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ANIMALS IN PREHISTORIC ART
The Euro-Mediterranean region and its surroundings

ANIMALIAK HISTORIAURREKO ARTEAN
Euro-Mediterranean eskualdea eta bere ingurua

LOS ANIMALES EN EL ARTE PREHISTORICO
La región Euro-Mediterránea y su entorno



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REVISTA ARKEOGAZTE ALDIZKARIA

N.º 11, año 2021. urtea 11. zbk.

Animals in prehistoric art: The Euro-Mediterranean region and its surroundings

Animaliak Historiaurreko Artean: Euro-Mediterranean eskualdea eta bere ingurua

Los animales en el arte prehistórico: la región euro-mediterránea y su entorno

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ROCK ART IN CENTRAL NORWAY – CHALLENGES WITH CHRONOLOGY AND ROCK ART NARRATIVES

Labar-artearen Erdialdeko Norvegiar - kronologia eta labar-artearen narraitibekiko erronkak

El arte rupestre en Noruega central - retos cronológicos y narrativas del arte rupestre

Heidrun Stebergløkken (*)

Abstract

This paper is about two rock art sites in Central Norway which is analysed in order to shed light on how complex and dynamic the creation of rock art can be within the same site. The sites are analysed and compared on how the figures are made, how they are positioned on the panel, and how types/styles are represented at two different sites from this area. The results show that the panels are greatly varied, and the animals presented are very heterogeneous. This can imply several different usages of the different panels throughout time, but also several different usages of the same panel. This may also have affected the narratives told throughout the single panels where adding a new image could have changed the whole story. In conclusion, there is reason to state that we have to be very careful when we interpret rock art panels. We do not know if the images documented are a part of one or several narratives. In such cases, we cannot treat one panel as one entity with one story, and we cannot expect the images to represent the same age. We need to acknowledge that one panel might be a complex medium of many narratives throughout time.

Key words

Petroglyphs; Scandinavia; perception; Northern tradition; Southern tradition.

Laburpena

Kapitulu honetan, Norvegia Erdialdeko labar-artedun bi gune aztertzen dira, multzo bereko labar-artearen ekoizpen-prozesuan egon daitezkeen konplexutasun eta dinamikak argitzeko. Bi gune horiek aztertu eta konparatu dira, irudiak nola egin diren, panelaren barruan nola kokatzen diren eta eremu honetako bi multzotan motak/estiloak nola irudikatzen diren behatuz. Eraitzen arabera, panelek aniztasun handia dute eta irudikatutako animaliak heterogeneoak dira. Honek adieraz dezake panel desberdinek denboran zehar izan ditzaketan hainbat erabilera eta, baita, panel bera nola erabili daitezkeen modu desberdinetara ere. Era berean, eragina izan dezake banakako paneletan kontatutako narrazioetan, irudi berri bat sartzeak aldatu egin baitezake irudikatutako historiaren esanahi osoa. Laburbilduz, bada arrazoi bat labar-artearen interpretazioan arreta handia jartzeko, ez baitakigu dokumentatutako irudiak istorio baten edo gehiagoren parte diren. Kasu horretan, ezinezkoa da panel bat aztertzea historia bakarreko entitate bakar bat balitz bezala, eta

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ezin dugu espero irudiek kronologia bera izatea. Kontuan izan behar dugu panel berbera narrazio asko denboran zehar transmititzeko bitarteko konplexua izan daitekeela Kapitulu honetan, Norvegia Erdialdeko labar-artedun bi gune aztertzen dira, multzo bereko labar-artearen ekoizpen-prozesuan egon daitezkeen konplexutasun eta dinamikak argitzeko. Bi gune horiek azertu eta konparatu dira, irudiak nola egin diren, panelaren barruan nola kokatzen diren eta eremu honetako bi multzotan motak/estiloak nola irudikatzen diren behatuz. Emaizten arabera, panelek aniztasun handia dute eta irudikatutako animaliak heterogeneoak dira. Honek adieraz dezake panel desberdinek denboran zehar izan ditzaketen hainbat erabilera eta, baita, panel bera nola erabili daitezkeen modu desberdinetara ere. Era berean, eragina izan dezake banakako paneletan kontatutako narrazioetan, irudi berri bat sartzeak aldatu egin bailezake irudikatutako historiaren esanahi osoa. Laburbilduz, bada arrazoi bat labar-artearen interpretazioan arreta handia jartzeko, ez baitakigu dokumentatutako irudiak istorio baten edo gehiagoren parte diren. Kasu horretan, ezinezkoa da panel bat aztertzea historia bakarreko entitate bakar bat balitz bezala, eta ezin dugu espero irudiek kronologia bera izatea. Kontuan izan behar dugu panel berbera narrazio asko denboran zehar transmititzeko bitarteko konplexua izan daitekeela.

Hitz-gakoak

Petroglifoak; Eskandinavia; Pertzepzioa; Europa Iparraldeko tradizioa; Hegoaldeko tradizioa.

Resumen

En este artículo se analizan dos sitios de arte rupestre en Noruega central para arrojar luz acerca de la complejidad y las dinámicas del proceso de producción de arte rupestre dentro del mismo conjunto. He analizado y puesto en comparación cómo las figuras están realizadas y cómo se presentan dentro del panel, y cómo los tipos/estilos son representados en dos conjuntos de esta área. Los resultados demuestran que los paneles tienen variedad y que los animales representados son heterogéneos. Esto puede implicar muchas utilizaciones de los diferentes paneles en el tiempo, así como diferentes maneras de utilización del mismo. Esto puede haber afectado a las narrativas de los paneles en sí mismos, ya que, al añadir una imagen nueva, podría cambiar la toda la significación de la historia representada. En conclusión, existe una razón por la cual tenemos que prestar mucha atención cuando avanzamos hacia una interpretación del arte rupestre. No sabemos si las imágenes documentadas son parte de una o más historias. En ese caso, no es posible abordar el estudio de un panel como si fuera una única entidad con una única historia, y no podemos esperar que las figuras tengan la misma cronología. Necesitamos tener en cuenta que un mismo panel puede ser un medio complejo de transmisión de muchas narrativas a lo largo del tiempo.

Palabras Clave

Petroglifos; Escandinavia; Percepción; Tradición nórdica; Tradición meridional.

ROCK ART IN CENTRAL NORWAY – CHALLENGES WITH CHRONOLOGY AND ROCK ART NARRATIVES

Labar-artearen Erdialdeko Norvegiar - kronologia eta labar-artearen narratibekiko erronkak

El arte rupestre en Noruega central - retos cronológicos y narrativas del arte rupestre

Heidrun Stebergløkken (*)

1. Introduction

The Scandinavian rock art tradition has been a source for research since the late 19th century. The first modern discoveries were made during the 18th century, but the age of the rock art was unknown. The rock art's story was hidden. During the late 19th century and early 20th century the awareness of the rock art grew, new discoveries were made, and a pattern started to form. During the rock art research's early days, a lot of work was put into systematizing, classifying and making efforts to try and see similarities in the material and to understand the age and chronology of the rock art (BRØGGER, 1906; ENGELSTAD, 1934; GJESSING, 1936; HALLSTRÖM, 1907; K. RYGH, 1882; O. RYGH, 1873; SHTETELIG, 1922).

During the early systematizations in Norway Andreas M. Hansen (1904) discovered that the rock art material in Scandinavia could be divided into two groups; one South-Scandinavian tradition, and another which originated from the northern part of Fennoscandia. He related the differences in iconography and motif to different cultural groups, but the age or chronology was not an important part of his work. Brøgger (1906, 1931) however, discovered that this division in the rock art material was a result of an age difference;

he related the rock art from the Stone Age to a hunter-gatherer contexts, and the rock art from the Bronze Age to an agrarian contexts. Gutorm Gjessing (1936) introduced the concepts hunter's rock art ("veideristninger") and agrarian rock art ("jordbruksristninger").

The rock art belonging to the hunter's rock art consists of images like large game and cervides, which are the dominant motifs. You also find birds, whales, fish and a particular kind of boat type with a rectangular form as well as zigzag patterns and frame figures. However, the agrarian rock art is dominated by boat/ship images, domesticated animals like horses, cattle, a few examples of dogs, footprints, hand prints, cupmarks and a lot of geometric figures spirals and concentric ring figures (SOGNNE, 2012; STEBERGLØKKEN, 2017).

Later research has problematized these conceptual differences. This has to do with new interpretation of the rock art, emphasizing the geographical localization and context of the rock art sites. The argumentation concerns how the rock art is placed in predetermined agrarian or hunter contexts using those old conceptual differences. The agrarian rock art in particular

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Figure 1. Examples of Northern and Southern rock art tradition in Central Norway. The reindeers at the site Hell to the left (Northern tradition) and boat figures at Leirfall to the right (Southern tradition). Photo: H. Stebergløkken.

has been criticized for being misleading, since we have several examples of finding this Southern tradition rock art in non-agrarian contexts. For example, the domination of boat motifs contradicts an agrarian context. Also, further south in Scandinavia (as for example Bohuslän in Sweden) the rock art was shore bound. Thus, many so-called agrarian rock art sites should rather be seen in relation to transport, launching of ships and rituals connected to the shoreline (LING, 2005, 2008, 2013). Hence, the Northern and Southern rock art traditions are now more commonly used as the prevailing conceptual differences by rock art researchers in Scandinavia. The Northern tradition (like the site Hell, Figure 1) belongs to the oldest tradition from the Stone Age period (Mesolithic and Neolithic), and “disappears” with the transition to the Bronze Age. While the Southern tradition (like the site Leirfall, Figure 1) belongs to the Bronze Age period, but continued possibly throughout to the Pre-Roman Iron Age. This is the general picture but it is important to point to the fact that there are sites that show an overlap between two traditions. In Central Norway there is also an example of a site (Evenhus in Frosta) with rock art belonging mainly to the Northern tradition, which has been shoreline dated to the Early Bronze Age (STEBERGLØKKEN, 2016).

In Central Norway, the Northern and Southern traditions coexist side by side on the same site/panel. The Northern tradition comprises about 20 % of the rock art material, while the Southern tradition makes up for about 80 % of the material. There are ten known sites in this region which consist of rock art from both traditions, six of these sites also have panels where both traditions occur side by side on the same panel or are superimposed (SOGNNES, 2008; STEBERGLØKKEN, 2017). In this situation, it is difficult to interpret the chronology based on shorelines alone, but what could be said is that the images were definitely not made during one single event. The PhD from 2016 (STEBERGLØKKEN, 2016) analyses the rock art from Central Norway and tries to understand what style can express. This research defined three different levels (gestalt, type and style) on how to see and interpret the rock art in Central Norway. The reason was to try to understand some of the complexity that each rock art panel shows. Since the beginning of rock art research in Scandinavia there has been a need to try and understand the age of the rock art, and to systematize the material. Consequently, this research states that there has been less of a focus on the micro level of the rock art in the early days of the research. This micro approach refers to how the figures

are constructed and how it is possible to see the individual artist's hand in the rock art images. This paper addresses this topic and how the micro aspect may affect the interpretation of the narratives and chronological aspects of the rock art. The focus will be two examples from Central Norway, where new documentation can indicate reuse of rock art panels.

The objectives that will be discussed in this paper are: i) How can we understand the rock art by moving around the rock; looking at how the light shifts and how different motifs come to light at different hours of the day? and ii): How does the expression and construction of the motifs show if the images are made by several people at several separate events? This research also wishes to find out if there is some indication of adding figures to an already existing scene or changing an image, because this has consequences for the interpretation of the panel as a whole.

2. Methodological and theoretical approach

The rock art in Scandinavia is generally dated according to shoreline displacement curves or style/typology (GJERDE, 2010; HELSKOG, 1999; HESJEDAL, 1993; LING, 2005, 2008, 2013; RAMSTAD, 2000; SOGNNES, 2003). In some cases excavations have been carried out close to or in relation to rock art sites (LINDGAARD, 2015; LØDØEN, 2013; SOGNNES, 2015), which have contributed to more accurate datings of the rock art. That being said, there is still much uncertainty attached to the dating of rock art in Scandinavia as in other parts of the world.

The shorelines in Scandinavia give us a maximum date of how old the rock art can be. Because of the land uplift we can date when the shoreline became dryland, but the rock art could have been made any time after this. However, in many regions like for example Alta in Northern Norway, and Bohuslän in South Sweden and Østfold in South-eastern part of Norway, there is a shore connection to the rock art. Researchers have analysed how the rock art is distributed, and

connected in different stylistic phases to different heights in the landscape. Figures that show similarities can be found at the same heights in the landscape. In other words, it is possible to develop a stylistic sequence – a typology of the rock art material in these regions (GJERDE, 2010; HELSKOG, 1999; LING, 2005, 2008, 2013). These different typologies could have relevance in other regions where such connections do not exist. However, applying a typology made on a material from one region does not necessarily transfer seamlessly to another region and must be done so carefully. In a best-case scenario this may show some common tendencies in the material, but such common tendencies can never be trusted as a dating method without support from other sources.

In some regions like Central Norway, the material does not fit as easily into chronological phases. Gutorm Gjessing (1936) established three different chronologies based on styles during his work with the systematization of the Northern tradition rock art in Central Norway in the early 20th century. According to Gjessing the most naturalistic rock art style was considered the oldest, and the style gradually turned more schematic through style II and III at the transition to the Bronze Age. However, the available material has increased since and new discoveries have been made. Researchers working with this material (LINDGAARD, 2013; SOGNNES, 2003, 2012, 2017) have pointed out some challenges, for instance that the shoreline datings do not necessarily support the style phases. There are examples of younger styles (II and III) at higher sea-level curves than where you would find the oldest style I artwork. The PhD research (STEBERGLØKKEN, 2016) also revealed challenges with this method of dating in the Central Norway region, and what really stands out is when you find style I and II at sea-level curves which give a Bronze Age.

Another problem is how researchers define style. One of the main challenge is when some researchers connect the style to geographical areas, while others put style in connection with group traditions and, furthermore, other

researchers see style as an individual expression. If the types of style are so diverse, how can style be used to make a chronology? There has to be a clear understanding in the definition of the concept style when this is used to explain or describe aspects of the rock art, because 'style' can mean many different things to different researchers. As mentioned above the author have identified three different levels, that are important to differentiate between - so there is no, or at least less sources of, misunderstanding. Each individual rock art figure contains three different qualities; the gestalt, type and style. Gestalts establish the intuitive basic forms (outer lines) and are so characteristic that we immediately see they stand out. They are the foundation blocks of the typology. Types on the other hand is something that is invented by the researcher and serves as a tool enabling to generalize the material in advance of a classification/typology. The types are based on how the figures are constructed -the absence and presence of different attributes (for example inner lines). This typology is not chronological. Style however, is as an element of design that reflects the individual artist. The style represents an individual level, linking it to the artist, the creator of the specific figure. It is something that already exists and is part of the figure, and similarity in style may indicate the same artist in the same way as one can recognize someone's specific handwriting. Naming the different qualities/ characteristics is not the crucial element, but the important factor is to acknowledge and to distinguish between the different characteristics of information within the same figure (STEBERGLØKKEN, 2016, 2017).

The point with this, is to be able to recognise if the rock art panels should be understood as the result of one event, created by one single artist. Or whether one panel can be the result of several visits by different artists at different events? If this is the case, we have to be careful when we interpret the narrative. The obvious mistake is to interpret images according to one narrative or scene if the figures are not made at the same time by the same artists. We will never wholly understand the narratives

of course, but some aspects like the motifs, perception, composition, the visual expression, how the images are placed on the panel and the relationship it has with the landscape still communicate to us in an abstract way.

During the last decades, several rock art researchers have focused on these aspects in trying to close in on understanding of how to "read" the rock art. Several methodical approaches are relevant to this paper. Jan Magne Gjerde (2006, 2010, 2013, and 2015) has analysed how the rock art is related not only to the topographical environment of the landscape that the rock art is part of – on a macro level. Gjerde has also focused on the panel itself, by looking at how the figures and motifs relate to each other and natural features like cracks, curves and oars within the rock panel (micro landscape) at different rock art sites in Fennoscandia. He has identified what seems to be a "Stone Age rock art map at Nämforsen" (GJERDE, 2015: 84-86) in Sweden, and he sees the motifs and their distribution on the panel in relation to the surrounding macro landscape. These interesting observations puts the rock art in a direct relationship with the landscape, based on comparing the micro and macro. Knut Helskog (2014: 101) has also studied these topographical elements in the rock surface, whilst studying the rock art material from Alta. In low sunlight, the light and shadow interact with the rock surface and the natural cracks and curves, resembling rivers, mountains and the animals placed meaningfully within this micro landscape.

From Central Norway, Kalle Sognnes (2011) has studied how certain motifs can guide the viewer in different directions, using the five panels at the site of Leirfall (Figure 1) in Stjørdal as a case. The footprints are the dominant motif from this site with 458 confirmed images, and 74 possible images (SOGNNES, 2001: 181). He conducted his analysis by following the footsteps from panel to panel and analysed how the footprints travel across the panels in different directions, as a result he has observed possible narrative routes. In other words, the footprints

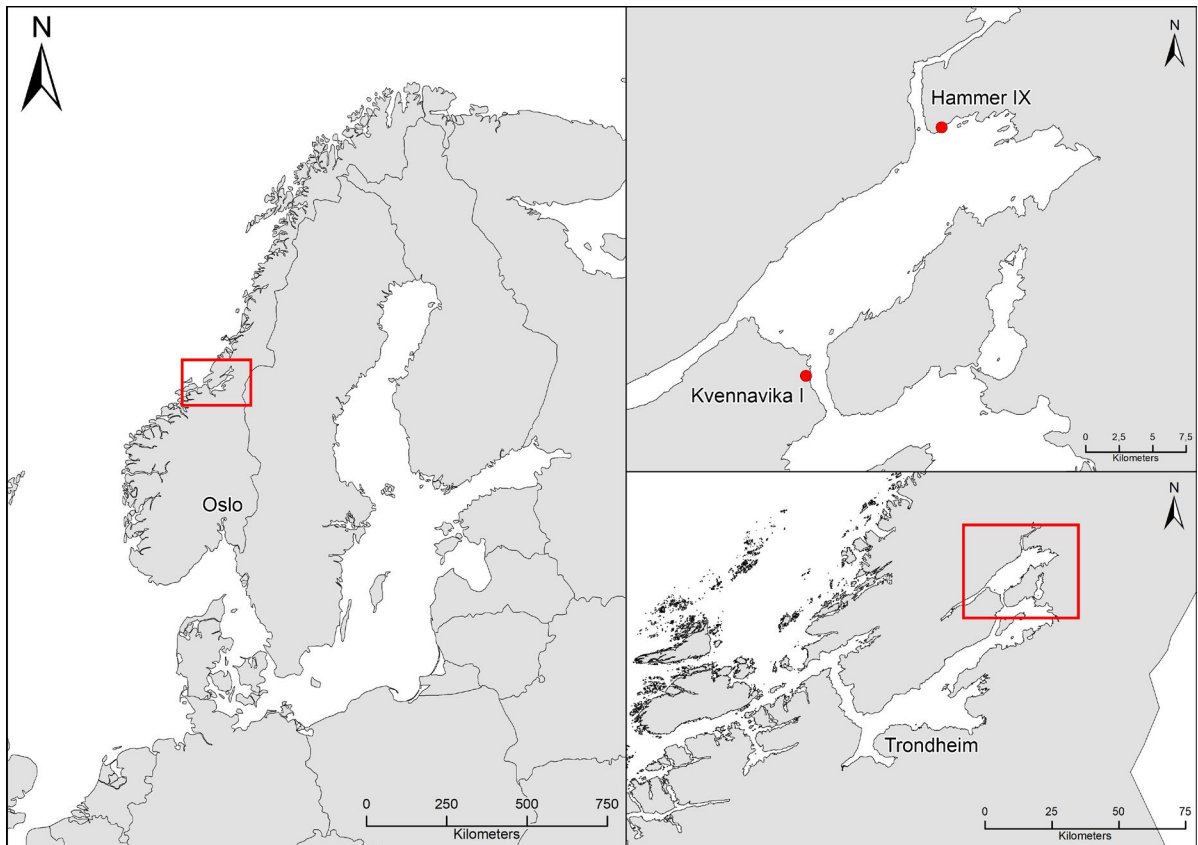


Figure 2. The location of Hammer IX and Kvennavika I. Map by M. M. Gran, NTNU University museum.

can indicate the order of the narrative, and maybe lead the viewer to different scenes/groups of motifs.

Another way to work methodically with the visual aspect of the rock art, is looking at station points the way in which Liliana Janik (2014) does with the material from Zalavruga in Northern Russia. She uses the approach of Margaret A. Hagen (1986) by defining station points as the direction in which the artist was looking at the object or landscape, and how this is reflected on the canvas, or in this case, the rock (JANIK, 2014: 109). Janik has done an interesting analysis of how these station points appear on some selected panels from Zalavruga. Taking this approach on the material gives an understanding on just how complex the rock panels can be. The panels are not created from one point of view. There are several station points at the same panel,

with images depicted in profile, while others are seen from above. This suggests movement and an active narrative in the scenes depicted.

These methodical approaches are relevant for the two sites I present in this paper. I wish to look at the micro level of the rock art, by looking at the motifs and their relation to each other and the rock surface.

3. The material from Central Norway; two newly documented sites from the inner part of Trondheimsfjord

In this paper I will approach my objectives based on two different panels from Central Norway; Hammer IX in Steinkjer municipality and Kvennavika I from Inderøy municipality (Figure 2).

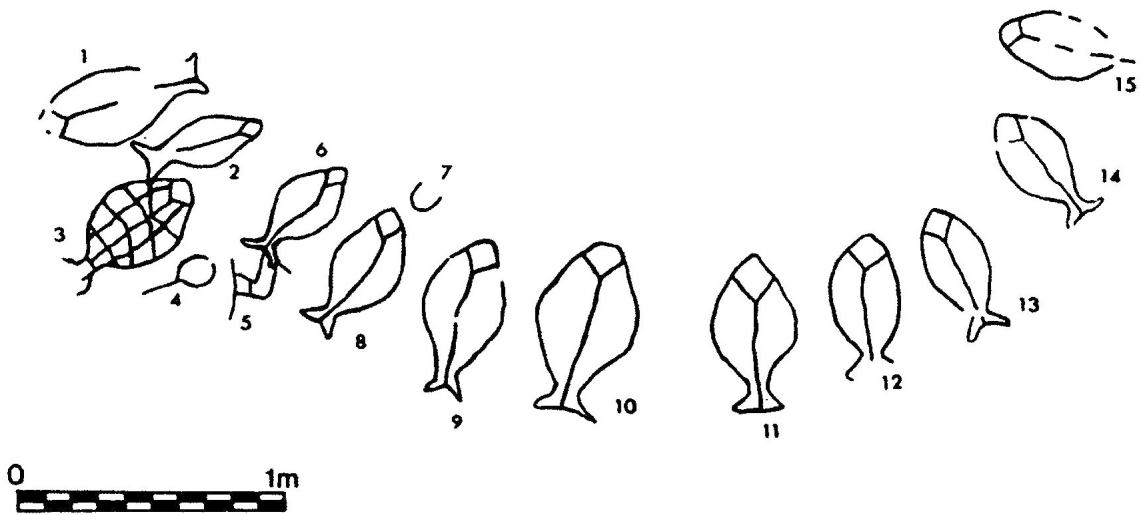


Figure 3. Tracing of Kvennavika I (GJESSING 1936: chart LXX).

The panels have been known since the 1930s and 1970s, but neither have been documented until now. The Directorate for Cultural Heritage funded NTNU University Museum, Department of Archaeology and Cultural History, to do new documentation of these sites in 2017 and 2018. During the fieldwork we focused on a multi methodical approach, using both traditional (tracing and frottage) and digital methods (photogrammetry and laser scanning), in order to secure and supplement the details of the rock art (KIRKHUS & STEBERGLØKKEN, 2019; STEBERGLØKKEN, 2018a).

3.1 Kvennavika I – the panel of flatfish

The rock art panel at Kvennavika in Inderøy municipality was discovered in 1930 and documented in 1934 (GJESSING, 1936). The panel consists of twelve flatfish interpreted as possibly Atlantic halibut, forming a semi-circle, placed horizontally at the top of a natural dome shaped rock.

The panel is located 35 m asl which gives an approx. maximum date of 5000 BP. This is one of the few panels from Central Norway where the motifs seem to create some sort of a scene and where there seems to be a clear intentional

placement of the figures. The rock itself has the shape of a dome and stands out in the landscape. All of the halibuts' heads (except one) point inwards in the semi-circle facing the top spot of the rock. There is a kind of heterogeneity about the motifs looking at the tracing by Gjessing (Figure 3), and the motifs are also not pointing in the same direction but are also very similar in the way they are depicted. But there are exceptions. These exceptions include the one halibut looking in the opposite direction and another breaking the semi-circle and having an internal pattern as well. There are other differences as well which are not so obvious at first glance, which I will return to below.

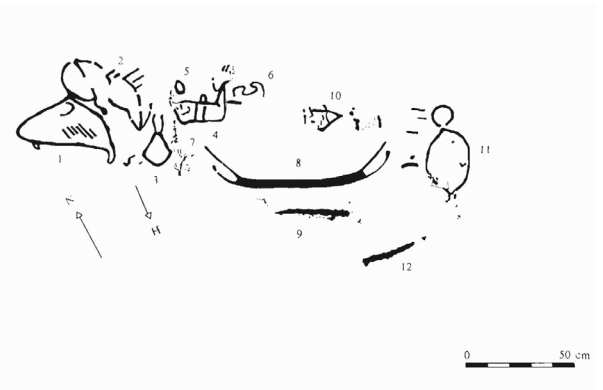


Figure 4. Tracing of Hammer IX (BAKKA 1988: vii).

3.2 Hammer IX – the panel of «chaos»?

Panel number IX at Hammer in Steinkjer municipality, was traced by Egil Bakka in 1977 (BAKKA, 1988). This panel is one of 17 registered panels and is located at 31 m asl, which gives an approx. maximum date of 4400 BP. At this panel, there is rock art from both Northern and Southern rock art tradition. Looking at how the motifs are distributed, there does not seem to be a particular pattern or a clear relation between the figures. Several of the figures are also hard to interpret, however a whale figure (Figure 4,1) can be seen furthest to the left, and also what can be interpreted as two boat figures (4, 6) belonging to the Northern tradition. At the centre, there is a boat of the Hjortspring type (8), which are often related to the Late Bronze Age/Pre Roman Iron Age and a possible anthropomorphic figure (11) furthest to the right.

4. New documentation and new discoveries – new interpretations

How we interpret and document the rock art is complex and many different processes affect our interpretations. At the most fundamental level, we interpret the rock and peckmarks – detecting what is natural and what is human-made. However, the weather conditions (wet or dry) and light conditions (light/shadow, sunlight/flashlight during night observations) affects how we see the images. The number of different details we are able to identify depends on all these things. Then of course, there is the weathering of the rock itself, and the general level of experience of the one who is documenting the findings. How we perceive the images is highly linked to the experience of the researcher, but what one expects to find is also a factor which Sognnes (1999) illustrates with the case at Sandhalsan (GJERDE & STEBERGLØKKEN, 2018). It took over 60 years from when the first painted images were discovered in 1931, until the pecked figures were discovered in 1993. This has to do with what the researchers were looking for during their documentation most namely their expectations,

and it just goes to show how easy it is to overlook certain aspects.

Then of course, there are the different methods of documentation that can also affect what is identified and documented. Using only one methodical approach can be a bit risky, and it is difficult to interpret challenging areas of the panel only relying on one method of documentation. That is why the best way of documenting rock art is using a multi-methodical approach. If some areas are unclear, there is a possibility that the frottage can reveal something you cannot make out during the night observation and tracing, or maybe the photogrammetry can reveal something else. Using the examples of Kvennavika I and Hammer IX, I will show how certain details have been exposed through new documentation methods and consequently how this has shed new light on the interpretation of the rock panel.

4.1 Kvennavika I – one scene, one event?

Looking at the original tracing (Figure 3), it looks very heterogeneous. The images show great similarity and they seem to create some sort of scene forming a semi-circle. Sognnes (2006: 556-559) has analysed their position and tried to find if there is one particular point they are all oriented towards. During his study, he identified three central points, which are actually located close to each other at the top of the rock. It seems that the fish point to a special place at the centre of the rock. He argues that this could possibly have been the spot where someone stood when they spoke to a crowd, or performed rituals.

If we want to consider a probability that this is the result of one specific event, I believe we need to look at the micro level. We need to look at the three different levels; the gestalt, type and style. All the fish images belong to the same gestalt; the same form and the basic construction. There are however, a couple of different types present. Most of the figures have markings of

the head/gills, and one horizontal back line. Fish number 3 and 14 (Figure 5) are different though, number 3 with an internal pattern and number 14 with two horizontal lines inclined from the back line. If one compares Figure 3 and 5 we have also found new figures including one more halibut; number 16. This figure breaks the semi-circle like fish number 3, but in an even more noticeable way. Perhaps this is why nobody has seen it before now, because it breaks the pattern? The rock is extremely weathered as the tracings suggest, so it was the combination of night observations, tracing, frottage and photogrammetry that resulted in this discovery.

But what about the style level? Are they so similar that they could have been made by the same hand during one single event? In order to study this question, it is necessary to look closely on how the lines of the figures are made.

Looking closely at the details from the tracing and photogrammetry, the figures are actually varied and not that homogeneous in their expression as at first glance. Some are quite slender (Figure 5, fish number 2), while

others have a chubbier appearance (Figure 5, fish number 12). Some of the figures are depicted as “static” (Figure 5, fish number 10) while others bend as if they are still swimming through the curves/waves of the rock itself (Figure 5, fish number 8). However, what really stands out, is the depiction of the tail. Some have a clearly split tailfin, while others end with an almost straight line (Figure 8, number 6 and 10 respectively). This can be a result of different individual styles.

The fact that the fish figures follow the rocks natural formation surrounding the naturally raised platform, may indicate an intended scene. The figures to the right (north) are much shallower than the ones to the left. This can indicate more weathering coming from the north, but it could also mean that these figures are pecked in a different way with a different force or are older and thus are more weathered due to age than the rest. These observations together; the placement of the figures and the different styles of the figures, might indicate that this scene was made by several different artists. This will again most likely affect the chronological aspect. There is a possibility that the figures were made during

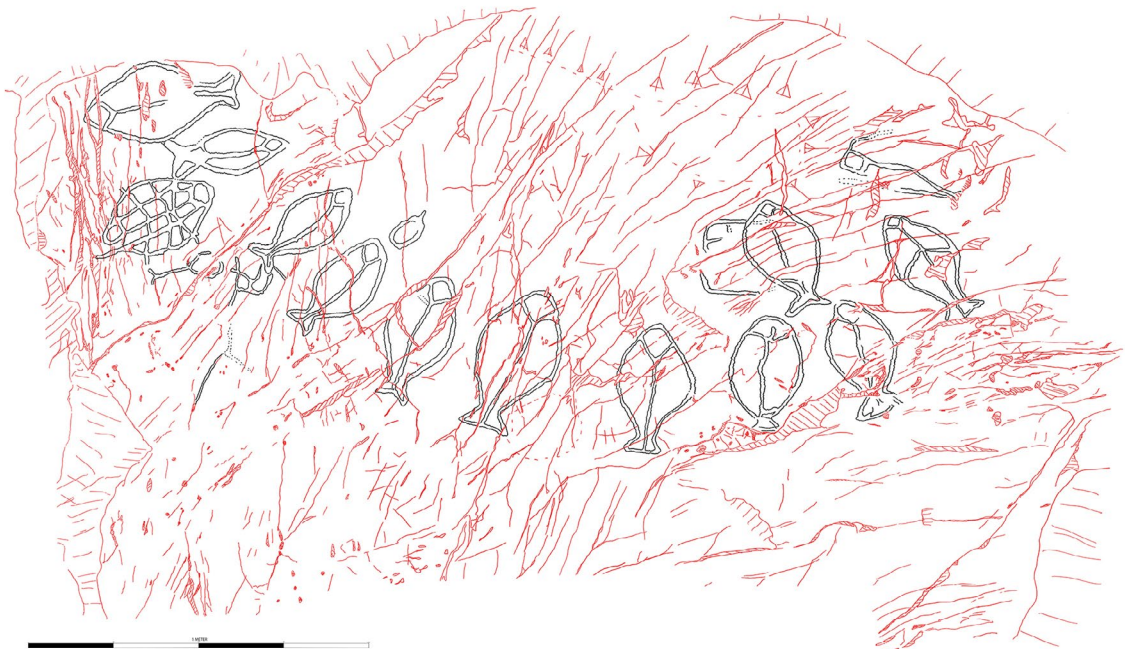


Figure 5. Tracing of Kvennavika I, NTNU University Museum (STEBERGLØKKEN 2018a: 19).



Figure 6. The 3D-model of Kvennavika I, the figures are marked with white chalk (oil free) and can be seen following the natural raised platform, NTNU University Museum (STEBERGLØKKEN, 2018a: 22).

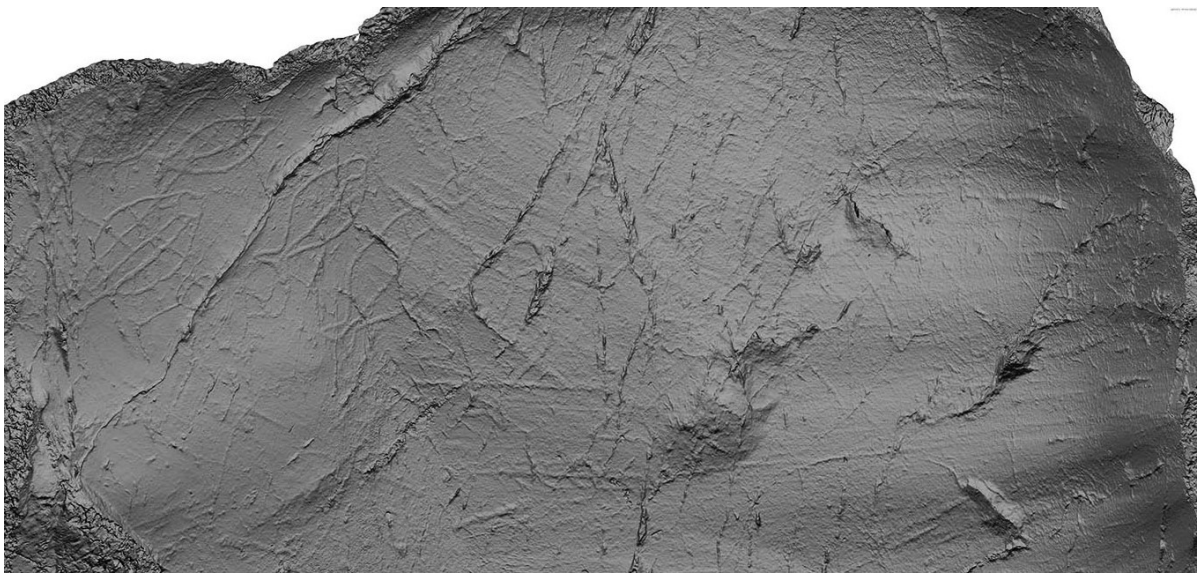


Figure 7. Details from the photogrammetry of Kvennavika I, NTNU University Museum (STEBERGLØKKEN, 2018a: 22).



Figure 8. Details (fish number 6 and 10) from the tracing of Kvennavika I (Figure 5), NTNU University Museum (STEBERGLØKKEN, 2018a).

one event by several artists, but there is also a possibility that the figures have been made over the course of decades, and possibly over a longer period of time. This also means that the narrative of the rock art could have changed over these years, and this last scene as it appears today, is only the last narrative of several that have built up over a long period of time (STEBERGLØKKEN, 2018b).

4.2 Hammer IX – a “chaos” of narratives?

Looking at the original tracing (Figure 4), there are only twelve documented figures. Even though they represent both the Northern and Southern tradition, they are all oriented in the same direction, being added over what must have been hundreds or even thousands of years. However, the marine aspect seems to be

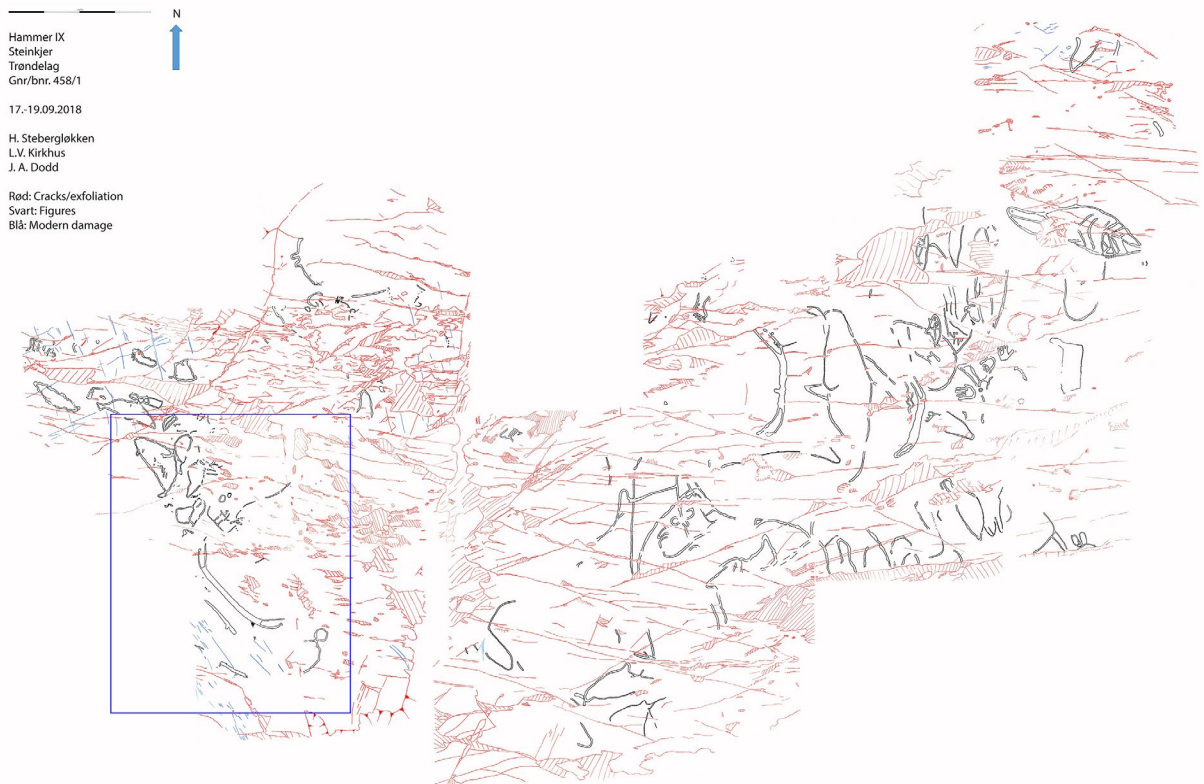


Figure 9. Tracing of Hammer IX, NTNU University Museum (KIRKHUS & STEBERGLØKKEN, 2019). Blue square marks area of the original tracing (Fig. 4).



Figure 10. The handprints from Hammer IX, Photo by Kirkhus, NTNU University Museum (KIRKHUS & STEBERGLØKKEN, 2019; Illustration by Stebergløkken).

an important factor throughout these years with both the whale and boat elements representing early and late motifs.

When documenting the panel in 2018, we used night observations, tracing, frottage, photogrammetry and laser scanning (a HandyScan 700). There had been some observations in 2012 of previously undocumented figures, which implied that the panel extended much further. Which we confirmed during our documentation (Figure 9).

A major challenge with this site is the extreme weathering of the rock, evident due to the many cracks and exfoliation damages. This is why many of the figures are not completely documented. Other areas we have only documented traces of lines that we were not able to interpret due to poor preservation conditions. The shape of the lines, however, could imply that we have several whale figures in a variety of sizes. We can also see bird images, elk images and the boat type (rectangular) representing the

Northern tradition. These figures are distributed all over the panel. In addition, we have three boats of Hjortspring type, which could belong to the Pre-Roman Iron Age (LING, 2005:26), as well as handprints (Figure 10) and footprints, which we normally associate with the Southern tradition.

The rock itself is curved, and the rock art follows this natural curving from west to east. What we realized early on during the documentation is that this natural curving, together with the movement of the sunlight (and if the rock surface was wet or not), “gave life” to the different parts of the panel at different times of the day. Figures that were almost invisible for most of the day, came to life at a certain time of the day when the light’s direction hit the right spot. Because of bad weather condition, we had to work in a tent for most of the time. This made it difficult interpreting some of the figures when doing the tracing since there was no available sunlight. We made a new discovery when studying the scan in Meshlab afterwards. The Meshlab program software made it possible to move the light source when studying a 3D model/ scan of a rock art panel. When positioning the light from the left we could see an elk figure we had not seen during our fieldwork. While positioning the light source

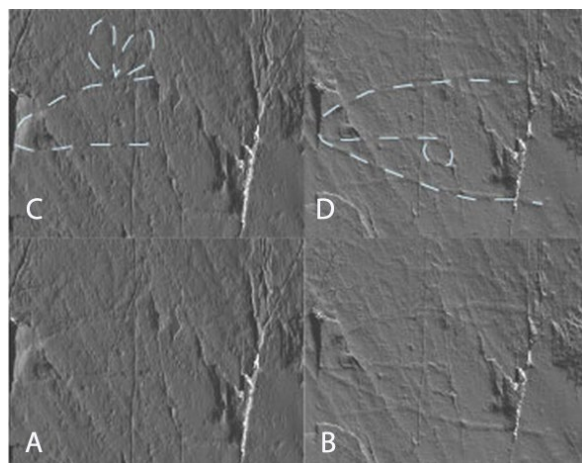


Figure 11. Details from the laser scan of Hammer IX, Illustration by Kirkhus, NTNU University Museum (KIRKHUS & STEBERGLØKKEN, 2019: 26). The images above (C and D) are identical to those below (A and B) only with markings to show our interpretation.

from underneath the figure, the figure changed (Figure 11A and B). The ears disappeared, and the belly line of a whale figure appeared and turned the elk head into the head of a whale.

I believe that where the images transform in the light is an intended effect. This is not the only image at this site where we can observe such a transformation. Just below the “elk-whale” (Figure 11) there is another image that could be interpreted as a “bird-whale” or a “bird-elk” (Figure 12). The bird’s body has inner lines, and a long neck. Because there is a third parallel line following the bird’s neck - the bird’s head could also be interpreted as a whale’s head, or an elk. Because of the exfoliation damage, the possible ears of the elk are gone so it is impossible to conclude if it is a whale or an elk. Another interesting aspect is the superimposed footprint on the bird’s back.

These two examples (Figure 11 and 12) are two of many whale images at this panel and at the Hammer site. What is so special about the

combination of these different motifs, and why does the whale seem to be the main character in this narrative? Only a hundred meters northwest, is where panel V is located. Here you find another transformation scene that was documented by Egil Bakka in 1977 (BAKKA, 1988) (Figure 13). This image is also superimposed, and you find several characters joining the scene; the whale, the bird and the bear. There is also a human figure close by and footprints.

What is common with these three examples of transformation images is that these have to be deliberate additions to already existing images. We cannot say how much later in time these additions were made, but those who made them must have seen the already existing images. We can also conclude that the marine element has a strong presence, and the whale seems to be the main character.

The images from Hammer V do not form scenes in the same way as Kvennavika I, and the panel appears more “chaotic” to us because

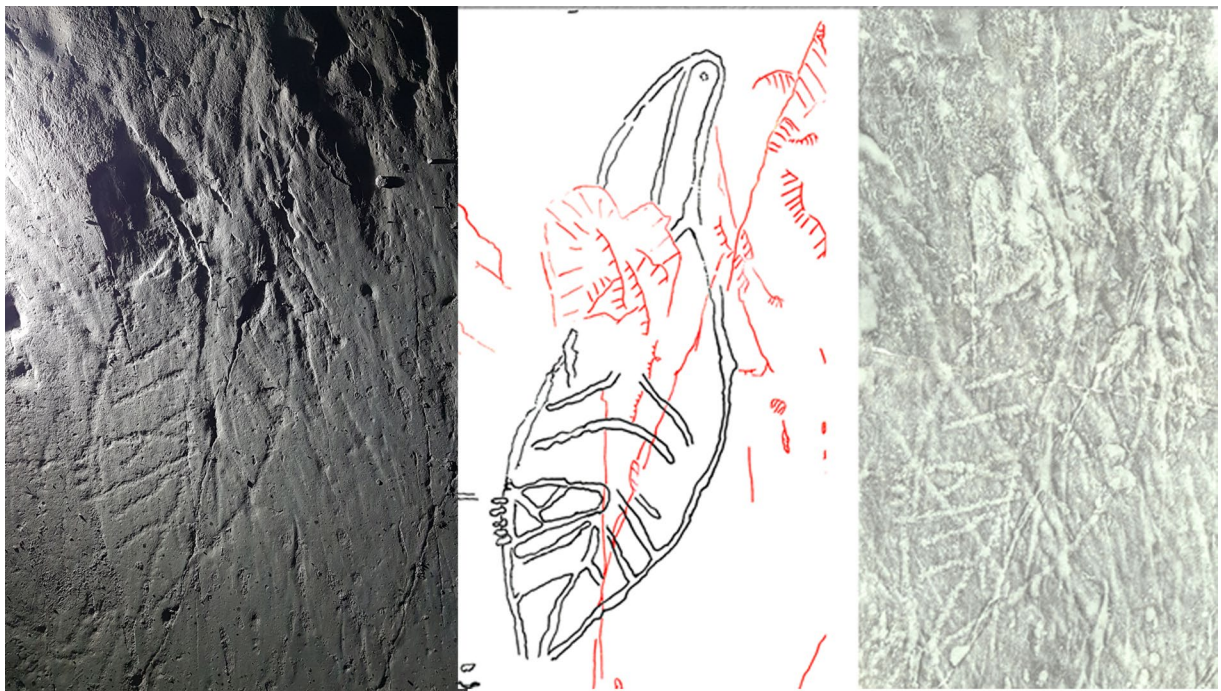


Figure 12. The “bird-whale”/”bird-elk” from Hammer IX, Photo by Kirkhus, NTNU University Museum (KIRKHUS & STEBERGLØKKEN, 2019). Illustration by Stebergløkken.



Figure 13. The “whale-bear” (number 2) from Hammer V, detail from tracing (BAKKA 1988).

of this. Because there are many additions throughout many thousands of years, the relation between the figures are difficult to see. As Janik (2014) has identified in her work with the material from Zalavruga there are many different station points at the panel. Our discovery of the “whale-elk” also implies that the station point can be important for the interpretation. This figure alters its meaning as the viewer or the sunlight changes position. This creates a whole other level of depth to the material, which shows that the rock art panels hold complex narratives. It is also possible that it was intended that the viewer had to move around the rock to understand the narrative. The sun conditions affecting the visibility of the rock art also implies that there could be certain times in a day or maybe even a year, where the panels full meaning could be understood. The constant

shifting of the light “gives life” to different parts of the panel at different times of the day, and the low autumn sunlight is ideal for spotting the rock art.

5. Concluding remarks

This paper shows how complex the rock art from Central Norway can appear by using two different examples to illustrate this. What is mutual to these examples, which also represents a general trend in the region, is that panels seem to demonstrate that there have been several returned visits to these sites. The rock art represents different artists returning to specific sites and adding or changing the panel, and perhaps the narratives. Working with different

rock art sites, also gives new understanding of the sites when returning at different times of the day. As the sun and light conditions change, different images “comes to life”. Images that are almost invisible at certain times, almost “pops out” when the light condition is right. This observation could imply that the panels’ narratives changes throughout the day or year.

The complexity of the panels are shown with these examples. The curving of the rock and the positioning of the motifs on the panel affect the way we see and interpret the figures, like the semi-circle of the flatfish of Kvennavika I and the “whale-elk” of Hammer IX. The marine element is a common factor from these sites, and the halibut and particularly the whale is an important animal within the Northern tradition in this region. The “transformation scenes” from Hammer combining a sea and a land animal, also imply that the animals were important ritual beings. An animal that could possibly change and move between different words (GJERDE, 2010; HELSKOG, 2014). The sites themselves were places people returned to, which also implies the importance of the geographic location of these sites. Maybe it was the surrounding landscape that was important, or maybe the rock itself, we only know that they continued to create rock art at specific sites repeatedly for a long time.

In conclusion, and one of my important objectives with this, is that we have to be very careful how we interpret the rock art panels. Maybe not all figures of a panel fit one narrative because maybe the panel consists of many different narratives. The narrative can also change when the viewer moves across and around the panel. Thus, we cannot treat one panel as one entity with one story, and we cannot expect the images to represent the same age. Chronology is equally challenging when working with sites like these. That is also why shoreline dating is difficult, and it only gives a maximum age. By acknowledging the complexity of the material, this gives us several different ways to approach the rock art that could be fruitful to both the interpretation but also the methodology.

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