Valle Camonica and 5 in Valtellina have yielded the materials still *in situ* (Poggiani-Keller 2009a, 205). Thus, a high number of prehistoric ritual spaces characterises these valleys. The locations seem to reflect the routes connecting the foothill to mountain peaks (Poggiani-Keller 2009a, 205). Moreover, for many of these sites, a link to proximal water sources can be established (streams, rivers, waterfalls, bogs) (Poggiani-Keller 2009a, 205).

The most noteworthy megalithic sanctuaries of Valle Camonica were discovered at Cemmo and in four different areas in the Ossimo-Borno plateau (Ossimo-Anvoia, Ossimo-Pat, Bagnolo and Passagrop). These are the sites that yielded the most number of statue-menhirs and with greater complexity. With regard to this research, I will examine the recurrence of Remedello-dagger engravings in these contexts.

The sanctuary of Cemmo is located in the municipality of Capo di Ponte (fig. 31). Here a ritual area with signs of occupation over millennia has been found (Poggiani-Keller 2009b, 212). The site experienced a series of destructions and reconstructions from the end of the Neolithic right to the Roman Era, when it was definitely abandoned (Poggiani-Keller 2009b, 212). Stratigraphic excavations have determined that the basal level dates to the beginning of the Copper Age (III millennium BC) (Poggiani-Keller 2009b, 213). The engraved menhirs of this site belong to this primary phase, together with the representation of Remedello daggers. The outline of the sanctuary consisted in a delimited space enclosed by an alignment of more than 20 stelae (Poggiani-Keller 2009b, 216). In front of them, two unmovable large stone blocks with engraved surfaces completed the ritual enclosure. These two rocks are likely to have originated through detachment from the mountain wall above (fig. 33). Remedello-daggers depictions do not seem to

apply to stelae in this site. They are rather decorated with spiral and concentric-lines motifs, figures of animals and human figurines. The Remedello-dagger branding at Cemmo occurs on the surfaces of the two rock blocks: ‘Cemmo 1’ and ‘Cemmo 2’. On block 2 (fig. 34) the dagger representations are predominant and occupy the whole extent of the engraved surface. They are accompanied by human figurines and engravings of cattle (fig. 35). The handle of the daggers at Cemmo has a crescent-shaped outline, but slightly arched edges. On block 1, at least four Remedello-dagger shapes occur, but a prominent role is given to animal representations. They resemble cattle and possibly reindeers with horns. Some of the cattle figures seem to overlap the dagger shapes, resulting in dagger-shaped animal representations (fig. 36). Whether this overlapping was intended, or a result of different stages of carved imagery is impossible to say. Nevertheless, it is interesting to notice among the cattle a larger triangular shape with a line of engraved circles on the base, recalling the rivets of daggers’ handles, similar to the ones found at Remedello (see above). Furthermore, in the proximity of the blocks signs of Copper Age ritual ploughing (fig. 35) were found, further evidence for the religious character of this complex (Poggiani-Keller 2009b, 2013).



Fig. 33. The sanctuary of Cemmo. Visible the two engraved blocks and the area of the original stelae alignment.



Fig.34. Block Cemmo 2.



Fig. 35 (right). Detail of Cemmo 2 Remedello-type daggers engravings.

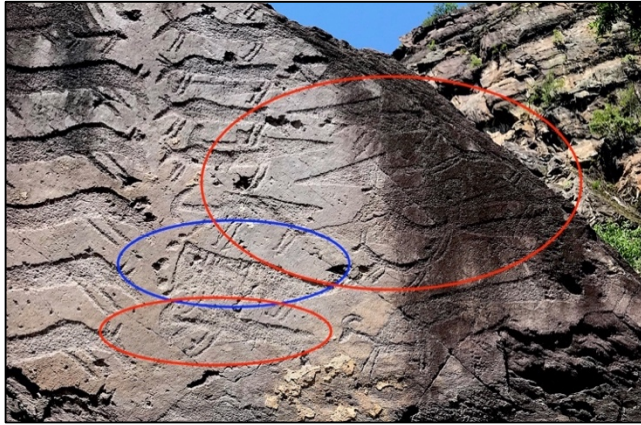


Fig. 36. Detail of the engravings on Cemmo 1. In red the Remedellian daggers converted into animal figures. In blue the triangular shape with carved circles.

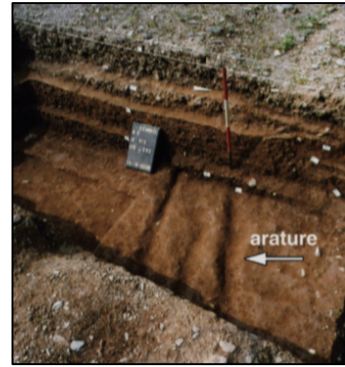


Fig. 37. Signs of ritual ploughing besides the stone blocks at Cemmo sanctuary (Poggiani-Keller 2009, 213).

Close to Cemmo, a Copper Age engraved stela was recovered by chance in the municipality of Cedegolo. This stela, precisely found in the locality of Campolongo, shows 6 engraved Remedello-type daggers. Three of them are intact, whereas only the blades of the other three are visible (fig. 38). Two of the handles have a perfectly crescent-shaped handle, whereas the the other one has slightly curved edges.

In the territory of Ossimo and Borno, four megalithic sanctuaries have been discovered and dated to the Copper Age (fig. 39) (Poggiani-Keller 2009c). Evidence of Remedello daggers engravings is present in three of them: Ossimo-Pat, Anvoia and Bagnolo. The sanctuary of Ossimo-Pat, in the Western end of the Pat plateau, was characterised by an alignment of monoliths and two areas with encircled votive *tumuli* (Poggiani-Keller 2009c, 224). 27 menhirs were recovered at Pat, integral and fragmentary, disposed along a N-S alignment. Some of them had been voluntarily broken down and fragmented during later stages of frequentation of the sanctuary (Poggiani-Keller 2009c, 226). Here, Remedello-dagger engravings are visible on the stela 'Pat 5'. A clear Remedello-dagger is carved on the right-hand side of the stela surface, whereas on the let-hand side only the handle is still visible (fig. 40). The handles are characterised by a slightly arched shape as in Cemmo. The two weapons are positioned above a striped rectangle, resembling a belt (Poggiani-Keller 2009c, 229). The boulder-menhir Pat 1 also

carries representations of Remedello-daggers. In this case, engraved daggers underwent subsequent superimpositions, which transformed most of them into cattle and human figures (fig. 41), similarly to what happened on Cemmo 1 block. Furthermore, in the area of the votive circles carbons of burnt plants have been recovered, together with hoards containing flint arrowheads, a beaker and a pearl necklace in a wooden vessel decorated with a copper double-spiral pendant (Poggiani-Keller 2009c, 227); all signs of the ritual activities performed at Pat.

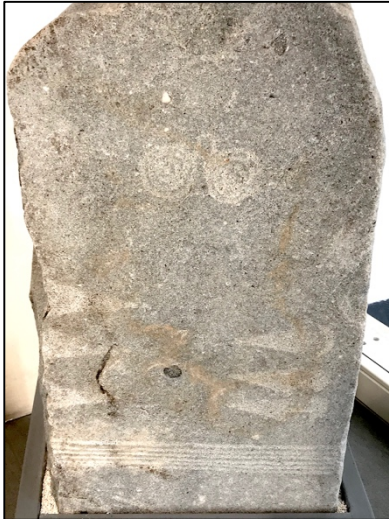


Fig. 38 (top). Stela Campolongo exhibited at the National Museum of Prehistory in Capo di Ponte.



Fig. 39 (top). The megalithic sanctuaries in the territory of Ossimo-Borno (own elaboration, original from Poggiani-Keller 2009a, 202).

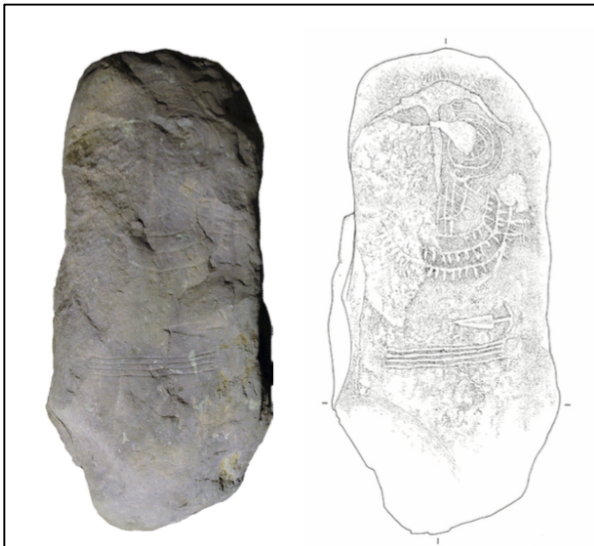


Fig. 40. Stela Pat 5 from Ossimo-Pat sanctuary (Poggiani-Keller 2009c, 229).



Fig. 41. Boulder Pat 1 exhibited at the National Museum of Prehistory of Capo di Ponte.

The sanctuary of Ossimo-Anvoia is located at an altitude of 850m, on the ‘Anvoia ridge’, a W-E ridge in the territory of Ossimo-Borno (Fedele 2007, 49). The site, even though of limited extension, shows a great structural complexity. It has been dated to 2800-2200 BC, with an initial Remedellian phase followed by a phase contemporary to the Bell-Beaker phenomenon (Fedele 2007, 50). An alignment of four stelae was found here still *in situ*, together with other 20ca. scattered statue-menhirs scattered across the area, intact and fragmentary. Moreover, a large flat cairn was discovered in the sanctuary, along with a pit signalled by a roughly-shaped monolith, a natural low barrow and representations of votive ploughing carved onto a bedrock platform (fig. 42) (Fedele 2007, 63-64). Interestingly, at Ossimo-Anvoia, also human remains dated to the Copper Age have been found in connection with the monoliths (Fedele 2007, 61). Human bones have also been recovered in the context of the barrow and the cairn (Fedele 2007, 74). Engravings of Remedello daggers at Anvoia are found on a fragment of stelae part of the cairn, fragment M9 (fig. 43) (Fedele 2007, 70). Here a Remedello daggers appears in connection with a striped rectangular shape, probably a belt. A clear image of a Remedello dagger is also found on statue-menhir M14, still intact. On this menhir a Remedello-type dagger with central ridge and crescent-shaped handle is represented below a series of human figurines (fig. 44). We may consider the figurines as a result of a subsequent engraving phase, especially if we consider the similar images superimposed on daggers at Cemmo (block 1) and Ossimo Pat (Pat 1) (see above).

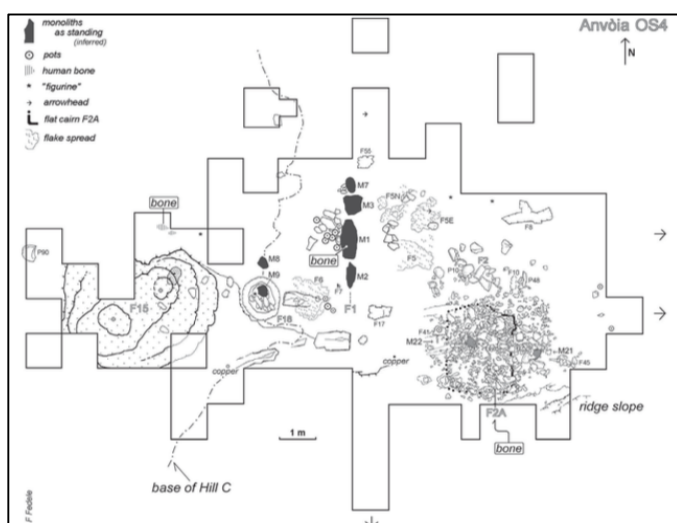


Fig. 42. Reconstructive map of Ossimo-Anvoia sanctuary layout. In the centre the stelae alignment and the cairn on the right. On the left, circular pit and barrow (Fedele 2007, 70).

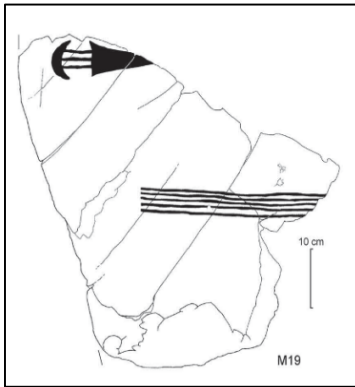


Fig. 43 (left).
Reconstructive
drawing, fragment M9
(Fedele 2007, 70).



Fig. 44 (right). Stela
M14 from Ossimo-Pat
(Poggiani Keller 2017,
43).

At the sanctuary of Bagnolo in the Ossimo-Borno territory, other Remedello-daggers engravings have been found. The boulder-menhir Bagnolo 1 shows 8 Remedello-type daggers engraved in the central part of the monument. Below them, a striped motif could resemble a belt; whereas above them the engraving of the sun could symbolise a head (fig. 45). The boulder-menhir Bagnolo 2 is characterised by a more complex imagery; here two Remedello-type daggers are represented with perfectly-shaped crescent handles (fig. 46). Along these, one axe and one halberd are carved on the monolith. Other engravings represent the sun, cattle figures, and a ploughing scene (cf. Trentino).

As far as Valtellina is concerned, evidence of Remedello-daggers engravings can be found on the menhirs from the Teglio-Caven sanctuary (Casini and De Marinis 2009, 66-67). On the stela Teglio-Caven 1 at least 4 Remedello-type daggers are easily recognisable. Together with them, similarly to Bagnolo 2, an axe and a halberd are represented along with a stylised plough (fig. 47). The stela Teglio-Caven 2 has a very similar design to the first one. On it, two Remedello-type daggers are engraved on the right-hand side, together with an axe and a halberd. The sun is represented in the upper central part and a stylised plough is carved on the left-hand side. This stela also presents a human figurine and another dagger, which has been considered similar to a bone dagger found in the necropolis of Spilamberto (see above) (Casini and De Marinis 2009, 67).



Fig. 45. Stela Bagnolo 2 exhibited at the National Museum of Prehistory in Capo di Ponte.

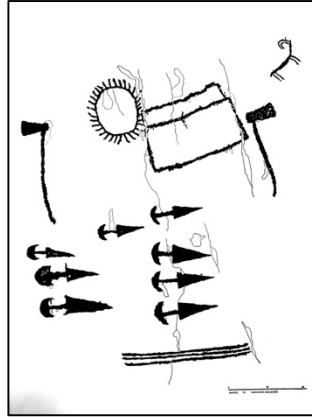


Fig. 46. Imagery on stela Bagnolo 1. Reconstructive drawing (Anati 1972, 36).

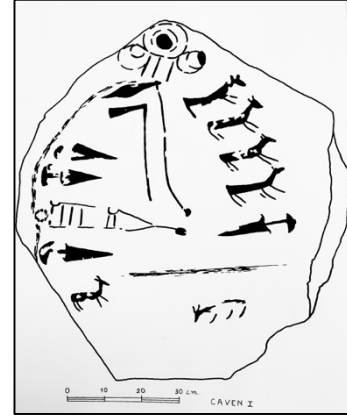


Fig. 47. Reconstructive drawing of stela Teglio-Caven 1 (Anati 1972, 48).

4.3 The case of Lunigiana statue-menhirs.

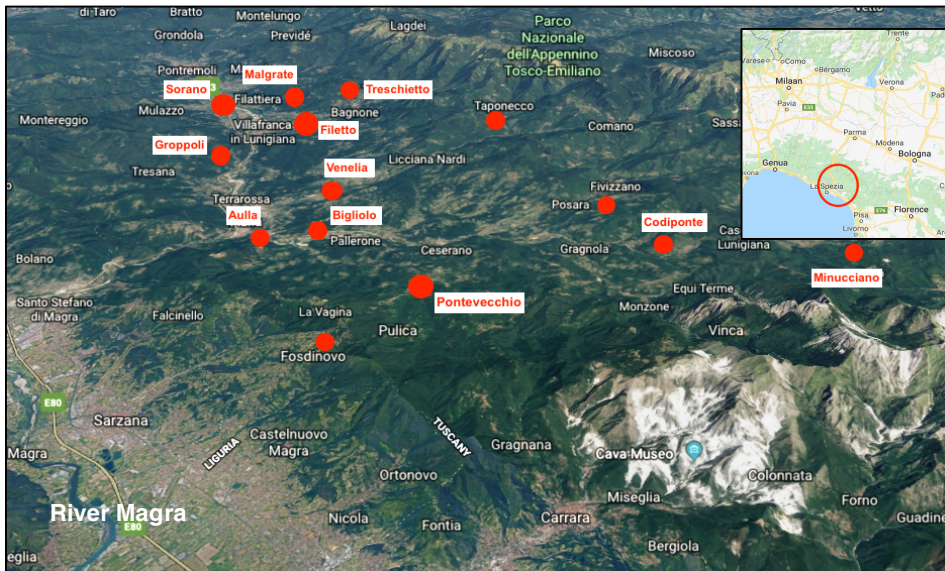


Fig. 48. Map of the statue-menhirs finds in Lunigiana. The area spans from the Appennines to the Ligurian sea following the valley of the river Magra (own elaboration from GoogleEarth, data from Ghiretti 2016).

Lunigiana is an historical region located on the boarder between the Italian regions of Liguria and Tuscany. It is located south of the Po plain on the Appennine mountain range. It encompasses the valley of the River Magra from its mouth in

the Ligurian sea up to Appennines which enclose the whole area (fig. 48). Here, scattered finds of anthropomorphic stelae have been frequent during the past two centuries. More than 70 stelae are known from Lunigiana, recovered individually or in group. In very few cases the statue-menhirs were *in situ*; rather the majority of the monuments was discovered fortuitously in contexts of defunctionalisation and deposition or in contexts of reuse. The chronology of these stelae has been established on the basis of engraved objects, which functioned as attributes of the individuals represented. Among these objects, Remedello-type daggers have a prominent role and contributed to tracing the origin of these stelae back to Copper Age (Anati 1972, 71).

4.3.1 Lunigiana statue-menhirs.

The statue-menhir of Lunigiana are all chance-finds, individually or in alignment. However, when the statues have been recovered as part of an alignment, they were never in the original position. Rather, they probably were defunctionalised and discarded altogether. The only context where an alignment of 9 stelae was considered to have been found in their original position is the one of Pontevecchio (Fivizzano) (cf. Maggi 1994).

Lunigiana statue-menhirs have been divided into three different groups according to typological features (Anati 1981, 7; Ambrosi 1988):

- ‘Type A’ stelae appear simpler in shape; the anthropomorphic character is expressed by the presence of face and engraved arms. The head is separated from the rest of the body through a carved line, interpreted as signalling the collarbone (cf. Ambrosi 1972). The face is stylised in a U shape, with nose and eyes evidently carved. The major examples from this group are the stelae found at Pontevecchio.
- ‘Type B’ stelae are characterised by ‘*chapeu de gendarme*’ (i.e. typical French policeman’s hat) head, visibly detached from the rest of the body through a rectangular neck leading to squared shoulders. The trunk shape of these stelae can be both straight and slightly curved, giving the idea of an inverted trapezoid (Harris and Hofmann 2014, 271). At the edges of the face, engraved circular shapes could suggest hearings or simply ears.

- ‘Type C’ stelae are the less numerous group. They are engraved on all four sides and presents more clear anatomic features. Not only the head and the arms are clearly distinguishable, but legs are represented too. These stelae are considered to be produced in a later period, possibly during the Iron Age. They have been connected with the Indoeuropean peoples of Liguria and Etruscans (Anati 1981, 16; Armanini 2015, 120).

The engravings of Remedello-type daggers characterise only group A and B. These second ones have been considered as a development of the less complex design of ‘type A’ stelae (Anati 1972, 71). For both groups the daggers are depicted only once on the monuments, as attribute of the individual represented. Type A and B statue-menhirs show sexual differentiation, comprising female, male and asexual stelae. The main feature which distinguishes female stelae is the carving of breasts (Harris and Hofmann 2014, 272). In Lunigiana, engraved daggers never appear on stelae with feminine features, nor on the smaller ‘asexual’ ones. Rather, they seem to be what distinguishes male stelae (cf. Anati 1981, Ambrosi 1972, De Marinis 1995, Leonardi 2013).

4.3.2 *Daggers on stelae.*

Within the Lunigiana groups, eight stelae are characterised by engravings of Remedello daggers. Most of them have been retrieved together with female and asexual statues, along which they were probably placed in alignments (Ghiretti 2016, 59). Among group A, dagger engravings are present on stelae from Pontevecchio (Fivizzano). The stelae from Pontevecchio constitute a rare exception in the archaeology of Lunigiana. This is because at Pontevecchio the original alignment was discovered still *in situ*. It was reported that under 2 metres ca. of terrain the nine Pontevecchio statue-menhirs stood in their original position (Ghiretti 2016, 53). Two of the stelae from this alignment have been interpreted as representing male individuals (Ambrosi 1972, 56); on both of them, their only attribute is an engraved Remedello-type dagger, one on each. Pontevecchio stelae no. 6 and 8 are characterised by a very simple shape, with face composed by an engraved U. The collarbone divides the head from the trunk, where the arms and hands are visibly carved (fig. 49). On both of them, the dagger has a prominent

position at the height of the waist. The proportions of the dagger (35x10cm ca.) are exaggerated if compared to the whole dimensions of the stelae (110x37cm and 117x39cm). Completing the alignment 4 female stelae with breasts and three smaller stelae (height range 47-90cm) without sexual attributes, interpreted as children (Ambrosi 1972, 52-55).

During agricultural works in the hamlet of Casola, a single type A statue-menhir was recovered. The Casola stela is extremely similar to the ones of Pontevecchio. U-shaped face, carved collarbone and arms with detailed hands. A Remedello-dagger again appears at waist-height (fig. 49). Again, the size of the engraved dagger seems to be proportionally bigger than anthropomorphic features of the statue, which measures 130x51cm (Ambrosi 1972, 120).

Moving on to group B, particularly interesting to this research are the findings from two sites: Minucciano and Groppoli (fig. 50). At Minucciano three statue-menhirs have been recovered, all with Remedello-dagger engravings. The location of the findings is a hill plateau, corresponding with the natural pass connecting Lunigiana with the adjoining Garfagnana valley (Province of Lucca). Two stelae (Minucciano 1 and 2) have been found by chance, whereas a third one was recovered during a scientific excavation in the area conducted in 1971 (Ambrosi 1972, 129-31). Minucciano 1 stela is fragmentary; the head is missing. However, the trunk is well-preserved and carved hands with detailed hands are visible. A Remedello dagger is engraved below the hands. On this stela an axe is also represented at chest-height, between the arms. The proportions of the dagger (46x6cm) definitely overtake the size of the axe, suggesting a prominent role of the former. The dagger, besides the usual crescent-shaped regular handle, also presents the central ridge on the blade. Minucciano stela 2 is intact but not well-preserved (fig. 51). The engraved imagery is barely visible. On the *chapeu-de-gendarm* head, the face is represented by a U-shaped engraving. The arms are visible, but the hands are erased by a breakage line in the centre of the menhir. A Remedello-dagger is engraved at waist-height; the crescent-shaped handle is clearly visible, whereas the blade is not very accurate and lacks of central ridge as in the examples from group A stelae. Stela Minucciano 3 is much more similar to Minucciano 1, but in this case the head is preserved. Also here, an axe is engraved on a stela in connection with a Remedello dagger. Unfortunately, the only preserved part of the dagger is the handle, perfectly shaped as a crescent. The bottom right-hand corner of the stela

where the blade was carved is missing (fig. 52). Minucciano stelae 1 and 3 are two of the three cases in Lunigiana in which an axe and a dagger occur together on a statue-menhir (Ambrosi 1972, 132). Interestingly, both these stelae were recovered in two pieces. They had been deliberately broken in half and deposited in the ground. This is particularly visible for the case of stela 3, which was scientifically excavated (Ghiretti 2016, 58). The layer where the stela was found did not correspond to Copper Age, but it represented a phase of occupancy dated to Bronze Age due to pottery fragments (Ghiretti 2016, 58).

The findings at Groppoli are also particularly interesting. Here, after the fortuitous recovery of a type B statue-menhir, an excavation was conducted in 2005 (Paribeni 2016, 59). In this context another seven stelae were recovered (fig. 53), probably all part of the same alignment. Also at Groppoli, the statues have been found not in the original position, but discarded into a pit. Nevertheless, it has been argued that the original context must have not been far from the recovery location (Paribeni 2016, 59). All the stelae are made of sandstone, abundant in the adjacent Geriola stream. Probably the location of the alignment was close to the ford of this stream, through which people could pass from Lunigiana to the adjoining valley (Paribeni 2016, 59). Two of the stelae from Groppoli are characterised by Remedello-type depictions, one on each (Groppoli 3 and 8). These two stelae have been interpreted as masculine due to the presence of the dagger. Groppoli 3 is intact, whereas Groppoli 8 lacks the head, which it is supposed to have been of type *chapeu-de-gendarme* as visible for the other statues of the alignment. On Groppoli 8 the dagger has the traditional position below the hands and its size is quite large. Similarly represented is the dagger on Groppoli 3; but here it is accompanied by the engraving of an axe, just as in Minucciano (see above).

Another two stelae from the North-Western corner of Lunigiana show Remedello-dagger engravings. The first one is from *Pieve* of Sorano (Filattiera); it was recovered during maintenance works of the church and adjoining cemetery (Anati 1972, 126). This stela (Sorano no.3) is highly fragmentary, it lacks the head and most of the left-hand side part. The blade of a Remedello-dagger is still visible (fig. 54), with a distinguishable central ridge. The second one was recovered in Filetto, during agricultural works transforming a chestnut grove into arable land (Anati 1972, 92). This stela (Filetto no. 4) is highly fragmentary, lacking the top part almost entirely. A very well-preserved dagger is engraved in the usual position

(fig. 55). This is perhaps the most realistic representation of a Remedello-dagger on a stela in Lunigiana. The blade has a central ridge and the handle is precisely delineated. Embossed points are carved on the handle, resembling the rivets that must have joined the two parts of the grip of the actual daggers. A unique attribute of this stela is a triangular pendant originating from the dagger, probably hanging from the weapon itself or a symbolical representation of something attached to the belt of the individual represented.



Fig. 49 (left). Pontevocchio stelae 6 and 8, group A (Anati 1972, 57-61)

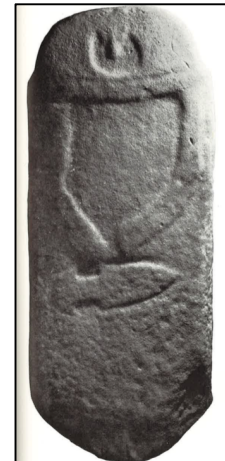


Fig. 50. The stela from Casola, group A (Anati 1972, 119).



Fig. 51 (left). Minucciano stela no.2, group B (Anati 1972, 125).



Fig. 52 (right). Stela no.3 from Minucciano (Anati 1972, 126).

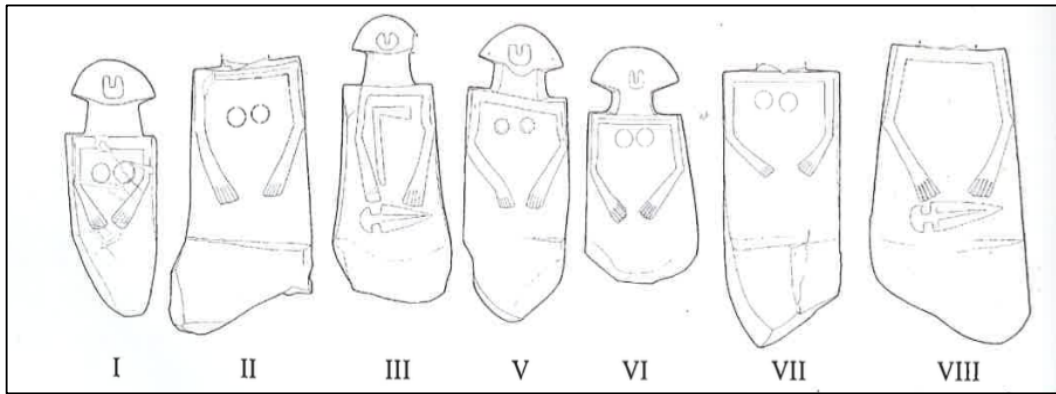


Fig. 53. The stelae alignment from Groppoli. Stelae 3 and 8 have Remedello dagger engravings (reconstructive drawing from Paribeni 2016, 60).



Fig. 54 (left). Stela no.3 from Sorano, only the blade of the dagger is visible (Anati 1972, 127).



Fig. 55 (right). The stela no.4 from Filetto (Anati 1972, 119).

Chapter 5

The evidence from North-Western Alps.

Two main prehistoric megalithic sites in the North-Western Alps have yielded evidence of Remedello-daggers representations. One is the Saint-Martin-de-Corléans site in Aosta (Italy), the other one is the Petit-Chassuer site at Sion, in the Swiss Valais (fig. 56). The two locations are fairly close, on the opposite sides of the Alpine range. The two sides are connected through the Great Saint Bernard Pass, one of the lowest Alpine passes, situated at 2459 metres of altitude.



Fig. 56. The location of the two Copper Age megalithic sites in the North-Western part of the Alps (own elaboration, from GoogleEarth).

5.1 The site of Saint-Martin-de-Corléans, Aosta.

The megalithic site in the proximity of the Catholic church of Saint-Martin-de-Corléans in Aosta covers an area of 10.000 squared metres and possibly extends under the surrounding buildings (Poggiani-Keller et al. 2016, 5). The evidence points out the presence of a ceremonial area with monumental structures and burials. The frequentation of the site has been characterised by several phases. The earliest evidence dates to the end of the Neolithic (4500 BCE) and its use spans over the Bronze Age and early Iron Age (Poggiani-Keller et al. 2016, 4). Frequentation of the surrounding areas was practised also in Roman times and in the Middle Age (Poggiani-Keller et al. 2016, 4).

The evidence from this site covers the whole Copper Age, with stylistic and structural evolutions leading to the transformation of the ritual area into a cemetery at the end of the third millennium BCE (Poggiani-Keller et al. 2016, 9). The earliest Copper Age frequentation was characterised by ritual ploughing and alignments of pits (probably depositional) and of wooden poles (fig. 55, 57). Ritual ploughing, as already seen in the Cemmo sanctuary (see Ch. 4), is an activity typical of the end of the Neolithic-beginning of the Copper Age, here dated to the 4th millennium BCE (Poggiani-Keller et al. 2016, 13). The erection of lines of wooden poles has been considered as a monumental activity contemporary to this early phase of frequentation (Poggiani-Keller et al. 2016, 13). Together with these, also 15 pits were discovered and attributed to the same phase; inside them traces of organic materials and stone fragments were recovered (cf. Mezzena 1998).

A subsequent change characterises the outlook of this ritual area, with the addition of new alignments. Timber is left out and stone is adopted for the realisation of monuments. It is at this moment that anthropomorphic stelae with Remedello-daggers appear at Saint-Martin-de-Corléans ritual area.



Fig. 57a (left). Traces of ritual ploughing at the site (Poggiani-Keller et al. 2016, 14).

Fig. 57b (right). Holes originally hosting wooden poles disposed in alignment (Poggiani-Keller et al. 2016, 13).

5.1.1 Remedello-dagger shapes in Aosta.

The introduction of rock art in the form of engraved anthropomorphic statues signals the beginning of Remedello-dagger representations at the site. However, stone alignments were also characterised by aniconic menhirs and perforated stelae. The production of anthropomorphic staute-menhirs has been divided into three

different stylistic phases (Poggiani-Keller et al. 2016, 27), with a sort of ‘evolutionary’ approach. In fact, three styles correspond to three different types of statue-menhirs, ranging from a simplistic representation of the human body, to a more complex representation right to a more realistic one. The engraving of Remedello-daggers as attributes of the represented individuals appears on the second and the third stylistic group, namely the ‘transitional’ and ‘evolved-style’ stelae (Poggiani-Keller 2016, 28-29). On the transitional stelae, the daggers are engraved in connection with a belt at waist-height (fig 58). On these stelae, a prominent feature is the double-spiral pendant, the same type engraved on stelae in Trentino and Valle Camonica. Remedello-dagger representations are engraved also on ‘evolved-style’ stelae; however, it seems that these group of stelae are characterised also by the presence of other weapons such as bow and arrows and axes. The more realistic outlook of these statues was achieved through the shaping of the head, which resembles the *chapeu-de-gendarme* silhouette (fig. 59), similarly to Lunigiana type-B stelae (see Ch. 4).



Fig. 58. ‘Transitional-style’ spiral-pendant stela from Aosta. Circled in red an engraved Remedello dagger with crescent-shaped handle (Poggiani-Keller et al. 2016, 29)

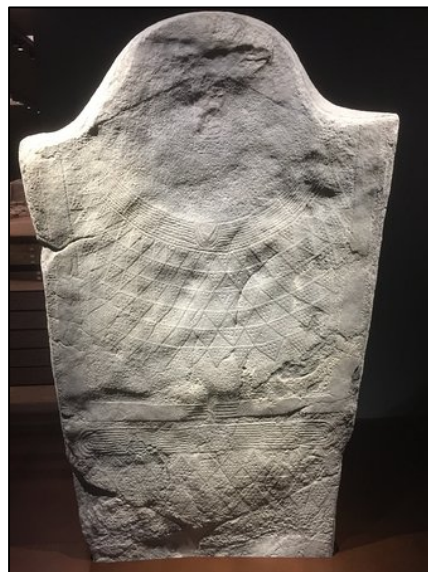


Fig. 59. ‘Evolved-style’ stela no. 3. The head is a *chapeu-de-gendarme* resembling the Lunigiana stela (Saint-Martin-de-Corléans Archaeological Museum).

Unfortunately, a complete catalogue of the anthropomorphic stelae from Saint-Martin-de-Corléans has not been published yet. Therefore, it is not possible to reconstruct the exact number of stelae with dagger representations nor the quantity

and relevance of this type of engravings. Nevertheless, it is interesting to notice that during Copper Age the stelae which were placed in alignments underwent a displacement and change of function.

In a subsequent phase the area is transformed from exclusively ritual to funerary (Poggiani-Keller et al. 2016, 32). This phase was also dated to the Copper Age, specifically to its latest phase, characterised by the Bell-Beaker Culture (2500-2200 BCE) (*ibid.*). During the structural transformation the anthropomorphic stelae were removed from their original alignments and were employed in the construction of monumental tombs. Some stelae have been carefully ‘cut’ from the ground and deposited on the ground with the engraved surface facing downwards (fig. 60). Numerous stelae are instead re-used in the funerary context. Most of these stelae have been modified and manipulated in this context, with breakage of parts of the outline and elimination of anthropomorphic features (Mezzena 1998). These examples of re-use and re-shaping have been interpreted as an ‘evolutionary character’ of the site and signs of continuity (Poggiani-Keller et al. 2016, 33).

Fig. 60. Stelae 17 and 18 were cut and torn down in their original location with the engraved surface facing downwards (Poggiani-Keller et al. 2016, 32).



Even though it seems that their original function and symbolic meaning were discarded and reinvented in the moment of their displacement from the alignments, there are cases in which the stelae are re-used intact. An example can be seen in tombs 1 and 3 (fig. 61). In the latter a stela with Remedello-dagger and double-spiral pendent was re-used intact. Whether the defunctionalisation of the stelae had an iconoclastic purpose and was complementary to the Bell-Beaker occupation of the site or in some way perpetrated the prior customs is not clear. The scholarly literature seems to accept the idea of a complete cultural change with the Bell-Beaker period, which is witnessed by ceramic evidence (cf. Poggiani-Keller et al. 2016, 40-41). Nevertheless, it is interesting to notice that in tomb 2, where stelae with Remedello-dagger engravings are re-used fragmented and only as construction

material, the shape of the dagger can be seen elsewhere. In fact, the tomb consists of a dolmen entrance covering a semi-circular structure placed on a large triangular platform. If looked at from above, the shape of the platform with the crescent-shaped structure can be seen as resembling the outline of a Remedello-dagger (fig. 62, 63) (cf. Leonardi 2013). A very similar monument also occurs in Sion, as we will see further on. Fragments of Bell beakers have been recovered inside tomb 2 and archaeologists have dated the use of the grave from the Bell-Beaker phase right to the Early Bronze Age (Poggiani-Keller et al. 2016, 38).

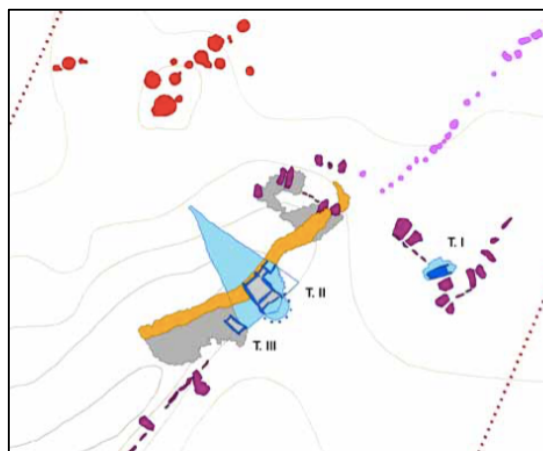


Fig. 61. Tomb 3. In the construction of the tomb an intact stela with double-spiral pendent and Remedello dagger was employed along with other aniconic slabs.



Fig. 62. Tomb 2. The chamber was built re-using fragmented stelae. The triangular shape of the platform recalls the blade of a dagger.

Fig. 63. The plan of SMC site. In Blue tomb 2 with the triangular platform recalling the shape of a dagger blade and the crescent-shaped extremity recalling the shape of the handle (Poggiani-Keller et al. 2016, 36).



5.2 The Petit-Chasseur cemetery in Sion.

The site of Petit-Chasseur in Sion (Swiss Valais) is a prehistoric necropolis in use from the Late Neolithic until the Early Bronze Age (Harrison and Heyd 2014, 133). The construction of megalithic structures hosting and marking burials came along with the realisation of anthropomorphic stelae in the third millennium BCE. The cemetery underwent different phases of frequentation with significant changes both structurally and symbolically. Most of the constructions have been built across Copper Age, with differences between pre-Bell-Beaker and Bell-Beaker people's occupation of the site. The negotiation and plausible continuities between these two phases have been extensively argued by Harrison and Heyd (2007) and Gallay (1995; 2014). The evidence of the Remedellian brand correspond to the pre-Bell-Beakers phase (or 'Late Neolithic' as Harrison and Heyd define it: 2007, 130).

The main structural features of the Petit-Chasseur site are represented by the construction of megalithic tombs of different shape. Along these graves, which hosted both single individuals and multiple individuals, anthropomorphic stelae were placed. In this context the stelae had predominantly funerary meaning, possibly signalling the buried individuals. Nevertheless, the history of the statuenhirs at Petit-Chasseur is not straightforward. In fact, the continuous frequentation of the cemetery shows different phases of construction and deconstruction in which stelae were erected, torn down and sometimes re-used in other contexts within the cemetery. There are cases of re-use of stelae both with their primary function of statues and as construction or packing material (Harrison and Heyd 2007, 139).

At Petit-Chasseur Remedello-daggers engravings occur on anthropomorphic stelae (fig. 64); but the conceptualisation of the dagger's shape goes beyond the rock engravings and just like in Aosta, triangular shapes also occur in tombs platforms.



Fig. 64. Stela no. 24 (left) and stela no. 7 (right) with engravings of Remedello-type daggers (Favre 2014, 26-28).



5.2.1 Stelae and tombs at Petit-Chasseur.

Among the 29 stelae recovered at the site, five of them show Remedello-dagger engravings. The history of the stelae at Petit-Chasseur is not always clear. The most common idea is the locations in which they were found were all secondary (Favre 2014). This is because most of the stelae were re-used as construction materials for the megalithic tombs, leading scholars to suppose that also those which were erected as tomb *signacola* were originally located elsewhere. Nevertheless, some studies have argued for the production and disposition of stelae besides tombs as their primary function, especially as far as Bell-Beaker period stelae are concerned (Harrison and Heyd 2007). It has also been argued that some of the pre-Bell-Beaker stelae were primarily intended to be at the side of the funerary monuments (Favre 2014, 28-29).

The Remedello-daggers engravings occur only on pre-Bell-Beaker stelae (i.e. ‘Type A’ stelae: cf. Gallay 1995). Only one later stela (no. 18, ‘Type B’) presents a dagger engraving, but the shape of the weapon is clearly non-Remedellian, with stylistic features of the Bell-Beaker Culture (fig. 65) (Gallay 1995, 190). At Petit-Chasseur the Remedello-dagger engravings occur once on the stelae, with the exception of stela no. 24 with at least 4 dagger depictions (cf. fig. 65) (Harrison and Heyd 2014, 147). Two of the stelae with Remedello-daggers attributes are reused in rectangular-based dolmen tombs as structural slabs. Stela no. 2 is the western-side slab of tomb M1, stela 16 is the northern-side slab in tomb M5. Due to their

employment as construction material, it seems fair to assume that their original position was elsewhere, possibly in a vertical and visible position. Another stela (no. 24) stands aside rectangular-dolmen tomb M11. Here, the stela is positioned alongside another one at the southern corners of the dolmen. Its position is vertical and clearly visible. It has been argued that stela 24 was not de-functionalised and that in this position still (or originally) worked as a *singaculum*¹ (Favre 2014, 29).

However, the daggers engravings are not the only occurrence of the Remedellian brand. Two large megalithic dolmen-tombs (M6 and M12) at Petit-Chasseur are characterised by a large triangular platform, just as the one of tomb 2 at Aosta. The argument for a chronology of tombs M6 and M12 in the early pre-Bell-Beaker phases of the cemetery is widely accepted (Harrison and Heyed 2007, Gallay 2014). The two large triangular platforms (fig. 66, 67) characterising these tombs have been considered the principal monuments of the site (Harrison and Heyed 2007, 141). Their triangular shape suggests the outline of the Remedellian dagger's blade, marking their prominence and uniqueness over the other rectangular-based tombs (cf. Leonardi 2013). Moreover, a stela (no. 7) carrying a Remedello-dagger engraving was placed on the south-eastern corner of tomb M6, possibly reinforcing the connection of the Remedello-dagger with the platform shape (fig. 67b).

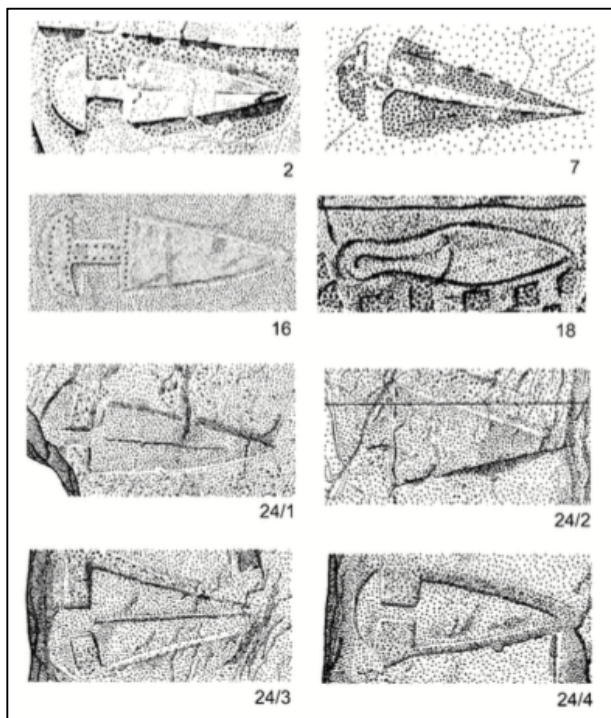


Fig. 65. Catalogue of the engravings of daggers on the anthropomorphic stelae at Petit-Chassuer. Four stelae have Remedellian daggers both with central ridge and without. Stela no. 24 is the only monument with multiple depictions (4). Stela no. 18 is characterized by the representation of a later (Bell-Beaker) dagger (Harrison and Heyd 2007, 162).

¹ Favre describes the stelae positioned at the tombs' corners as 'antennae'. He argues that antennae-stelae are the only ones still in their original location: Favre 2014, 26-27.

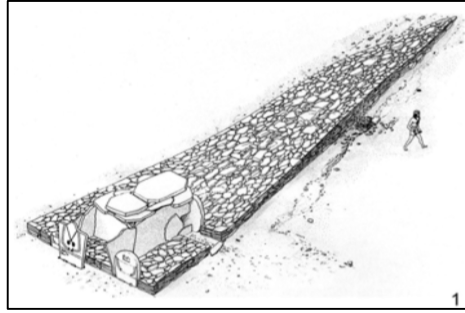
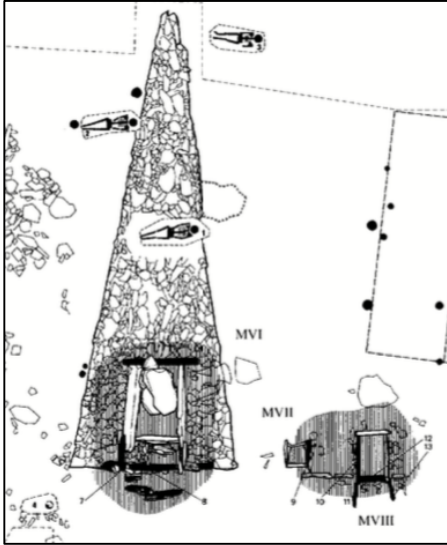


Fig. 66 a,b. Reconstruction of tomb M6 at Petit-Chassuer. Plan and aerial perspective of the platform. Visible the dolmen and the stelae (Harrison and Heyed 2007, 140).

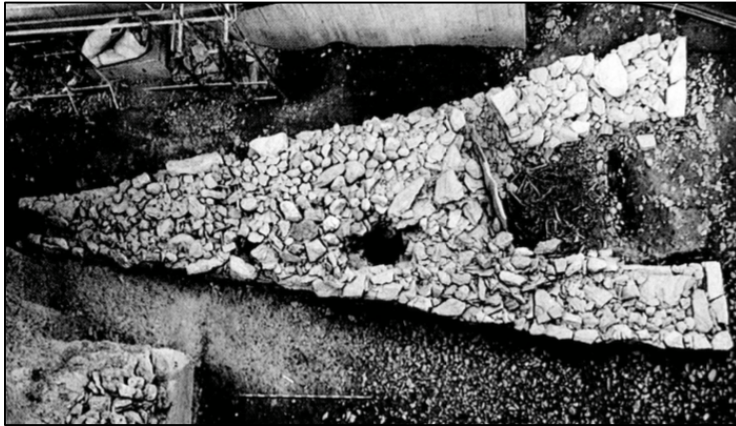


Fig. 67. Tomb M12 at Petit-Chassuer. The graves lies on a triangular platform resembling the blade of a dagger (Favre and Mottet 1990, 118).

Chapter 6

The evidence the Maritime Alps.

The evidence of Remedello-dagger engravings in the Western side of the Maritime Alps (France) is quite scarce and limited to a few sites (Fig. 68). This goes along with the reported find on only one fragmented Remedello-dagger blade in the region, at Orgon (see Ch. 3). Nevertheless, two prehistoric sites show engravings of Remedellian daggers on natural rock walls. On the one hand, the evidence from the site of Chastel-Arnaud is quite limited, with less than 10 isolated engravings. On the other hand, the rock-art site of Mont Bégó presents a large variety of engravings, among which a great quantity of daggers, of Remedello and other types.

If the megalithic phenomenon of statue-menhirs and anthropomorphic representations seems to be unknown in this bordering area of France, performances of rock-art similar to the examples found in Valle Camonica are the context of transmission and adoption of the Remedello-dagger brand.



Fig. 68. Map of the two sites with Remedello-dagger engravings in the Maritime Alps (French territories) (own elaboration from GoogleEarth).

6.1 The Chastel-Arnaud engravings.

In the French Alpine foothills, a site with rock-art engravings of daggers was discovered near the hamlet of Les Auberts in the administrative territory of Chastel-

Arnaud (Drôme). The location of the engravings (Fig. 69) is at the feet of a 30m-high rock wall where recreational climbing activities have been carried out (Morin et al. 2005, 346). The site dominates the landscape of the Drôme valley on the North and it has a view on the Ardéchois foothills towards West. It is overlooked by the cliffs of the Saou forest. The site has not yielded signs of megalithic activities or any other sort of monumental establishments. The relatively small engraved rock surface is the only trace of prehistoric activity in the immediate surroundings. Other prehistoric sites are known in the surrounding areas -such as the ‘Grotte



Fig. 69. The site of Chastel-Arnaud engravings. An arrow marks the exact location of the engraved surface (Morin et al. 2005, 346).

d’Hannibal’, Pas du Faucon, Pas de Lestang- but they all have been dated to the Bronze Age (Boutes 1976; Combiér 1985).

6.1.1 The engraved daggers at Chastel-Arnaud.

The rock wall at the site measures three metres in height and 50 metres in length. The engraved surface is approximately 60cm above current sole-level and measures around six squared metres (3x2m). The state of preservation is poor; the surface underwent frost weathering, which spoiled the engravings. Among the signs of corrosion, engraved daggers and other motifs are still recognisable. The nature of the other shapes is not clear: they are mostly circular holes (*‘cupules’*: Morin et al. 2005, 347) and their contemporaneity to the daggers cannot be established.

At least six daggers have been recognised on the surface. They are all represented with the blade pointing downwards. Morin and colleagues (2005) analysed the geometric features of these engravings, comparing their proportions to

the prototypical study of Copper Age daggers by Anati (see Ch. 2; Anati 1972). Initially, the presence of Bronze Age sites in the region has led to comparative analysis with bronze artefacts. Only a slight resemblance has been noticed with rare Late Bronze Age French stocky daggers (*'type trapu à languette peu arquée'*: Briard and Mohen 1983, 27-28). Nevertheless, the clear crescent-shaped handle led to the dismissal of this argument in favour of their attribution to the Remedello-type (Morin et al. 2005, 347). The particularly large proportions of the blade may appear quite misleading, distancing these daggers from the Remedello-type B daggers. However- wider and shorter blades are quite common to the Remedello-type A daggers. Furthermore, the clear presence of arched handles connects these engravings to their Italian counterpart, especially Valle Camonica (cf. Cemmo).

Four of the six dagger-shapes engraved at Chastel-Arnaud are intact (no. 1, 2, 3, 6), with large blade with no central ridge and crescent-shaped handles (fig. 70). For the other two (no. 5 and 6), only a triangular blade is visible, while the handles have been eroded away (fig. 70).

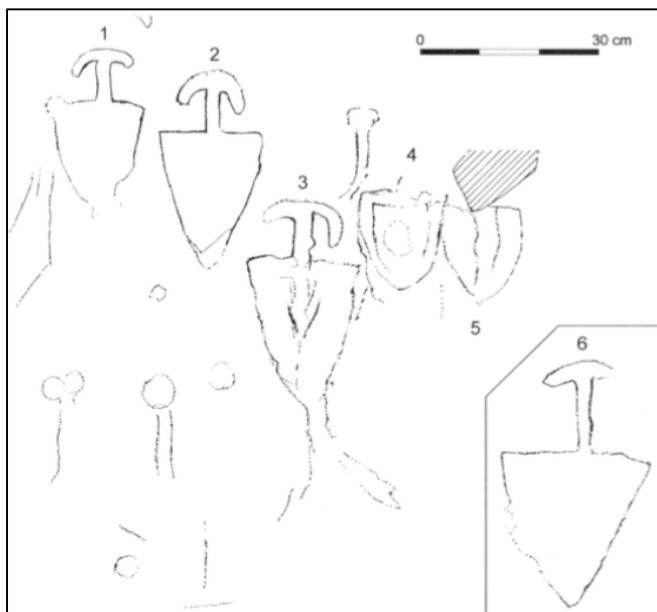


Fig. 70. Reconstructive-drawing of the Remedello-type daggers engraved at Chastel Arnaud. Dagger 1, 2, 3 and 6 are intact, only the blades of daggers 4 and 5 are visible (Morin et al. 2005, 347).

6.1.2 The Remedello-brand at Chastel-Arnaud.

The engravings at Chastel-Arnaud witness the knowledge and application of the Remedellian brand on the Western side of the Maritime Alps. The employment of the brand's design here does not seem to be connected with the human body. In

fact, statue-menhirs or other anthropomorphic representations are unknown in this region. The employment of the dagger in the context of rock engravings at Chastel-Arnaud resembles more the characteristics of Valle Camonica, especially Cemmo (see Ch. 4). In fact, depictions of daggers of Remedello-type occur in both the contexts on unmodified rocks and in multiple number. Unfortunately, the precarious state of preservation of the rock wall at Chastel-Arnaud makes it difficult to reconstruct if there were other imagery accompanying the daggers and what they could have been.

Nevertheless, these few engravings are evidence of the circulation of Remedello-type daggers in this region, even though not a single blade was found in the area. At Chastel-Arnaud the knowledge and representation of the Remedello-dagger brand once again is disjointed from evidence of actual copper daggers.

The context of the site does not show any clear sign of ritual activities, making the interpretation of its function more doubtful than in other contexts such as Petit-Chasseur, Saint-Martin-de-Corléans and Valle Camonica megalithic sanctuaries. However, the physical features of this location show many similarities to the above-mentioned sites and to the places where statue-menhirs were erected in Trentino, Valle Camonica and Lunigiana. The ridge where the Chastel-Arnaud rock wall stands has a towering view on the surrounding valleys, providing a particular position of prominence on the landscape.

6.2 The engravings at Mont Bégo.

The archaeological complex of Mont Bégo, in the Marcantour massif (Southern Maritime Alps) (fig. 67) comprehends more than 4,000 engraved rocks, which positions have been thoroughly mapped and catalogued (cf. Lumley and Échassoux, 2011). The Mont Bégo site is located about 40km from the Mediterranean shore and in the proximity of Tende Pass (1872m), connecting France to Italy (Huet and Bianchi 2015, 105). Multiple interpretations concerning the chronology of the engravings have been postulated. The noticeable similarities of employed techniques and of imagery repertoire have led scholars to interpret the rock art as a single continuous phenomenon ranging from the Copper Age until the early Bronze Age (Lumley et al. 1995; Lumley and Échassoux 2011, Huet and Bianchi 2015).

This theory was predominantly based on the study of engraved objects. On the one hand, weapons such as daggers, axes and halberds; on the other hand, animals and agricultural tools (yokes, horned figures etc.) and other motifs (reticulated figures) (Huet and Bianchi 2015, 105).

In this context engravings of multiple types of daggers have been found. A study on typology has interpreted part of these daggers as Remedello-type (cf. Bianchi 2013). The majority of these are concentrated in a peculiar location in the Mont Bégó archaeological context: the *Roche de l'Autel* (Fig. 71). Here, the largest concentration of engraved daggers has been registered, with examples of Remedello, Bell-Beaker and later types.



Fig. 71. The Roche de l'Autel site at Les Merveilles sector, Mont Bégó (Huet and Bianchi 2015, 110).

6.2.1 The 'Roche de l'Autel' at Mont Bégó.

The rock called 'de l'Autel' is located in the *Les Merveilles* sector of the Mont Bégó archaeological complex, by the namesake lake (fig.). The earliest occupation of the *Les Merveilles* area was dated back to the Epipalaeolithic due to the finding of a flint core (Machu et al. 2007, 43). Cardial pottery also attests occupation in the Early Neolithic (4000-3500) (Lumley et al. 1995, 2010). Palaeo-environmental studies have determined that the maximum extension of the forest in the area reached 2400m of altitude (Kharbouch 2000, 239). At the lowest level of the engravings (2000m) the forest must have had large open areas, similarly to its look in modern times (Ponel et al. 2001, 809).

The patterns of distribution of the engravings in *Les Merveilles* sees a concentration in the central area of the lake valley, with highlighted figurative themes characterising different areas (cf. Bicknell 1973; Huet and Bianchi 2015, 108). Here, the majority of the engravings depicting daggers (and especially Remedello-daggers) are concentrated on the surfaces of the *Roche de l'Autel*. This rock is the most engraved one, with more than 800 figures among which 127 are of daggers (Huet and Bianchi 2015, 108). The rock lies in the central part of Les Merveilles valley, a couple hundred metres north from the lake. It is naturally divided by a ridge into two parts, a northern and a southern one. The engraved surface has been divided into five faces, all of which with dagger depictions among other figures (Lumley et al. 1995, 217).

The chronological and stylistic attribution of the engraved daggers is problematic. This is mostly due to the bad state of preservation of the engraved surfaces and the presence of superimposition of engraved imagery over time (Huet and Bianchi 2015, 114). Only 41 daggers have been chronologically interpreted and they span from the Early Copper Age² to the Early Bronze Age (Bianchi 2013, 116). In the categorisation of daggers engraved on the Roche de l'Autel, the type defined 'A1a' and 'A1b' have been attributed to the Remedello Culture (Bianchi 2013, 122). These engraved daggers are characterised by short triangular blades and small handle (more or less arched) (fig.) (Bianchi 2013, 122).

The recognition of Remedello-daggers at Roche de l'Autel has been carried out through comparisons to the actual daggers from Remedello (especially dagger from tomb 83) (fig. 72) and their depictions in clearer contexts such as Valle Camonica, Aosta, Sion and Chastel-Arnaud (Bianchi 2013, 124-128).

² I call this period Early Copper Age on the basis of De Marinis' (2013) chronology of Alpine prehistory; instead, Bianchi uses the term '*Neolitique final*' to refer to the third millennium BCE (Bianchi 2013, 116-128).

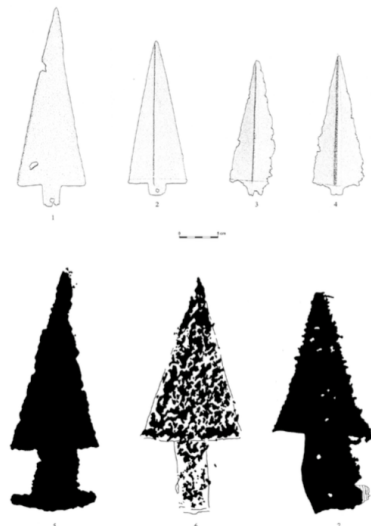


Fig. 72. Comparison of dagger engravings from the Roche de l’Autel and Remedellian blades from Remedello and Borgo Rivola (Bianchi 2013, 124).

Furthermore, an interesting feature regarding the support of these engravings has been noticed. The shape of the Roche de l’Autel resembles the outline of a triangle (fig.). Huet and Bianchi argue that, despite its unmodified character, this particular triangular rock reminds of a dagger blade when seen from above (Huet and Bianchi 2015, 114). They also noticed that no other rock in the Mont Bégo complex have such a distinctive geometrical shape (Fig. 73), suggesting that its high concentration of dagger engravings was not dictated by chance. Rather, the rock could have been chosen on purpose due to its triangular form, which one could have been read as a dagger blade by a higher position (Huet and Bianchi 2015, 125).

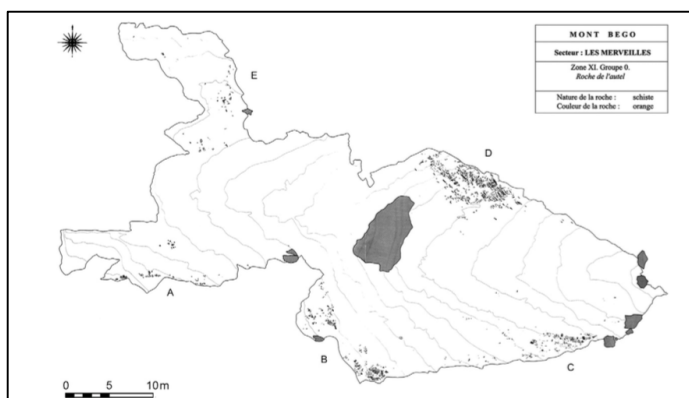


Fig. 73. Reconstructive drawing of The Roche de l’Autel seen from above. The letters mark the different engraved faces (Huet and Bianchi 2015, 111).

6.2.2 The Remedello-dagger brand at ‘Roche de l’Autel’.

The interpretation of type A1a and A1b daggers as Remedellian and the triangular shape of the Roche de l’Autel are evidence of the knowledge and

employment of Remedello-dagger brand at Mont Bégo. As usual, no evidence of actual daggers has been retrieved from the area, but the numerous depictions of Remedello-type (and other) daggers clearly witness the cultural and symbolic importance of dagger depictions for the prehistoric people of Mont Bégo. The main features of the Remedello-dagger brand at the *Roche de l'Autel* concern the characteristics of the support and the nature of the numerous depictions and their change over time.

Firstly, the choice of representing Remedello-type daggers at the beginning of the engravings-history at *Roche de l'Autel* signals a possible interpretation of the triangular rock as a dagger blade. This argument lies in the evidence of artificial triangular platforms in Aosta Saint-Martin-de-Corléans and Sion Petit-Chasseur (see Ch. 5); where Remedello-daggers engravings are connected to this particular architectures (cf. Heut and Bianchi 2015). However, in this case the deliberate choice of a triangular rock does not entail the human manipulation of the stone to create a shape. The resemblance to the brand's design is seen in the natural shape of the stone support. The engraving of daggers could have been a further reminder to the shape evoked by the Roche de l'Autel.

Secondly, the character of the Remedello-dagger engravings at Mont Bégo resembles the rock-art contexts of Chastel-Arnaud and Cemmo in Camonica Valley. The weapons are not connected to statue-menhirs and therefore are not individual attributes. Rather they are represented in numerous quantity and often surrounded by horned figures and reticulated motifs. Also, as in Chastel-Arnaud, the character of these engravings is rather discreet, they are not part of any man-built monumental architecture. Nevertheless, it has been noticed that the Roche de l'Autel lies at the entrance of the Les Merveilles valley, gaining certainly a prominent position if compared to the other engraved rocks at Mont Bégo (Huet and Bianchi 2015, 106). Furthermore, the later engravings of Bell-Beaker type and Early Bronze Age daggers (confirm the prolonged rock-art activity at the Roche de l'Autel, which does not terminate with the Remedello-Culture time but continues over the centuries with superimpositions of other types of engraved daggers.

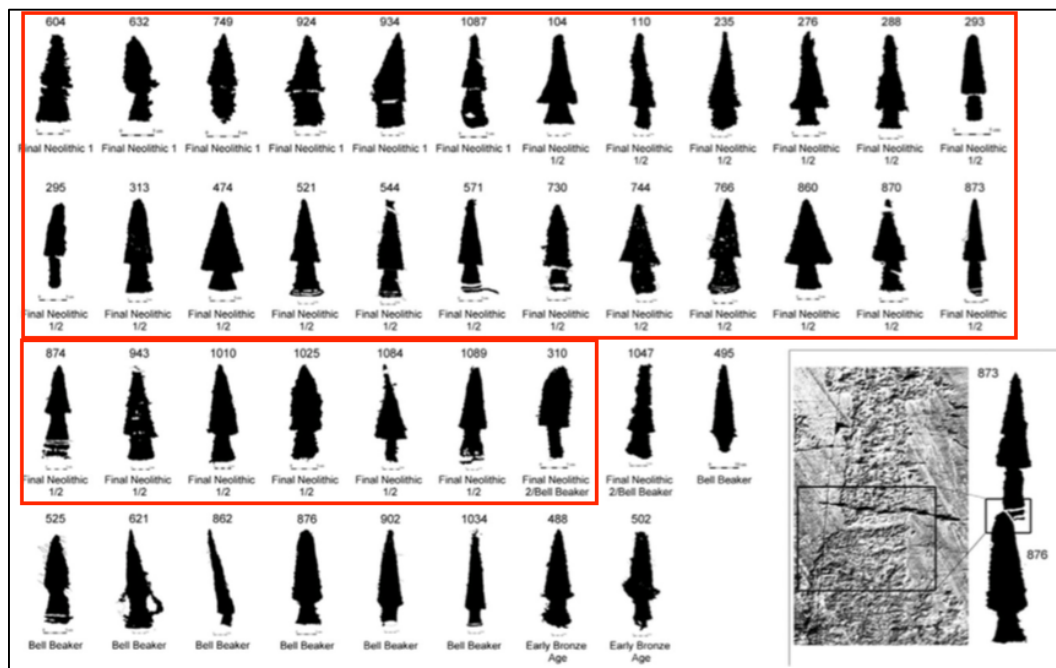


Fig. 74. The daggers engravings at the Roche de l'Autel from Copper to early Bronze Age. Circled in red the Remedello-type daggers. The picture shows a case of superimposition of different daggers (Huet and Bianchi 2015, 115).

Chapter 7

Discussion.

7.1 The characteristics of the Remedello-brand occurrence.

Table 1. Table showing the different occurrences of the Remedello-dagger brand in different contexts in the Alpine region.

Site:	(Male) body attribute:	Funerary context:	Recurring in rock-art:
Remedello and Po plain sites	✓	✓	
Trentino-Sudtiroi	✓		
Valle Camonica-Valtellina	✓		✓
Lunigiana	✓ (+ stelae outline)		
Saint-Martin-de-Corléans (Aosta)	✓	✓ (monumental platform)	
Petit-Chasseur (Sion)	✓	✓ (monumental platform)	
Chastel-Arnaud			✓
Roche de l'Autel (Mont-Bégo)			✓ (+ rock shape)

The evidence delineated in the previous chapters highlights various characteristics of the Remedello-dagger brand employment. From contexts in which the daggers exclusively appear as attributes of anthropomorphic menhirs right to dagger-shaped tombs platforms and repetitions of engraved daggers on rock-walls. In order to proceed with the analysis of the evidence, I will divide the evidence of branding according to the different monuments and contexts in which

it was applied (Table 1). Three categories have been recognised: (1) branding of the (male) human body, (2) branding funerary contexts, (3) branding of rock-art complexes.

7.1.1 Branding bodies.

Remedello-daggers representations across the presented evidence have been often found in connection with the human body, with a particular focus on male individuals. From the actual copper daggers found in the graves at Remedello, Cumarola, Borgo Rivola and other Copper Age cemeteries in the Po Valley, the association of these weapons with the bodies of dead male individuals appeared clear (De Marinis 2013, 306). However, the link between Remedellian daggers and particular male individuals transcends the burials and is translated in the megalithic expression of human bodies: anthropomorphic statue-menhirs. Going through the evidence of the Alpine region, it has been highlighted that Remedello-daggers engraved on anthropomorphic statue-menhirs occur in Trentino-South Tyrol, Lunigiana, Valle-Camonica and Valtellina, Aosta and Sion, in slightly different ways.

Among the statue-menhirs of Trentino-South Tyrol (see Ch. 4) the representation of the Remedello-type dagger prototype has a prominent role. In the recovered alignments, feminine (and asexual) statues are always accompanied by stelae considered as representative of male individuals (cf. Pedrotti 1995a). These stelae are often characterised by recurring attributes, such as belts and cloaks. Among the weaponry, when axes and halberds are represented, Remedello-type daggers are also engraved in multiple numbers (cf. Lagundo 2, Arco1, Arco 3), gaining a prominent position in the stela composition. When a single depiction of Remedello daggers occurs (Lagundo 3, Lagundo 4), no other weapons are represented on the stela, suggesting the unique value of this type of weapon. The Remedello-dagger brand appears to be used to mark stelae in Trentino both in isolation or among other weapons, but always with a pivotal position. This can be seen also in the disposition of the dagger engravings: in the central part of the stela and sometimes pending from a necklace (Arco 1, Lagundo 2). All the male figures on Trentino statue-menhirs seem to be marked by the Remedello-dagger brand. Masculine figures seem to be primarily defined by such attribute. The application of the Remedello

brand in Trentino is attested until the introduction of the Bell-Beaker style in both pottery and weapon depictions, as shown by the evidence from Velturmo (see above) (Pedrotti 1995b).

Similarly connected to the human body representation is the occurrence of Remedello-dagger engravings on the statue-menhirs of Lunigiana. The recurrence of the brand in Lunigiana may be considered firstly as a marker of masculinity, since it never appears on female stelae, just as in Trentino. In Lunigiana the brand seems to be applied differently: never appearing more than once on the same monument. The correlation with other weapons is weak, only twice a dagger is accompanied by an axe, suggesting its pivotal role as a male attribute. It has also been argued that Lunigiana ‘type B’ stelae resemble the shape of a Remedello dagger in their outline (Leonardi 2013, 255-256). The *chapeu de gendarme* shape of the head is very similar to the crescent-shaped handle of the Remedellian daggers. Considering the head as the handle and the trunk as the blade, the whole shape of the stelae could be interpreted as representing the design of the dagger-brand. In this case *branding* the anthropomorphic stela goes beyond the simple depiction of a dagger; rather the human body itself is conceptualised and represented in the form of a dagger. In this case, the Remedello-dagger is not solely branding the male individuals, but invests the whole stelae-alignments with female and a-sexual figures too.

A less gendering-related form of branding is represented by the case of Valle Camonica and Valtellina engraved stelae and boulder-menhirs. If the evidence of branded stelae/boulders in Valle Camonica and Valtellina is certainly less visibly connected to pinpointing masculinity, it is true that together with other engraved images it contributes as an attribute to reference the outlook of the human body (Fossati 2007, 79). The Remedello-daggers are not only attributes of the human figure; they rather participate together with other imagery to build up an anthropomorphic outlook. If the engraved beamed sun is interpreted as a reference to the head, the dagger (or daggers) in a lower position of the stelae/boulders may be seen as masculine attributes, as in Trentino and Lunigiana. It is interesting that in most of the cases the same monument is branded with multiple daggers, as already seen in Trentino. The repetition may suggest that the marking of such monuments through the Remedello brand was intended as a primary characteristic.

At Saint-Martin-de-Corléans (Aosta) and Petit-Chasseur (Sion), the branding of anthropomorphic stela occurs in a funerary context. However, the characteristics of the Remedello-dagger engravings on stelae are quite similar to the examples of Trentino and Lunigiana. At Aosta and Sion the representation of limbs and other anthropomorphic features leads to a feasible connection of the Remedello-dagger to the branding the human body. The dagger-brand marks the stelae as an attribute. As in the previous regions, the daggers never appear in relation to feminine sex markers, suggesting a plausible male interpretation of the branded bodies.

7.1.2 Branding funerary contexts.

Another characteristic of the Remedello-brand is its occurrence in funerary contexts, both in connection to the bodies of the buried and as regards monumental expressions. Firstly, the evidence from Remedello necropolis and the other funerary sites in the Po Valley is an example of the connection of Remedello-type daggers with the buried individuals. The cases of Remedello, Borgo Rivola, Cumarola and Spilamberto show the intimate relation between copper daggers as grave goods and the burials of adult male individuals (see Ch. 3). The evidence from Remedello has also shown that when the dead are buried with a copper dagger, a particular disposition of the body has been recognised: the *Rüchenocher* position (De Marinis 2013, 312). In the Copper Age cemeteries of the Po Valley, the tombs equipped with copper daggers are very few, highlighting their unique character. No monuments have been retrieved in these areas, suggesting the absence of *singacula* marking the burials, which in the case of Remedello were probably inserted in an artificial mound (see Ch. 3).

The branding of burials with the Remedellian dagger shape occurs in Saint-Martin-de-Corléans (Aosta) and Petit-Chasseur (Sion). In Aosta the Remedellian logo appears on anthropomorphic stelae as we have already seen; but it does not appear to have a prominent position such as elsewhere in the Alps and in Lunigiana. This is also because here the stelae have not been preserved in their original position and function, but they have been mostly re-used in the Bell-Beaker and subsequent phases of the site occupation (cf. Harrison and Heyed 2007). Branding at Saint-Martin-de-Corléans occurs more visibly in the construction of tomb no. 2 (see Ch. 5). It is interesting to notice that for this tomb, where the employed statue-menhirs

did not preserve their figurative features, a triangular platform was realised, resembling the shape of the dagger blade (cf. Leonardi 2013).

An extremely similar architecture has been realised at Petit-Chasseur (Sion) as well. Here, the stelae engraved with Remedellian daggers are placed along tombs M6 and M12, which are characterised by a monumental triangular platform. As in Aosta, the triangular platforms are a special feature of the site, not shared by the totality of the tombs. Their character is therefore extremely elitist. However, a fundamental difference need to be stressed between these burials and those of the Po plain with copper dagger among the grave goods (see Ch. 3). The tombs of Aosta and Sion host more than one burial, losing the individualistic character of the Remedellian necropolis. Also, in these Alpine sites the brand is ostentatious and monumentalising.

7.1.3 *Branding rock-art complexes.*

A quite different employment of *branding* has been seen in rock-wall engravings across the Alpine region. In the case of Cemmo, the repetition of engraved daggers on the two blocks suggests that the Remedellian brand in Valle Camonica does not only mark human bodies (on menhirs), but its value also applies to other contexts. The branding of two monumental natural rocks in the site of Cemmo takes in a more a-personal character. In a context where anthropomorphic stelae were laid out in the adjoining space, the branding of these large rocks hints to their prominence in the ritual landscape of Cemmo.

A more secluded example of branding in rock-art is represented by the site of Chastel-Arnaud in France. Here, the badly preserved rock surface does not tell much of the original imagery repertoire engraved on this wall. Nevertheless, the presence of repetitive Remedello-type dagger engravings in the central part of the rock wall suggests again the importance attributed by these markings (cf. Courtin and Sauzade 1975). At Chastel-Arnaud the peculiarity of the Remedellian-brand may be seen in their chosen location. The site has a prominent view on the adjoining valleys and is therefore in a towering position (cf. Courtin and Sauzade 1975). The particularity of the natural site can hint to why this surface was designated to be branded.

A similar context is represented by the evidence at Mont Bégo, especially by the *Roche de l'Autel*. Here, the numerous engravings of daggers of Remedello-type have been followed by replacement and superimposition of later types of daggers. The engraving activity at la Roche de l'Autel certainly begun in the Remedellian phase and the choice of clustering dagger depictions on this particularly shaped rock does not seem accidental. The naturally triangular shape of the Roche de l'Autel may be voluntarily chosen to recall the outline of the Remedellian dagger, acting as an expression of the brand itself. Again, the particular location, at the entrance of the lac de Merveilles valley, hints to why the branding took place in this precise spot (cf. Saulieu 2013).

7.2 Long-lasting forms of religious branding.

This research has highlighted the archaeological contexts in which Remedello-daggers have been represented in rock engravings and referred to in other forms of artistic expression. The long-lasting timeframe of the evidence and the occurrence of this imagery across a vast area of the Alpine region have hinted to the understanding of the Remedello-dagger not merely as a univocal symbol, simply fostering values connected to masculinity or warfare. The employment of the dagger's design in the considered contexts actually appears a brand used to mark a variety of monuments. With probable different meanings attributed to each one of the monument, the Remedellian brand helps creating a link among them all, acting as an 'umbrella-category' (cf. Becker 2015).

Within this group, a clear distinction appears among the branded monuments with their corresponding contextual framework. First of all, the nature of the branded objects extremely differs from the type of evidence tackled in Wengrow and Becker's works. The character of the things that are normally considered suitable for a brand is transportable, exchangeable. They are *de facto* commodities. In our case, the activity of branding takes place in the establishment of megalithic/monumental areas. Even the stelae, the most transportable branded monuments, were produced locally and only moved to be set in their final spot. We are dealing here with a case of branding which affects primarily the landscape. These are areas where prehistoric art took form, charged with a high degree of cultural symbolism. It would not be feasible to assume that these art expressions

were meaningless or driven by merely ‘practical’ reasons. Having recognised the funerary character of sites as Remedello, Aosta and Sion, it is fair to interpret the similar statue-menhirs alignments and the rock-art complexes as religious sites. This actually means recognising the symbolism embedded in the megalithic sites, which is directly linked to these societies’ culture and economic/political organisation; in other words, cosmologies. Thus, the Remedello-dagger brand occurs and affects the religious landscape of the Alpine region.

But how and why did this form of religious brand occur over such a long period of time encompassing more than 500 years? A plausible answer to the first question lies primarily in the multiple application of the dagger design. The various religious contexts have been *branded* in different ways and with various purposes. The daggers engraved on the stelae marked the masculine character of the individuals, the daggers in rock-art complexes were not concerned with this type of information, rather they marked the whole landscape such as the tomb platforms at Aosta and Sion. A degree of variability must therefore be recognised for the Remedello-dagger brand.

Another reason of the ‘how’ links to the ‘why’. At the beginning of this research the main features of brands have been discussed, directing the attention to the potentiality of a standardised design to foster some information. It has also been noticed that the underlying ‘packaged information’ is far from univocal, being subjected to the interpretation of the viewer (cf. Ch. 2). We can imagine that across the Alpine region and over half of a millennium the response to this brand was not the same everywhere and did not remain unchanged. This is also why an interpretation of the dagger as a mere ‘symbol’ cannot account for the evidence. It is my argument that the dagger throughout Copper Age did play a pivotal role in Alpine societies and the reason for its transformation into a brand should be seen in the technology employed to produce them: metallurgy.

7.3 Daggers in Copper Age societies.

It has been showed that the typical occurrence of Remedellian dagger depictions and references has developed in ritual contexts. We have seen that in many cases branding concerns the bodies of male individual, marking a clear gender distinction.

This is the case of the burials in the Po valley and the anthropomorphic statue-menhirs complexes. This type of evidence has led to interpretations of these metal artefacts as weapons, signalling the elitist character of the buried individual (cf. De Marinis 2013; see Ch. 2 and 3). Within this notion, the occurrence of branded human figures essentially deals with the showiness of power by the elitist groups of these societies, which supposedly represented their lineage in the stelae alignments (De Marinis 2013, Saulieu 2013, Harrison and Heyd 2007, Fossati 2007). In my opinion, this narrative is heavily based on the picture of later Bronze Age societies, where warriors and warfare are seen as pivotal cultural elements (cf. Horn and Kristiansen 2018; Harding 2007; Kristiansen and Larson 2005; Earle 2007).

The different employment of branding disconnected from anthropomorphic figures, such as in the rock-art complexes of Cemmo in Valle Camonica, Chastel-Arnaud and Mont Bégo tells us a different story. Here, the dagger-brand is not a marker of masculinity; rather, it appears in a monumental context, often among other imagery. The numerous and repetitive occurrences of Remedellian daggers on rock-walls may be seen in these contexts as branding the landscape. A clear example of this is the choice of branding the *Roche de l'Autel* at Mont Bégo. With its distinctive natural triangular shape, this rock could have acted already as an expression of the brand within the landscape of the *Lac de Merveilles* valley. Such an example, together with the building of monumental triangular platforms in the burial sites of Aosta and Sion and the shaping of the 'Type B' stelae according to the Remedellian dagger outline in Lunigiana signal something else. If the Remedellian dagger only had a masculine character, why representing also female stelae in the same way? These artistic expressions conceal a rather obsessive perception of the Remedello-type dagger in the first half of the third millennium BC.

I argue that the Remedello-type dagger in the Alpine region was charged with a cultural meaning that created some sort of shared, cross-societal identity. This feeling of identity was heavily intertwined with the technology employed to produce the daggers themselves: i.e. metallurgy. The newly introduced technology of copper smelting can actually be seen as a 'disruptive' innovation, bringing new artefacts, new methods of production and possibly new power-relations and political/economic organisations. The effect of copper metallurgy in 3rd-millennium

Alpine region led the way to the development of this brand, which probably functioned as a means to express the participation of the people employing it to this new technology. The brand was used in several contexts and with different specific meanings (male bodies, funerary, rock-art etc.), but the *branding* itself could have only be developed and transmitted among people and societies which held metal-work knowledge. It is in this respect that the concept of agency of the daggers unfolds.

7.4 The agency of the dagger.

In Wengrow's work on commodity branding in 7th-millennium BC Mesopotamia, state-seals acted as brands marking commodities. The process of 'standardising' an object while making it special is seen as a paradox inherent to the act of branding itself. Differentiating something through the employment of a brand is a process which defines the relationships entangled in material culture. An object does not stand alone, but it is connected to other objects, to people, to knowledge, to technology. This is why Wengrow argues that the circulation of branded commodities helped creating a sense of identity which fostered the development or urbanism in Mesopotamia.

However, in our case the branded objects are not commodities and they are definitely not movable or exchangeable. The act of branding in the Alpine region is more interested in branding a landscape and the people who inhabit it. It seems that in the artistic expressions of these Copper Age societies, branding megaliths and monumental areas had a pivotal role. The concept of 'art's agency' coined by Gell (1998) is a good example to explain how artistic imagery as 'sign-vehicles', essentially symbols able to transmit some social meaning (Gell 1998, 4). In Gell's anthropological theory the artistic representation functions as a *mediator* of the 'social agent' who produced them (1998, 7). I would argue that in the case of the Remedellian-brand, the branding in artistic contexts mediates the agency of the copper daggers themselves. It is within this framework that the reasons for conceptualising and employing the dagger's design as a brand can be explained, together with the sense of shared-identity that the repetition of this shape could have had in the first half of third millennium BC.

Even though the evidence of actual daggers from the area is quite scarce and limited to the graves of Remedello and its surroundings, the creation, transmission and employment of the brand accounts for the deep engagement of prehistoric people with this object. This leads to the technology through which the copper daggers were realised. Metalwork in the Copper Age was at its first steps and was about to evolve into the grand networks of copper and tin trading in the Bronze Age. As technology is *de facto* invented by humans, it is true that human lives are deeply affected by it as well (Boivin 2008, 155). Therefore, in the monumental the Remedello-dagger brand represents the will of transmitting the shared, cross-cultural knowledge of metallurgy, especially in the form of copper daggers production. The branded religious artistic artefacts were not supposed to circulate, they were marking the landscape and its people in order to convey a sense of shared-identity among the societies of the Alpine region; which was based on the communal knowledge of metallurgy. In conclusion, if the single application of the Remedello-dagger design varied according to each and every monument/context, the choice of *branding* them conferred a visual and informational recognisable character (cf. Wengrow 2008). This last one was deeply embedded with the cross-cultural knowledge of metallurgy and created a sense of identity shared by the communities who possessed it and advertised it through the Remedellian brand. Whether it marked male individuals, it contributed to the representation of human bodies, it inspired the shape of tombs or recurred in landscapes characterised by rock-art expression, the dagger-brand was recognised cross-culturally by those who employed it in the Alpine region. This recognition fostered a sense of communal identity, which was based on the use of copper daggers and on the technology employed for their production: metallurgy.

7.5 The legacy of the brand.

The evidence of branding through the representation of Remedello-type daggers roughly covers a wide time span comprised between the beginning of the third millennium BC and 2500 BC. It seems that the period of diffusion and application of the Remedellian brand begun in correlation with the evidence of copper daggers from the tombs at Remedello and in other locations in the Po' plain (cf. De Marinis

2013). The contextual evidence of dagger engravings in the Alpine region has often proven to be contemporaneous to the period of Remedello-daggers smelting in the early phases of Italian Copper Age, i.e. 3000-2600 BC (after De Marinis 2013).

However, it is more difficult to determine when exactly the Remedellian brand ceased to be employed and was discarded together with its cultural significances. The archaeological record has yielded signs of continuity in the locations branded by the Remedello-daggers, with examples of superimpositions of differently shaped daggers and other imagery on the original engravings in many contexts. Among them there are examples in Valle Camonica (see Cemmo's monumental rocks) and Mont Bègo (Poggiani-Keller 2009a, Bianchi 2013). There have also been examples of production of stelae with engraved daggers of later periods. For instance, we have evidence of Bell-Beaker daggers engraved in Trentino, Valle Camonica and Sion. Furthermore, the use of the triangular plaforms at Aosta and Sion continued in the Bell-Beaker period and further on, with additional burials and later grave-goods complexes (cf. Gallay 2014; Poggiani-Keller 2016).

In some way the narrative of the dagger-brand, even though of other types, seems to have persisted at least in the Bell-Beaker period. At the *Roche de l'Autel* at Mont Bègo superimpositions of Bell-Beaker and early Bronze Age daggers on Remedellian ones is registered, witnessing a continuity in the importance of the dagger (cf. Bianchi 2013). It is fair to say that the role of the dagger as a possible representative of early metallurgy ceases to exist in the Bronze Age. In the second millennium BC the production and erection of anthropomorphic statue-menhirs ends unexpectedly, together with other form of megalithic monumentality. It is very likely that the changes in the technological and economic lives of prehistoric people were not anymore represented by these forms of artistic expression typical of our brand. The new trade networks and the political developments of European Bronze Age along the procurement of copper and tin for the production of bronze artefacts could be seen as setting the end for the values brought by the Remedello-dagger brand, which was then abandoned (cf. Earle et al. 2011).

Chapter 8

Conclusions.

In this thesis the evidence of copper daggers engravings and representations in the Alpine region in the first half of the third millennium BCE has been considered. The numerous depictions clash with the scarce evidence of actual copper daggers in the same area. A stylistic pattern has been recognised, leading to the interpretation of the engraved weapons as 'Remedello-type' daggers, from the namesake village in the Po plain where they were first recovered. The dichotomy between the actual artefacts and the multiple engravings on anthropomorphic stelae/menhirs and in rock-art complexes raises some issues regarding the transmission of this design and as far as their meaning is concerned. Therefore, the purpose of this research is trying to explain how it was possible that the Remedello-dagger shape was employed over such a long period of time in this vast region and why this artefact was chosen.

In order to tackle these questions, the concept of branding has been introduced. The Remedello-dagger's shape was conceptualised, transmitted and represented in context of megalithic art for a very long time (over 500 years) and across a vast region encompassing the modern territories of Italy, Switzerland and France. The particular contexts where these engravings appear and their numerous quantity suggest that the dagger had some cultural importance. However, trying to postulate a symbolic meaning would not account for the long timeframe and the geographical vastness of their application. The meaning laden on the dagger's design must not have been straight-forward. This is why the concept of 'brand', following Wengrow and Becker's steps, has been chosen to analyse the evidence. In fact, a brand is characterised by the repetition of a standardised design which fosters a set of ideas and characteristics: a 'package of information' laying beneath it and marking the branded object. The interpretation of this information is not straight-forward, but it is subjected to the individuals. Through the recognition of a brand, a sense of commonality and shared identity can be created. Branded objects are grouped under the same category and targeted to an audience who can recognise that specific mark and subjectively trace back the repertoire of values and ideas underlying it.

Having defined the framework of the research, the nature of the evidence has been considered. Remedello-dagger engravings occur on megaliths and in rock-art complexes. The first category of monuments is primarily characterised by anthropomorphic menhirs (stelae or boulders), whereas the second comprises engraved rock walls and surfaces. After delineating the visual characteristics of the Remedello-dagger brand, I have moved on to the analysis of the evidence of actual copper daggers finds in the Po Valley, particularly in the Copper Age cemeteries of Remedello di Sotto, Cumarola, Spilamberto and Borgo Rivola. Having noticed that in these contexts copper daggers have been used as part of the grave-goods in some of the male burials, I have moved on to the analysis of the evidence of Remedello-dagger engravings in the archaeological sites of the Alpine region. These have been divided into sites of the Central Alps and Northern Appennines, North-Western Alps and Maritime Alps.

In the Central Alps two contexts have been considered: Trentino-Südtirol and the complex of Valle Camonica and Valtellina, whereas in the Appennines the Lunigiana region has been tackled. The evidence from Trentino region is characterised by anthropomorphic stelae found both in isolation and in alignments. Here, the Remedello-daggers are engraved on the stelae as attributes of male individuals, represented once or multiple times on each monument. Female stelae are never characterised by dagger engravings, they are rather marked by sculptured breasts. The evidence from Valle Camonica and Valtellina is more complex; alignments of anthropomorphic menhirs (stelae and boulders) carry Remedello-dagger engravings and in one case, at Cemmo, two natural rock surfaces have been engraved with multiple Remedellian daggers. The daggers on the anthropomorphic menhirs in Valle Camonica and Valtellina can be seen as attributes of the represented individuals and also serve, together with other engraved imagery, to build the anthropomorphic outline of the menhirs. They are usually represented in multiple number on each monument. In the case of Cemmo, the rock surfaces were engraved with Remedello-type daggers and other imagery, but the high number of daggers accounts for their prominence in the engravings repertoire. The case of Lunigiana is slightly different, with representations of single Remedellian daggers on each of the anthropomorphic stelae. The character of the dagger as an attribute of male stelae has been noticed. Nevertheless, the particular shape of ‘type B’

stelae, which recalls the outline of the Remedello-dagger comprises both male stelae with dagger-attribute and female stelae with breasts.

In the North-Western side of the Alps, two particular complexes have been considered: the site of Saint-Martin-de-Corléans in Aosta and the Petit-Chasseur site in Sion. In both Aosta and Sion, Remedello-dagger engravings occur on anthropomorphic stelae similarly to the previously analysed contexts. The special character of these sites is represented by the building of triangular tomb-platforms, where the statue-menhirs were also placed. Tomb 2 at Saint-Martin-de-Corléans and tombs M6 and M12 at Sion are characterised by these geometric platforms, which recall the Remedello-dagger's shape in their outline.

In the Maritime Alps two rock-art complexes have been considered: the engravings at Chastel-Arnaud (Drome) and the ones on the *Roche de l'Autel* (Mont Bégo). The engraving of six Remedello-daggers have been noticed in the natural site of Chastel-Arnaud, together with other surrounding motifs which have not been interpreted. At the grand rock-art complex of Mont Bégo, the choice of engravings numerous of Remedello-daggers on the *Roche de l'Autel* seems to be connected to the natural shape of the rock, which resembles to a triangle similar to the Remedellian dagger. The choice of this rock appears similar to the choice of constructing triangular platform in Aosta and Sion, representing another employment of the Remedellian brand.

Subsequently, a comparison among the different contexts branded by the Remedello-type dagger has allowed to trace some similarities and differences. The Remedellian dagger occurs in connection with human (male) bodies, in funerary contexts and in rock-art complexes. The branding of the human body has been traced back to the burials of the Po plain. A switch to its representation on statues has been recognised in the examples of anthropomorphic menhirs carrying Remedello-daggers as attributes. An evolution of the brand has been seen in the shape of 'type B' stelae in Lunigiana, which recall the Remedello-dagger in their outline. Besides the actual daggers in the Po plain burials, Remedello-dagger representations have been noticed in connection with other funerary contexts. This is the case of Aosta and Sion, where not only anthropomorphic stelae carrying engraved daggers were discovered, but also the three triangular tombs resembling the outline of the dagger's blade. As far as rock-art complexes are concerned, the engravings at Chastel-Arnaud and Mont Bégo do not show a connection to the

human representation nor to the funerary sphere. Rather, the Remedellian brand marks the landscape, especially in the case of Roche de l'Autel, which with its natural shape references to the dagger's shape and it is clearly visible in the surrounding environment.

Having noticed the highly symbolic and culturally-meaningful contexts in which branding was carried out, the definition of the Remedellian brand as a religious one was proposed. Thus, the repetition and transmission of the Remedello-dagger shape in religious contexts across the Alpine region over more than 500 years was tackled. The diffusion of the Remedello-dagger in the form of engravings and other artistic expressions was primarily concerned with the dagger acting as a brand, marking monuments and the landscape and signalling a set of values and information. Due to the nature of a brand, the underlying information is not straight-forward, rather it is multi-layered and subjective. Nevertheless, the cross-cultural employment and recognition of the brand create a sense of communality and shared identity. The basis for these has been seen in the newly introduced technology used to produce copper daggers: metallurgy.

In conclusion, it has been argued that in this horizon the Remedello-dagger brand functions as a mediator of the material agency of the copper daggers themselves. The multiple employments of the dagger's design have been considered a signal for the importance that the daggers had in Copper Age Alpine societies, with a pivotal reference to metalwork. Remedello-daggers acted as agents in these prehistoric people's lives. Hence, the activity of *branding* monuments and landscapes can be read as the will of creating a shared cross-cultural identity based on the knowledge and production of copper daggers through the technology of metallurgy between 3000 and 2500 BC in the Alpine region.

If it is fairly easy to see the origin of the brand as contemporaneous to the evidence of copper daggers in the burials of Remedello, but the end of it is not clear-cut. The evidence of superimpositions of later daggers and the re-use of stelae and the triangular tombs of Aosta and Sion suggest that the 'obsession' for daggers continued through the Bell-Beaker period right until the Bronze Age revolution, when the ideas and values laden on the daggers ceased to exist and the brand was definitely discarded.

Abstract:

The scarce evidence of copper daggers from the third millennium BC in the Alpine region clashes with the numerous representation of metal daggers on anthropomorphic statue-menhirs and other forms of megalithic art. The identification of a particular recurring type of copper daggers in these representations has led to their attribution to those produced in the context of the Remedello Culture in the central area of the Po' plain, Italy. How was it possible that this type of dagger appeared over such a vast region during the considerable time-span comprised from 3000 and 2500 BCE? Why was the Remedello-dagger specifically employed? In order to tackle these questions a framework based on *branding* has been theorised. Following the steps of David Wengrow (2008) and Samuel Becker (2015), the concept of branding has been used to explain the repetition of standardised design conveying some underlying information and its application in different contexts. The establishment of a prototype of the Remedello-dagger brand has been followed by its identification in the archaeological record of the Alpine region. The analysis of the evidence comprised statue-menhirs alignments in Trentino, Lunigiana and Valle Camonica and Valtellina. The evidence of funerary megalithic sites at Saint-Martin-de-Corléans (Aosta) and Petit-Chassuer (Sion), together with the rock-art complexes of Chastel-Arnaud and Mont Bégo. These contexts have been seen as representative of different employments of the Remedellian brand, which marked human (male) bodies, funerary contexts and the landscapes of rock-art complexes. The reason behind this long-lasting form of religious branding has been connected to its link to the newly introduced technology of metallurgy. Copper metalwork through the Remedellian brand was the base of a shared, cross-cultural identity in the Alpine region in the first half of the third millennium BCE.

Gli scarsi ritrovamenti di pugnali in rame del terzo millennio a.C. nella regione alpina si contra con l'evidenza di numerose rappresentazioni di pugnali in metallo su statue-stele e altre manifestazioni di arte megalitica. L'identificazione di un particolare tipo di pugnale ricorrente in queste rappresentazioni ha portato alla sua

attribuzione al tipo detto di Remedello, dal nome dell'onomino comune bresciano dove i primi esemplari furono ritrovati. Come è possibile che raffigurazioni del pugnale remedelliano siano presenti in una così vasta area geografica lungo un considerevole lasso di tempo (500 anni)? Qual è stata la ragione che ha portato alla raffigurazione di questo pugnale? Per cercare di rispondere a queste domande si è deciso di utilizzare il concetto di 'marchio'. Sulla scia delle ricerche condotte da David Wengrow (2008) e Sebastian Becker (2015), il concetto di marchio è stato impiegato per spiegare la ripetizione di un'immagine standardizzata portatrice di un qualche significato culturale. Dopo aver delineato un prototipo figurativo del marchio remedelliano, si è cercata la sua applicazione nell'archeologia della regione alpina. L'analisi ha compreso i complessi di statue-stele di Trentino-Alto Adige, Valle Camonica-Valtellina e Lunigiana. Si sono inoltre presi in considerazione i complessi megalitici di Saint-Martin-de-Corléans ad Aosta e Petit-Chasseur a Sion (Canton Vallese), insieme ai contesti di arte rupestre di Chastel-Arnaud (Drome, Francia) e del Monte Bego. L'evidenza archeologica di questi siti ha permesso di delineare le diverse declinazioni del marchio remedelliano, che caratterizza corpi umani (maschili), contesti funerari e pareti rocciose incise. La ragione che soggiace questo duraturo marchio che appare in contesti religiosi è stata ricondotta alla recente introduzione della metallurgia. La lavorazione del rame attraverso il marchio remedelliano si configura come base di un senso di identità condivisa e intra-culturale per le popolazioni calcolitiche dell'arco alpino.

Résumé:

Les rares découvertes de poignards en cuivre du troisième millénaire avant notre ère dans la région alpine, ils sont en désaccord avec les nombreuses représentations de poignards métalliques sur les statues-menhirs et autres manifestations de l'art mégalithique. L'identification d'un type particulier de poignard récurrente dans ces représentations a conduit à son attribution au type dit Remedello, après du nome du site archeologique près de Brescia où les premiers spécimens ont été trouvés. Comment est-il possible que des représentations du poignards de Remedello soient présentes dans une zone géographique aussi vaste sur une période de temps considérable (500 ans)? Quelle est la raison qui a conduit à la représentation de ce

poignard? Pour tenter de répondre à ces questions, il a été décidé d'utiliser le concept de 'marque'. À la suite des recherches menées par David Wengrow (2008) et Sebastian Becker (2015), le concept de marque a été utilisé pour expliquer la répétition d'une image normalisée ayant une valeur culturelle. Après que on a tracé un prototype figuratif de la marque de Remedello, son application a été recherchée dans l'archéologie de la région alpine. L'analyse comprenait les complexes statues-stèles du Trentin-Haut-Adige, de la Valle Camonica-Valtellina et de la Lunigiana. Les complexes mégalithiques de Saint-Martin-de-Corléans à Aoste et de Petit-Chasseur à Sion (Canton du Valais) ont également été pris en compte, ainsi que les contextes d'art rupestre de Chastel-Arnaud (Drôme, France) et du Mont Bego. Les preuves archéologiques de ces sites, elles nous ont permis de définir les différentes variantes de la marque du poignard de Remedello, qui caractérise les corps humains (masculines), les contextes funéraires et les parois rocheuses gravées. La raison de cette marque durable qui apparaît dans des contextes religieux a été attribuée à la récente introduction de la métallurgie. Le travail du cuivre à travers la marque Remedellian est configuré comme base d'un sens d'identité partagé et intra-culturel pour les populations calcolitiques de l'arc alpin.

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