

## THE ROCK ART OF ARCTIC NORWAY

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The two groups of rock art

In Northern Europe there exist two main groups of monumental rock art. They have long been known as the South Scandinavian group and the North Scandinavian or Arctic group. However, it has been discovered that both groups exist side by side in the same terrain in large areas of Central Scandinavia, for instance in most of Southern Norway. This led to the conclusion that the difference between them was due to chronology. The northern group of carvings was attributed to the Stone Age and the southern one to the Bronze Age. This attribution is also partly, but not entirely correct. Later investigations have proved that the local Stone Age, to which the northern group belongs, is a very long one, lasting at least until the end for the Bronze Age of South Scandinavia and, perhaps, even longer. Consequently the Stone Age carvings completely overlap with the Bronze Age carvings in time. In recent years investigators have stressed cultural background, calling the northern group « hunters' art », and the southern one « farmers' art ». This implies that the main difference between them is not one of chronology or diffusion, but is due to mental differences between people of a different way of life, while similar ways of expression occur among people living in the same way. This explanation, however, makes it difficult to explain the latest development of both groups, a fact to which I will return later. Here I only wish to make it quite clear that when I use the term « hunters' art », I refer to what other authors have called « Stone Age carvings », « North Scandinavian rock art » or « Arctic rock carvings ». « Farmers' art » is the group elsewhere named « Bronze Age carvings » or « South Scandinavian rock art ».

The distribution of the hunters' art

The hunters' art of Northern Europe is distributed over large areas and can be divided into many subgroups of different geographical extent. But, by and large, these cover a continuous area, comprising Norway - except the county of Ostfold -, the northern part of Sweden, Finland

and the adjacent parts of the USSR up to Lake Onega and the White Sea. Within this large area the county of Angermanland in Northern Sweden represents a transitional zone between an eastern and a western group. North Norway is the central part of the western group and the Carelian Soviet Republic is the central part of the eastern group. Since the western group is apparently the older of the two and is in direct contact with the farmers' art in the later periods of its development, the Northern Norwegian material is of outstanding importance with regard to most problems concerning the hunters' art. In this paper I shall confine myself to the Northern Norwegian areas, i. e. those which are located on Norwegian soil north of the Arctic Circle.

#### Sites in Northern Norway

Altogether 34 sites of hunters' rock art are known in the 3 northernmost counties of Norway. Of these, 10 are in Finmark, 9 in Troms and 15 in Nordland. This includes all the art stylistically related to this group. Only 23 of the sites are on solid rock, the rest are on large boulders or - in a couple of cases - on small stones. The examples on boulders and stones are: 8 out of 10 sites in Finmark, but only 2 out of 15 in Nordland; and in Troms all 9 are on solid rock.

It will be evident from the distribution-map that the sites are unevenly distributed and do not cover the whole district. Sites are clustered in some place, more scattered in others; all are on the coast, none inland. These differences may well be due to uneven exploration of the district and not to any circumstances originating in the time of the rock art. Representations on solid rock may be isolated figures or large sites with up to 60 single representations on the same rock surfaces. On boulders or minor stones normally only one figure is present on each site, though in one or two cases 3-4 figures may be found on a boulder. 4 boulders excavated and a chunk out of a solid rock are now in the museum of Tromsø and a chunk from another rock is in the museum of Oslo. All other carvings and paintings are still preserved in their original positions. These places may be difficult to visit, because of the great distances in Northern Norway, the very coarse meshes in the communication system and the sparse population. Fortunately, however, some of the largest and most interesting sites are near main roads and easy to visit. Some of these have recently been repainted by responsible scientists, while others can be seen without any modern treatment.

#### Literature

The rock carvings of Northern Norway were first investigated by Gustav Hallström, then by Gutorm Gjessing,

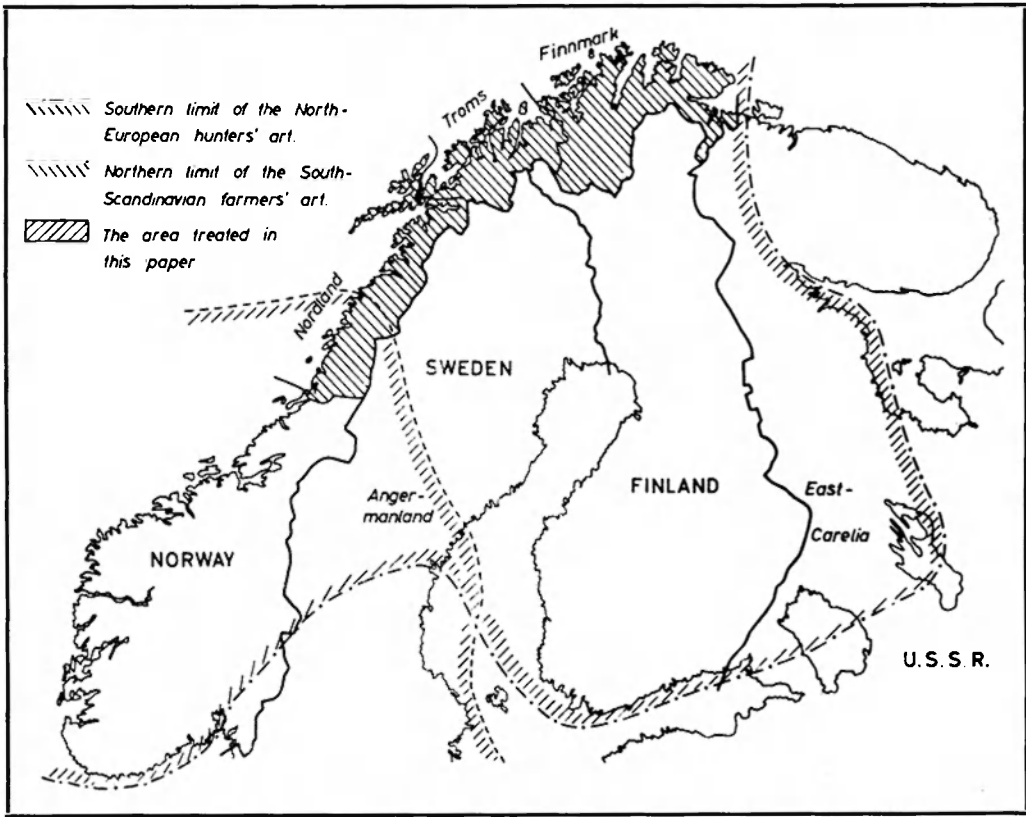


Fig. 34  
Distribution map  
of rock-art in  
Scandinavia.

and sites found since 1936 have been described and partly published by the present author. The major publications are Hallström: *Monumental Art of Northern Europe* (1936) which is in English; Gjessing: *Arktiske helleristninger i Nord-Norge I* (1932); Simonsen: *Arktiske helleristninger i Nord-Norge II* (1958) which have German summaries.

Otherwise the material is often described and interpreted in small papers in Norwegian, without a summary in an international language (see the bibliography). An exception to this is Hans-Georg Bandi's short, but excellent survey of Arctic art in Bandi und Mahringer: *Kunst der Eiszeit- Arktische Kunst* (1952), which is in German.

#### Farmers' art in Northern Norway

There are a few sites of farmers' rock art in Northern Norway. A short distance south of the Arctic Circle there are two small carvings on solid rock, comprising a number of ship figures. A little further north, at Vallsjoen in Meloy pgd., a boulder is found with many cup-marks, some cross figures and stylized figures of animals and human beings. Even in this northernmost example of farmers' art,

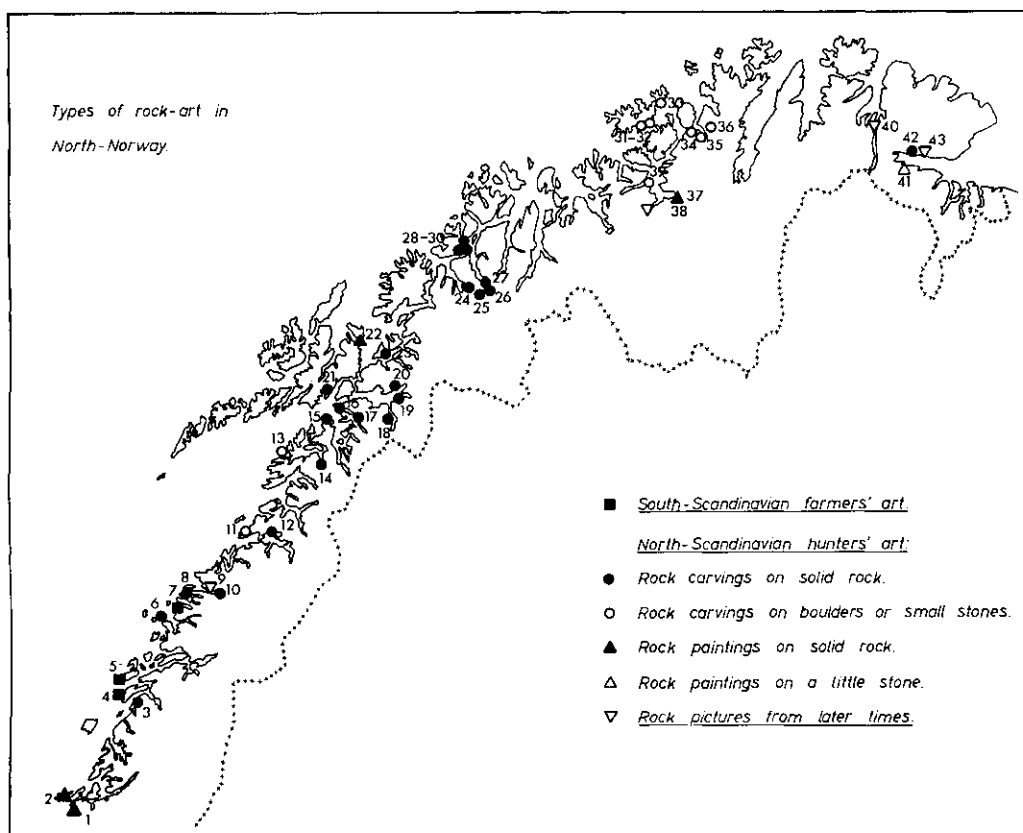


Fig. 35  
Types of rock-art  
in North-Norway.  
For names of sites see appendix.

the representations are completely different from the animal and human figures in the hunters' art. This underlines the difference not only between the two art-styles, but also between their mental and cultural backgrounds. My assumption is that the Vallsjoen stone - now exhibited in Tromsøe Museum - marks both the northern limit of the farmers' rock art and also the northern limit of agriculture itself, in the early Bronze Age. The site is on 67° latitude North.

#### Rock carvings at Spitzbergen

Approximately 600 km. North of North Cape, in the Arctic Ocean, lies the archipelago of Spitzbergen, which is also part of Northern Norway. From dwelling-sites there we know that a Stone Age population found its way to the islands, and, as far as we know, they came from North-East Russia. A plate-knife of slate, points to contact with the Carelian district around Lake Onega. I have mentioned this district as one of the central areas within the North European hunters' art province. Therefore, we should not be surprised if rock carvings are found even on Spitzber-

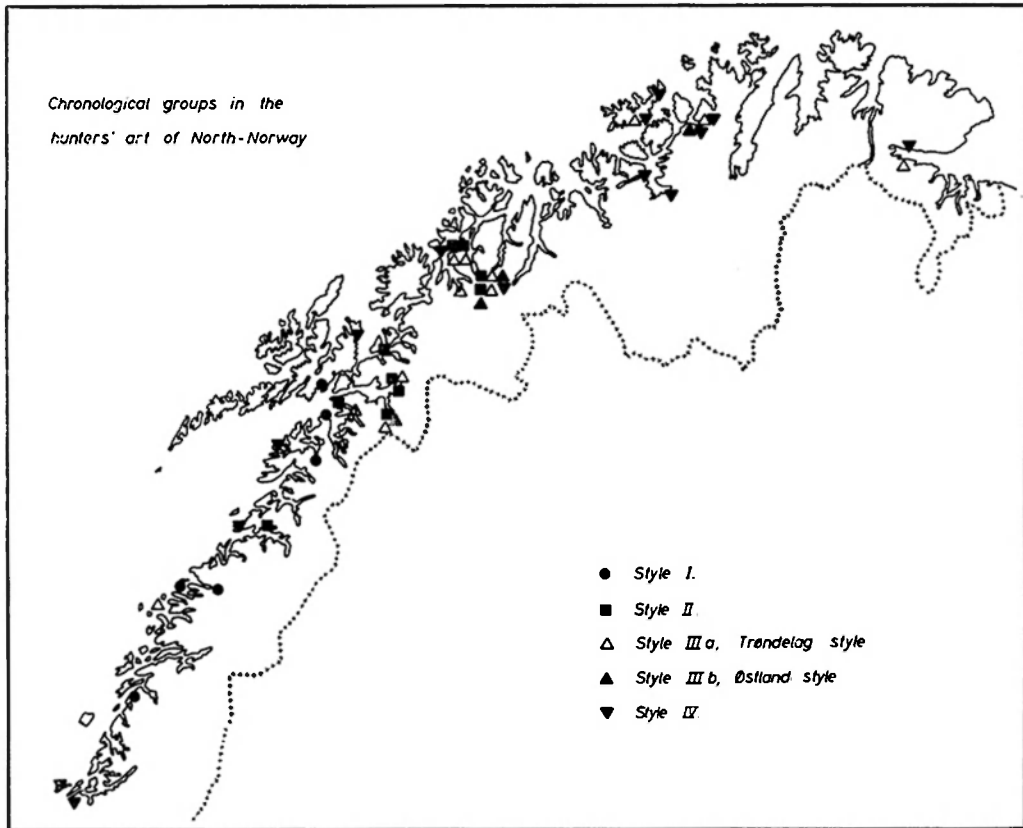


Fig. 36  
Chronological  
groups of 'hun-  
ters' art in north-  
Norway.

gen. Russian scientists, visiting the islands, in 1968, have reported the existence of figures on solid rock near the town of New Alesund; other Russian colleagues are said to have found rock carvings at another place in 1972. But these finds are not verified; no Norwegian archaeologist has yet had the opportunity to visit the sites.

#### Technical description

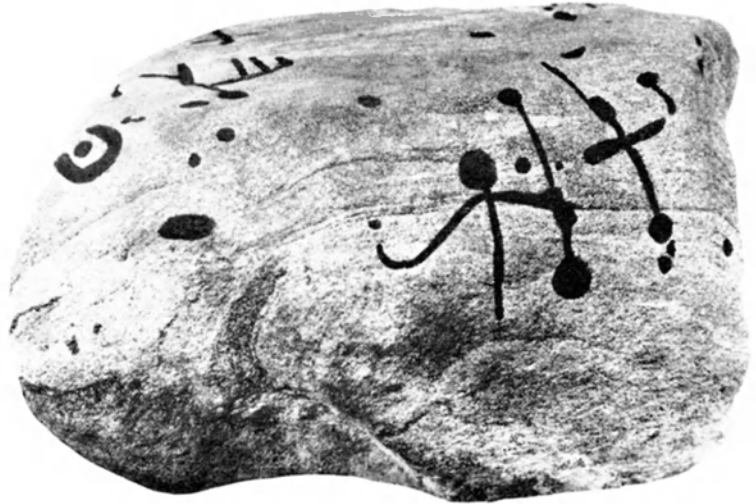
We now turn to a description of the hunters' rock art in Northern Norway, firstly in terms of technique. According to the ways of producing the lines on the rock-surface the art can be divided into 5 groups, which are described below in the sequence in which we suppose them to have been introduced. But each of these techniques may have persisted so long that most of them coexisted in the latest phase of the rock art.

1. *Ground carvings*: The figures are marked by an outline, produced by a grinding motion lengthwise to the line. This is 1-2 cm. wide and is seen as a polished band crossing the uneven rock-surface. Subsequent deepening of the line has never been found; on the contrary, the

opposite may sometimes occur: disintegration of the rock-surface due to weathering has occurred only on the uneven surfaces, not on the polished bands, which thousands of years later have changed into a relief. In most places the lines are very easy to see in reflection, when the light is at certain angles; not, as with the hewn carvings, with the aid of shadow-effects. Therefore, the ground carvings are easiest to investigate during full day light when the sun is fairly high.

2. *Hewn carvings*: Here too the figures are marked by an outline, but this is hewn out with a strong, pointed stone implement, presumably a «pick». The lines are 1-2 cm. wide, and a max. of ½ cm. deep, although they may be shallower - either originally or as a result of weathering - even to the point of being unidentifiable. Usually, weathering has given the furrow the same colour

*Fig 37*  
*A boulder with*  
*rock-art of South-*  
*Scandinavian ty-*  
*pe from Vallsjoen.*



and consistency as the surrounding surface. These figures are naturally best seen by a very grazing light or, if necessary, by artificial light. The same is the case with groups 3 and 4.

3. *Pecked carvings*: These consist of outlines, 2-4 cm. wide and are very shallow. They are often found on smooth rock surfaces, where the lines are seen or felt as uneven streaks, normally slightly deepened. The lines are produced by a round chopper-stone, with which the rock surface is pecked, presumably so that paint will adhere better there than on the surrounding, smooth surface. In fact, the rock figures on Kjeoy are made by first pecking the figures and then painting them in red. In other cases the paint has not been preserved in the lines, probably as a result of weathering.

Fig. 38

Vertical rock with carvings in style II, from Skavberg near Tromsøe.



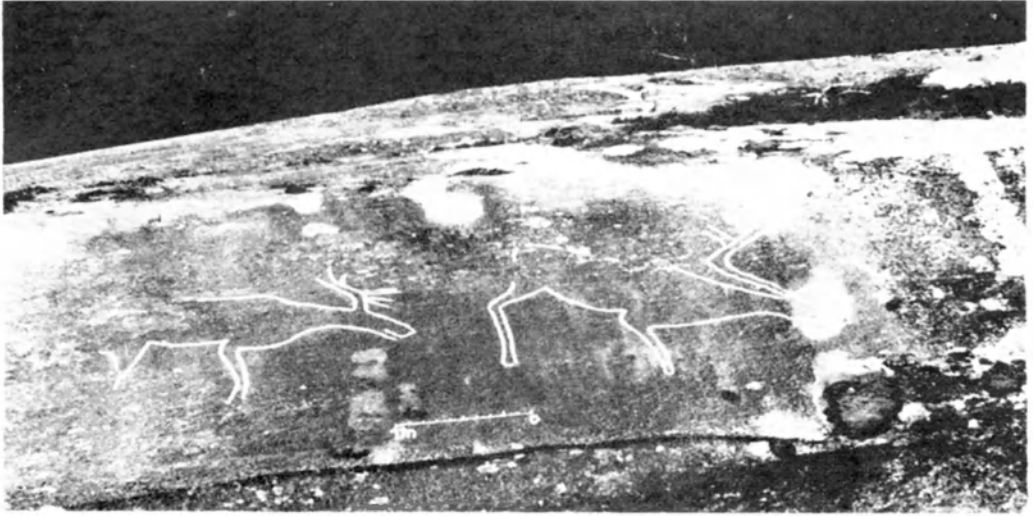
4. *Bas reliefs*: The whole inner surface of the figure is hewn away to a depth of 0,2 - 0,5 cm. by a combination of the two techniques described above: hewing with a pick and pecking with a chopper. There are no instances of such figures occurring in isolation on a site. In Northern Norway they are infrequent and always found scattered among the hewn outline-figures. At the Forselv site a bird's figure in full bas-relief is obviously later than the outlined animal figures and geometric designs.

Fig. 39

Rock-carvings from Leiknes, Ty-sfjord.

5. *Rock paintings*: Finally we have paintings. So far only 3 sites of this type have been found in Northern Norway and one of them, mentioned above, is painted





*Fig. 40*  
*Rock-carvings in*  
*style I from Sa-*  
*gelva, Hamarøy.*

over a pecked outline. But immediately to the south of the district dealt with here, we find two large rock painting sites, both in mountain caves. The paint is always red ochre. It may cover the whole figure or, more usually, form only the outline. At the site of Transferdalen, near Alta, the lines, although not pecked before painting, have the same width of 2-3 cm. as at Kjeoy and at the sites where pecked outlines are found without paint. The reason why these lines are wider than the hewn or ground ones is quite obvious in the case of Transferdalen: Every figure here is accompanied by a little, comma shaped sign, caused by the artist cleaning his forefinger against the rock surface. This proves the practice of finger-painting, and the width of the line thus has a perfectly natural explanation. The rock-paintings are often so poorly preserved that they can be only seen in extraordinary light conditions or by looking at them through a grey or ultraviolet filter. An ultraviolet filter is necessary where the rock has a yellowish or reddish colour, since to the naked eye this coincides with the ochre paint. A loose slab from Nyelv in Varanger lay with its painted surface turned down into the sand. The paint is therefore well preserved. On the solid rock at Kjeoy and Transferdalen, where the figures have been exposed to the weather, no paint is preserved on the surface. We now see only that part of the paint that originally penetrated into the pores of the stone.

These are the different techniques used. It is worth noting that cutting figures into pliable slate surfaces with a knife is a technique not known in Northern Norway. On cupmarked stones the cupmarks are always produced through the pecking of a chopper, never bored.



The motifs of the hunters' art

The principal motifs are wild animals. It is quite obvious that the main concern of the artist was the animals hunted for food, then the fur animals and, to a lesser degree, the beasts of prey man struggled against. The most common animals are moose and reindeer, followed by bear, seal, goose, whale, porpoise, halibut and salmon. In the most stylized phases of the art, zoological definitions are often impossible; here the word cervids is used instead of moose, reindeer or stag. At the sites of both Skavberg III near Tromsø and Forselv near Narvik, 2 animal figures are found. These are often declared to be domesticated dogs, but the interpretation is not certain, despite the line at Forselv leading from a neck-band on the animal to the hand of a human figure. Human beings are often depicted, either portrayed conventionally with arms and legs placed symmetrically on both sides, or shown as skiers, fishermen in a boat etc. Some human beings are outlined, others are drawn with a single line. Caps, clothes and sexual marking are frequent traits. The only indisputable female figure is hewn on a loose stone from Isnes-toften, near Alta, now in Tromsø Museum. She has 2 long plaits, a short miniskirt and, apparently naked breast.

Hunting-gear and means of communications are placed in relation to people and animals. The small and large boats are unfortunately too stylized to tell us anything about the real boats of the Stone Age. On the other hand, the skis at the Roedoy site, south of Bodo, are quite naturalistic. Some boats have a fishing line running over the

*Fig. 41*  
*Rock-carvings in style I from Leiknes, Tysfjord.*





*Fig. 42*  
*Rock-carvings in*  
*style I from Val-*  
*le. Ejjord, Loedin-*  
*gen.*

gunwale and ending either in a fish or a sinker. Isolated stone sinkers are also depicted at many sites. On the boulder Gaashopen I, from Gaashopen near Hammerfest, which is now in Tromsøe Museum, there are two large boats, each containing many men. In the carving Skavberg III, a moose stands with its forelegs in a geometrical design which presumably signifies the criss-crossed branches over a pit-trap. Another moose on the same site has 2 spears in its flank. In addition to these figurative representations, most localities have geometric and symbolic figures: cup-marks, circles, spoked wheels, rectangular or rhomboid frames containing meanders or zigzags, etc. These figures are often interpreted as sun symbols, fertility symbols etc. As an argument in favour of their symbolic content I can mention rectangular frames at Forselv and a human being at Skavberg I, both of which contain exactly the same geometrical pattern in their interior. It is tempting to explain the former as a fertility symbol, the latter as a woman. While a circle with radiating lines may be a sun symbol, presumably it also represents a real wheel with spokes, i. e. a cultural element which I suspect never existed in Northern Norway in the Younger Stone age. Similarly we must see the snake figure at Kirkely, near Tromsøe, as a creature which never lived so far north. These two signs must be symbols imported from South Scandinavia together with their religious or

magic meaning. The normal rule is that every single figure or composite figure is a unity in itself. Scenes comprising two or more figures acting together are very rare. A few cases, however, undoubtedly represent compositions: At Klubba in Meløy 2 mooses clearly form a pair; at Gaashopen I, the two ships must be seen as a unit; at Skavberg I a scene can best be explained as a man beating a drum and a woman dancing to the rhythm; and at the same site two reindeer heads which end at the neck and are shown following each other are, most credibly, interpreted as two reindeer swimming the stream in front of the site. Thus the artistic expression is on the same level of development as the Western European Magdalenian cave paintings, where compositions occasionally occur, but the isolated animal figure, which may be accompanied by symbols, is the normal rule. The explanation presumably is that compositions were not alien to the artist, but the religious and magic function of the art was related to the single figure, not to scenes.

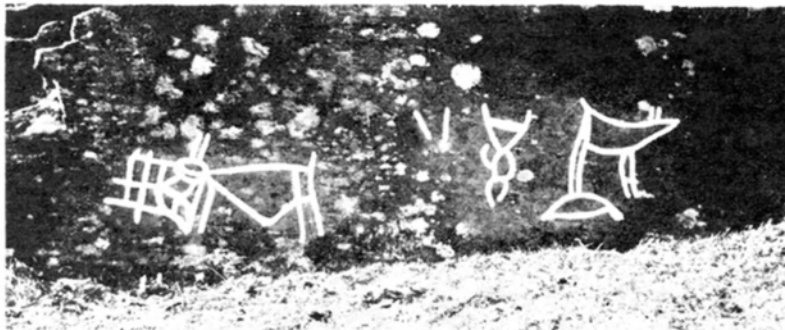
The milieu of  
the hunters'  
art

The normal location of a rock art site is near the coast. No Northern Norwegian carving or painting is situated more than a few hundred metres from the sea; and most were presumably directly above the high tide mark at the time of execution, when the sea level was higher than today. This can be proved in a few instances, where the lower part of a carving has been worn by the waves or covered by marine layers of sand and gravel. I will comment on these phenomena in the section on chrono-



*Fig. 43*  
*Rock-carvings in*  
*style II from For-*  
*selv, Skjomen,*  
*Ankenes.*

Fig. 44  
Vertical rock with  
carvings in style  
III or IV, from  
Skavberg near  
Tromsøe.



logy. Other sites were near the lower part of a river, and in particular near a waterfall. This link between rock art and water has, of course, practical reasons: reindeer and moose often wander along the water; the reindeer's regular swimming places, where they cross the sound or fiord, are the easiest places for hunting them; fishing and hunting sea-mammals are important means of sustenance; and man often preferred to live close to both the sea and fresh water. For instance: The sites at Aasli, Sagelv and Forselv are near waterfalls, Skavberg I-III near an old swimming place; Transferdalen and Kanstadjorden by the side of a natural track along the coast; and Gaashopen must be seen in relation to a dwelling site near a good landing. However the relation to water must undoubtedly also be regarded as a magic one: many sites are located exactly where water runs over the rock surface all summer. This is the case at Kirkely, Vaagan, Skavberg I etc. A detailed understanding of the role played by running water in the magic ceremonies performed here is perhaps impossible for the archaeologist, but the fact that such a link existed for Stone Age man is beyond question.

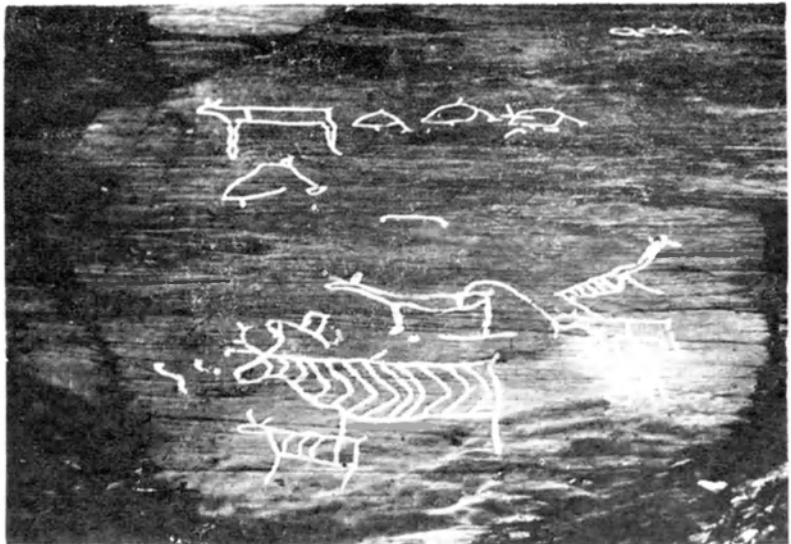
In other areas the reasons for selection of a particular site are more obscure. Within a relatively long stretch of land there may be many rock surfaces, which appear to us to be absolutely identical and equally well suited for the purpose. In spite of this, only one or two of them have been used; but these are used over and over again. It was impossible as yet, to discover the reason. We can only, say that this very restricted area must have been the holy place, whereas the neighbouring area, only 3 or 4 m. away, was not. Where many figures are found together, the later choice of location presumably depended on the existence of previous figures, which made the site sacred. The reason for the precise positioning of the first figure - or, on some surfaces, the only one - may be that an event of importance has occurred here. A successful hunt may have sanctified the exact spot where the prey died, the birth of a child may have given a place

great significance in relation to fertility rites, etc. Of course this is a very loose hypothesis, but I see no alternative explanations which come closer to interpretation of the topography. Sites with many overlapping figures are Fykan, Leiknes, Forselv, and Graabergan at Tennes. In other Northern Norwegian localities, overlapping is rare, in contrast to the south Scandinavian farmers' art.

Perhaps this means that the farmer's interest in the representation was related more to the act of making the picture, which was not seen as sacred later on; whereas the hunter regarded his picture as invested with power for all future time.

One single site in the district is uniquely placed: the carving of Aldon in Varanger is on a high mountain-top, far from sea and fresh water, with a magnificent view over a large area of land and sea. The only parallel in Northern hunters' art is Flatruet in North Sweden. In both places we are driven to the conclusion that the mountain was a holy place, perhaps a place of sacrifice, already, before the making of the pictures. The Aldon mountain was used as a place of sacrifice by the Lappish people right up to the final extinction of their pre-Christian faith only 200-250 years ago.

The hunters' art may be placed on a vertical wall or on horizontal or sloping surfaces. In most cases this has no apparent influence on the choice and style of the motifs. However, one observation is worthy of mention: rectangular frames containing geometric figures are always found on horizontal or near-horizontal surfaces, for instance at Forselv. On vertical walls the same geometrical patterns are outlined only by a straight, hori-



*Fig. 45*  
*Carvings in style*  
*III b, from Kirke-*  
*ly, Balsfjord.*

zontal line on the bottom edge, while the sides and top are irregularly and roughly finished for instance at Vik near Harstad and Skavberg I. It is tempting to explain these figures as huts or tents seen respectively from bird's-eyeview and from the side. Where many figures occur on one site, they may differ in style; this must be because they were carved successively over a long period or on different occasions separated by long intervals.

At Graabergan the figures on the top of the rock are larger and more naturalistic than those at the foot. In the nearby Kirkely carving, the same difference is found between the figures in the upper row and the lower figures, which have been eroded by the waves. At Skavberg there are three sites in close proximity. The two more naturalistic, Skavberg I - II, are 5-6 m. higher above sea level than the more stylized Skavberg III. Such instances are relevant when we turn to questions of relative chronology and of stylistic development.

#### Style and chronology

A number of stylistic phases may be distinguished within hunters' art. Some of these form parts of a relative chronology, others seem to have just a geographical limitation. The relative chronology is based not only on the Northern Norwegian material, but also on material from the rest of Norway and from North Sweden. I shall therefore restrict myself to the relevant material and not discuss the chronology in detail.

Where the land level has constantly risen, the sites often show different styles corresponding to the different shore lines. It is normally assumed that the lowest figures are the most recent. Generally, it has been common practice to date the rock-carvings by their height above sea level in a relative sequence, even where they are very far apart geographically, although in this case great caution must be used. Some figures may be dated, for example, those which depict identifiable antiquities or motifs related to other known archaeological material. Some localities may be directly linked with dwelling-sites, for instance the Solsem-cave in the County of North Trondelag. Others can be proved to be contemporary with a shore-line, as in the cases of Forselv and Kirkely. But there are few fixed points for an absolute chronology anywhere, least of all in Northern Norway. We can be certain, however, that the style has moved from naturalism towards stylization and this movement can be described as style-phases I to IV. Style II is currently dated to ca. 2000 B.C., style III to ca. 1000 B.C., and style IV to ca. 500 B.C. Thus the hunters' art in Northern Norway is believed to be related to the development of the Subneolithic Stone Age, beginning ca. 3000 B.C. and lasting until ca. A. D. 200.

The style-phases can be characterized in the following way:

*Style I:* Naturalistic figures; full size; only animal outlines; ground carvings. Distributed from the Narvik-district to the north to Bronnoysund to the south.

*Style II:* Subnaturalistic figures: nearly full size; only outlines. Animals, human figures, also scattered symbolic designs. Hewn rock carvings. Distributed over the whole of the Swedish-norwegian area up to Tromsø to the North.

*Style IIIa: The Trondelagen style:* Stylized figures: from half to quarter size. Outlines, but also some entrails in the animals. Animals, human beings and other motifs. Distributed over the whole of Northern Norway, Trondelagen, and Northern Sweden.

*Style IIIb, Ostland-style:* Contemporary with IIIa. Stylized figures: half size. The animal figures have a geometric pattern, filling the body. Distribution: Northern and Eastern Norway.

*Style IIIc:* Contemporary with these two there is a special *Vestlands-style*, not found in Northern Norway.

*Style IV:* Extreme stylization: very small figures. Some are outlined, others are single-lined, still others beaten or in bas relief. Includes rock-paintings, which do not differ stylistically from the carvings. The animals can no longer be defined zoologically. Human beings, geometrical designs and symbols. Distributed in Finland, and over the whole Scandinavian peninsula except South Sweden.

The Eastern group, comprising the localities of Carelia, most of the Finnish sites, and some figures in Northern Sweden, has a different stylistic development, which has not been dated in relation to the Northern Norwegian chronology. The oldest phase there is thought to be contemporary with my style II; so the Northern Norwegian style I is still the oldest phase in all Northern European rock-art.

Fig. 46  
Vertical rock with  
carvings in style  
IV, from Skavberg  
near Tromsø.



## Minor arts

In the Subneolithic Stone Age of Northern Europe there are also other artistic manifestations, e.g. small stone and pottery sculptures. We cannot compare their development with that of the rock art. The stone sculptures and some of the terracottas represent animals and remain naturalistic throughout their development. The anthropomorphic terracotta idols, on the other hand, are extremely stylized from the start. So neither of them follows rock art's development from naturalism to stylization. Gjessing has given the following explanation: the hunters' rock art of style I-II is executed by the hunters themselves, and they remain the masters of the small sculptures even later. But from the transition from style II-III the execution of rock art passed to professional shamans. The subsequent professionalisation and distancing of the shaman from everyday life on the hunt and in the fishing-boat, started a process of stylization not paralleled in the minor arts.

About the anthropomorphic terracotta idols we can say only that they are distributed in Finland and Eastern Finmark and originate in a period previous to the earliest known existence of rock art in the same areas. It is very hard to establish the relation between the two types of art.

## Origins

The debate over the origin of North-Scandinavian hunters' art has focussed on the age of Northern Norwegian style I. Both sides in the debate consider that this style is older than the earliest farmers' art in South Scandinavia. According to P. V. Glob, the latter is rooted in a Central and Western European milieu and the two species of art have independent origins and are not connected in their early development.

In « *Arktiske helleristninger i Nord-Norge* » (1932) G. Gjessing postulated that the ground rock carvings, are of very great age. His theory was based mainly on the Sagelv area, where the rock carvings are situated at a point on the wall, which was very difficult of access except in the period when the sea level was immediately below the figures, i. e., ca. 6000 B.C. But Gjessing also pointed out resemblances between style I and the minor arts of the Maglemosian Culture, for instance on the bone axe from Ystad in South Sweden. If the early date is correct, there may be a continuity from the Palaeolithic cave-art of Western Europe to Arctic style I.

The other side in the debate, the present author included, has cast doubt on the validity of the arguments referred to and disagrees with the tendency of identifying style I with the Mesolithic Fosna Culture and styles II-IV with the Subneolithic « Slate Culture », as such



identification postulates a continuity in art and religion across a serious break in material culture. According to the present writer's view, it is more reasonable to date the beginning of hunters' art ca. 3.000 B. C., contemporary with the beginning of the Subneolithic era, despite the fact that this means complete independence from all other known schools of rock art. In 1970, even Gjessing questioned his own earlier adherence to « the Sagelv argument »; the theory of the parallel development of art-styles in relation to comparable mentality and ecological background is now familiar to most archaeologists.

In the author's opinion the most likely theory is as follows: North-Scandinavian hunters' art is an independent creation from ca. 3.000 B. C. in the form of style I. This is found only on the Nordland coast from Bronnøysund to Narvik. From this small area, rock art spread in the third millennium to South Norway, the northernmost parts of Norway and eastwards to Carelia. Gjessing has also discussed a hypothetical relationship between all rock art areas in the circumpolar zone. If he is right in this, the secondary effects of our style I should be traceable through the whole of Siberia and Alaska to Canada, at a rather early stage. But an evaluation of this theory is outside the scope of the present paper.

Late rock art  
in Scandinavia

Towards the final phase of the development of the hunter's art, in style IV and to some extent in style III, we see a convergence between the two main groups of rock art. By this time, the farmers' art too, had almost completed its development. It is not unlikely that the farmers'



*Fig. 47*  
*Carvings of South-Scandinavian type from Gashopen I, Hamnesfest.*

art may have been influenced by the hunters' art. This would account for many animal figures in the East - Swedish areas. However, evidence of influence in the opposite direction is stronger. It is expressed differently in different places: in west Norway by the development of a style dominated by bas relief, where the whole style looks like a mixture of the two species of rock art; this has been described recently by Anders Hagen in his publication of the Ausevik localities. In Trondelagen and Northern Sweden the farmers take over the hunters' holy places and their carvings overlap with those of the hunters, for instance at Bardal and Nämforsen. In Northern Norway we have 3 different developments: 1) the appearance of contemporary figures of both styles in the same locality; 2) the mixing of stylistic traits in one and the same figure, 3) the expansion of the farmers' art far northwards to districts where agriculture never appeared in the Stone Age. Under group 1, I would place the wheel and snake figures at Graabergan and Kirkely, the cupmarks at Kirkely and possibly the ship figures at Gaashopen I - although the latter may also relate to Carelian carvings. Group 2 would include the Ausevik-style female figure from Isnestoften near Alta and the bas-relief bird at Forselv. Group 3 must include the large cupmarked boulders at Sandvaagmoen in Steigen and Sandbukt near Hammerfest and the stone Gaashopen II with a spoked wheel. It is more difficult to decide what to do with the human figures in the rock paintings, but they also seem to belong to this group. All these sites are late, as can be proved either stylistically or geologically. There is an obvious explanation for this confluence of North Scandinavian hunters' art, South Scandinavian farmers' art and perhaps also Carelian hunters' art; it outlined below as a working hypothesis for further investigation. The farmer population of Southern Norway in its early phases is considered to have immigrated from the South. It is only natural to think of its religion and religious arts as being radically different from that of the «aboriginal» hunters. Ethnic, cultural and ecological causes have united to create a significant difference between the two main types of rock art. But throughout the Late Neolithic and Bronze Age, the further expansion of agriculture is based on the assimilation of groups of hunters and fishers. In these periods it expanded to districts where a farming population had to combine agriculture, with hunting and fishing in order to ensure survival. This development must also have resulted in a mixing of religion and magic, and this again must have caused a mixing of artistic elements. Traffic along the Western and Northern coast of Norway has always been very intense and so the mixed style soon spread far

north of the areas climatically suited to primitive agriculture.

The end of  
rock art

It is quite impossible to give more than, a rough idea of the end of rock art. We have no exact datings later than the subatlantic transgression, ca. 500 - 400 B. C. But so many sites remain completely undated that we have no reason to believe that our latest dated site is actually the latest. On the contrary, it may very well be that rock art was still produced at least as late as the first or second century A. D.

It has been commonly held that art on boulders and solid rock disappeared without any trace of persistence in later types of art in North Scandinavia. There is certainly a surprising similarity between style IV and the painted figures on Lappish shaman-drums dating from 1600 - 1700 A. D., but the chronological lacune between them has been considered to be too long. However, I should like to stress that neither the termination of the rock art nor the beginning of the drum art is dated, and we have no reason to believe that the oldest preserved drums - from the late 16th century - represent an early phase in the development of drum art. Some recent finds have indicated a possible development from style IV through the Lappish Iron Age and Middle Ages right up to the drum art. Most important, is the rock art site on the Aldon mountain in Varanger. In technique and style it is certainly a rock carving, but stylistically closer to the drum figures than any other rock carving; and its site has functioned as a holy place almost up to the present day. We have no absolute dating of Aldon: it can probably be ascribed to ca. 200 - 300 A. D.. Over the last 3 years we have found a series of figures carved with a knife in pliable slate surfaces, from Aldon to the East - only 150 m. from the rock carving - via Mattisdalen near Alta, to Glomfjord, south of Bodoe, to the South. These are small figures in a naturalistic style, showing scenes of Lappish life as it was a few hundred years ago. The costumes are not like modern Lappish costumes. The bow-and-arrow is shown, but fire weapons never. There are many reports of « false rock carvings », « modern scratches » and so on, indicating that such figures may perhaps be relatively common in North Norway.

Presumably they can be dated to ca. 1500 - 1700 A. D. No scientific investigation has ever been made on them. But we can take it for granted that a few hundred years ago a tradition of carving figures on solid rock still existed among the Lapps. This opens up the possibility that the rock art of the Stone Age hunters never really became extinct, but had its descendants almost up to modern times.

Fig. 48  
Boulder with a  
female figure  
from Isnestofthen,  
Alta.



## RIASSUNTO

L'Autore offre una visione panoramica dei problemi riguardanti l'arte rupestre dei popoli cacciatori artici della Scandinavia settentrionale. Viene analizzata la distribuzione geografica, sono descritte le tecniche di esecuzione (incisioni levigate, picchiettate, a basso rilievo, pitture), elencati i principali motivi, esaminato l'ambiente in cui si colloca l'arte rupestre della Norvegia settentrionale, l'area presa in considerazione dall'Autore in questo articolo. In genere i soggetti rappresentati sono animali selvatici (alce, renna, orso, ecc.), compaiono però anche figure umane, imbarcazioni, lance, trappole e inoltre anche figure geometriche come coppelle, circoli, ruote raggiate e motivi meandriformi. Sono stati individuati quattro stili e la loro evoluzione mostra un progressivo passaggio dal sub-naturalismo alla stilizzazione. La cronologia del primo stile è soggetta a valutazioni discordanti e ciò si riflette sul problema dell'origine dell'arte rupestre artica, se vi sia cioè continuità dal Paleolitico Superiore oppure no. Secondo l'Autore, che segue la tendenza ribassista, l'inizio va posto intorno al 3000 a. C., nel periodo sub-neolitico.

Verso la fine dell'arte rupestre artica si assiste ad una convergenza con quella della Scandinavia meridionale, opera di popolazioni agricole, la quale fa sentire la sua influenza molto a nord, in regioni in cui l'agricoltura non era ancora apparsa. Vi sono figure dei due stili eseguite contemporaneamente nella stessa località e figure in cui si può osservare la fusione dei due stili. E' infine affrontato il problema della continuità di evoluzione dopo lo stile IV e la possibile relazione tra l'arte rupestre artica e quella degli sciamani, attraverso l'età del Ferro lappone e il Medioevo.

## RESUME

L'auteur nous offre une vision panoramique des problèmes concernant l'art rupestre des peuples-chasseurs arctiques de la Scandinavie septentrionale. La distribution géographique est analysée, les techniques d'exécution (incisions polies, piquetées et en bas-relief; peintures) sont décrites, les motifs principaux sont énumérés, le cadre dans lequel est situé l'art rupestre de la région prise en considération (Norvège septentrionale), est examiné. Les animaux sauvages (élan, renne, ours, etc.) constituent le thème majeur de l'iconographie; néanmoins apparaissent aussi des figures humaines, des embarcations, des lances, des trappes, ainsi que des figures géométriques, comme les cupules, cercles, roues radiées, et méandres. L'auteur a déterminé quatre styles dont l'évolution montre un passage progressif du sub-naturalisme à la stylisation. La chronologie du premier style est sujette à des évaluations discordantes et ceci se reflète sur le problème de l'origine de l'art rupestre arctique - à savoir s'il y a eu continuité à partir du Paléolithique Supérieur ou non. Selon l'auteur, qui tend à adopter la chronologie basse, le début se situerait aux alentours de 300 avt. J. C., dans la période sub-néolithique.

Dans la phase finale on assiste à un phénomène de convergence entre l'art rupestre arctique et l'art rupestre finissant de la Scandinavie méridionale, oeuvre des populations-agricoles, qui fait sentir son influence très au Nord, dans des régions où n'avait pas encore paru l'agriculture. Les deux styles se côtoient dans des figures exécutées simultanément au même endroit ou se voient fusionnés dans une même figure. Enfin sont abordés le problème de la continuité de l'évolution artistique après le style IV et celui de la relation possible entre l'art rupestre arctique et l'art des chamanes, à travers l'âge de Fer lapon et le Moyen âge.

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APPENDIX: List of localities:

- |                            |                            |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Ossians cave            | 21. Kanstadfjorden         |
| 2. Solsem cave             | 22. Kjeoy                  |
| 3. Vistnesdalen            | 23. Vik                    |
| 4. Flatoy                  | 24. Asli                   |
| 5. Tro                     | 25. Grabergan at Tennes    |
| 6. Rodoy                   | 26. Bukkhammeren at Tennes |
| 7. Vallsjoen               | 27. Kirkely at Tennes      |
| 8. Klubba on Amnoy         | 28-30. Skavberg I-III      |
| 9. Glomfjord               | 31-32. Gashopen I-II       |
| 10. Fykanvatn in Glomfjord | 33. Sandbukt               |
| 11. Skeiet                 | 34. Leirbukt               |
| 12. Vagan                  | 35. Faegfjord              |
| 13. Sandvagmoen            | 36. Stokkeberg             |
| 14. Sagelva                | 37. Transferdalen          |
| 15. Leiknes                | 38. Mattisdalen            |
| 16. Valle                  | 39. Isnestoften            |
| 17. Forsa                  | 40. Gullholmen             |
| 18. Forselv i Skjomen      | 41. Nyelv                  |
| 19. Narvik                 | 42-43. Aldon I-II          |
| 20. Slettjord in Herjangen |                            |