

Herbert NOWAK, Hallein

NEW DISCOVERIES OF ROCK ENGRAVINGS IN THE
LAND SALZBURG, AUSTRIA

To my friend Willi Repis

Until 1960 investigation of rock engravings in the Land Salzburg, and all over Austria for that matter, was limited to casual discoveries. In fact, apart from places known for the existence of rock drawings, such as Hexenwand on Mt. Dürrenberg and Wasserpalfen on Mt. Ofenauerberg near Golling, which are the most relevant ones, no further rock drawings had been explored. It was not until the past twelve years that a search of such engravings and their exact registration in a cadastre was undertaken in a systematic manner¹.

At the same time investigation of this kind all over Austria was carried out independently by E. Burgstaller of Linz who had his finds of rock drawings published in suitable scientific papers². Thus, with previous reports on such investigations by Haberlandt and Hell relevant facts about this recently established branch of ethnological research can now be summarized³. I realize that the term "ethnological" (or "folkloristic") used in this connection will not be readily accepted, since two recognized authorities in this domain are inclined to emphasize a "prehistoric" interpretation⁴. The fascinating thought that the rock drawings discovered in Austria might be taken as a cultural link between the "traditional" sites in the north and south of Europe where rock engravings have been found, will have to pass the test of chronological and typological dating. When investigation of the speed of natural crumbling of the kinds of rock involved will have been carried out and yield adequate results regarding the intensity of disintegration by rain, snow and changes in temperature, we shall know how far the dating of the drawings will have to be regarded as "chronological" or "typological".

As it does not seem reasonable to postpone the presentation of the rock engravings listed below until the prehistoric age of some of them is confirmed or disproved, and since also their ethnological interpretation may be of considerable value, we now prefer to publish the facts so far available.

During the past twelve years, the main centers of our investigation were the Tennengau district and the territory around Lofer in the Land Salzburg,

but part of the work was also carried out in the Rupertiwinkel area in Bavaria and in the Salzkammergut district of Upper Austria. In two places in neighbouring Upper Austria, viz Kienbachklamm near Bad Ischl and Höll in the Totes Gebirge mountains, the ravages of exaggerated publicity were conspicuous to visitors. Well-intentioned reports of mass media usually cause an influx of numerous visitors who take photographs, who delineate and sometimes even “immortalize” themselves on the rock surfaces which display drawings from former times⁵. That is why we prefer not to mention any precise sites in order to prevent the risk of destruction, and this is also the reason why the investigation of rock drawings in the Bluntatal valley has been carried on for years with the necessary precautions. We worked there in the autumn only, since large numbers of excursionists visit the valley in spring and summer whose attention, for the above mentioned reason, should not be drawn to the rock drawings. It is not yet possible to ascertain how much the publicity concerning the engravings at St. Wilhelm in the Taugl district has damaged them⁶. Anyhow it is necessary not to mention exact locations of rock drawings in the newspapers, in order to ensure their protection. Such publicity, as well as certain regulations for the preservation of valuable relics of the past are more harmful to the engravings already located than occasional markings on them by chalk which can be easily wiped off after taking photographs. Sometimes such markings are nevertheless misrepresented as destructive although experts all over the world have used and are still using this method for copying the less conspicuous kinds of engravings⁷.

In recent years we discovered the following rock drawings. We have taken the measures necessary for ensuring their protection and preservation⁸.

In the Tennengau district

Kronreifstein in Weitenau. Discovered by W. Repis in 1962. Large piece of rock displaying initials, a rectangle, christograms and geometrical signs.

Weitenau near Golling⁹. Discovered by a local hunter around 1965. One site in an “Abri” displaying merils, chess-boards, rhomboids, a “sun-wheel”, crosses and “X”-signs and a pentagram.

St. Wilhelm in the Zimmereckwald wood near St. Koloman. Discovered by W. Repis and H. Nowak in 1966. Eight large pieces of rock with crosses, “W” and “X”-like engravings, initials, the relief of a crucifix etc. In the

opinion of N. Watteck, site I, which she calls Fagerstein and/or Kreuzerlwand, is a former place of worship with libations. Relevant in this connection is verbal information received from Oberschulrat A. Rettenbacher, St. Koloman, to the effect that his father had told him that St. Wilhelm had been used for meetings by protestants.

Pass Lueg, site I. Discovered by Willi Repis in 1969. One site on a rock wall with crosses and initials.

Wasserpalfen on Mt. Ofenauerberg near Golling. Nine places on rock walls in the cadastre of rock engravings, marked I, II, III etc.; I and III to VIII were discovered by W. Repis and H. Nowak in 1968; II by W. Urbanek, Golling, in 1968; and IX by W. Czoernig and W. Gruber in 1934. The sites were named Jägerzeile, Jägerhöhle, Hauptfels, Leiterband, Radband, Mühleband, Kleine Becher, Soldatenstein and Großer Wasserfels. The most relevant motifs are pentagrams, initials, "X"-signs, triangles, wheels, drawings of human beings and animals, merils, geometrical signs, cup-shaped signs etc.

Höhlenband on Mt. Ofenauerberg near Golling. Discovered by H. Ager in 1970. Three places on a rock wall displaying ladders, chamois, pentagrams, christograms and crosses.

Auwald in the Bluntau valley near Golling. Discovered by M. Malter, W. Repis and H. Nowak in 1968. Four sites on rocks with engravings representing animals, ladders, wheels, initials, pentagrams, crosses, indications of years (18th and 19th centuries), triangles, merils.

Quellwände in the Bluntau valley near Golling. Discovered by H. Nowak and E. Urbanek in 1968. Several sites on rock walls with pentagrams, crosses, initials, merils, and a hunting motif.

Bachfeld in the Bluntau valley near Golling. Discovered by W. Repis and H. Nowak in 1968 and E. Urbanek in 1969. Two sites on rocks with representations of animals, initials, ladders, crosses and an indication of the year 1850.

Baumschule in the Bluntau valley near Golling. Discovered by M. Malter in 1967. A site on a rock wall with mainly initials.

Unterstand in Schildkar, Tennengebirge mountains. Discovered by W. Repis and U. Kub in 1971. A site on a rock wall with many representations of animals, geometrical signs etc. Exploration is in progress at Schildkar.

Schönalm in the Oberscheffau district in the Lammertal valley. Discovered by H. Nowak in 1971. A rock displaying crosses and geometrical signs.

Kuchlbachalm in the Unterscheffau area in the Lammertal valley. Discovered by H. Nowak in 1971. Five sites on large rocks with crosses, ladders, initials, figures, wheels, bowl-signs and numerous geometrical drawings.

Kleines Kirchentäl near Hallein. Discovered by H. Nowak in 1971. Rock wall with polished rectangular surfaces, initials, indications of years (19th century).

Wegscheid near Hallein. Discovered by H. Nowak in 1971. Rock wall showing initials, figures, lines and geometrical drawings.

Pinzgau in the Lofer area

Jagdplatz in the Lofer valley. Discovered by W. Repis in 1966. Several sites on rocks with initials, crosses and indications of years (19th century).

Lindauwald near Frohnwies. Discovered by A. Morocutti in 1959, and by W. Repis and H. Nowak in 1965. Three rocks with drawings resembling human beings, animals, mask-shaped motifs, geometrical drawings etc.

Eingangstein near the Lamprechtsofen gorge. Discovered by W. Repis and G. Schreder in 1964. Drawings of houses, geometrical signs, initials, arows.

Wegfels near Lofereralp. Discovered by W. Repis in 1965. Piece of rock with "X"-signs and crosses and numerous geometrical drawings.

Kreuzwand at Lake Königsee. Discovered by O. Schauburger in 1964. A rock wall shows many initials and indications of years (20th century).

Parkplatzstein at Lake Königsee. Discovered by W. Repis in 1962. A large rock with initials, pentagrams, crosses and bowl-shaped signs.

Kniefpass near Unken. Discovered by M. Hell probably around 1960. Rock wall displaying tree-shaped sign, cross, wreath of rays, wheel-cross¹⁰.

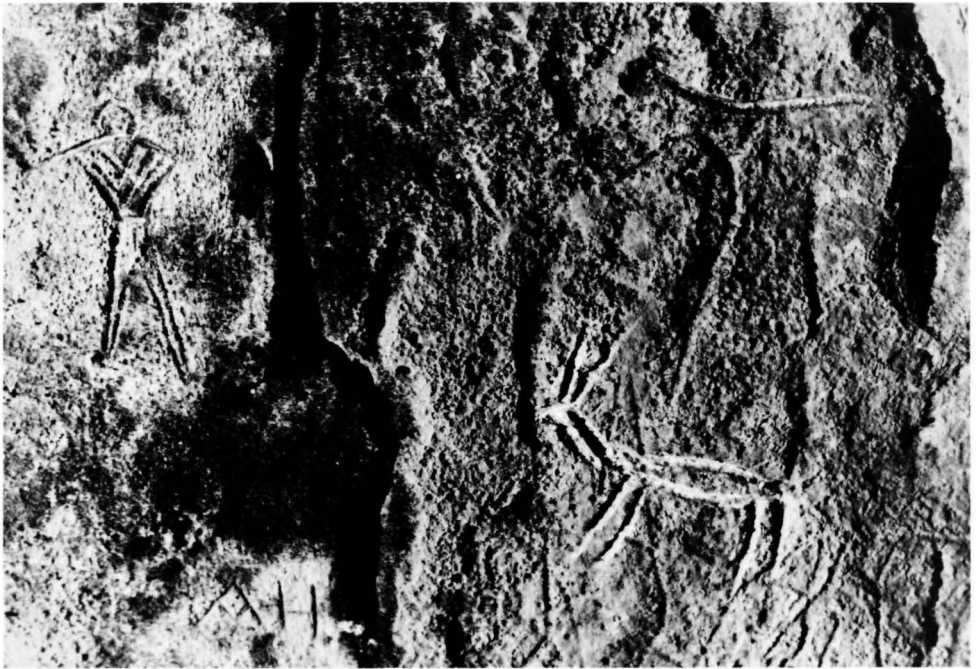
Many other sites are known to us, but have not yet been fully explored. In addition to the registration of signs and drawings on rock walls and on pieces of rock we also make records of signs and drawings cut into the wood of furniture and into the doors of old churches. There are also signs carved by stone-cutters in columns and arches. The latter are undoubtedly distinctive marks of artisans, of houses and farms¹¹. We shall deal with this subject at a later date. It is noteworthy, however, that marks of the same kind are sometimes seen also at sites in natural surroundings.

REMARKS

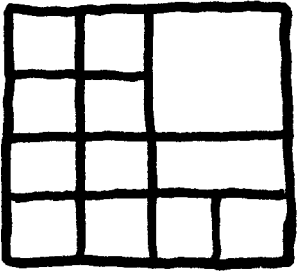
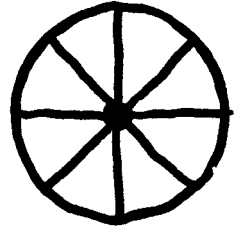
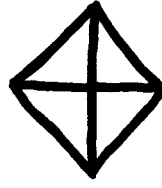
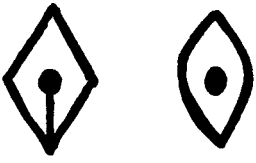
- 1 This cadastre of engravings on the lines of the classification applied by the Austrian Cave Cadastre has been compiled by W. Repis, Oberalm, Land Salzburg.
- 2 The most relevant publications on the subject are:
Ernst Burgstaller, Felsbilder und Inschriften im Toten Gebirge in Oberösterreich, in: Oberösterreichische Heimatblätter, Jahrgang 15, Heft 2/3, pp. 57–101, Linz, 1961
Ernst Burgstaller und Ludwig Lauth, Felsgravierungen in den österreichischen Alpenländern, in: Jahrbuch des oberösterr. Musealvereins, pp. 325–378, Linz 1965
Ernst Burgstaller, Schamanistische Motive unter den Felsbildern in den österr. Alpenländern, in: Forschung und Fortschritt, Heft 4/5, Berlin, 1967
Ernst Burgstaller, Felsgravierungen in den österr. Alpen, in: IPEK 1966–1968, pp. 123–132
Ernst Burgstaller, Felsbilder in den Alpenländern Österreichs, in: Valcamonica Symposium, Actes du Symposium International d'Art Préhistorique, pp. 143–149, Capo di Ponte, 1970
Ernst Burgstaller, Felsbilder in Österreich, Linz 1972
- 3 A. Haberlandt, Zu einigen volkstümlichen Felsritzungen in den österr. Alpen, in: Archaeologica Austriaca, Heft 19/20, 1956
M. Hell, Zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte des Kniepasses bei Unken, in: Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für Salzburger Landeskunde, Band 104, 1964
- 4 Herbert Kühn, Die Felsbilder Europas, 3. Auflage, W. Kohlhammer-Verlag, Stuttgart 1971
Ernst Burgstaller, Felsbilder in den Alpenländern Österreichs, in: Valcamonica Symposium, Actes du Symposium International d'Art Préhistorique, pp. 143–149, Capo di Ponte, 1970
- 5 Salzburger Nachrichten, 16. 11. 1971 (Denkmalschutz auf dem Papier)
- 6 Salzburger Nachrichten, 16. 11. 1971 bzw. 9. 12. 1971 (Das Geheimnis des Fagersteines). A report on these discoveries is scheduled to appear in a volume to be published by Gesellschaft für Salzburger Landeskunde.
- 7 See for instance the books „Die Felsbilder Europas“ by H. Kühn and the volume „Valcamonica Symposium 1970“.
- 8 Several typical glyphs have been included in the material published within the work „Das Buch der Zeichen und Symbole“, edited by H. Biedermann and I. Schwarz-Winkelhofer, Graz 1972.
- 9 Erich Urbanek, Felsbilderfund in der Weitenau, Halleiner Zeitung, 8. 3. 1973
- 10 Martin Hell, 1964; see remark (3)
- 11 Buberl, Dr. Paul: Die Denkmäler des politischen Bezirkes Hallein, Österreichische Kunsttopographie, Band XX, Wien 1927
Becker, Leopold: Über die Haus- und Hofmarken, in: Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für Salzburger Landeskunde, Band 41, 1901
Die Steinmetzzeichen (Winkelmüller), ORA-Verlag, München 1960

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

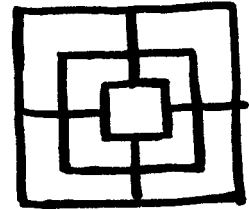
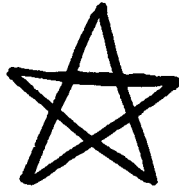
Nach einem kurzen Abriß über die Österreichische Felsbilderforschung zeigt der Verfasser seine gegensätzliche Ansicht zur generellen prähistorischen Interpretation der österr. Felsgravierungen, zumal dort kaum Rücksicht auf das chronologische und typologische Alter der Darstellungen genommen wird. Die Publikation neuer Felsbilderfunde in den Massenmedien wie auch die in der Presse publizierten Forschungserfolge bringen durch aufmerksam gemachte Touristen die Bildfelsen in die Gefahr der Zerstörung durch Unberufene. H. Nowak stellt sodann die meist noch unpublizierten Felsbilderfundstellen im salzburgischen Tennengau und Pinzgau vor und weist auf die oft enge Verbindung von Felsgravierungen zu Handwerkszeichen und Haus- und Hofmarken hin.



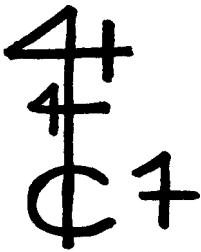
Detail of the rock-engravings in Wasserpalfen (Ofenauerberg near Golling) Foto: Willi Repis



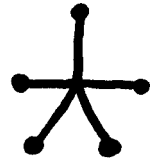
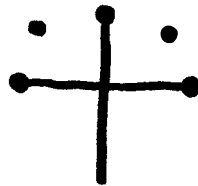
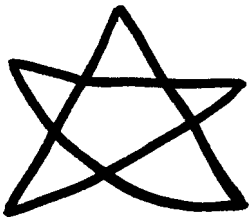
Pentagram and other signs (Parkplatzstein, near Lake Königsee)



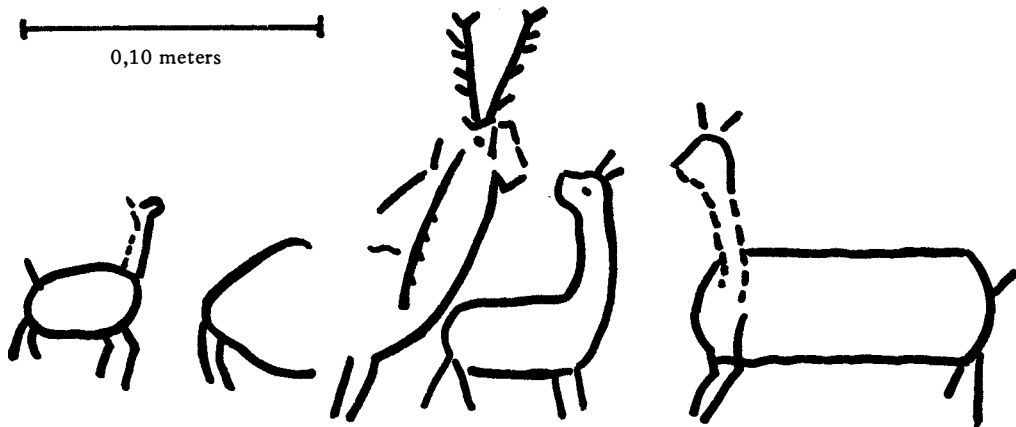
Pentagram and meril (Bluntauental near Golling)



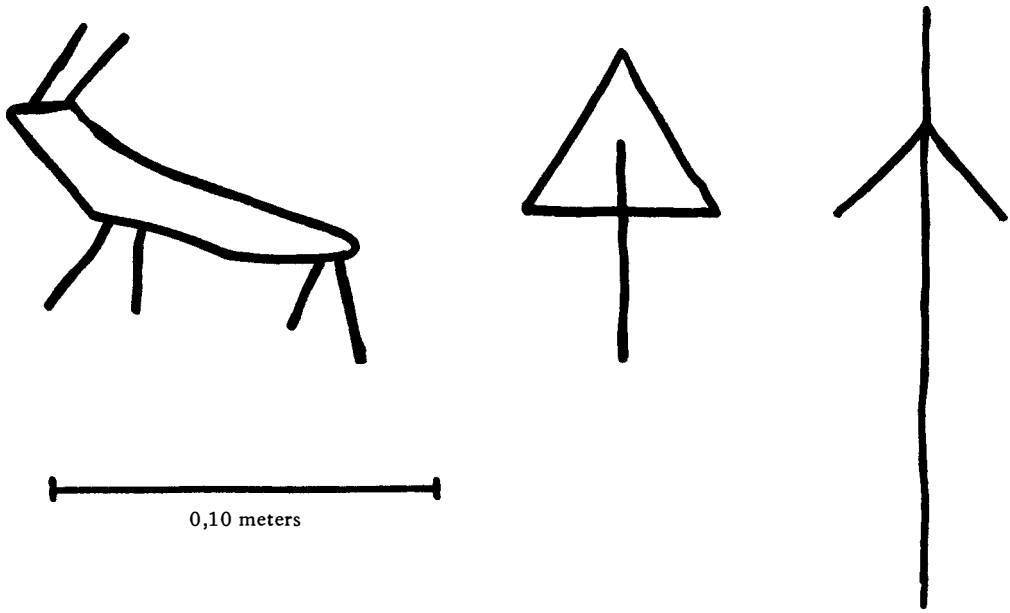
Distinctive marks of houses or artisans (Wegscheid, Dürrenberg)



Geometrical signs (Kuchlbachalm)



Stag and hinds (Bluntauental near Golling)



Animal and geometric signs (Bluntauental near Golling)