

NATIONAL-SOCIALIST RESEARCHES IN VAL CAMONICA A SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF THE PETROGLYPH DRAUGHTSWOMAN ERIKA TRAUTMANN-NEHRING (1897-1968)

*Reena Perschke **

SUMMARY

Erika Trautmann was one of the early rock art researchers between 1933 and 1944. First as draughtswoman of the Frobenius-Institute in Frankfurt (Germany), later with own field trips and finally as member of the National-Socialist research group Ahnenerbe of Heinrich Himmler's SS, she was busy to discover, document, draw, replicate, and interpret rock engravings and paintings in Northern Africa, Scandinavia and in the Italian Val Camonica. In terms of her time, she therefore succeeded in her professional career in spite of her non-formal education as well-raised young countryside girl and her lack of formal academic studies. During World War II, her Third Reich career was suppressed due to the fact of her female sex when women researchers were no more provided with scientific projects by the Ahnenerbe. The planned publication of her life-work in form of a greater rock art study failed. After World War II, she never regained own career chances. Although she refused in her senior years to distance herself from her National-Socialist interpretations, her outstanding accomplishments in discovering and documenting rock engravings should not be forgotten.

RIASSUNTO

Erika Trautmann è stata una dei primi ricercatori a studiare l'arte rupestre fra il 1933 e il 1944. In primo luogo, come disegnatrice di Frobenius-Institute di Francoforte (Germania), in seguito con propri viaggi sul campo e infine come membro del nazional-socialista Research Group Ahnenerbe delle SS di Heinrich Himmler. Il suo impegno la portò a scoprire, documentare, disegnare, rilevare e interpretare incisioni rupestri e dipinti in Nord Africa, Scandinavia e in Valcamonica. Giovane donna informale e con una buona educazione, per i suoi tempi fece una discreta carriera. Durante la seconda guerra mondiale, venne penalizzata dal Terzo Reich per il fatto di essere donna e non venne più incaricata di compiere ricerche per conto dell'Ahnenerbe. Il suo progetto di pubblicare i risultati di una vita di studi fu accantonato. Anche dopo la seconda guerra mondiale, il suo passato non le permise di riprendere la carriera. Pur prendendo le debite distanze da alcune sue interpretazioni fortemente influenzate dall'ideologia nazionalsocialista, non dovrebbe essere dimenticata.

Among the early research history of Val Camonica, there are also two German scholars who came to Northern Italy in the 1930s with special intentions regarding their research¹. During four campaigns, the petroglyph draughtswoman Erika Trautmann (Fig. 1) and the historian of antiquity Franz Altheim endeavored to find both known and undiscovered rock engravings in order to document them in trace copies, drawings and photographs. According to contemporary German research, they tried to show a Nordic influence within prehistoric petroglyphs, aiming to "prove" that the supremacy of Teutonic peoples extends to Southern Europe.

* Scholarship holder of the Gerda-Henkel-Stiftung, An der Kappe 110 - 13583 Berlin, Germany; email: reena.perschke@yahoo.de

¹ MARRETTA 2008, pp. 41-42; ALTHEIM 1949/50b, p. 167

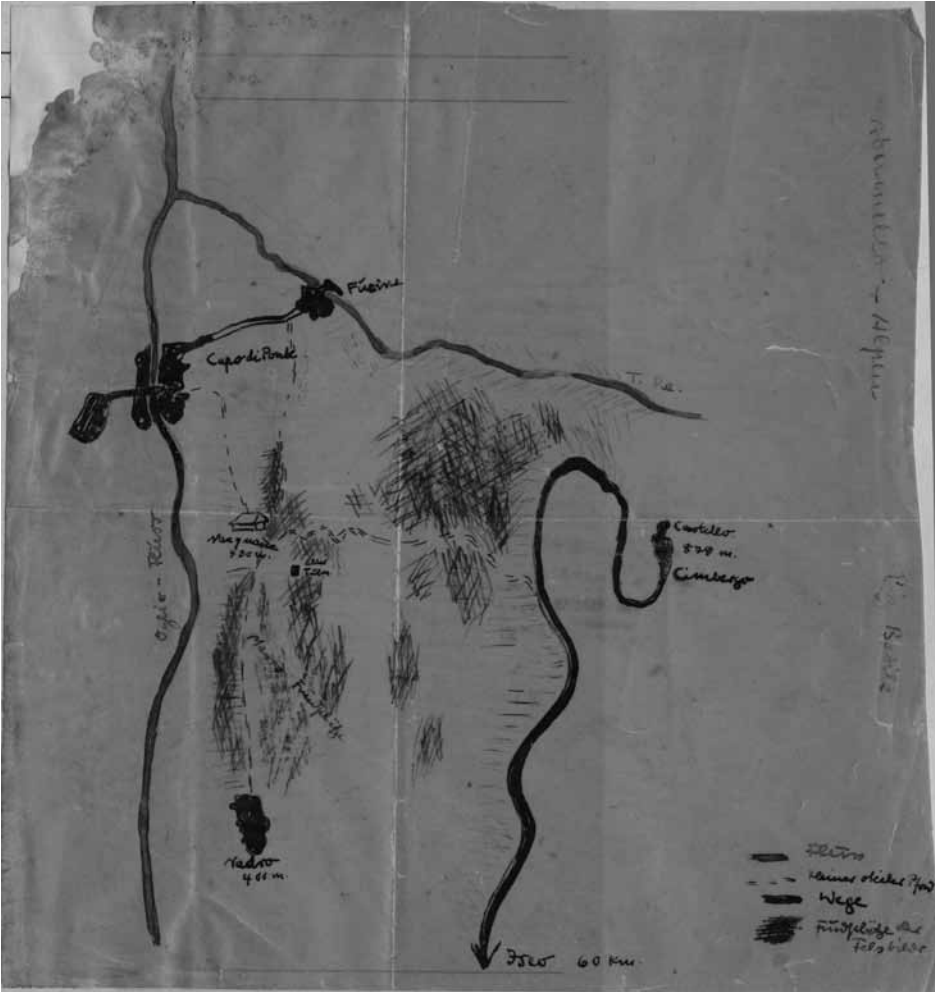


Fig. 1 - Map of the rock art site of Naquane, drawn by Erika Trautmann during her self-conducted field trip 1935. Dotted areas: the rocks with engravings between the Oglio River, Cimbergo and Nadro; FBA-A1 02-001)

It is noteworthy that the female researcher is consistently referred to as assistant, co-worker or even lover of the male professor. However, Erika Trautmann was not merely the driving force behind the campaigns spanning multiple years – she also discovered a majority of the new petroglyphs in the 1930s and secured the funds for their joint research. Franz Altheim, meanwhile, was able to arrange most publications by means of his academic contacts. It is due to this as well as his title of professor that he has become known as the head of their expeditions.

A detailed analysis of the transmitted documents in German archives paints a different picture of both their mutual relationship and the central role Erika Trautmann played within the context of the research in Val Camonica. On the basis

of these as-of-yet unpublished documents², it was possible to compose a short biography of this impressive woman within the context of the time she lived in.

CHILDHOOD IN WEST PRUSSIA AND FIRST WORLD WAR

Erika Frieda Charlotte Nehring was born on 15 April 1897 as daughter to land-owner Arthur Nehring (1861-1931) and his wife Charlotte, née Richter (1870-1918)³. Her father owned a large farm in Osterwick (today Ostrowite, Gmina Chojnice, Powiat Chojnicki, Voivodship Pomerania, Poland), which provided the family with a decent income. Erika was the second youngest, only followed by her sister Eva, and first daughter after the births of her five older brothers Karl, Hermann, Waldemar, Erwin and Hans.

In 1914 the family migrated to Neu-Grabia (today near Toruń, Voivodship Kuyavia-Pomerania, Poland) despite the threats posed by the beginning war not far from the fortified city Thorn an der Weichsel⁴. The father must have been an ardent supporter of the Prussian army, given that at this point all five of his sons had already been sent to study at the Cadet Corps of the German Reich. The two girls, however, neither received formal training nor the chance to attend a high school. They were being taught by a governess and the village priest⁵.

Even during the pre-war years, the family counted the young officer Hermann Göring (1893-1946) among their acquaintances since he had completed his military training with Erika's older brothers, presumably at the Royal Prussian Cadet Corps in Groß-Lichterfelde near Berlin, which Göring had attended from 1910 until his exams in 1911⁶. Göring enjoyed the company of his comrades' sister and might even have been fallen in love with the young, blonde Erika Nehring. She declined to marry him, yet this did not preclude Göring from maintaining a good and friendly relationship with her throughout their lives⁷.

The World War I abruptly destroyed this idyllic, rural childhood. All of Erika's five brothers served in the German army; two of them died at different fronts and the youngest was taken to Siberia as a prisoner of war⁸.

The situation of the other family members deteriorated substantially towards the end of the war. The construction of the so called Polish Corridor spelled the displacement of the family, which signified a traumatic experience of loss for the daughters⁹. Eventually Erika, Eva and their parents settled near Magdeburg (Saxony-Anhalt, Germany) where their oldest son Karl had taken over a doctor's practice¹⁰. It was also there that mother Charlotte Nehring died at the beginning of December 1918 after a brief illness (possibly during the influenza epidemic outbreak); father Arthur followed thirteen years later¹¹.

2 An article referring to the same documents but in German language is in print (PERSCHKE 2017). The hereby given English translations of the German titles and documents have been made by Julia Schnorrer and the author. The literal citation of the Federal Archive documents will be given in the longer German text.

3 GENEALOGIE 1999, p. 186.

4 NEHRING, NEHRING 1975, p. 77; GENEALOGIE 1999, p. 186.

5 NEHRING, NEHRING 1975, pp. 76-77.

6 PRINGLE 2006, p. 103; PRINGLE 2006, p. 353, endnote 11.

7 NEHRING 1973, p. 51.

8 NEHRING 1973, p. 51; NEHRING, NEHRING 1975, p. 77; GENEALOGIE 1999, p. 186.

9 NEHRING, NEHRING 1975, p. 78.

10 NEHRING, NEHRING 1975, pp. 77-78.

11 GENEALOGIE 1999, p. 186.



Fig. 2 - Rock engraving with palafittes at Naquane, first discovered and documented by Erika Trautmann in 1935 (FBA-B 02578)

EDUCATION AND STUDIES IN BERLIN

Instead of meeting family expectations regarding an advantageous marriage, the sisters Erika and Eva were drawn to Berlin. While Eva enrolled at university and later emigrated to Sweden, Erika began training at the Berlin Lette-Haus, a vocational school for unmarried women¹². This institution dated back to Imperial times when it had been founded by a society club to promote unmarried women's education and to further their earning capacity¹³. There are no records of the kind of courses Erika took, yet in the following years she was proficient in both technical drawing and fine arts, which she might have acquired at the Lette-Haus. Moreover, she had an inherent predilection for photography, meaning she also could have been trained at the Photographical Institute of the Lette-Haus. This department had been founded as early as 1890 in order to prepare bourgeois women who had no access to technical jobs or university education for a job as photographer or technical assistant. Under direction of chemist Dankmar Schultz-Hencke, women there learned imaging techniques like the nascent branch of science photography used for medical and biological examinations. This opened up the possibility for young ladies to work alongside male, university-educated academics in research and science – the path that young Erika Nehring would take.

¹² NEHRING, NEHRING 1975, p. 77; PRINGLE 2006, p. 107; LETTE-VEREIN 1966, pp. 36-37.

¹³ LETTE-VEREIN 1938.

In the wake of her training at the Lette-Haus, Erika Nehring enrolled at a trade school for applied arts during the summer semester in 1923 and attended advanced courses on painting, drawing, fashion design and tailoring taught by the famous professor Otto Ludwig Haas-Heye¹⁴. At the beginning of the 1920s, during her time at the Lette-Haus and especially later at the trade school, Erika had a large and sophisticated circle of friends¹⁵. It was in this stimulating environment that Erika Nehring met Bernhard Trautmann (* 30.09.1900, date of death unknown), a graduate engineer, three years younger than her. They married in Berlin-Wilmersdorf in 1925 and moved to Frankfurt at the end of the decade¹⁶.

AN AUTONOMOUS CAREER AS ROCK ART RESEARCHER IN FRANKFURT/MAIN

So far it is impossible to determine whether or not Erika Trautmann worked for a living during her first years of marriage. One aspect is noteworthy, however, considering the conventions of her generation: the marriage produced no children.

Instead, Erika applied for a job as graphic designer and technical draughtswoman at the renowned Institute for Cultural Morphology, later known as the Frobenius Institute, in the year 1933. Due to her striking artistic talent, her solid training and her language skills, Leo Frobenius gave her the responsibility of documenting parietal art by means of technical drawings and photography during his international excursions from 1934 onward. The employee directory of 1935 notes her as "Trautmann, Erika, draughtswoman, employed at the research institute since 1933, participant in the parietal art expedition to South France/Spain 1934. Autonomous expedition for the recording of rock engravings in Northern Italy 1935. Article: Parietal art in South France and Spain, Frankfurt 1935"¹⁷.

Thus the years between 1933 and 1937 saw hundreds of watercolor works, trace copies, drawings, photographs, and chalk rubbings of rock engravings, petroglyphs, and cave paintings originate from Erika's hand. Leo Frobenius praised her as one of "three skilled rock art copyists" of his institute¹⁸. It was also during this time that Erika composed her first paper on the field research of 1934 and her own take on southwest-European parietal art¹⁹.

She enjoyed these trips and insights into prehistoric and ethnological worlds immensely.²⁰ Having worked inside the caves of Les Combarelles and Font-de-Gaume (both Dordogne, South France), she noted: "The ancient art within these mysterious, temple-like caves is infinitely impressive. We know nothing about the people who created these images. We may only let their grand art move us silently"²¹. And she enthused about the parietal art of East Spain: "It is a tremendous experience to witness these last vestiges of prehistoric art within the vast, solitary and wildly-fissured landscape of the Valltorta gorge, high above the protruding rock galleries that are difficult to reach and exposed to both sun and wind"²².

14 NEHRING, NEHRING 1975, p. 77; PRINGLE 2006, pp. 107-108; PRINGLE 2006, p. 354, endnote 37.

15 NEHRING, NEHRING 1975, p. 78.

16 NEHRING 1973, p. 51; GENEALOGIE 1999, p. 186.

17 Note „Der Mitarbeiterstab des Forschungsinstituts für Kulturmorphologie“, dated October 11, 1935, BArch, R73/10112, p. 0007; TRAUTMANN 1935, pp. 77-80.

18 FROBENIUS 1935, preface.

19 TRAUTMANN 1935.

20 PRINGLE 2006, p. 108.

21 TRAUTMANN 1935, p. 79.

22 TRAUTMANN 1935, p. 80.



Fig. 3 - Franz Altheim, Erika Trautmann, Karl Kerényi and his wife on rock n° 1 in Naquane, 1936 (FoA 18-59)



Fig. 4 - Karl Kerényi (Frobenius-Institut) and Giuseppe Amaracco (from Cemmo) during the expedition 1936 in Naquane (FoA 18-70)

Pictures of the excursions show her laughing and smoking at the side of her colleagues, both male and female, next to the vehicles during the journey, at work, in the evenings during dinner or at the beach. Despite her lack of academic schooling, her career at the Frobenius Institute seemed to lead straight to autonomous, scientific research, not only in terms of supervised copying of rock paintings and engravings but also in conducting her own researches. In 1935, a field trip for the Institute took her to Northern Italy into Val Camonica, where she documented prehistoric petroglyphs (which had been known to researchers since 1909) in abrasions, drawings and photographs (Fig. 2) and even discovered many as-of-yet unknown petroglyphs²³. Erika liked this new autonomy and conducting her own research so much that she endeavored to expand it in the following years.

Thus, Erika refused – despite her marriage to Bernhard Trautmann – to succumb to the rising pressure the Third Reich exerted on married women in order to persuade them to choose the role of housewife and mother over earning their own wages. Her trips abroad as well as her growing, close friendship to the unmarried historian of antiquity and classical philologist Franz Altheim (1898-1976) speeded up the gradual splitting up between her and her husband. At the time, Altheim was associate professor at the University of Frankfurt for Classical Philology and a good friend of Erika's superior Leo Frobenius. He worked since 1932 as freelancer at the Frobenius Institute in the department for Greek, Roman and Provincial-Roman antiquity²⁴.

Erika and Altheim's friendship seems to have grown into more during the Institute's second excursion to Val Camonica in 1936 (Fig. 3)²⁵. Science journalist Heather Pringle refers to her as "Altheim's lover"²⁶ in this context, which evokes a professional and private disparity in the relationship between the professor and the draughtswoman. In light of Trautmann's confident résumé this has to be re-contextualized as a mutual relationship rooted not only in physical passion but also in reciprocal academic interest and mutual respect for each one's work: Franz Altheim was able to introduce the petroglyph draughtswoman to academic circles while Erika Trautmann introduced the historian, who had not joined the NSDAP²⁷, to political patrons through her close friendship to Hermann Göring.

Altheim and Trautmann published together the results of both trips to the petroglyphs of Val Camonica in Italy (1935 by Trautmann alone, 1936 by a team of Franz Altheim, Karl Kerényi (Fig. 4) and the draughtswomen Erika Trautmann, Elisabeth Krebs, Maria Weyersberg and Elisabeth Pauli), postulating for the first time their theory of the connection between Nordic-Scandinavian rock art and Italian rock engravings²⁸.

In accordance with the national-socialist premise that Indo-Germanic peoples from the Nordic region were early Aryan cultural messengers²⁹, the artful Ital-

23 Note „Der Mitarbeiterstab des Forschungsinstituts für Kulturmorphologie“, dated October 11, 1935, BArch, R73/10112, p. 0007; GRÜNIG 2012, pp. 11-12.

24 Note „Der Mitarbeiterstab des Forschungsinstituts für Kulturmorphologie“, dated October 11, 1935, BArch, R73/10112, S. 0005.

25 PRINGLE 2006, p. 109.

26 PRINGLE 2006, p. 103.

27 PRINGLE 2006, p. 104.

28 ALTHEIM, TRAUTMANN 1937, pp. 83-113.

29 PERSCHKE 2014, pp. 84-86; PERSCHKE 2016b, pp. 170-172.

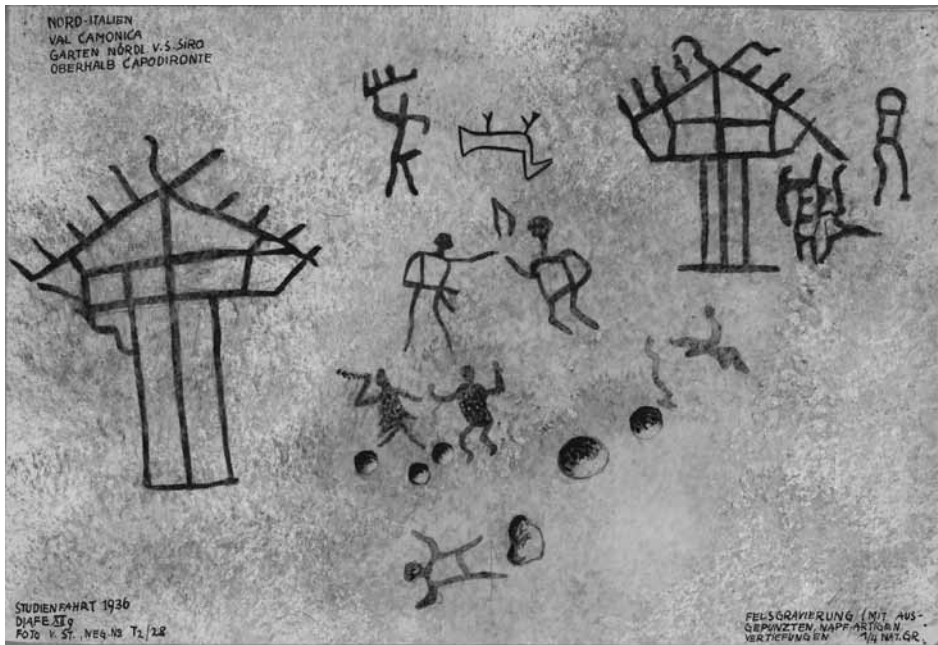


Fig. 5 - Scene of palafittes, humans and a bird on a rock in Seradina, Capo di Ponte (Drawing: Elisabeth Pauli, expedition 1936, FBA-A1 02-008)

ian petroglyphs were not allowed to be older than the Scandinavian ones. Accordingly, Altheim and Trautmann endeavored to confirm a cultural influence in the petroglyphs of Val Camonica stemming from Northern Europe. The motif of “(Indo-)European” transmitters of culture from a presumed “Nordic circle”, used by Altheim and Trautmann, had been a common and consistent interpretation for prehistoric findings ever since Gustaf Kossinna, first professor for Teutonic Archeology at the Friedrich-Wilhelm-University in Berlin and precursor of national-socialist ideologies, had published his monography “German Prehistory: a Pre-eminently National Discipline”³⁰. Apart from this one-sided and without other options interpretation of their findings, the results of both their excursions still have to be considered a valuable contribution to European study of petroglyphs³¹, especially since Erika Trautmann once again found a large number of engravings and carvings in 1936 which she published in the course of several articles (Fig. 5)³². Those joint publications ignited a pan-European debate regarding origin and influences on rock art in the 1930s. Erika Trautmann had reached the height of her academic career: research results of her own, field trips, publications... It had to have been hard for her to return to petty bourgeoisie everyday life of Frankfurt after her excursions.

30 KOSSINNA 1911; GRÜNERT 2002, pp. 307-320.

31 MARRETTA 2008, p. 41.

32 ALTHEIM 1949/50b, p. 167; ALTHEIM, TRAUTMANN 1937; 1938; 1939a; 1939b; 1942a, p. 9; MARRETTA 2008, pp. 41-42.

THE SWITCH TO THE AHNENERBE OF THE SS IN BERLIN

The year 1937 marked a big caesura in Erika's life. First, she left Bernhard Trautmann. The couple divorced in October 1937³³. Curiously, she did not drop her married name after that – instead, she added her birth name and mostly signed as “Erika Trautmann-Nehring” for the rest of her life. She never re-married.

Furthermore, she resigned from the Frobenius Institute (notwithstanding its third Val Camonica trip in the summer of 1937) in order to conduct all future research expeditions with Franz Altheim alone and author publications together. As to financing, she counted on her good connections to high-ranking National Socialists. Thus she sent her articles to Hermann Göring, who in the meantime had risen to Reichsmarschall of the Third Reich³⁴. Göring in turn handed the articles to the Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler, who ordered Wolfram Sievers, the director of the Ahnenerbe within the SS, to establish contact with the two researchers.

The “Forschungsgemeinschaft Deutsches Ahnenerbe e. V.” (literally: Research Society Ancestral Heritage, abbreviated in the following as Ahnenerbe)³⁵ used to be a research institution affiliated to the SS under the decisive leadership of Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler, curator Walther Wüst as well as director Wolfram Sievers, at least in the years after 1937 which were relevant to Erika Trautmann's work.

On Himmler's instructions, the Ahnenerbe covered the costs for a longer expedition to Yugoslavia, Northern Italy (Val Camonica) and Southern Italy (Sicily). Afterwards, Erika Trautmann wrote directly to Heinrich Himmler in October of 1937, stating that she would present the journey's results to him in person.³⁶ After the missive had been forwarded to the Ahnenerbe, Altheim, Trautmann and Sievers met on 16 November 1937 for a private conversation in Berlin. Sievers noted: “They put forth hundreds of records they had taken this summer in North Italy. [...] The size of the yield already presented to the Reichsführer-SS prompted him to demand that the evaluation needed to be carried out with the ‘Ahnenerbe’. Professor Altheim explained that they were glad to hear that since he [being a historian of classical antiquity, not of German prehistory; author's note] didn't understand anything about the North and furthermore holds the view that the topic needed to be approached from different points of view. I briefly delineated the structure of the ‘Ahnenerbe’ and both Professor Altheim and Mrs Trautmann said they knew of no other institution better suited for cooperation”³⁷.

Both then joined the Ahnenerbe of the SS. This was highly unusual for academics who weren't members of the NSDAP. Apart from Franz Altheim, a membership for Erika Trautmann has not been verifiable. According to the Federal Archives of Berlin-Lichterfelde no entry for her can be found in either the directory of the district or the central membership directory of the NSDAP. The Lack of an entry note may not automatically mean that Erika Trautmann has never been a member of the party since only slightly more than 80% of the documents have been preserved. On the other hand, there is no actual evidence in favour of a party

33 PRINGLE 2006, p. 109.

34 PRINGLE 2006, p. 110; PRINGLE 2006, p. 356, endnote 53.

35 KATER 2006.

36 Trautmann's letter to Reichsführer dated October 15, 1937, BArch NS 21/2537, pp. 2034-2036.

37 Memo of Sievers, dated November 16, 1937, BArch NS 21/896, p. 0814.



Fig. 6 - Franz Altheim and Elisabeth Pauli producing a plaster cast from a rock near Capo di Ponte, expedition 1936 (FoA 18-68)



Fig. 7 - Erika Trautmann, Elisabeth Pauli and Franz Altheim at work near Capo di Ponte, expedition 1936 (FoA 18-62)

membership. Her personnel file at the Ahnenerbe, which usually contains a note of the party membership number, is void of this information.³⁸

The cover page of Trautmann's personnel file misleadingly refers to her as "Dr." even though she never attended university – thus superficially underscoring Trautmann's scientific reputation within the SS-Ahnenerbe and leading to authors of contemporary secondary literature citing her as a graduated archaeologist, something she never has been. Trautmann herself never signed any correspondence with an academic title.

SCIENTIFIC AND POLITICAL WORK AT THE AHNENERBE

In January 1938 Erika Trautmann was already working at the photo atelier of the Ahnenerbe in Berlin³⁹. Her direct and ever-stronger connection to Göring and Himmler helped her to secure funding for even the most peculiar destinations for her and Altheim's trips by means of the Ahnenerbe. Procuring visas and foreign currencies for trips to countries that were far away or not allied to the German Reich, like Scandinavia, the Balkan or the Middle East, required an immense organizational effort in those times, which the employees of the Ahnenerbe managed for the two researchers. Additionally, the Ahnenerbe wrote to the general Consulates and other local contacts in order to ensure the most seamless travels possible. In this respect, the two became a researching dream team in a way, since they complemented each other perfectly in terms of work, funding, interpretation, as well as a couple.

In February 1938 they proposed another research trip to Denmark, Norway and Sweden in order to compare the local petroglyphs to those from Val Camonica. Wolfram Sievers requested funds from, among others, the German Congress Center with the note that "The continuation of the research on petroglyphs of Valcamonica in Northern Italy, initiated by professor Dr. Franz Altheim, Halle, and Mrs E. Trautmann, Berlin, is due to an order of the First Curator of our research community 'Ahnenerbe', the Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler"⁴⁰.

During this trip Altheim and Trautmann not only made scientific contacts in Scandinavia and visited rock engravings but also gathered information for the Sicherheitsdienst (SD) of the Reichsführer-SS – which in practice translates to active spying for the secret service of the German Reich in preparation for war under the cloak of an archaeological and art historical research expedition⁴¹. They not only listed the scientists they visited in Sweden by name but also included details on their attitude toward and views on Germany⁴².

The scientific results of the trip to Scandinavia led to four joint published articles about Val Camonica and the connection between its petroglyphs and the Scandinavian area⁴³. Altheim underscored: "Older Italian publications could be complemented by a number in the multiple hundreds of new finds first and fore-

38 Personnel file, Ahnenerbe/Dr. Erika Trautmann, BArch NS 21/2537.

39 ID card dated January 19, 1938, BArch NS 21/2537, p. 2030; Research assignment for Mrs E. Trautmann dated March 29, 1939, BArch NS 21/2537, p. 2028.

40 Letter Sievers to Deutsche Kongress-Zentrale dated February 10, 1938, BArch NS 21/896, p. 0818.

41 PRINGLE 2006, pp. 111-112.

42 In regards to Denmark and Norway they just reported contrarily a latent anti-German mood in Oslo (Confidential report of Altheim and Trautmann, without date, BArch NS 21/896, pp. 0858-0862).

43 ALTHEIM, TRAUTMANN 1937; 1938; 1939a; 1939b.



Fig. 8 - New discovered engravings above Naquane, with view into the Val Camonica, expedition 1936 FoA 18-KB09-03)

most due to E. Trautmann's gift for discovery"⁴⁴. A large number of Trautmann's black-and-white photographs of the newly-discovered engravings of Val Camonica was reproduced in the four articles in order to bring them to the attention of European petroglyphs research.

Among others, Erika Trautmann had discovered⁴⁵ a figure in Naquane which is iconographically similar to the so-called "Cernunnos" found on the Gundestrup cauldron in Denmark⁴⁶. Yet Trautmann and Altheim also found analogies to Italian engravings of ships, suns, birds, dogs, horses, humans and deer among the Swedish and Norwegian petroglyphs⁴⁷.

Instead of an indifferent influence from the North or a mutual interrelation, they postulated a concrete migration of Indo-European tribes from the Nordic region to Italy, bringing their fine art with them from Scandinavia⁴⁸. Their interpretation of the petroglyphs, adjusted to National-Socialist diction, fell on fertile soil with Göring and Himmler and ensured the approval of further research trips through the Ahnenerbe. Apart from this, Altheim received a professorship for Classical Archaeology at the University of Halle in the summer of 1938.

Trautmann's political connections paid off when it came to financing future expeditions as well as processing and publishing their results. A private communication dating of July 1938 from Sievers to Himmler reads,

Mrs E. Trautmann, who already proved her worth researching petroglyphs of Val Camonica together with Professor Dr. Altheim, was recently received by the Ministerpräsident and Generalfeldmarschall Göring, who is very interested in this research. During this chance, the necessity of exploring and presenting the conflict between the Teutonic peoples and the Orient, such as the one taking place in the 3rd century our time, became evident. The attached proposal by Mrs Trautmann and professor Altheim appraises on task and importance of the planned research trip. Ministerpräsident Generalfeldmarschall Göring immediately granted 4.000 RM in foreign currencies and urges to begin the expedition as soon as possible due to the sand storms commencing in September. Ministerpräsident Generalfeldmarschall Göring asked about the entire work of the 'Ahnenerbe' in a lively manner and made a note of his intention to speak at length about this with the Reichsführer-SS at the next opportunity. After consultation with the SS-Sturmabannführer Galke it is possible to place the costs of the trip, which will be about 6.000 to 7.000 RM, at their disposal from the funds of the 'Ahnenerbe'⁴⁹.

Like other expeditions abroad, this one was extensively prepared and organized by different institutions. One order from the Ahnenerbe states that "Mr.

44 ALTHEIM, TRAUTMANN 1942, p. 9; cf. ALTHEIM 1949/50b, p. 167.

45 About this „discover“, we can only state that the first photograph known of the so-called Cernunnos was taken by Trautmann during the summer of 1936. Professor Giovanni Marro, the most famous Italian rock-art scholar in the Thirties, during the XXV Reunion of the S.I.P.S. in Tripoli (November 1-7, 1936), presented the horned figure related to the Celtic deity on the Gundestrup cauldron found in Naquane as well as the one at the Scale di Cimbergo. So it seems that Marro was the first communicator of the discovery. It is also important to know that both Marro and Altheim-Trautmann had the same local guides on the rocks, and that between rock-art scholars in Val Camonica there was a sort of war about who first "discovered" the engravings, even if most of them were already visible. (Giovanni Marro, *Curiose figurazioni antropomorfe fra le incisioni rupestri camune*, Società Italiana per il Progresso delle Scienze, "Atti della XXV Riunione della S.I.P.S. a Tripoli (1-7 novembre 1936 -XV), Roma 1937, pp. 2-3).

46 Relating to the cauldron of Gundestrup cf. JENSEN 1993, pp. 81-84.

47 ALTHEIM, TRAUTMANN 1937, pp. 87-89; 1938, pp. 12-45.

48 ALTHEIM, TRAUTMANN 1937, pp. 100-101; 1938, p. 14, p. 30, pp. 38-39.

49 Sievers' Letter to Himmler dated July 13, 1938, BArch NS 21/2537, pp. 2016-2018.



Fig. 9 - The Rosa Camuna discovered in Bedolina during the expedition 1936. Discovery and photography by Erika Trautmann with the (original German) description: "Val Camonica. Bedolina. Rock engraving: Man with arrow and swastika-resembling ornament" (FoA 18-KB05-44)

Ministerpräsident Generalfeldmarschall Göring expressed his interest in the field trip by advising the German offices in the countries the expedition will cross by means of several handwritten letters to provide Mrs Trautmann and her companion [*sic!* – author’s note] with every possible assistance⁵⁰. It is inescapably clear that Erika Trautmann did not function as an assistant, lover or other attachment to Franz Altheim in the eyes of the financiers of her research trips but as autonomous researcher. She had even signed the trip application for the indisposed Franz Altheim in his name⁵¹.

THE JOURNEY TO THE BALKANS AND THE ORIENT: RESEARCH AND ESPIONAGE ON BEHALF OF THE SD

The trip intended to clarify the prehistoric and classical power relations between the "Nordic Indo-Germanic" and Semitic peoples at the eastern limits of the Roman Empire took place over the course of three summer months in 1938. Trautmann and Altheim traveled from Yugoslavia to Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey, then to the nomadic Bedouin tribes in Iraq and Syria before visiting Mosul, Bagdad, Damascus, Palmyra and famous contemporary excavations like Hatra, returning to the Asia Minor coast and ending in Brindisi and Rome⁵².

50 Request of Sievers to the Reichs- and Preußisches Wirtschaftsministerium dated August 1, 1938, BArch NS 21/2537, p. 2022.

51 Trautmann's Letter to Ahnenerbe dated June 30, 1938, BArch NS 21/896, pp. 0826-0832.

52 Request of Sievers to the Reichs- and Preußisches Wirtschaftsministerium dated August 1, 1938, BArch NS 21/2537, p. 2020.

The Ahnenerbe not only had scientific but also political interest in the journey. Once again Altheim and Trautmann were supposed to compose a political report about their voyage which would be made available to the SD afterwards. Once again they gave names and attitudes of scholars they visited⁵³. They portrayed the “native population” of Syria as anti-French and anti-Semitic while rather friendly and partially enthusiastic towards the German Reich. Regarding the French military border in East Syria they noted that the Arabs and Bedouins were aggressive and familiar with the oil pipe line hidden from the French, as well as willing to possibly show the location to the Germans⁵⁴. The tribe of the Shammar, nomadic in the area between Bagdad, Mosul, Cizre up to Harran, possessed 4.000 to 6.000 warriors. However, these were armed with ancient weaponry and ruled by a sheik who, while interested in the “new Germany”, would need to be sent pictures due to his inability to neither speak nor read any European language. Altheim and Trautmann urged to maintain the close relationship with this sheik as well as to provide him with visual propaganda materials and to send a leader from the SS for a follow-up visit to the Syrian-Iraqi border to hold up the friendly German contact to the desert nomads⁵⁵. They also vehemently recommended to Sievers for the Ahnenerbe to establish contact with Julius Jordan, head of the excavations at Uruk-Warka (Iraq) and director of the local NSDAP chapter for Bagdad. With the assistance of Jordan and the German envoy Fritz Grobba they also were able to undertake a car trip spanning multiple days and leading them across the Iraqi steppe up to Ktesiphon and Hatra, during which Franz Altheim gathered material for his work “The Barracks Emperors” and Erika Trautmann took pictures for the illustration section. In spite of the joint publication of their research results of Scandinavia and Val Camonica and ignoring Trautmann’s close cooperation, this monograph was published only under the professor’s name⁵⁶.

CAREER OPTIONS: FROBENIUS INSTITUTE OR AHNENERBE OF THE SS?

In the wake of their return to the German Reich, new job options opened up near the end of 1938 for Altheim and the by now 41-year-old Trautmann. Leo Frobenius had died on August 9, 1938 and Altheim was asked to fill the vacant leadership position at the Institute for Culture Morphology at Frankfurt/Main since the provisional leadership refused “to carry out the necessary changes and redundancies”⁵⁷. Altheim devised extensive suggestions for future operations of the Institute which foresaw large layoffs amongst established employees, a complete reorganization of the Institute and an adjustment to “other and contemporary fields of research”. Furthermore, Altheim suggested to Wolfram Sievers an affiliation between the Ahnenerbe and the Institute, with their rich archives filled with parietal drawings, photographs and documents from expeditions. In this context, he pointed to his joint research with Erika Trautmann being a very well-known former member of the Institute, and related to Göring, Himmler and the

53 Confidential report of Altheim and Trautmann, without date, BArch NS 21/896, p. 0868.

54 Confidential report of Altheim and Trautmann, without date, BArch NS 21/896, p. 0870.

55 Confidential report of Altheim and Trautmann, without date, BArch NS 21/896, pp. 0874-0880; cf. PRINGLE 2006, pp. 115-120; BARROWCLOUGH 2016, pp. 131-134; KOOP 2012, pp. 117-118.

56 ALTHEIM 1939.

57 Altheim’s letter to Sievers, without date, BArch NS 21/896, p. 0950.



Fig. 10 - The working party on the great rock n° 1 in Naquane: Franz Altheim, Maria Weyersberg, Editha Frobenius, Adolf Jensen, Giuseppe Amaracco, Karl Kerényi and his wife (Photo by Erika Trautmann, 1936, FoA 18-KB02-15)

Ahnenerbe. Altheim specified he was “profoundly grateful to these patrons and would only be able to take over as head of this Institute if a cooperation is certain. In that case he would suggest that the Institute continue its work in the closest connection possible with the ‘Ahnenerbe’”⁵⁸. Subsequently, Sievers visiting with Altheim the Frankfurt Institute yet did not show much of an interest in acquiring it⁵⁹. Instead Sievers offered Altheim to continue his research at the ‘Ahnenerbe’⁶⁰.

Altheim taking over the Institute in Frankfurt would also have been a safe career option for Erika Trautmann, as her political contacts were an essential part of Altheim’s reorganization suggestions based on “contemporary”, i.e. National-Socialist premises.

Finally, in March 1939, Trautmann received along with Franz Altheim and Celtic scholar Josef Weisweiler a research assignment about “The Animals of the Forest (The Stag)”. They were granted a monthly grant of 180 RM to split between the three of them under their own responsibility⁶¹.

Additionally, Trautmann gained her own research assignment on “Preparations for cataloguing European petroglyphs with a special focus on those of Indo-European origin in Sweden, Northern Italy and Northwest Spain”. The assignment also included the preparations for a comprehensive publication as well as the “exploration of the stag motif, which means a lot to both Generalfeldmarschall

58 Proposals of Altheim dated of 1 December 1938, BArch NS 21/896, pp. 0956-0958.

59 Note of Sievers dated January 24, 1939, BArch NS 21/896, pp. 0960-0962.

60 Sievers’ letter to Altheim dated February 23, 1939, BArch NS 21/896, p. 0964.

61 Sievers’ letter to Altheim dated March 29, 1939, BArch NS 21/896, pp. 0970-0978.



Fig. 11 - The shoe of Elisabeth Pauli as scale beneath an engraving on a way between Cimbergo and Naquane (Photo by Erika Trautmann, 1936, FoA 18-KB03-20)

Göring and Reichsführer-SS"⁶². The stag motif of the parietal artworks of Val Camonica already caught Trautmann's attention during her trip in 1937. To research it now, she received a separate monthly allowance of 200 RM. A number of communications from the Ahnenerbe to Erika Trautmann between 1939 and 1943 are addressed to her "on the premises", suggesting she had an own office at the Berlin headquarters of the Ahnenerbe throughout these years.

In 1939, Altheim and Trautmann published an article as well as a monograph, "On the origins of the runes" concerning the petroglyphs of Val Camonica, again featuring a comparison with the Nordic engravings⁶³. The monograph was printed in Fraktur typeface and released by the Ahnenerbe publishing house as part of a series called "Works on Teutonic lore". In the preface, the authors thanked their renowned sponsors Göring and Himmler as well as the Ahnenerbe for funding their expeditions⁶⁴.

Even a photo-book that would prelude a series of pictorial monographs on rock art research was under discussion: "For years I have been planning the compilation of a small handbook on European rock art since I have personally inspected and discovered many of them. Maybe one could, in cooperation with Professor Altheim, begin this endeavor by printing plates of Swedish and Italian petroglyphs"⁶⁵.

62 Sievers' letter to Wüst dated March 29, 1939, BArch NS 21/2537, pp. 2028. The stag motif had specially attracted Trautmann yet on her excursion to Val Camonica in 1937 (ALTHEIM, TRAUTMANN 1938, pp. 24-26).

63 ALTHEIM, TRAUTMANN 1939a; 1939b.

64 ALTHEIM, TRAUTMANN 1939b, preface.

65 Trautmann's letter to the Reichsgeschäftsführung Ahnenerbe dated January 10, 1940, BArch NS 21/2537, p. 2000.

WORLD WAR II – THE EXCLUSION OF WOMEN FROM RESEARCH EXPEDITIONS

The outbreak of war 1939/1940 seemed to have gone mostly ignored by the research team. Not one critical or pensive line of them is on record. Contrarily, they continued their extensive research trips within Europe during the first years of the war. Funded and organized by the Ahnenerbe, they once again traveled to Sweden and Norway from 8th to 29th December 1939. Written shortly after the German attack on Poland, their travel report reads as follows: “The trip was undertaken to enter a thought exchange with the colleagues of both countries and thus endear them to the German viewpoint”⁶⁶. They were warmly received by their colleagues in Stockholm, Uppsala and Oslo and guided through the museums and institutes.

This time, Altheim also penned a report on the situation in these countries after their return:

We undertook the trip even though the tensions between Germany and Sweden resulting from the Finnish war have seemingly reached their culminating point. The fact that this critical point in time required special activities and had to bring forth special results directed our actions. [...] There are many friends of Germany amongst the Scandinavian professors. All feel a deep commitment to German scholarship; many have studied in Germany. Unfortunately, they have formed a false impression of contemporary Germany due to the extremely effective English propaganda. The German propaganda has not stood a chance against it. We had a great deal of leeway in this respect, and it seems to us that we succeeded in clearing an initial way. [...] The only possible strategy is exerting an indirect influence by means of personal contact, confidential conversations and activating many inherent ties connecting the North with Germany⁶⁷.

However, the request for three additional expeditions to Italy, Tripoli and Iraq were declined two weeks after the first declaration of war to Poland since all expedition plans had to be postponed until after the state of war had been resolved⁶⁸.

One comment found within the Ahnenerbe documents is particularly interesting since it allows to draw conclusions about the relationship between Trautmann and Altheim during the first year of the war. Sievers vehemently notes during the settlement of the Orient trip in an Ahnenerbe report: “Mrs Trautmann is not part of this expedition as companion to professor Altheim but as a second researcher who also conducted scientific research, namely on the depiction of conflicts between the Indo-Germanic peoples from the North and the Orient throughout global history”⁶⁹. Therefore, Altheim and Trautmann still acted as equal researchers with their respective work shares at the Ahnenerbe in 1940. This was about to change profoundly over the course of the following years.

During the summer of 1940, in the wake of the conquest of France, Erika Trautmann made her first attempt at obtaining a research project abroad from the Ahnenerbe, independently of Altheim: studying megalithic monuments in Carnac (Bretagne) in which Heinrich Himmler saw the promise of new findings

66 Report of Altheim dated December 29, 1939, BArch NS 21/896, p. 0910.

67 Report of Altheim dated December 29, 1939, BArch NS 21/896, pp. 0910-0916.

68 Altheim's letter to Ahnenerbe dated August 10, 1939, BArch 21/896, pp. 0902-0906; Sievers' letter to Altheim dated September 15, 1939, BArch 21/896, p. 0908.

69 Note of Sievers dated of 4 March 1940, BArch NS/896, p. 0920.

on stone-aged archaeoastronomy⁷⁰. Her application was declined, however, and Wolfram Sievers awarded the assignment to archaeologist Herbert Jankuhn after Heinrich Himmler had emphatically requested the position be filled from his own staff, where no women were allowed outside of the secretarial jobs⁷¹. Yet Trautmann was given hope that she would be part of a later research expedition to occupied Bretagne. This field trip never happened, however, due to various delays caused by the course of the war in France in the following years⁷². Trautmann continued working for the Ahnenerbe in the context of the research assignment on the "Preparations for the recording of European parietal art", that had been authorized in 1939 and was extended in 1940, without ever being able to include the Breton monuments⁷³.

Other project suggestions she put forth were also declined on reasons of war and her gender. Altheim and Trautmann planned on traveling to Iraq in 1942 for an "antiquity-focused and archaeological exploration". Sievers partially rejected the application and wrote to Altheim: "However, a participation on part of Mrs Trautmann will not be possible seeing as such a venture would have to be undertaken in the wake of military operations, thus obviously sealing off the area for Mrs Trautmann"⁷⁴. In addition to the perfidious logic behind engaging in research activities in the shadow of war, this situation succinctly demonstrates the exclusion of female researchers from projects during the Third Reich on gender-related grounds. Erika Trautmann would not have applied for the expedition to Iraq with Altheim if she hadn't been aware of the circumstances accompanying such a difficult trip into a war zone and hadn't decided to accept this in light of her scientific curiosity.

JOINT PROJECTS AND PUBLICATIONS DURING WARTIME

As an alternative, Altheim and Trautmann were able to realize a second Sweden expedition in 1940 and a longer research stay in Italy despite the outbreak of the war at the western front⁷⁵. In October 1941 they were looking for antique and medieval inscriptions on the Plöckenpass (Passo di Monte Croce Carnico) in the Carnic Alps⁷⁶. These inscriptions were to prove the diffusion of runic writing from northern Italy over the Alps. In the following war years they continued to travel Europe unimpeded, for instance to Austria and Slovenia⁷⁷ at the end of 1942 while the air strikes of the allied forces at the Siegfried Line became more severe and the Battle of Stalingrad started along the East front. The records and publications that were consulted did not include any reference by Altheim or Trautmann about the advancing war.

In fact, their joint monograph "Cimbri and Runes. Exploring the origin of Runes" went to be published via the Ahnenerbe press⁷⁸. By including new petro-

70 PERSCHKE 2014, pp. 91-92; 2016a, pp. 238-239.

71 Refusal dated of 26 August 1940, Bundesarchiv Berlin, NS 21/615, B/41/f5.

72 PERSCHKE 2014, pp. 111-113, pp. 116-118.

73 Sievers' letter to Trautmann and Sievers' letter to Wüst, both dated February 7, 1940, BArch NS 21/2537, pp. 2002-2004.

74 Sievers' letter to Altheim dated August 20, 1942, BArch NS 21/896, p. 0932.

75 ALTHEIM 1943a, preface, n. pag.

76 ALTHEIM, TRAUTMANN 1942a, preface, n. pag.; 1942a, p. 37.

77 Note of Sievers dated of 10 September 1942, BArch NS 21/896, p. 0968.

78 ALTHEIM, TRAUTMANN 1942a.

glyphs and inscriptions found by Trautmann in Val Camonica, the theory of Nordic transmitter of culture was further expanded on⁷⁹. Now they also wanted to demonstrate that the development of the Scandinavian Runic Futhark from the older Latin-Etruscan alphabet was not facilitated (as previously postulated) by the trade ways with northern Europe, but that early runic petroglyphs from about 120 BC reached Italy during the migration of Cimbers, Teutons and Ambrones from the North. They stated that it were the scattered Teutonic tribes that had remained some time in Italy who brought the by-now fully developed runic characters back to Scandinavia.

The joint publications merely mention Erika Trautmann as subordinate co-author to Altheim, not as autonomous researcher⁸⁰. She was partially involved with Ahnenerbe topics, for example an article on "The Elk Rune", "Arian Stags and Stag myths", the pre-olympic cult of "Orthia" and the "Oldest Depiction of Wodan?"⁸¹. Furthermore, Altheim tasked her with preparing the figures for his extensive papers on ancient history. Trautmann still received a grant from the Ahnenerbe for her work on the "Stag" topic, which was again extended in 1944⁸².

Her final own project: the rock art photographs of Val Camonica

In the meantime, their joint publications on parietal art had caused quite the stir. Requests from colleagues for individual photographs from Val Camonica had reached such an extent that Erika Trautmann decided to pool the most important images in two volumes:

The petroglyph catalogue (Val Camonica) is ready to be used. Yet at the moment it resides inside a bomb bay, boxed up, though I have duplicates for my personal use. The scientific processing has yet to be done, but I work on it daily. Some publications are in preparation. Requests regarding Val Camonica are frequent. I'm trying as well as I can to satisfy everyone. But the photo prints are starting to run out [...] In order to meet the many requests I'm now working on a compilation of the most important petroglyphs that the local photo company wants to manage then. Only original photographs will be produced. I hope that this option at long last will also give you joy since it takes care of the difficulties. Publishing a larger catalogue of plates is impossible under current circumstances, after all⁸³.

Indeed, neither the catalogue nor the photo folder could be printed during the war.

The importance of the documentation and publication of the photographs was thrown into stark relief elsewhere. During the war, the parietal art of Scandinavia, which Altheim and Trautmann visited as recently as 1939 and 1940 and documented in part, was entirely at the mercy of the creation of military entrenchments of the Wehrmacht. Some of the engravings from the Bronze and Stone Ages were completely destroyed. For instance, Wolfram Sievers recounts the following of an Ahnenerbe journey to Norway in the summer of 1944:

There were joyous experiences, yet against a serious backdrop. When we confronted a captain of pioneers about why he broke a Bronze Age ship (you certainly

79 ALTHEIM, TRAUTMANN 1942a, preface, n. pag.

80 ALTHEIM, TRAUTMANN 1940; 1942a; ALTHEIM 1943a.

81 ALTHEIM, TRAUTMANN 1941a; 1941b; 1941c; 1942b.

82 Altheim' letter to Sievers dated August 30, 1944, BArch NS 21/896, pp. 0936-0937; Sievers' letter to Altheim dated September 7, 1944, BArch NS 21/896, p. 0940.

83 Trautmann's letter to Sievers dated November 15, 1943, BArch NS 21/2537, pp. 1998-1999; later partially published as: TRAUTMANN-NEHRING 1947.



Fig. 12 - Franz Altheim at a new discovered rock art site between Cimbergo and Naquane (Photo by Erika Trautmann, 1936, FoA 18-KB03-19)

know the rock art of Hafslün near Sarpsborg) only to keep their position straight, meaning not half a meter off, he said that he had only destroyed the runes that indicated the name of the ship (!). The ship itself was still there, after all. But it was strange how a ship had been able to turn into stone in such a short time (!!!). This unsophisticated soul had assumed that the rock protruding from the earth in some places was a petrified ship!⁸⁴.

The undocumented destructions wreaked on the valuable petroglyphs of Norway by stupidity and military obedience of the German occupiers is unbelievable and a real loss for scientific research and posterity.

LOSSES OF WAR AND ITS END

Trautmann and Altheim were planning further editions and volumes of “Crisis in the Ancient World” for 1945⁸⁵. Erika Trautmann was supposed to compile the figures for all of them⁸⁶. Multiple monographs were in development, yet there were losses because of the war: Altheim wanted to re-write a paper on the origin of the Etruscans that had been destroyed in a bomb strike whereas he decided against it in the case of the manuscript for the second edition of “Epochs of Roman History”, which had been lost to an air strike as well along with the set text and the paper bought for the prints⁸⁷.

⁸⁴ Sievers' letter to Jankuhn dated July 20, 1944, BArch NS 21/51 (punctuation adopted from Sievers).

⁸⁵ Copy of the work schedule of Altheim and Trautmann, turn of the year 1944/45, BArch NS 21/896, pp. 0798-0804.

⁸⁶ ALTHEIM 1947-48.

⁸⁷ Copy of the work schedule of Altheim and Trautmann, turn of the year 1944/45, BArch NS 21/896, p. 0802.

How and where Franz Altheim and Erika Trautmann experienced the end of the war in 1945 is still unclear. The financing from the Ahnenerbe had dried up with the collapse of the Third Reich. Due to his connection to the SS, the professor lost his job at the University of Halle in September 1945, leaving the two researchers temporarily without any income⁸⁸.

In December 1945 Altheim was reinstated as a full professor by means of a decree of the Soviet Military Administration but moved to West-Berlin in 1949 and changed from the Ancient History department to the newly-founded Free University Berlin where he taught from 1950 to his retirement in 1965⁸⁹.

UNDER THE PUBLISHING BODY OF ALTHEIM

Neither Halle nor West-Berlin offered any career options of her own for Erika Trautmann. When the war ended she had been 48 years old and far from retirement. Until 1947 she continued her work on the rock art recorded in Val Camonica during the 1930s which resulted in two boxes filled with 100 black-and-white original photographs in DIN-A4 format⁹⁰. She had already been negotiating with the Ahnenerbe regarding them, but it was not until the post-war era that the two volumes could be published with a print run of 50 copies. The text included in the books is slim and only includes a very brief preface in the first volume as well as names of the locations of each individual petroglyph in both volumes. No interpretation or even a travel report is to be found; only at the very end there is a list citing the publications of Altheim and Trautmann between 1937 and 1943⁹¹. The catalogue and the “scientific processing” she had referenced in 1943 have to be presumed lost⁹².

Significantly these photo boxes, whose authorship and copyright reside solely with Trautmann, were published under Altheim’s editorship. Apparently the plan was to issue an initial volume of a series called “Image and Research. Department Classical Studies” featuring the petroglyphs of Val Camonica to be followed by a publication of further rock art findings⁹³. Other volumes do not seem to have ever seen the light of day, however. Erika Trautmann set a monument for herself within the contemporary parietal art research by means of these photographs.

Yet with Altheim self-sacrificingly functioning as a publishing body, the shadow of a male partner was placed on this truly independent work of hers since her work wasn’t allowed to be published without his name on the cover. These circumstances forced her into the role intended for her by her times – autonomous photographer and author, but unable to publish on her own.

EXCLUSION FROM THE ROCK ART RESEARCH IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

How Erika Trautmann supported herself in these or the following years until her retirement in 1962 – whether solely through Altheim’s salary or whether she

88 UAHW, Rep. 11, PA 3900 (Altheim); cf. <http://www.catalogus-professorum-halensis.de/altheimfranz.html> (as consulted online on 20 September 2017).

89 UAHW, Rep. 11, PA 3900 (Altheim); cf. <http://www.catalogus-professorum-halensis.de/altheimfranz.html> (as consulted online on 20 September 2017).

90 TRAUTMANN-NEHRING 1947.

91 ALTHEIM, TRAUTMANN 1937; 1938; 1939a; 1939b; 1940; ALTHEIM 1943a; 1943b.

92 Trautmann’s letter to Sievers dated November 15, 1943, BArch NS 21/2537, pp. 1998-1999.

93 TRAUTMANN-NEHRING 1947, title page and preface, n. pag.

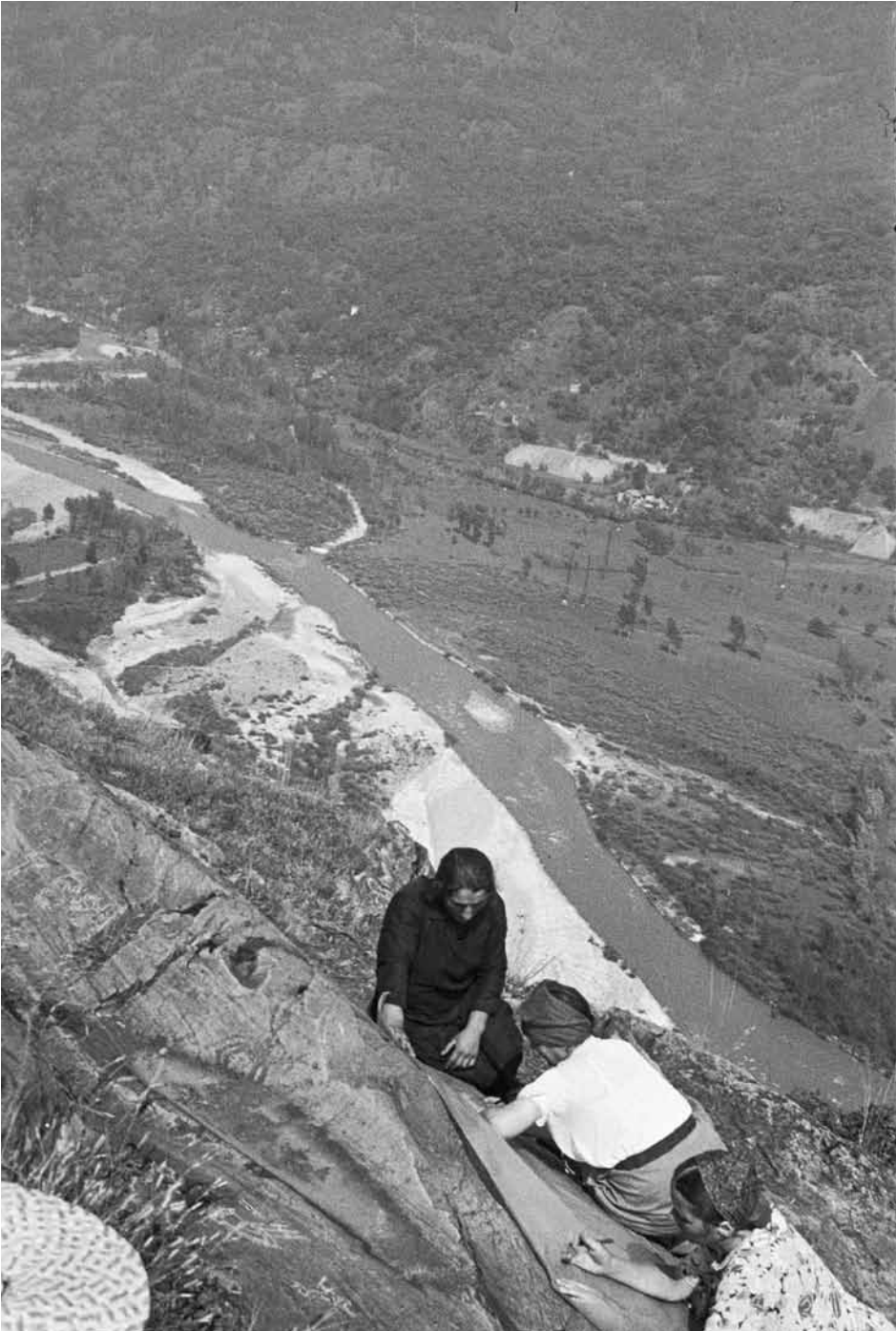


Fig. 13 - The working party during the expedition 1936 on a steep slope in Bedolina, Capo di Ponte (FoA 18-KB06-26)

received a service contract for processing the visual material – could not be determined, neither through archive documents nor witnesses. “She didn’t hold a teaching position at the Free University Berlin or the Westphalian Wilhelm University in Münster. She also didn’t have a job as draughtswoman or graphic artist anywhere else during the post-war period”⁹⁴. There exists neither a personnel file nor a mention of her in the employee directories from 1950 to 1965 at the Free University Berlin⁹⁵. During these years, she was credited as author of the picture sections of almost two dozen additional publications, both in monographs and anthologies, which were published by Altheim⁹⁶.

Now, on the brink of the foundation of the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic and as a means of distancing himself from earlier National-Socialist tendencies in his interpretation of rock engravings and petroglyphs, Altheim penned a new summary of their research results in *Val Camonica*, which he published without crediting her as co-author⁹⁷. At least, Altheim did mention her tremendous contribution to the discovery of the petroglyphs and the joint articles and monographs from the 1930s and 1940s. Yet the fact that this first post-war article was published just under his name spelled the exclusion of Erika Trautmann’s work and interpretation from scientifically quotable statements within both young Republics (GDR and FRG), and thus from all future parietal art research.

Overall, Altheim held on to his interpretation that petroglyphs and the development of runic characters are due to the migration of the Cimbri as previously stated alongside Trautmann in the 1930s and 1940s, even though he adjusted his vocabulary. Professional circles no longer paid any attention to Altheim and Trautmann’s older works, meaning Trautmann’s name faded into oblivion despite her achievements in field research and documentation.

SUNSET YEARS AND FUNERAL IN MÜNSTER

In the year 1965, after Altheim had retired, Trautmann and he moved to Münster/Westphalia, where Altheim’s adopted daughter Ruth Altheim-Stiehl held a chair at the university⁹⁸. In her final years, Trautmann suffered from circulatory disturbances in her veins and needed constant medical care after a severe leg thrombosis⁹⁹.

Erika Trautmann died on October 28, 1968 at the age of 71 after an extended in-patient stay at the Klemenshospital in Münster¹⁰⁰. Franz Altheim, who organized the funeral, wrote to her relatives on the side of the Nehring family: “She resides on the forest cemetery Lauheide in a single grave with a grave stone to be crafted in ancient Germanic design; her wishes will be met in this regard as well”¹⁰¹. This gravestone consisted of greenish granite and was carved like a small

94 Translated excerpt from a communication by Ruth Altheim-Stiehl to the author, dated June 5, 2014.

95 Communication of archivist Gerd Walter from Free University Berlin, dated May 17, 2017.

96 Cf. PERSCHKE 2017.

97 ALTHEIM 1949/50b, pp. 166-185.

98 PALETSCHEK 2006, p. 181; BALTRUSCH 2008, pp. 15-16, pp. 31-32, p. 39.

99 Communication by Ruth Altheim-Stiehl to the author, dated May 22, 2017.

100 Communication by Ruth Altheim-Stiehl to the author, dated May 22, 2017.

101 ALTHEIM 1968, p. 54.

menhir with an ornamental Ingwaz rune¹⁰². Curiously, the notation of the rune was not old Nordic style but from the Anglo-Saxon Futhork¹⁰³. It is possible that Altheim and Trautmann came across this form during their research on Scandinavian runes and had it engraved as a rune of the Germanic God Ing on the parietal art researcher's green gravestone.

Once the usage period had expired, the grave on the forest cemetery had been cleared in 2008 and the grave stone destroyed¹⁰⁴. Given that she had no children and her inheritance as well as her personal documents have been lost, Erika Trautmann's contributions to parietal art research remain her only legacy.

CONCLUSION: A FEMALE RESEARCHER BETWEEN CHANCES, POLITICS AND PERSONAL DECISIONS

Regrettably, Erika Trautmann neither endeavored to distance herself from National-Socialist premises in the post-war era nor from old contacts¹⁰⁵. Her professional knowledge about the discovery and documentation of petroglyphs would have been a considerable gain for post-war research in the fields of archaeology and anthropology.

In spite of her decision to actively serve the Third Reich, the circumstances of her life also did not provide any substantial chance for a scientific career of her own. It seems most of all important to shed light on her contributions to parietal art research and honor (while considering and verbalizing the National-Socialist assumptions underlying her wider interpretations) Erika Trautmann's personal achievements regarding the discovery, documentation and tradition of Northern Italian and Scandinavian rock art. Admittedly, she finally submitted to the traditional women's role of her time when serving Altheim's publications with her photographic and pictorial work since the end of the 1940s. But before, she had dedicated most of her active years and autonomous scientific research efforts to the European rock art.

The Frobenius Institute is currently hooking up this appreciation by retrieving the rock art drawings of the 1930s from its depots. Some examples of Trautmann's rock art drawings and photographs were shown during spring 2016 in the context of the exposition "The Art of Prehistoric Times – Rock Paintings from the Frobenius Collection" at the Martin-Gropius-Bau (Berlin)¹⁰⁶.

Today, the petroglyphs of Val Camonica, some of which first discovered and recorded by Erika Trautmann, belong to Italy's oldest UNESCO World Heritage Site, which attracts thousands of tourists each year. Her accomplishments should not be forgotten.

102 Information from the cemetery records, Email by Wilhelm Klönne, City of Münster, dated May 8, 2017.

103 PERSCHKE 2017.

104 Information from the cemetery records, Email by Wilhelm Klönne, City of Münster, dated May 8, 2017.

105 PERSCHKE 2017.

106 KOHL, KUBA, IVANOFF 2016.

UNPUBLISHED SOURCES

- Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde (BArch) / German Federal Archives in Berlin-Lichterfelde
 BArch NS 21/51.
 BArch NS 21/615.
 BArch NS 21/896, microfilm, personnel file Ahnenerbe/Franz Altheim.
 BArch NS 21/2537, personnel file Ahnenerbe/Erika Trautmann.
 BArch R 73/10112, microfilm, Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft.
 Archives of the Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg (UAHW)
 UAHW Rep. 11, PA 3900 (personnel file Franz Altheim)
 Photo archives of the Frobenius-Instituts, Frankfurt/Main (FoA)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ALTHEIM F.
 1939 *Die Soldatenkaiser*, mit 71 Bildaufnahmen von Erika Trautmann, Frankfurt/Main, Klostermann.
 1943a *Die Krise der Alten Welt im 3. Jahrhundert n. Zw. und ihre Ursachen. Mit Beiträgen von Erika Trautmann-Nehring, vol. I: Die außerrömische Welt*, Berlin, Ahnenerbe-Verlag.
 1943b *Italien und Rom*, vol. 1, third edition, Amsterdam/Leipzig, Pantheon Akademische Verlagsanstalt.
 1947-48 *Weltgeschichte Asiens im griechischen Zeitalter*, 2 volumes, picture section by Erika Trautmann-Nehring, Halle/Saale, Max Niemeyer Verlag.
 1949/50a *Die Wanderung der Hunnen*, in «La Nouvelle Clio» 1/2, pp. 71-86.
 1949/50b *Runenforschung und Val Camonica*, in «La Nouvelle Clio» 1/2, pp. 166-185.
 1968 *Briefauszug aus der Korrespondenz mit Walther K. Nehring*, in «Familienblatt des Familienverbandes Nehring-Moek-Wagner» 9, p. 54.
 ALTHEIM F., TRAUTMANN E.
 1937 *Nordische und italische Felsbildkunst*, in «Die Welt als Geschichte» 3, pp. 83-113.
 1938 *Neue Felsbilder aus der Valcamonica. Die Sonne im Kult und Mythos*, in «Wörter und Sachen» 19, pp. 12-45.
 1939a *Keltische Felsbilder der Val Camonica*, in «Römische Mitteilungen (Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts)» 59, pp. 1-13.
 1939b *Vom Ursprung der Runen*, Berlin, Deutsches Ahnenerbe Verlag.
 1940 *Italien und die dorische Wanderung*, Amsterdam/Leipzig, Pantheon Akademische Verlagsanstalt.

- 1941a *Die Elchrune*, in «Germanien» 13, N.F. 3, pp. 22-30.
 1941b *Hirsch und Hirschsage bei den Ariern*, in «Germanien» 13, N. F. 3, pp. 286-297 and pp. 349-357.
 1941c *Orthia*, in «Welt als Geschichte» 7, pp. 360-368.
 1942a *Kimbern und Runen: Untersuchungen zur Ursprungsfrage der Runen*, Berlin, Deutsches Ahnenerbe Verlag.
 1942b *Die älteste Darstellung des Wodan?*, in «Germanien» 14, N. F. 4, pp. 369-382.
 BALTRUSCH E.
 2008 *Geschichte der Alten Geschichte an der Freien Universität*, in KUBICKI K., LÜNNENDONKER S. (eds.), *Die Geschichtswissenschaft an der Freien Universität Berlin*, Berlin, V&R unipress.
 BARROWCLOUGH D.
 2016 *Digging for Hitler. The Nazi Archaeologists Search for an Aryan Past*, Oxford, Fonthill Media.
 FROBENIUS L.
 1935 *Vorwort*, in «Bilderbuchblatt. Europäische Felsbilder (Südfrankreich, Ostspanien, Skandinavien)», Beiblatt 6 zu den Mitteilungen des Forschungs-Instituts für Kulturmorphologie e.V., Frankfurt/Main, n. pag.
 GENEALOGIE
 1999 *Genealogie des Familienkreises Nehring*, 4/1999. Distribution via Family Nehring, <http://familienkreis-nehring.de/genealogie.html> (as consulted online on 30 March 2017).
 GRÜNERT H.
 2002 *Gustaf Kossinna. Ein Wegbereiter der nationalsozialistischen Ideologie*, in LEUBE A. (ed.), *Prähistorie und Nationalsozialismus: Die mittel- und osteuropäische Ur- und Frühgeschichtsforschung in den Jahren 1933-1945*, Heidelberg, Synchron Wissenschaftsverlag der Autoren, pp. 307-320.
 GRÜNIG G.
 2012 *Val Camonica. Felsbildkunst in den Alpen*, Weinstadt, Verlag Bernhard Albert Greiner.
 JENSEN J.
 1993 *Dänische Vorzeit. Führer durch das Nationalmuseum*, Kopenhagen, Nationalmuseet.
 KATER M.
 2006 *Das „Ahnenerbe“ der SS 1935-1945. Ein Beitrag zur Kulturpolitik des Dritten Reiches*, Studien zur Zeitgeschichte 6 (4. ed.), München, Oldenbourg-Verlag.
 KOHL K.-H., KUBA R., IVANOFF H.
 2016 *Kunst der Vorzeit – Felsbilder aus der Sammlung Frobenius*, Exhibition Catalogue, München, Prestel-Verlag.

- KOOP V.
2012 *Himmlers Germanenwahn: Die SS-Organisation Ahnenerbe und ihre Verbrechen*, Berlin, Bebra Verlag.
- KOSSINNA G.
1911 *Die Herkunft der Germanen. Zur Methode der Siedlungsarchäologie*, Würzburg, Kabitzsch.
- LETTE-VEREIN (eds.)
1938 *Photographische Lehranstalt des Lette-Vereins*, Berlin, Verlag H. L. Rust.
- 1966 *100 Jahre Lette-Verein. Eine Chronik*, Berlin, Verlag Bernhard Goebel.
- MARRETTA A.
2008 *Digging the Past: one hundred years of research on Valcamonica rock art*, in «Adoranten», pp. 36-54.
- MARRO G.
1937 *Curiose figurazioni antropomorfe fra le incisioni rupestri camune*, in Atti della XXV Riunione della S.I.P.S. a Tripoli (1-7 novembre 1936 -XV), Società Italiana per il Progresso delle Scienze, Roma 1937, pp. 2-3.
- NEHRING W.
1973 *Erika und Eva Nehring aus Osterwieck*, in «Familie Nehring» 2, pp. 51-52.
- NEHRING H., NEHRING E.
1975 *Die Schwestern Eva und Erika Nehring*, in «Familie Nehring» 3, pp. 76-80.
- PALETSCHKE S.
2006 *Ermentrude und ihre Schwestern. Die ersten habilitierten Historikerinnen in Deutschland*, in ALBRECHT H. (ed.), *Politische Gesellschaftsgeschichte im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Hamburg, Krämer, pp. 175-187.
- PERSCHKE R.
2014 *Ausgrabungen und Zerstörungen an den Megalithen von Carnac während der deutschen Besatzung der Bretagne (1940-1944)*, in «Archäologische Informationen» 37, pp. 81-152.
- 2016a *Der Bunker im Tumulus. Kriegsarchäologie im Spannungsfeld von Wehrmacht, Ahnenerbe der SS und Dienststelle Rosenberg*, in GRUNDWALD S., HALLE U., MAHSARSKI D., REICHENBACH K. (eds.), *Die Spur des Geldes in der Prähistorischen Archäologie*, Bielefeld, Transcript-Verlag, pp. 209-257.
- 2016b *Die deutsche Megalithgrab-Nomenklatur - Ein Beitrag zum Umgang mit ideologisch belasteter Fachterminologie*, in «Archäologische Informationen» 39, pp. 167-176.
- 2017 *Die Felsbildforscherin Erika Trautmann-Nehring (1897-1968)*, in HÄDER S., WIEGMANN U. (eds.), *An der Seite gelehrter Männer. Frauen zwischen Emanzipation und Tradition*, Bad Heilbrunn, Verlag Julius Klinkhardt, pre-emptive pp. 225-269 (in print).
- PRINGLE H.
2006 *The Master Plan - Himmler's Scholars and the Holocaust*, New York, Hyperion.
- TRAUTMANN E.
1935 *Südfranzösische und ostspanische Felsbilder*, in «Bilderbuchblatt 6. Europäische Felsbilder (Südfrankreich, Ostspanien, Skandinavien)», Beiblatt 6 zu den Mitteilungen des Forschungs-Instituts für Kulturmorphologie e.V., Frankfurt/Main, pp. 77-80.
- TRAUTMANN-NEHRING E.
1947 *Die Felsbilder der Val Camonica*, 2 volumes, Berlin, Transmare-Photo.

