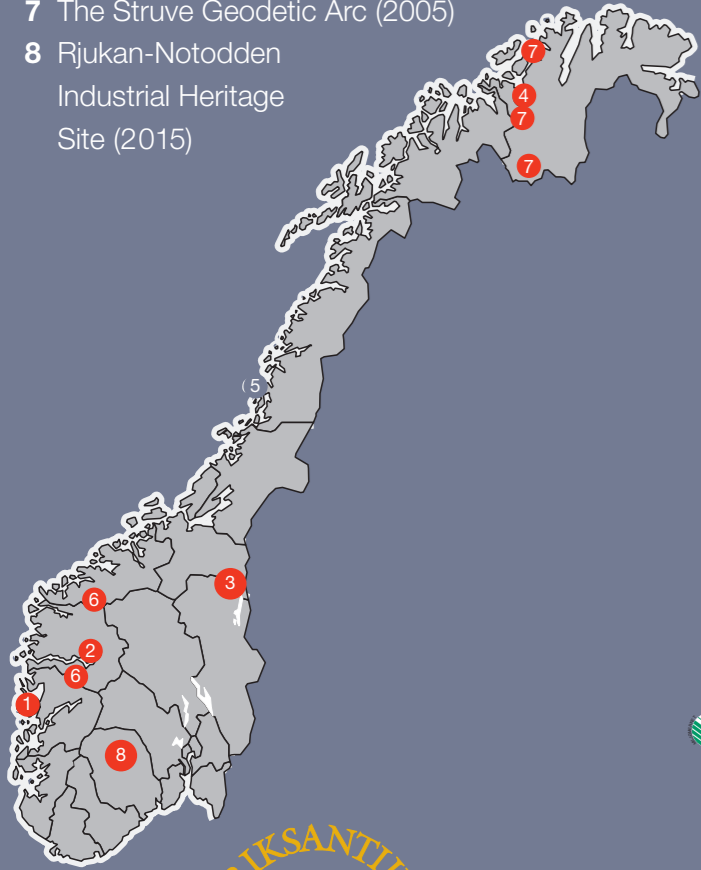


NORWEGIAN WORLD HERITAGE SITES

- 1 Bryggen in Bergen (1979)
- 2 Urnes stave church (1979)
- 3 Røros Mining Town (1980) and Circumference (2010)
- 4 The Rock Art at Alta (1985)
- 5 The Vega Archipelago (2004)
- 6 The West Norwegian Fjords (2005)
- 7 The Struve Geodetic Arc (2005)
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older figures were carved in were then higher above the sea, and were no longer used for new rock carvings. The location has most likely been important for communication with the spiritual world. In the beach area, earth, water and the heavens meet. Does this mean that the rock carvings in the beach area symbolize that this is where communication between the spirits and gods of the three worlds met both physically and spiritually? Was this where people communicated with the spirits?



Photo: Directorate of Cultural Heritage/Arve Kjerfveit

ROCK ART

Rock art is a term for all prehistoric pictures that are carved, chopped, ground or painted into rock. They express the earlier times' understanding of the world and of people's place in the world.

As early as 30,000 to 40,000 years ago pictures were produced in stone, for example in Australia and France. The rock art in Norway is 9,000 years old and consists of rock carvings in bedrock and loose stone, or of paintings in caves and rock shelters.

Rock carvings are one type of rock art, and these are divided again into a number of different types. Currently it is common to divide them in relation to trade: hunters' carvings associated with hunting and gathering, and agricultural carvings associated with domesticated animals and farming.



Photo: Directorate of Cultural Heritage/Eva Walderhaug

HUNTERS' CARVINGS

The hunters' carvings are dated to the Stone Age. They are mostly found in the western, middle and northern parts of Norway. Reindeer, moose, bear, fish and boats are common elements in the scenes and compositions. The motives provide associations to a society with an economy and a lifestyle consisting of hunting, trapping, gathering and fishing.

THEMES

For decades researchers and others have attempted to understand why representations in rock were made, and who made them. Currently rock art is interpreted as part of a



Photo: Alta museum

complex system of belief and is studied in terms of economic, social, political and territorial conditions. The themes in the pictures are seen as integrated with the landscape, surroundings, topography and the appearance of the bedrock. The pictures are interpreted as the creator's own understanding of the universal order, as well as a method to create order within their own existence.

Social relationships and people's understanding of the world change continually. This most likely also applies to the meaning contained within the rock art, which was created over a long period of time. Many of the themes are found repeated in different cultures, without necessarily having the same meaning everywhere.



Photo: Alta museum

ACCESSIBILITY

Rock art is a cultural treasure, which should be available for most people to experience. As such some of the localities are accessible for visitors. But because rock art is extremely fragile, it is not possible to provide access to all the locations.

At the fields that are accessible to visitors, some of the rock carvings are painted, so that they are easier to see. Walkways and platforms have been constructed, which save the art from wear and tear; at the same time making it easier for people to see the art.



Foto: Riksantikvaren/Eva Walderhaug

Rock carvings are often painted red. This painting has been done recently, to make the carvings easier to see. However, unpainted carvings are a more accurate representation of how they originally appeared. Today rock art is very rarely painted in this manner. The paint can damage the bedrock, and lead to more rapid erosion of the stone. In addition it can be damaging for future research.

The light conditions have enormous importance for the appearance of unpainted rock art. Evening sun, low on the horizon, can make the carvings appear to rise up out of the stone.

As are all prehistoric monuments in Norway, the rock art of Alta are legally protected.



Foto: Riksantikvaren/Eva Walderhaug

The Rock Art at ALTA



Photo: Eva Walderhaug, Directorate of Cultural Heritage



United Nations
 Educational, Scientific and
 Cultural Organisation



World Heritage
 in Norway
 The Rock Art at Alta

UNESCO

UNESCO is the abbreviation for the "United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization". UNESCO's goal is to contribute to peace and safety through international cooperation within these areas. The organization was established in 1945, and Norway became a member in 1946.

❖ The UNESCO convention for the protection of the world's cultural and natural heritage

The convention for the protection of the world's cultural and natural heritage was approved in 1972, after cultural heritage and natural areas were increasingly exposed to threats from war, natural disasters, pollution, tourism or, more simply, neglect.

The convention encourages all countries to promote the protection of cultural and natural heritage of both local and national significance. The most important goal of the convention is to identify cultural and natural heritage of universal value. The need for a coordinated effort, both human and economic, was demonstrated by the international rescue of cultural heritage monuments in Egypt and Nubia, when the Aswan dam was built in the 1960's. Sixty countries, including Norway, participated.

Cultural and natural heritage can include monuments, single buildings or groups of buildings, cultural landscapes or natural areas. These can be created by nature, or by people in cooperation with nature. They can be buildings representing important historic developments, or natural phenomena of exceptional esthetic or scientific value.

Norway ratified the convention on May 12.1977. The World Heritage Committee has so far approved eight Norwegian nominations to the World Heritage List. Being nominated as a World Heritage Site does not include any new form of legal protection, rather it offers additional recognition and status.

Norway on the World Heritage Committee

The World Heritage Committee consists at any time of the representatives of 21 nations. The Committee's primary mandate is to implement the World Heritage Convention.

Norway has been a member of the World Heritage Committee on two previous occasions, from 1983 to 1989 and from 2003 to 2007. Norway has also now been elected to the Committee for the period 2017–2021.

As a member of the Committee, Norway will prioritise improving the protection of existing World Heritage sites and also contributing to a more representative World Heritage List. After more than 40 years, the developing countries in particular continue to be under-represented on the List.

It is also important to raise awareness through the involvement of local communities and to highlight best practices in the management of sites on the List through the World Heritage Leadership programme. Norway will also stress the importance of List nominations being made on the basis of professional assessments rather than political interests. A further goal will be a more holistic approach to and management of the global natural and cultural heritage.

The Directorate for Cultural Heritage and the Norwegian Environment Agency represent Norway on the World Heritage Committee.



Bryggen in Bergen

Photo: Ane Kjerstein, Directorate for Cultural Heritage



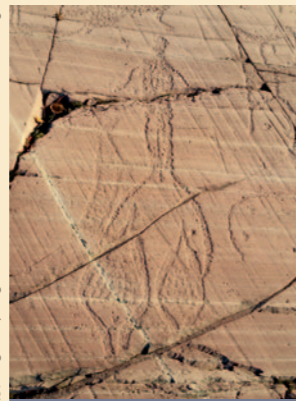
Urnes Stave Church

Photo: Ane Kjerstein, Directorate for Cultural Heritage



Roros Mining Town

Photo: Asgeir Spangre Brekke, Directorate for Cultural Heritage



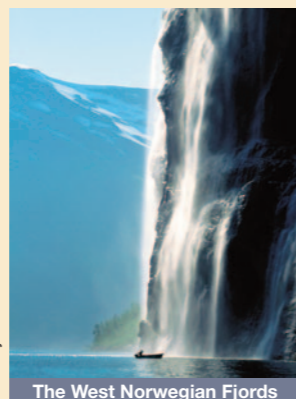
The Rock Art at Alta

Photo: Eva Waldenhaug, Directorate for Cultural Heritage



The Vega Archipelago

Photo: Cyril Russo



The West Norwegian Fjords

Photo: Ane Aasheim



The Struve Geodetic Arc

Photo: Bjørn Gairn, The Norwegian Mapping Authority



Rjukan-Notodden Industrial Heritage Site

Photo: Trond Taugbøl, Directorate for Cultural Heritage

THE ROCK ART AT ALTA



Photo: Directorate of Cultural Heritage/Eva Waldenhaug

The rock art of Alta were inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 1985.

The rock art of Alta are the largest known collection of rock carvings in Northern Europe made by hunter-gatherers. The first carvings were uncovered in 1973. The rock art of Alta are between 6200 and 2000 years old.

A rock carving is a figure which is carved, polished or chipped into a stone or bedrock outcrop. They are often based upon real models; animals, objects or people. Sometimes these can be easily recognized, other times it can be difficult or impossible to understand what they represent. Rock carvings have two meanings, either they represent a concrete situation, or they have a symbolic meaning and can signalize group identity, religious beliefs, rituals, shamanism, ideology or power.

VARIED PICTURES

What makes the rock art of Alta so unique is that they are so varied and include so many different figures. At the four uncovered fields there are more than 5000 figures. The most common pictures are of animals, especially reindeer and moose. But there are also other animals such as bear, birds and fish; often there are objects such as fishing nets, spears and boats, as well as people in a variety of activities. Many of the

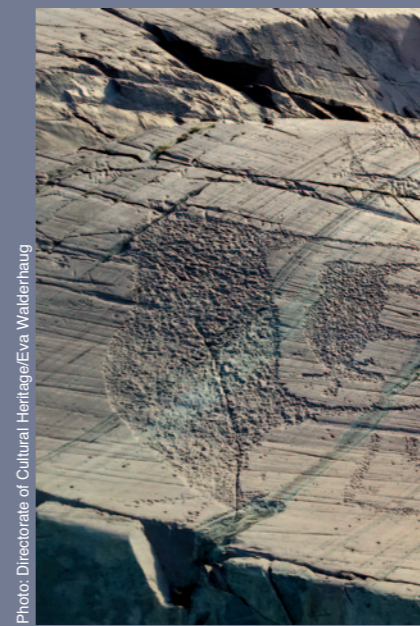


Photo: Directorate of Cultural Heritage/Eva Waldenhaug

figures display high artistic quality, and are very well preserved. They were made by people who lived by hunting, gathering and fishing. Most of the figures are relatively small, between 20 and 40 cm high. Some of them are relatively naturalistic; others are more geometric and stylized.

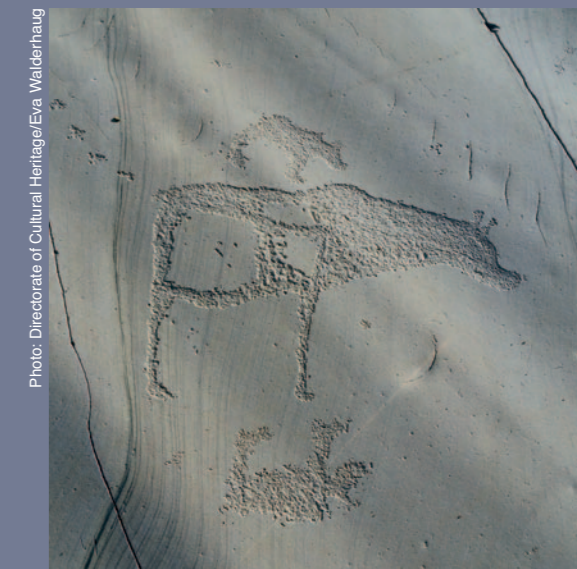


Photo: Directorate of Cultural Heritage/Eva Waldenhaug

The large collection of rock carvings can indicate that there are additional large, ritually important areas at the end of the Alta fjord. Most likely Alta was a meeting place for people from the coastal and interior areas. They gathered here to participate in rituals and ceremonies, to exchange knowledge and experiences and to decide in matters important to the group, to the individual and to the relationship between the different groups



Photo: Directorate of Cultural Heritage/Knut Heiskog

The carvings were made in the bedrock with hammer and chisel. The hammer was made of stone or antler, the chisel was made from hard stone. The figures were carved into smoothed stones at the shoreline. As the land level rose, new figures were carved into the bedrock that had newly arisen from the sea. The parts of the bedrock where the