

## CUPMARKS IN CONTEXT

*Dr. Gerhard Milstreu*

Cup mark - the most common and the oldest icon in rock art. A cosmopolitan symbol, "Active" and in use through the whole history of rock art.

Some / many researchers are splitting up the iconography - rock art *and* cup marks.

Does that mean: Cupmarks are not rock art ?

Of course cup marks are a part of rock art - and probably a very important symbol and a symbol with many aspects and changing through time too.

Cup marks in context is not that easy to figure out.

But connecting cup marks to well known interpretable figures, compositions might be possible, and that way round to get an idea of - at least some of - the meanings of this very simple but complicated dot.

It remains, however, difficult to interpret rock art and especially cup marks. The carvings were created in a social and historical setting and the moment of their creation was unique. The experiences of people today do not coincide with those of the rock carving artists.

So there are limits when we are trying to interpret and to connect to a context.  
But good reasons to try.

It is useful to make a kind of organization in order to get a "general view". And I use this very rough systematic - dividing cup marks into two groups:

### *Not organized*

Where the cup marks are "accidentally spread out" on a surface without a certain structure or connection to any identification cause - *for us to see to day*. Represented on panels with only cup marks and panels with figures and cup marks as well as on boulders, smaller stones including "pocket-cup mark-stones", which are very common in Denmark.

### *Organized*

*Schematic art* - f ex cup mark-circles, cup - and ring marks, rows of cup marks, cup marks connected with lines, circles and other geometric figures filled with cup marks.

*Connection to figurative art* - as an integrated part of human beings, animals, ships and other figures

*Conceivable Symbols for rituals* - fertility, water, crops, and to the cosmology: the sun - and stars, which has become important theories in connection to the recent find - the sky-disc from Nebra in Sachsen, Germany.

The dating aspect is interesting too and also imaginable in cases, where it is possible to relate to datable figures and especially to finds with cup marks, f ex shields, helmets and other finds.

But it will only include "0,7%" of the cup marks.

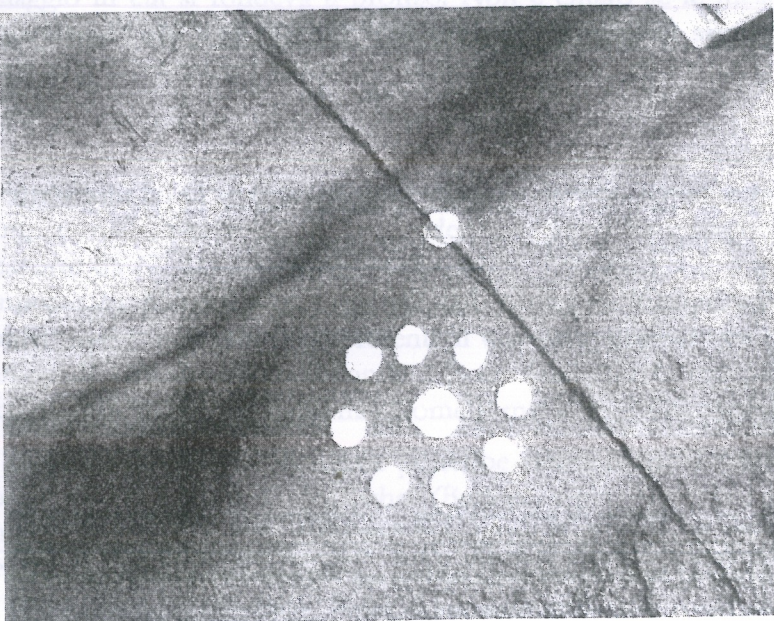
Astonishment is the main entrance to rock art - also for researchers.



Asperberget



Grevinge



Skem Skål