

MAGDALENIAN ANTHROPOMORPHIC FIGURES AT
GÖNNERSDORF (WESTERN GERMANY)¹.
Preliminary report on the 1968 excavations

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The Site

Gönnersdorf is located on the eastern bank of the Rhine, 15 km. northwest of Koblenz. The site is about 50 meters above the present river level on a slight slope which faces south on the middle-terrace of the Rhine. On the opposite bank, just in front of the Gönnersdorf site, the town of Andernach is situated. There, in 1883, a Magdalenian site was discovered and excavated by H. Schaaffhausen (Schaaffhausen, 1888; R.R. Schmidt, 1912, p. 88 ff.). In addition to numerous stone artifacts, the Andernach finds contain some bone and antler points with oblique or double-oblique bases, bone-needles, two harpoons with one row of barbs and one harpoon with two rows as well as an antler carving, most frequently interpreted as a bird's head.

The Gönnersdorf site was discovered during the spring 1968 in the foundation-pit of a house².

¹ The original title of this paper was «Representations of Human Figures at the Magdalenian site Gönnersdorf (Western Germany)».

² The scale in the drawings marks one centimeter, the dotted line indicates the border of the plaque, the interrupted line indicates the border of the preserved part of the engraving. Photos by E. Prokop and G. Fischer; drawings by G. Fischer. I wish to thank R. Newell, Gröningen, who kindly looked through my English translation of this text.



Fig. 13 Map of the Rhine Valley between Koblenz and Köln, with the most important Magdalenian sites indicated.

The walls of the pit showed the following levels:

- a - 0.40-0.50 m.: Vegetable soil
- b - 1.40-1.60 m.: Bims, in the upper part one bank of Britz
- c - ca. -0.15 m.: Humified-loamy zone
- d - 0.40-0.50 m.: Brownish loess-loam with wavy bottom
- e - 0.40-0.60 m.: Yellow loess
- f - ca. -0.10 m.: Grey loess, topmost a layer of small quartz-pebbles
- g - 0.50-0.60 m.: Basalt-tuff in thin horizontal layers, sometimes cut by ice-wedges.

Below the basalt-tuff lies a loess-deposit 6.00 m. thick. In this loess there are loamy zones and layers of volcanic material. Still deeper, gravels of the middle-terrace complete the geological succession.

The Bims (b) is a volcanic deposit which originated during the second part of the Alleröd interstadial from the present Laacher See (Lake of Maria Laach). This lake is situated 12 km. west of the Gönnersdorf site. The bank of Britz consists of smaller particles and belongs to the same volcanic eruption. This event is dated by radiocarbon between 11,000 and 11,500 B.P. (J. Frechen, 1962). Under the Bims deposit the Alleröd-surface is preserved. The humified zone (c) below this surface and the brownish loam (d) were built during the Alleröd by the transformation of loess. Originally, the loess (e) reached up to the Bims. The basalt-tuff (g) seems to correspond to the Eltviller tuff (A. Semmel, 1967).

The culture-layer is 0.20-0.30 m. under the Bims deposit. Due to the different slope of the culture-layer and the Alleröd surface, the cultural level partially belongs to the yellow loess (e) and partly to the brownish loam (d). It is remarkable that the finds were covered with 0.20-

0.30 m. loess and therefore are older than the end of the loess sedimentation in this part of the Rhine valley. During the Alleröd, the upper part of the loess became loamy. According to K. Brunnacker the cultural remains belong to the time of the loess sedimentation; their relation to the Bölling interstadial is open to question (compare K. Brunnacker in G. Bosinski, 1969). In the profile, the cultural horizon was marked through a layer of stone-slabs, predominantly of slate; between these, stones artifacts and animal bones were found.

Among the faunal material the horse predominates; reindeer is also well represented, mostly antler; fox remains (snow-fox?) are abundant as well. The preliminary study indicates that rhinoceros and bovids are rare. The mammoth is represented only by one tusk partially de-

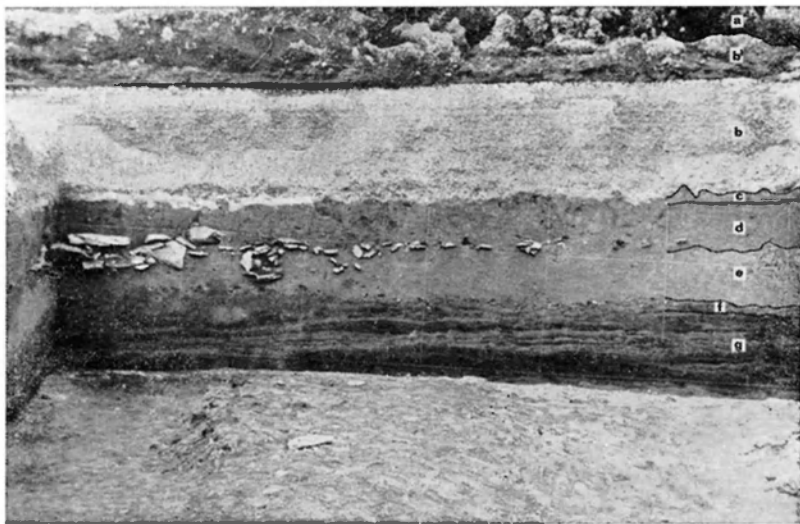


Fig. 14 Profile of the foundation-pit (west wall). a) vegetable soil; b) Bims; b') a bank of Britz in the upper part; c) humified loam; d) brownish loess-loam; e) yellow loess; f) grey loess; g) basalt-tuff in thin horizontal layers. The culture layer is marked by slabs of stone which are concentrated in the southern part (at the left).

stroyed by the dredging machine and by one complete femur.

Of the palaeobotanical material, only the charcoal has been studied. The analysis was done by I. Peters. About 95% of the charcoal belongs to the pine; a very small amount of oak and maple are represented.

The Gönnersdorf site is only partially excavated. Further excavation work will take place in 1970-72.

The Structures found in the Excavation

In 1968 an area of 96 m² was excavated to the west and south of a newly built house (G. Bosinski, 1969). The excavation was undertaken by the *Institut für Ur- und Frühgeschichte* of the Cologne University in connection with the *Staatliches Amt für Vor- und Frühgeschichte Koblenz*. Due to the protection of the Bims, the original living-surface was preserved and during the excavation the ground-plans of two huts with a paved way between them were discovered. The ground-plan of the larger hut was a broad oval with a diameter of 6.00 to 5.40 m. The interior was deepened a little, intensively coloured red by pulverized haematite and covered with stone slabs. In this hut two fireplaces and several small pits were found. The pits were of different size and character. One of them contained parts of a necklace consisting of nearly 40 wooden pearls as well as perforated and unperforated fox-teeth, and perforated teeth of deer (Grandeln). At the bottom of another pit, three female statuettes, carved from ivory, bone, and antler were discovered. At the bottom of still another pit, one statuette of the same type was located. In the upper part of the pits, jaw-bones of fox were often found while foot-bones of the same animal were in the bottoms of the same pits. Perhaps fox-skins were originally used to line the pit-walls. On these skins the jaw and foot-bones were retained (as they are in modern times).

The smaller hut had a diameter of 2.50 m. The circular border was built with some large stones. Near the middle

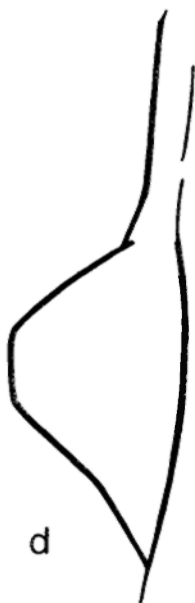


Fig. 15 Upper part of the body: a) type 1, the arms are represented by the full length. The upper arms are extended horizontally, the forearms are raised vertically. The hands are directed forwards horizontally. Under the upper arms, the bosom is visible. b) type 2, the arms are engraved to the elbow, only. Under the armstump the bosom is reproduced. c) type 3, the upper part shows only one projection. d) type 4, the upper part is stick-like without any projection. e) type 5, the upper part is formed by two converging lines and is funnel-shaped. f) type 6, the upper part is built by one line, only.



Fig. 16 Leg-type: a) type 1. The legs are represented in full length but below the knee there are only posteriorly curving lines. b) type 3. The legs end in a point at the knee-region. c) type 2. The legs are formed by two almost parallel lines which end not far below the knee.



of the hut, a bowl-shaped piece of conglomerate, consisting of small coloured pebbles, was discovered. Such a piece of conglomerate was not to be found in other parts of the excavation area. In this hut, the red colouring of the interior was almost absent and there were neither fireplaces nor pits.

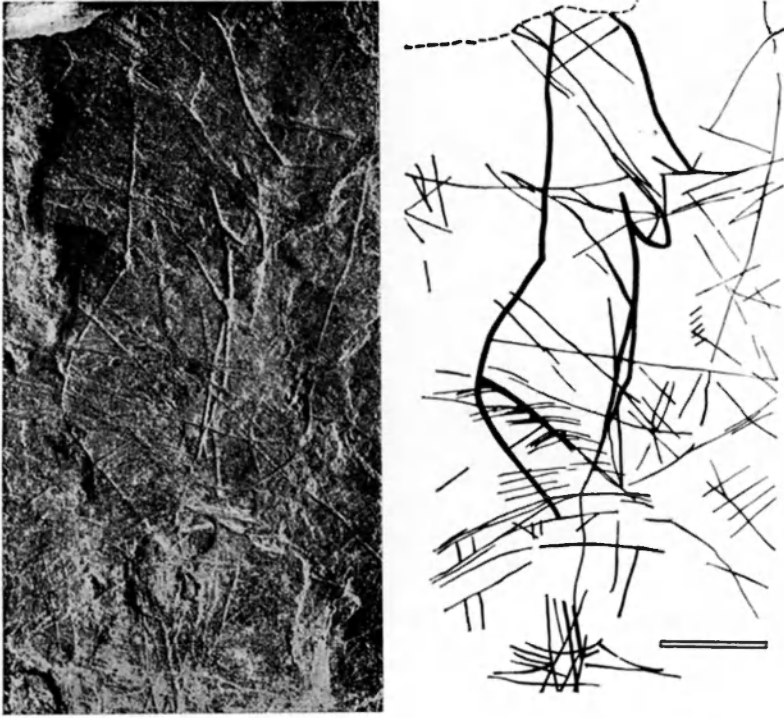
The Artifacts

The stone artifacts were partially made from a fresh-water quartzite which occurs in this area. Other artifacts were worked from varieties of flint which are to be found 120 kilometers to the north and/or 75 kilometers to the east of the site at the nearest. Altogether there are 1,350 stone-tools.



Figs. 17-18 Single figure on a broken plaque. Gō 50 St. 9 (back-side see figs. 32-33). The arm ends in a pointed stump, below this stump the rounded bosom is indicated. Above the bosom an oblique line is engraved. The two vertical lines in the lower part of the figure seem to indicate the two thighs. In the posterior, there is a chevron-like design.

End scrapers on blades are represented by 9%. Burins appear with 33% (burins on predominantly oblique retouched ends, 18%; burins «diedre», 6%; burins on broken ends, 6%). «Pièces esquilles» are represented by 8%. Between the 37% backed bladelets, there are only simple (30%) and parallel-sided (7%) specimens; backed bladelets with retouched ends and with a curved back do not occur. Borers appear with 9%; the borer-point is always short and often retouched alternately. Borers with a long borer-point are absent. Borers worked out of burin waste chips are well represented.



Figs. 19-20 Single figure on a large plaque. Gö 11 St. 11. The arm ends in a stump. The waist is thicker than in other figures.

Artifacts of bone, ivory, and antler are not numerous. There are points with an oblique or double-oblique base, needles, one isolated harpoon-barb, and one 24 cm. long «*baguette demi-ronde*» decorated with animal-heads. The «*jewelry*» consists of the wooden pearls mentioned above, of perforated animal teeth, perforated shells, and two kinds of «*dentalia*». The wooden pearls are circular, globular, cylindrical, boot-tree-shaped, or almost rectangular. According to the «*baguette demi-ronde*» and the assemblage of stone-implements, the finds are likely to belong to the time of the Magdalenian V in the French subdivision.

The Art Material

In addition to eleven carved, stylised female statuettes or their fragments and the mentioned «baguette demi-ronde» decorated with animal heads, the art material consists of about 500 engraved slate plaquettes. Among the engravings, stylized female figures, described below, predominate. Further engravings of mammoth and horse, more seldom of rhinoceros, bovids, reindeer (?), fox and fish occur, as well as some non-figurative representations. The engraved slate-plaques are predominantly broken into pieces and it looks as if they were broken intentionally. Pieces fitting together were found at a distance of several meters. The decorated plaques were without any visible rule, part of the pavement of the living-horizon. The engraved face was often, but not always, turned down. In many cases, both faces of a plaquette were decorated; often they were engraved several times, which resulted in a chaotic puzzle. Sometimes, broken pieces were engraved again; in such a case the lines of the new representation traversed the fracture.

The Anthropomorphic Figures

About two hundred human figures are present, apparently, all of them female. In addition to eleven carved statuettes, the figures are engraved on slate plaques. All the representations are without heads, without detailed figured feet, and all of them show an oblong upper body and an exaggerated, rounded posterior. Technically the engravings should have been made with burins. They are often very light (less than 1 mm. deep). Deep engravings (up to 2 mm) are rare. The figures can be classified according to different attributes. One possible subdivision concerns the depiction of the upper part of the body. There are six types:

1. The arms are represented by the full length. The upper arms are extended horizontally, the forearms are raised vertically, the hands (when represented) are di-

rected forwards horizontally. Under the upper arms the bosom is visible. In Gönnersdorf this type is rare. The hands are engraved only once (fig. 15a).

2. The arms are engraved to the elbow; often they are only a pointed stump. Under these stumps the bosom is to be seen. This type is well represented by 20 examples identified³ (fig. 15b).

3. There is only one projection at the upper part of the body. It is not always certain whether an arm-stump or a bosom is intended. With 40 examples identified, this type is the most frequently represented. In addition to the engravings, one statuette belongs to this type (fig. 15c).

4. The upper part of the body is stick-like and lacks a projection. 20 examples are known at present. Most of the statuettes belong to this type (fig. 15d).

5. The upper part of the body is formed by two converging lines and is funnel-shaped. Only 2 examples have been found (fig. 15e).

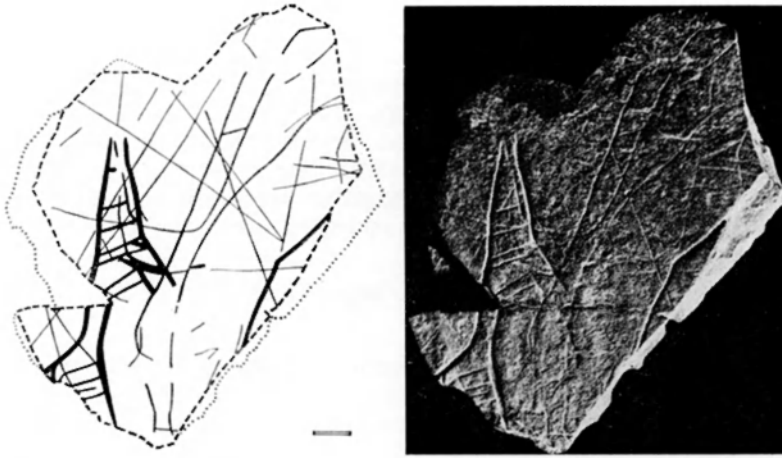
6. The upper part of the body is built by one line only. With 30 examples identified so far, this type is well represented (fig. 15f).

Another possibility of classification concerns the representation of the legs. Here three types are distinguishable:

1. The legs are represented in full length but below the knee there are only two posteriorly curving lines. In the unique example identified, these lines end in two small rhombs (fig. 16a).

2. The legs are formed by two, almost parallel, lines. In the knee-region they are curved slightly backwards. The two lines do not meet but remain open at the end. This type is well represented by 25 examples (fig. 16c).

³ This number, and the following ones, are very preliminary. More careful analysis of the material is likely to modify them.



Figs. 21-22 Single figure on a broken plaque, reconstructed from two pieces, Go 56 d/23 (upper part) and G6 65a. The upper part of the body shows only one projection, but an additional line is engraved. The waist is slender and the interior of the figure is filled by nearly parallel oblique lines.

3. The legs converge to a point in the knee region. Most frequently there are one or two lines running a little further down below the knee. This type is best represented, with 80 examples (fig. 16b).

Normally the figures are pure outline-drawings. In most cases a strict side-view is kept. Figures with both arms or both legs are rare. With the exception of one ivory-statuettes one bosom only is represented. Sometimes the arm-stump is so short that it looks like the second bosom, but its pointed form makes it quite distinguishable. In addition to the outline-drawing two figures show a chevron-like design in the posterior. This design starts on the back and goes obliquely down to the front of the figure. The pointed end either touches the frontline of the engraving or lies just in front of it. Until now, an oblique line between the bosom and the upper part of the body has been identified only once. The interior of seven figures is covered with horizontal, vertical, or oblique lines.

This design varies and is likely to represent clothing, tattooing or body-painting.

Due to their three-dimensionality, the statuettes are different from the engravings, but they show the same characteristics. It seems that depending upon the raw-material, the form of the posterior has some variations. In ivory, the posterior is subtriangular and well accentuated, in bone or antler it is more rounded and smaller.

The Posture of the Figures

A discussion on the posture of the body is only possible if one accepts that the human figures were conceived and executed as natural representations, in spite of their abstraction and schematisation. Considering the upper part of the body, the most detailed information comes from the type 1 of the corresponding classification. The upper arms are half elevated and the forearms are raised upwards. The hands are held horizontally. The more shortened representations of the upper body part, type 2, present no information pertaining to this question. Consistently, the bosom is to be seen below the arm-stumps. This is only possible if the upper arms are lifted. The more abstract figures without arms (upper part types 3-6) naturally give no indications as to the attitude of the arms, but equally there is nothing to contradict a bearing similar to types 1-2.

The breast of the figures is mostly medium sized and falls slightly down. Except for some examples it is fuller and more developed than that of a young girl. Most likely it is the breast of a young woman. The shape argues against the representation of lying figures and indicates an upright standing posture of the body. There is only one exception which demonstrates a pointed, forward extended bosom hanging free and at some distance from the upper part of the body. In this case, a woman with the upper part of her body bent forwards could have been represented.

The figures without a bosom (upper part of the body, types 3-6) may indicate the same representations as the

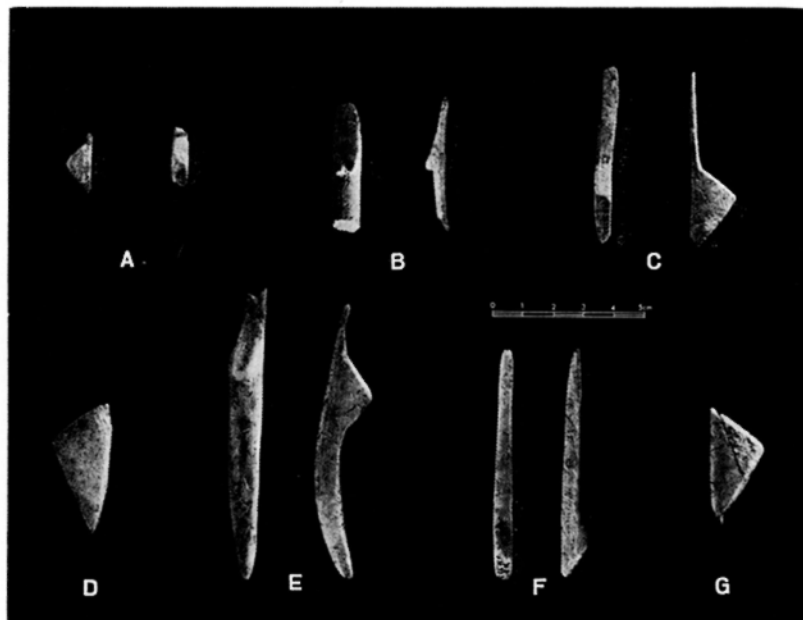


Fig. 23 Statuettes. A-D, G ivory, E antler, F bone. The orientation of E is not clear.

other engravings but in a more abstract way. It is hardly conceivable that the figures without bosom should represent males for these more shortened figures are not only without the bosom but without arms too, while the form of the posterior is identical and the rounded shapes are likely to represent female bodies. Until now, figures of males with distinctive sexual attributes are absent. With rare exceptions, the waist of the figures is always slender. Pregnant women are not represented. The line of the back has a marked break between the upper part of the body and the posterior. While the upper part is upright, the posterior is stretched backwards. Among the Gönnersdorf figures there is only one representation without this angle between the upper part of the body and the posterior. This engraving has for the back a continuous line. It differs in the shape of the breast (see abo-

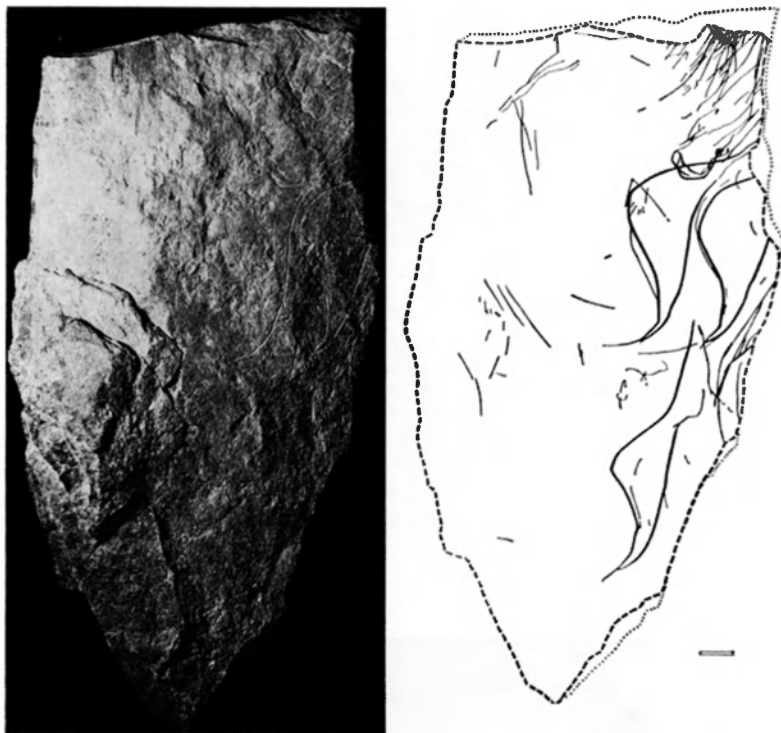
ve) and seems to represent a woman with the upper part of her body bent forwards. It is engraved much deeper than the others and the lines are often repeated. Perhaps this engraving should represent another kind of body position than the other figures.

The line of the posterior goes continuously into the backward line of the thigh. The angle between the posterior and the thigh shown by standing persons is always absent. Such a continuous line is only to be seen by persons with a forward curving upper part of the body, by sitting persons, or by persons with bent knees. Most figures are engraved down to the knees only (leg-type 3). The more complete representation of the legs (types 1-2) shows bent knees and the shanks are curved rearwards. However, the angle between thigh and shank is never as extreme as that of kneeling persons, or that of persons sitting on their shanks. The moderate angle rather indicates that the persons are meant to be standing, or jumping (?), with bent knees. The attitude seems to correspond to a «half squatting vault» in sports. Such a «half squatting vault» demands thighs slightly directed forwards as shown by many engravings. Other figures and first of all the more schematic representations have a straight front-line. Possibly this is due to a more abstract representation. From these various considerations it would seem that we may conclude that the anthropomorphic figures represent young women in a standing (or jumping) posture, with bent knees. The upper part of the body is upright, the upper-arms are raised half-way, the forearms are elevated and the hands are held horizontally. One

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Figs. 24-25 Figures in succession, other figures and the legs of a quadruped on a plaque pasted together from four pieces (and still incomplete). Gö 19 d/58, Gö 24 d/32, Gö 23 d/38, Gö 16 d/129. Altogether, we count 25 human figures or parts of them. In the left part there are a row of nine figures, a second row of five figures, and below it a third row of three figures. All these small figures are very similar. Mostly their upper part has only one projection (most likely the arm). The leg region is pointed. The larger figures on the right part of the plaque are more incomplete. Further more, in the middle of the plaque there are two very schematic representations their upper part consists of one line and their leg-region is pointed. The legs of the quadruped could belong to a mammoth.





Figs. 26-27 Two figures in succession and a third figures try not cross one another. The preserved upper part of the lower figure shows the line of an arm and below it a flat bosom. The legs-region of all the figures ends pointed.

deeper engraved figure makes an exception and gives the impression of a woman standing with the upper part of her body bent forwards.

All these representations are standardized to a high degree and, considering the respective types, the figures show an overall similarity to each other. However, differences in proportions and in the way of drawing should not be overlooked. A good example are two rows of figures engraved one across the other. The upper row consists of three figures; all of them have a large, broad poste-

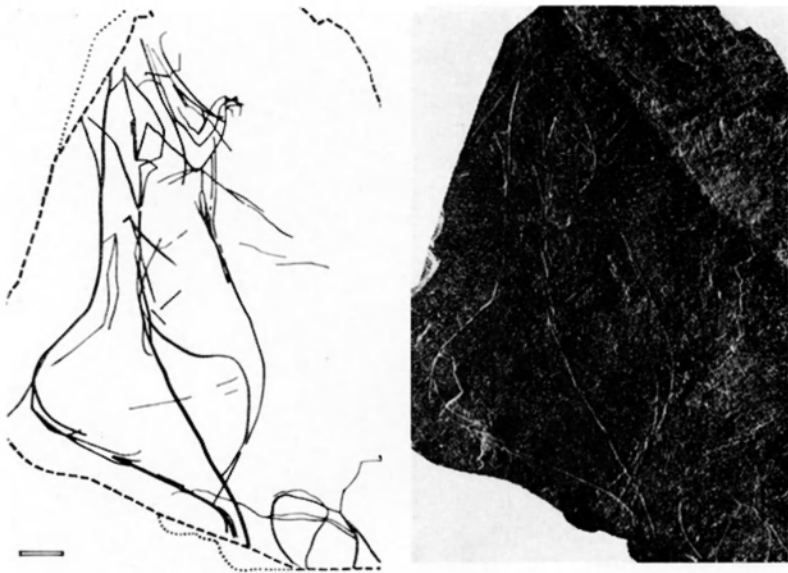
Fig. 28

Two figures in succession. Go 53 d/10. The upper part of the left figure shows two projections (arms and bosom?); the leg of this figure ends as an opening a little below the region of the knee. The right figure is smaller, its upper part has no projection, its leg is briefly indicated by a point. About natural size.



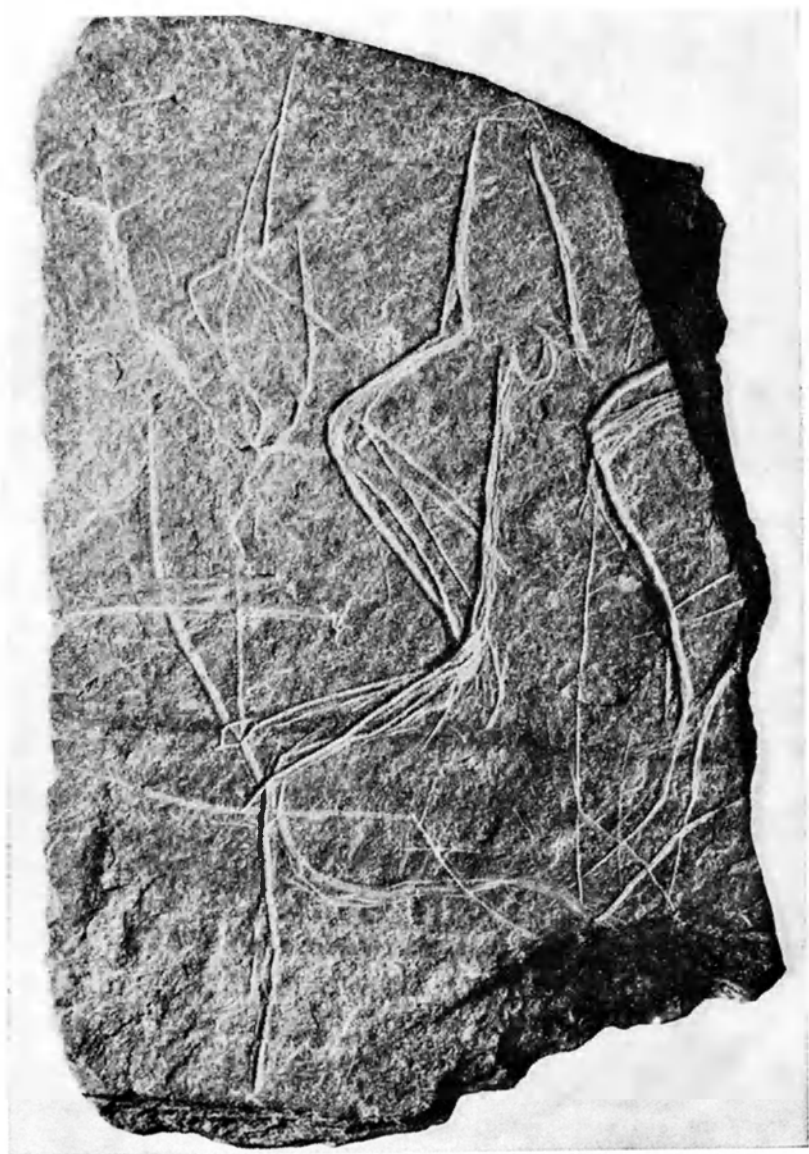
rior and a somewhat abruptly added upper part of the body. These figures were probably engraved by one person. The second row consists of four partly fragmentary figures. They are smaller and engraved more freely than the previously described representations. One may assume that also the figures of the second row are engraved by one person.

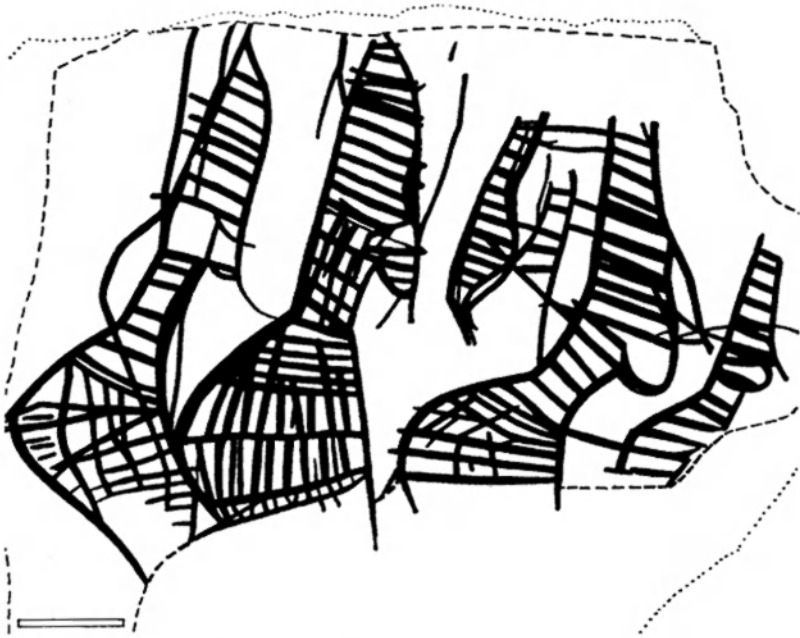
It would seem that each row was engraved by a different artist. In the Gönnersdorf material, such differences of style are often to be seen. The figures, arranged one after another and characterized by the design of the interior, are engraved by one person as well as the figures placed friezelike in three rows, one under the other. These



Figs. 29-30 Two figures, one after another, in a corner of a large plaque. Gö 45 c/22 Pl. z. The left figure seems to embrace the right one. The upper part of the left figure is the most complete representation in the material; it shows the upper arms extended horizontally and the fore-arms raised vertically. The hands are held horizontally. Below the arms the small, pointed bosom is to be seen. The upper part of the right figure shows only one projection (arm or bosom?). The leg region of both figures is pointed.

Fig. 31 Two (three?) figures in succession on a broken plaque. Gö 87 c/33 Pl. z. The most left figure is smaller and strange in its shovel-like appearance. The main figure has two projections in its upper part. The upper one is pointed and should represent an armstump, below it the rounded bosom is reproduced. In the posterior there is a chevron-like design (compare fig. 6b). Below the knee the legs are formed by two rearward curving lines, which end in two small rhombs. The leg region of the right hand, partly preserved figure, ends in two open lines not far below the knee. Size, cm 6 x 8,5.





Figs. 32-33 Four figures in succession on a broken plaque. Gö 50 St. 9. (back side see figs. 17-18). The upper part of each of the four main figures has one projection, most likely the bosom. The interior of these figures shows a design of horizontal, vertical and oblique lines. Such a design is shown also by the little figure behind the back of the third figure from the left. This little figure without bosom is interpreted as a baby on the back of a woman (compare the text). The main figure on the left overlaps an earlier figure that has no design in the interior; its upper part is stick-like, in its hip region a slightly bowing line is indicated. This attribute is unique in the present material.

differences of style show that the engravings were not made by one artist but by a greater number of persons.

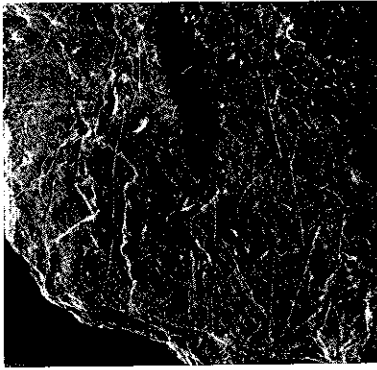
The groupings and compositions

Isolated representations of single figures are rare and where they occur they are on broken plaques and it is uncertain whether or not they originally were parts of a



larger composition. At present, the bone, ivory, and antler statuettes naturally are single figures, but three statuettes were found together on the bottom of a pit and two figurines seem to have been together in another pit. It is also possible that some of the other statuettes found scattered in the culture layer were not in their original position just like the engraved plaques. Therefore, it seems possible that even the statuettes originally formed parts of compositions or groups.

Often the engravings show two or more human figures in a row, one after another. On one plaque, put together from several pieces and still fragmentary, there are up to ten figures one after another. The same plaque shows three rows of figures grouped one under the other in a frieze-like composition. In these compositions «one after another» the single figures occasionally touch one another. The thighs of one figure touch the posterior, or



the arm/bosom region of the nearby figure. Compositions with two or more figures placed one behind the other are frequent. Due to the almost lack of disturbing overlappings which perhaps would indicate a different age of the single figures, and due to the stylistical resemblances always to be seen between the figures within such a composition, we may assume that such compositions are intentional and may represent scenes.

A second type of composition, known in eight cases, shows human figures facing each other. In the region of the knee, the figures are drawn into one another and they touch in the arm/breast region. Twice the two figures partly overlap one another. In these cases, the upper part of the body of one figure is to be seen behind the back of the other. The composition «two figures facing each other» should represent a scene, too. With the exception of one, the two appear to have been made by the same hand and with the same tool. The overlapping shown by two of these scenes may be interpreted as persons standing behind each other.

In one scene of «figures one after the other in a row» the third woman from the left has a strange attribute, unique in the Gönnersdorf material. Behind her back, a smaller, backwards turned figure is engraved. This little figure has no bosom and only a slightly rounded posterior. Between the main figure and the smaller one, a kind of

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Figs. 34-35

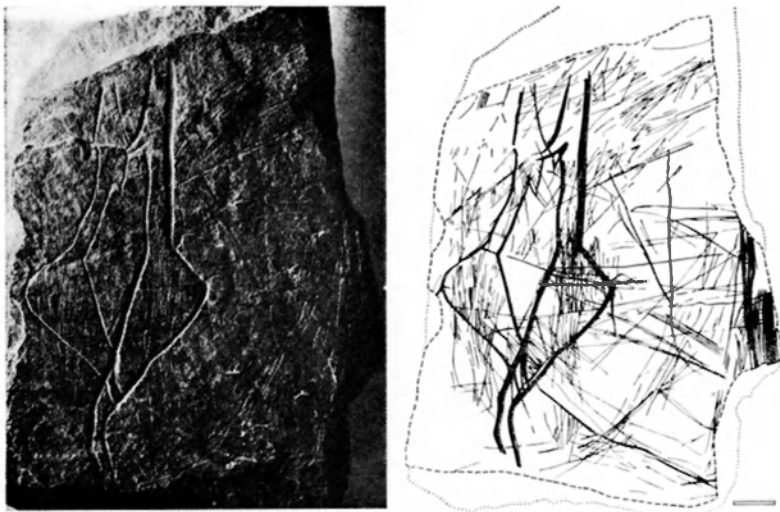
Groups of respectively two and three figures one after another, two more figures. Go 64 c/21 Pl. z. The left figure of the larger ones has only one projection at its upper part, the right figure shows a pointed armstump and below it the rounded bosom. The leg region of both these bigger figures is pointed. The other figures are more schematic. Their upper part consists of one line only, their leg region mostly is pointed.



Figs. 36-37-38

Groups of respectively three and four figures one after another on a broken piece. Go 34 d/23. The figures of the first group have a broad posterior. The upper part of the central figure shows a pointed armstump and below it a rounded bosom. The bosom (?) of the second of the right figures is only partly preserved. The upper part of the left figure is stick-like without any projection. The figures of the second group are more slender and more fruly engraved. The most left figure shows an armstump, and below it a bosom. The next figure is preserved only up to the bosom, the other figures are more fragmentary. The leg region of all figures is pointed.





Figs. 39-40 Two figures opposite one another. Gö Sickergrube. Both figures are very slender. Their upper parts show armstumps and, below them, the bosom. The legs end not far below the region of the knee.

frame is to be seen. This object is connected with the main figure through two lines in the upper part and one line near the bottom. With the smaller figure it is connected by a single line. The posterior of the little figure touches the frame. Furthermore, there are two lines in the upper part and one deeper line which connect the little figure with the upper part of the larger one. The main figure of the composition seems to be carrying something on its back. This is indicated by the forwards bent upper part of the body and the backward posture of her posterior. The whole composition looks like a woman carrying a baby in a frame on her back. The baby is turned backwards with its back against that of the woman.

On many plaques the female figures are engraved across one another. The jumble of human figures can include groups of figures «one after the other» or «two figures facing each other». In these cases, the apparent



Figs. 41-42 Two figures opposite one another. Go 11 d/178. The upper part of the left figure shows the line of the arm; the upper part of the right figure has one pointed projection (arm or bosom). The leg region is built by two lines which end not far below the knee. The bent knee is especially well indicated in the right figure.

chaotic overlapping of scenes is the result of phases engraved at different times in different style and by different hands. In front of the deeply and repeatedly engraved figure already mentioned, a second much slighter engraved figure is engraved in the opposite direction and in a different style. The deeper figure is younger than the other. Some engravings display a jumble of human figures without any regularity. In these cases, the figures overlap and destroy each other; it looks like a half-dreaming person engraved these figures in a rapid succession without concern for problems of space and composition.

In Gönnersdorf, there are only a few engravings which show human figures together with representations of animals. In one example, a scene with two figures facing each other has been superimposed by the picture of a

fox. A second specimen shows many human figures, most of them in rows and the legs of an animal (mammoth?). They seem to represent an accidental overlapping of pictures engraved at different times.

The Parallels

Central Germany, Moravia, and Ukraine: To the east of Gönnersdorf, in central Germany, in Moravia, and in the Ukraine, several parallels to the described human figures are known. In Nebra, Kr. Nebra, three statuettes, carved of ivory and antler (?), were found (V. Toepfer, 1965). Two of them show a projection at the upper part of the body (type 3), the third figure has a stick-like upper body (type 4) and the leg region of all three pieces is pointed (type 3). The statuettes from Nebra were found in small pits. The assemblage of stone artifacts is similar to that of Gönnersdorf (H. Hanitzsch and V. Toepfer, 1963; H. Hanitzsch, 1969; G. Bosinski, 1969, *in press*). Other similar statuettes are known from Ölknitz, Kr. Stadroda (R. Feustel, 1970). Two of them are carved from ivory, others are represented by flat pebbles. One ivory statuette with figured bosom and exaggerated posterior is very similar to the specimen of Nebra and Gönnersdorf. Another statuette comes from the «Bärenkeller» cave near Königsee-Garsitz (R. Feustel, 1970, fig. 7). Feustel interpreted the thick end as the head. Possibly it is the posterior and, in this case, this ivory statuette is another parallel to the Gönnersdorf figures.

The bone statuette from the Pekarna-cave (Moravia) has been known for more than 30 years (K. Absolon and R. Czižek, 1926; K. Absolon, 1949). The upper part of the body is missing, the leg region with bent knees and rearwards turned shanks corresponds to our type 2.

The famous carvings from Mezin at the Desna river (Ukraine) represent a far away but undeniable parallel to this type of human figures (I. G. Šovkopljas, 1965). Šovkopljas himself connects the Mezin figures with the corresponding engravings of Central and Western Europe

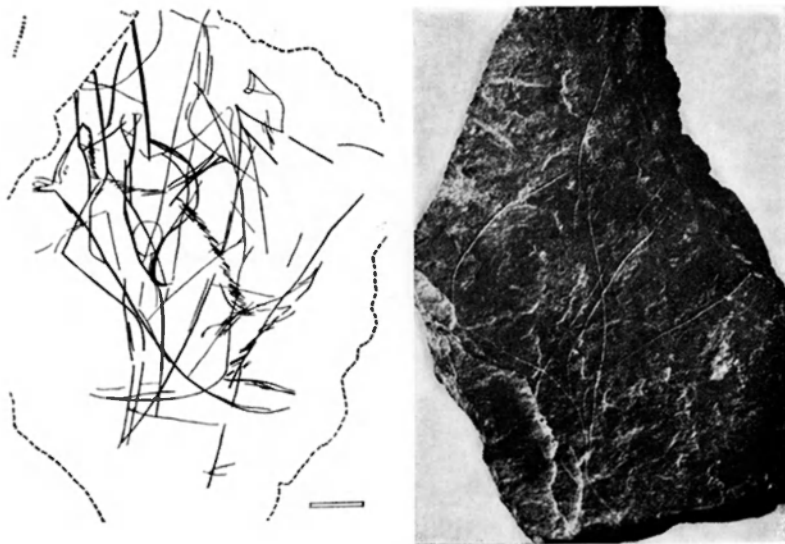
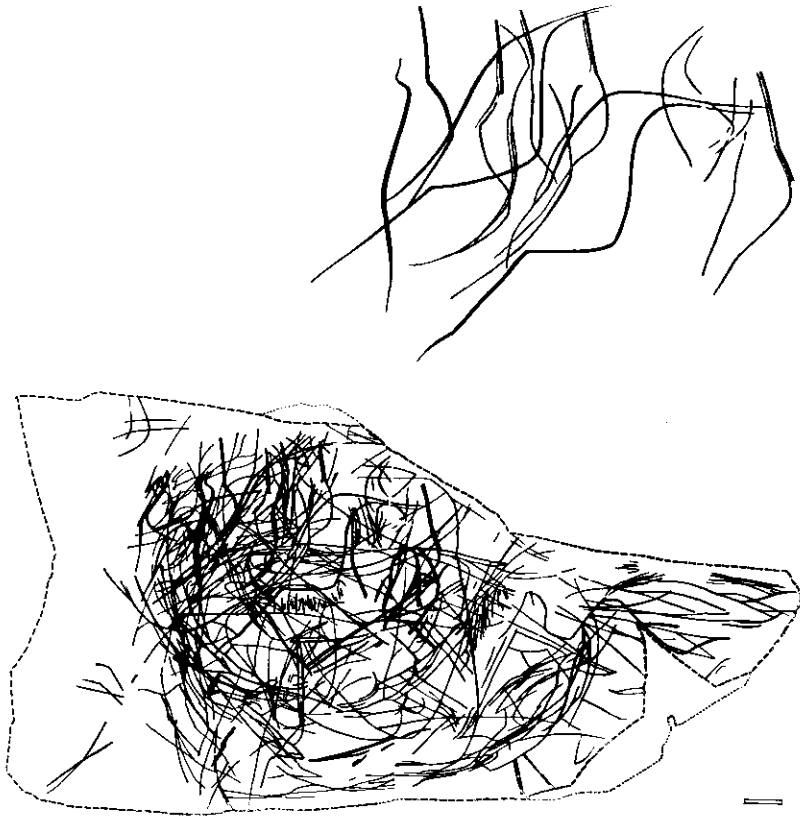


Fig. 43 Two figures opposite one another, and a fox figure. Gö 34 d/23. The two figures opposite another are different in style. The left one has a stick-like upper part without any projection and a long-drawn lower part with two nearly parallel lines indicating the legs. The upper part of the right figure shows the armstump, the rounded posterior and a pointed leg region. The fox figure may not be connected with the human figures (compare the text).

Fig. 44 Two figures opposite one another on a broken piece. Gö 9 d/176. The preserved part of the representation shows the lower part of two figures.

(loc. cit., pp. 250-252). They differ from the Gönnersdorf type mainly because of their proportions and their geometric ornamentation.

Southern Germany: South of Gönnersdorf in southern Germany, two caves yielded parallels to the human figures described. In the Hohlenstein (Nördlinger Ries) F. Birkner found a limestone slab with engraved figures on it (F. Birkner, 1913; G. Freund, 1963, pp. 116-117; K. J. Narr,



Figs. 45-46 Two figures one after another, two figures opposite one another, and four figures on a much engraved plaque. Gö 10 d/176 Zw. Pl. z. The two figures one after another have an upper part formed by one line and a pointed, taillike leg region. Among the other figures, three of them have one projection at the upper part (once an arm and twice it looks like the bosom).

1965). There are three figures nearly complete and parts of some (three?) other figures. From a photograph, it looks as if the scene «two figures facing each other» could have been executed twice. The upper part of the figures is

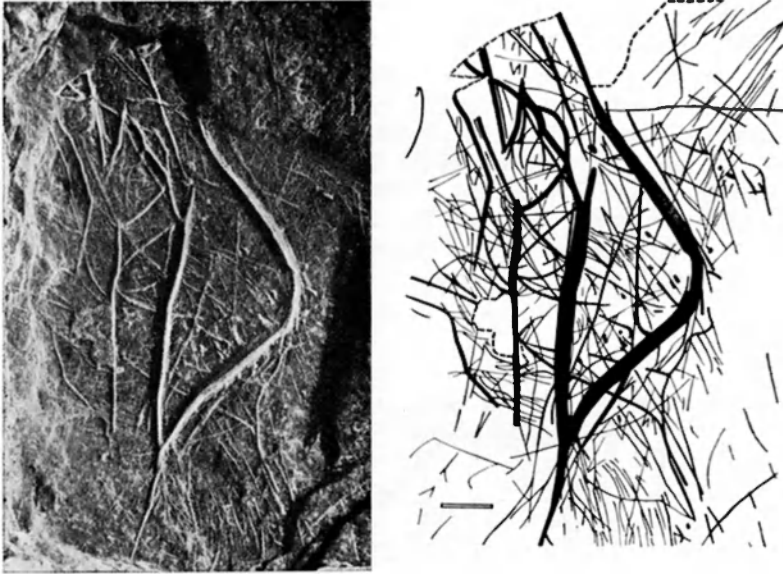
stick-like (type 4), the leg-region is built by two parallel lines (type 2), or is pointed (type 3).

In the Petersfels cave (Baden), E. Peters found fourteen statuettes of a similar type carved from bituminous coal (E. Peters, 1930; E. Peters and V. Toepfer, 1932, Taf. 3 - p. 185; E. Schmid, 1964). The top of the figures is perforated like a pendant. The posterior is well marked while the upper part of the body and the leg region are only flat prolongations. These figures are different from the Gönnersdorf material.



Fig. 47 Two figures opposite one another. Gö 11 St. 9 Plan. 11. The upper parts of both figures show armstumps and rounded bosom. The leg region is pointed. The two figures partly overlap one another so that the upper part of the left figure is behind the back of the right one, and vice-versa.

Fig. 48 Two figures opposite another, two other figures. Gö 15 c. The two main figures overlap one another. Their upper parts show arms and below them a small, pointed bosom. The long-drawn leg region of one figure is formed by two parallel lines, the other figure has a pointed leg region.



Figs. 49-50 Two figures overlapping one another. Gö 25 d/91. The larger more deeply engraved figure has a pointed bosom hanging at some distance from the body; its leg region is pointed. The upper part of the other figure, which is turned upside down, shows an armstump and below it the bosom.

Southern France and Northern Spain: Other parallels are to be found in the art of the Franco-Cantabrian region. In Roche de Birol (Lalinde), two engraved limestone plaques were discovered (D. Peyrony, 1930; A. Leroi-Gourhan, 1965 fig. 56; D. de Sonneville-Bordes, 1967, pp. 128-130). The ten figures on the plaque from «Les Eyzies» have a stick-like upper part of the body without any projection (type 4). The leg region of all representations is pointed (type 3). Most of the figures show a straight line in the posterior. These lines remind one of the chevron-like design of some of the Gönnersdorf figures. The composition of the figures looks like the row scenes. On the «Chicago» plaque, the type of the figures is almost identical, including the straight line in the posterior. One figure

(the second from the left) has a leg region formed by two lines which do not meet (type 2). One smaller figure, oriented differently than the mentioned representations, has one line only as the upper part of the body (type 6) while the leg region is pointed. On the «Chicago» plaque, two different scenes seem to be represented: the two figures on the left reproduce the row scene while the two larger figures, in the middle and on the right represent the «two figures facing each other».

Another limestone slab with a corresponding engraving comes from Gare de Couze, not far from the Roche de Birol (F. Bordes, P. Fitte and P. Laurent, 1963). Contrary to the other representations, the Gare de Couze plaque shows only one figure. The arms are not to be seen, the bosom is large, extended, and hanging down at some distance from the upper part of the body. This figure reminds one of the deeply engraved Gönnersdorf figure. The leg region ends up in two open lines (type 2). Also, there is a line which continues the rearward line of the thighs and goes up to the front line of the knee-region. This line leads to the pointed sort of the leg region. From the photograph, it looks as if the line mentioned is engraved deeper than the rearward continuation of the shanks.

Two other limestone plaques with similar engravings are published from Fontalès (P. Darasse, 1956; L. R. Nougier and R. Robert, 1968, p. 92). One of them shows two figures. The upper part of the body of one figure is funnel-shaped (type 5) and its leg region is pointed (type 3). The upper part of the second figure is not clearly identified (stick-like?), the thighs are oriented forwards and the shanks are bent backwards and end up in two parallel lines without feet (type 2). The second plaque shows one representation only. The upper part of the body is partly destroyed by a fracture. The preserved part shows one line of the bosom (or the arm?). The leg region is pointed (type 3).

A more remote parallel is represented by an engraving on a piece of red colouring matter (ochre?) from the Abri Murat (A. Lemozi, 1924; A. Leroi-Gourhan, 1965, fig. 434). The posterior and the leg region of this figure



are similar to the Gönnersdorf figures but the top of the representation shows a kind of antlers or horns.

Among the cave art, another parallel is to be found in Les Combarelles (A. Leroi-Gourhan, 1965, fig. 514; 1968, p. 72). There are three figures engraved in a row «one after the other». These figures are not exactly of the Gönnersdorf type and less elegantly drawn.

Finally, the «claviformes» should be mentioned; they are, best known from the cave of Niaux (E. Cartailhac and H. Breuil, 1908, pp. 36-37; A. Leroi-Gourhan, 1968, pp. 72-75). These signs are comparable to the most schematic human figures of Gönnersdorf. The latter have the upper part of the body marked by one line only and a pointed leg region. The «claviformes» of Niaux, La Cullalvera (J. Echegaray and P. Gonzales, 1959; A. Leroi-Gourhan, 1965, fig. 672) and elsewhere are very similar, sometimes, to these figures and may belong to the same context (A. Leroi-Gourhan, 1965, p. 107). Often the «claviformes» occur in a

*Figs. 51-52-53
 Figures overlapping one another in a corner of a large plaque. Gö 18 d/91. The deeply engraved torso has a pointed leg region; its upper part is only partly preserved. Orientated otherwise, there are six figures engraved more freely. One of them shows a pointed arms-tump and below it the bosom.*



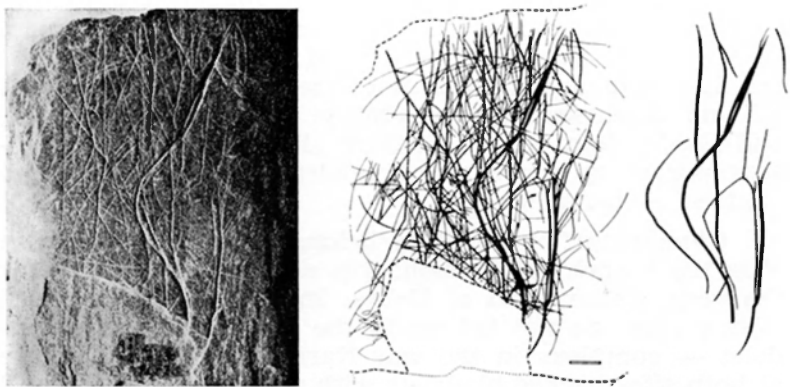
row of several figures (f.e. Niaux, La Cullalvera). This, too, corresponds to the scenes at Gönnersdorf.

Besides Mezin (considered as late Upper Palaeolithic), all parallels mentioned above belong to the Magdalenian. F. Bordes (F. Bordes, P. Fitte, and P. Laurent, 1963) places the engraving of Gare de Couze into the Magdalenian VI and discusses this possibility for Lalinde, Fontalès, and Hohlenstein, too. K. J. Narr (1965) puts the Hohlenstein engraving into a late Magdalenian «borer — backed bladelet — complex».

Gönnersdorf more likely belongs to the Magdalenian V in the French subdivision; this should also be true for the very similar finds of Nebra. In any case, Nebra and Gönnersdorf do not belong to the «borer — backed bladelet — complex» in the way Narr described it because at both sites backed bladelets with retouched ends as well as borers with an elongated borer point are absent (G. Bosinski, 1969).

The significance of the Figures

The Gönnersdorf material allows some interpretations which depend upon the situation in which the engravings were found and upon the pictures themselves. With the exception of thick, heavy slabs, the engravings are on fractured plaques which seem to have been broken intentionally. Sometimes pieces belonging together were spread over an area of several meters. This fact seems to indicate that the representations were important and that there was, at a certain point, a necessity to break them into pieces. At the same time, only a temporary use of the engravings can be postulated. Following this temporary utilization, the engraved plaques were broken and formed part of the pavement, together with the unengraved slabs. Sometimes broken pieces were used again and new pictures were engraved. In these cases, the lines of the new representations may cross the surface of the break. The new engravings were made in such a way that the older engravings played no role for the subsequent engravers. The new figures cross the older ones without any system and it appears that they were flatly ignored by the artists.



Figs. 54-55-56 Figures overlapping one another. Gö 24 c/20 Pl.z. In the jumble of lines there are only three recognizable figures.

Possibly the plaques were covered with a layer of colour and the figures were engraved through this colour. However, this old theory does not explain the necessity of breaking the plaques; and in any case to destroy the picture it would have been sufficient to erase the colour-surface.

The overlapping of engravings likewise indicates that the drawings were only of temporary importance. Perhaps the act itself of engraving was their only purpose and not their use for a longer time. This fact seems to be shown also by prehistoric art of other areas and other periods and it is evidently indicated in rock-art both in Spanish Galizia and in the Camonica Valley (E. Anati, 1968, p. 21).

The statuettes were partly located at the bottom of small pits. Similar observations are published from Nebra (V. Toepfer, 1965) and Ölknitz (R. Feustel, 1970). This too indicates that the representations were of extraordinary importance.

The human figures are always represented without the head. The result is a more schematic character of the figures. From the evidences concerning the body-attitude it is apparent that the figures represented are young women standing (or jumping) with bent knees and their arms partially lifted. This is not a normal attitude but rather a dancing or praying position practicable only for a limited time. At the same time this attitude is not «godlike» and it is not very likely that a deity is meant instead of a human being. Through the existence of scenes, sometimes with more than ten figures, all of them in the same half-upright attitude, the representation of a deity is even more improbable.

Most figures are represented in compositions, or scenes. The scenes contain two or more figures in a row «one after the other» or two figures «facing each other». Even in their abstract way, these scenes must have been understood and must have had a definite meaning for the artists. The represented happening was of particular importance. Perhaps the figures represent dancing-scenes of young women. This is the interpretation of the Lalinde

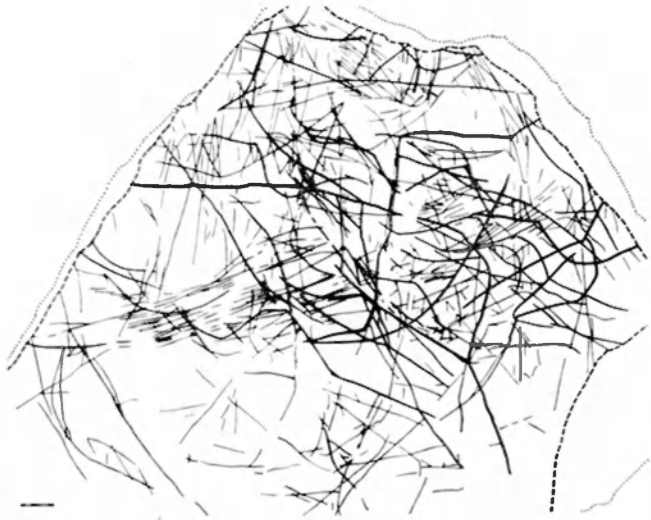




Fig. 59 Recognized human figures from Figs. 45-46.

plaque by D. de Sonneville-Bordes (1967, p. 129), also. But contrary to D. de Sonneville-Bordes, who speaks of a «désacralisation» of these representations, I would prefer to see the dances in connection with religious rites.

In this context the representation of a woman with a baby on her back is not very likely. If the interpretation as dancing-scenes is correct, this scene, which differs also through the design of the interior, should mean something else.



Figs. 57-58 Figures overlapping one another on a large plaque. Gö 26 c/25 Pl.z. On this plaque, twelve figures or parts of them have been acquainted. With two exceptions, their upper parts are built by one line only. Their leg regions are mostly pointed.

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