

### **Work status – phase 1 of the project completed**

The work on phase 1 of the project for the recovery and enhancement of the Prada Village has been completed. The work focused on the conservation and partial restoration (the work will be completed virtually) of the buildings in sections 7, 10 and 13 (northwest of the village) for a total of 9 buildings. The result obtained, with an expense of almost 1.6 million francs, is surprising from our point of view and fully reflects the expectations and directives of the Cultural Heritage Office. As highlighted by the office itself, recovery works of this kind always involve multiple unforeseen events and difficulties and even in Prada we found ourselves faced with problems such as the very friable nature of the ground in certain areas which required the necessary reinforcement and the installation of additional drainage or a greater quantity of collapsed material inside the buildings and a greater fragility of the submerged walls compared to the initial hypotheses. It is clear that these unforeseen events have led and still lead to a higher cost that is impossible to define before the excavation of the individual building.

### **Findings**

After the discovery of what was established to be an oven last spring, a few weeks ago, our archaeologist Giorgio Nogara who follows the works in Prada on a daily basis, informed us of the discovery of the first hearth on the ground floor of a building. This reflects the peculiarity of Prada, where the ground floors, unlike what is regularly found in comparable agglomerations, do not seem to be occupied by kitchens or stables, but by cellars, warehouses and laboratories. There were also finds of tools such as knives, hay forks, preys for sharpening sickles, but also the remains of door or window locks, keys, and finally shards of cooking vessels dating back to the 15th and 16th centuries, as well as a ring, probably belonging to a woman, found on the lime soil of one of the buildings.

To tell the truth, these are just a few finds, confirming that when the Village was abandoned, as much as possible was taken away.

### **The peculiarity of the buildings of Prada**

The work carried out during this first phase allows us to highlight the peculiarity of the buildings of Prada, very large houses (mostly three floors) and well built, certainly inhabited by a relatively well-off population, with a standard of living comparable to that which lived within the walls of Bellinzona, of which Prada, with its many internal communication routes, seems to constitute a district.

### **Next steps**

The Board of Trustees, supported by the engineers Andrea Demarta (project manager), Renzo Bagutti (architect) and Giorgio Nogara (archaeologist), is working on phases 2 and 3 of the project, which include, respectively, the conservation and partial restoration of the buildings in sections 8, 9, 11, 14, 15, 16 and 17 (southeast of the village), for a total of 16 buildings, and the work to arrange the churchyard, with the enhancement of the 7 or 8 buildings located there, one of which will be used as a reception point, an information center on the results of the work and a warehouse for the storage of materials. Detailed estimates for these works are being prepared but it is reasonable to expect a total cost of at least 2 million francs.