

A Stone Age rock art map at Nämforsen, Northern Sweden

Introduction

The forceful Nämforsen rapids and its landscape have fascinated people for thousands of years. People left their marks on the rocks and numerous settlements in the area. Nämforsen is a unique remnant of the Stone Age where one can sit down on the islands with rock art – close your eyes and travel back in time accompanied by the forceful power and sound of the rapids. Over the past years, I have appreciated numerous visits to this large concentration of rock art in Northern Sweden with more than 2000 rock carvings.

People in the past visited and revisited Nämforsen for generations. The unique geographical location as an ideal aggregation place due to its location was suggested by Hallström (1960:XI) and the role of Nämforsen as a meeting place during the Stone Age and Bronze Age has been repeatedly argued (Baudou, 1993; Forsberg, 1993:242; Hagen, 1976:127-130; Hallström, 1960; Ramqvist, 2002:154-156; Tilley, 1991:108-113). The revisiting of the fabled place with the storied rocks – the memoryscapes of “our world as we know it” - made the rapids of Nämforsen a node in the landscape and a natural meeting place. Nämforsen was a place where people met. Central to their meeting was the journeys to and from such nodes in the hunter-gatherer landscapes (Gjerde, 2010b:409-416).

It is overwhelming to look at the same images that people did thousands of years ago. To unravel the meaning of the carved

figures is somewhat more difficult. A clear advantage with rock art is that archaeologists can study the same carvings at the same place over and over again. Revisiting Nämforsen in the footsteps of Gustaf Hallström makes it a “new” journey among the rocks time after time.

The temporality and the changing landscapes lures new impressions from the rock art rocks at Nämforsen. The interplay between the rock art and the micro-topographical features, land and landscape seems to have played a part in the deliberate placing of the figures where they interact with the canvas of the rock. The rocks appear as memoryscapes and even maps of the Stone Age world left by the people inhabiting the Nämforsen area. This paper focus on the interaction between the natural elements and rock art.

New eyes on old art, relating the natural elements to the rock art, this brief presentation will show how there is a link between the rock art and its related natural features. These natural features hold information on the Nämforsen landscape and the surroundings where rocks are storing information on geographical knowledge and the taskscapes of Nämforsen. This may also suggest why the figures and motifs are placed deliberately where they are on the rock outcrop and give us a better understanding of the relations between the figures, motifs, scenes and composition at the rock art panel.



Figure 1 Panoramaphoto of Nämforsen from the area where Ställverksboplatsen once were. Compiled from 6 photos. Photos and illustration: Jan Magne Gjerde

Rock art at Nämforsen

First mentioned in 1705, Nämforsen holds a central place in the rock art research of northern Europe. Gustaf Hallström's lifetime investment at Nämforsen has made the site accessible to the international reader by its meticulous documentation published in his large monograph (Hallström, 1960). Hallström estimated the number of figures at Nämforsen to exceed 2000 and documented about 1750 figures (Hallström, 1960:283). Later more carvings were discovered by Lindqvist (1999:105) and a re-documentation of the Nämforsen site increased the known number of figures to more than 2300 (Larsson & Broström, 2011; Larsson & Engelmark, 2005). The carvings at Nämforsen are mainly situated on the islands Laxön (Hallström Group I), Notön (Hallström Group II), and Bradön (Hallström Group III) (see Figure 1) with carvings on both shores of the rapids.

By far the dominant representation at Nämforsen is the elk (*alces alces*). The elk figure is found throughout Fennoscandia in Stone Age rock art, but by far the largest concentration is found at Nämforsen. An overview of the figures that could be identified at Nämforsen presented by Lindqvist (1994:183) shows that of the 1180 identified figures, a staggering 585 are elks (c. 54%) in addition to 337 boat figures (c. 31%) and 99 human figures (9%). That is, c. 95% of all the figures at Nämforsen represent elks, boats or humans. The elks occur as single individuals and in large groups. There are a few representations of other animals such as bears and salmon. Some of the human representations at Nämforsen include

artefacts such as the well-known elk-head staffs.

The elk is all-embracing and also occurs as elkhead-stems of many of the early boats and on elk-head staffs. In Tilley's "quest of ambiguity" at Nämforsen, he observed that some elk-antlers are representations of boats (Tilley, 1991:68). Elk-antlers as boat representations have been found in rock art elsewhere in Fennoscandia (Lahelma, 2007:117-119). The elk-head boats have only been found in the northeastern part of Fennoscandia and seem to have an eastern origin (Gjerde, 2010b:397-400; *in press-a*). The Stone Age boats are dominant, but there are a few examples of the later more "traditional" South Scandinavian boats. There are also a few foot soles and wheel-crosses that are associated with the South Scandinavian Bronze Age.

Rock art, landscapes and lost relations at Nämforsen

Reconstructing the physical landscape is important for the understanding of landscapes and lost landscape relations in particular. The Ångermanland area has the highest prehistoric shorelines in the world at 286 m asl. (Fredén & Grånäs, 2002). The relevance of the land uplift and landscape impact of the connected changes was pointed out at an early stage (Sidenblad, 1869:206f), and as Hallström states, "the carvings cannot be older than the rapids themselves" (Hallström: 1960:372). Shoreline dating has been applied in combination

with other dating methods (mainly stylistic) to date the Nämforsen carvings.

Previous dating suggestions have argued that the initial carvings at Nämforsen were made about 4200 BC and the latter in the Early Bronze Age c.1800 BC (Baudou, 1993; Forsberg, 1993; Lindqvist, 1994). I have argued, based on more recent geological data from shoreline dating, that the initial phase of the carvings was at about 5000 BC (Gjerde, 2010b:354-358). The latter phase is likely to be from the Early Bronze Age. The carvings at Nämforsen were likely made between 5000 BC and 1800 BC, over a period of about 3000 years. There are very few motifs that can be directly attributed to the Bronze Age and of the about 2300 carvings, I estimate that about 50 of them originate from the Bronze Age.

During the 700 years from about 7000 until 6300 years ago, the Nämforsen area was transformed from a silent running river to forceful rapids, becoming a 500 m long and about 100 m wide area of forceful

rapids with two main islands in the middle (see Figure 2 and Figure 3). The rapids and islands entered from the river (underworld) and became a major obstacle for the long communication route inland by boat. When the first rocks appeared from the river/fjord about 7000 years ago, they were part of the long Ångermanälven-fjord stretching about 140 km from the Baltic Sea (Gjerde, 2010b:359-361). The boats had to be carried past the rapids making this a natural stop along the waterway. The long Ångermanälven-fjord would have been a major communication route as also "described" by the boat depictions in the rocks. The rapids became a landmark in the area, a node in the landscape. The changing landscape and its lost relations are important to get closer to an understanding of the Nämforsen rock art.

Going to Nämforsen today is a different experience from when the initial rapids appeared due to the land uplift, consequential changes and modern installations. The lost relations makes visiting Nämforsen a differ-

Figure 2 The rock art area of Nämforsen and its surroundings. The rock art is situated on the islands in the rapids area and on the river bank on both sides of the river. Photo from Gustaf Hallströms Archive at the Research Archive, University of Umeå, Sweden.





Figure 3 The massive rapids at Nämforsen with the island Bradön at midsummer in 1907 taken from Notön Island. Photo by Gustaf Hallström by courtesy of the Gustaf Hallströms Archive at the Research Archive, University of Umeå, Sweden.

ent experience compared to when the rock art was made. However, spending time at Nämforsen considering the lost relations at the place may yield a better understanding of this rock art place.

The force of the rapids at Nämforsen has been discussed by Goldhahn, where the audio-visual aspect of the carvings at Nämforsen have been stressed (Goldhahn, 2002a, 2002b). Undoubtedly, the sound and fury of the rapids at Nämforsen made this place as “special” to people in the past as today. As Hallström puts it: “On the rock laid bare by the river on the shores of Nämforsen and on the islets in the middle of the rapids, the multitudinous rock-carvings have been applied; it is these which together with the beauty of the rapids have made the locality so famous” (Hallström, 1960:130).

Stone Age geographical knowledge

Stone Age hunter-fisher-gatherers in Fennoscandia most likely lived by a mobile life

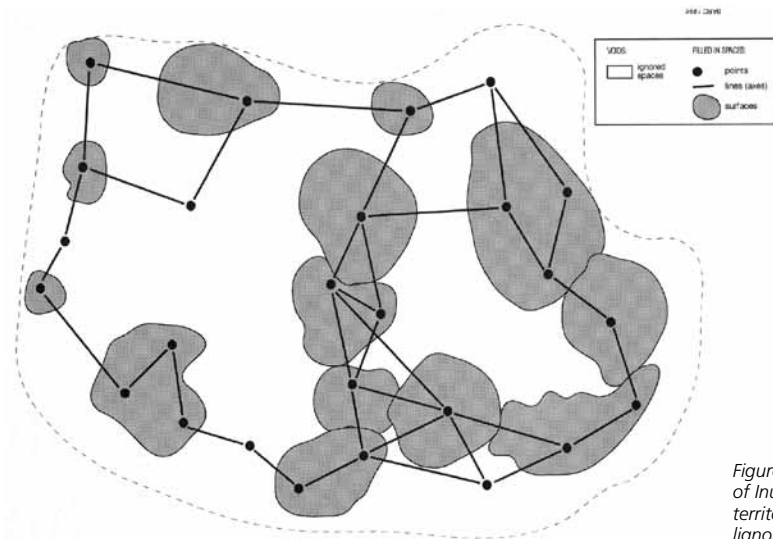
strategy. This mobile strategy is well described amongst hunter-fisher-gatherers in the ethnographical record of vast parts of the circumpolar area. Important to knowledge of land and landscape are journeys. By journeys, both real and imagined, that are central to shamanic practice, the significance of geographical knowledge is represented by memoryscapes and cynegetic activities. Cynegetic derives from Ancient Greek and means something like “connected to hunting”, referring to travelling, hunting, trapping, fishing and gathering (Collignon, 2006). By spending time in the landscape, hunter-fisher-gatherers build their geographical knowledge around important places and lines of movement for their hunting strategy.

Nuttall initiates and applies the term memoryscape in relation to landscape. “... , but by way of a brief definition, memoryscape is constructed with people’s mental images of the environment, with particular emphasis on places as remembered places” (Nuttall, 1992:39).

Animals are important to hunter-fisher-gatherers. Knowledge of animals, their morphology and ways of living are also important. Knowledge of animal movements, their crossing places and habitats are also crucial for hunter-fisher-gatherers. Amongst the Nganasan in Siberia and the Sàmi in northern Europe, rich areas or favourable places where animals are found certain times of year are important places in their landscape (Manker, 1960; Popov, 1948, 1966; Sommerseth, 2009:248; Vorren, 1998:135). Such favourable places connected to the annual migration of large terrestrial game occur in vast parts of the circumpolar area (Benedict, 2005; Blehr, 1982; Collignon, 2006; Grønnow, Meldgaard, & Berglund Nielsen, 1983; Popov, 1948, 1966; Stewart, Keith, & Scottie, 2004). A study amongst the Inuinnait in North America shows that animals cannot be separated from the knowledge of land. Such a division does not make sense to them since knowledge of game is an inherent part of what the hunters understand as geographic knowledge. Their territory (lived space) is perceived through points, lines (axes), surfaces and ignored spaces (see Figure 4) (Collignon, 2006:90-97). Surfaces or zones without game are regarded as empty

zones. They are less travelled and are so unimportant as to be nonexistent to them, ignored spaces. Thereby land – Inuinnait land – is made up of spaces, empty and full. Through human experiences and storytelling, the landscape becomes a memoryscape, a humanized environment (Collignon, 2006:97-99). Thereby the Inuinnait have a horizontal and a vertical dimension in the perception of space. “The horizontal plane of perception (of points, lines, and surfaces) is a mental diagram that the Inuinnait carry with them and apply to any new spaces they discover in their travel. In contrast, the “vertical” plane of perception cannot be so easily applied to new territories. It takes time to make the new space historical and turn it into something familiar” (Collignon, 2006:100).

As argued by Kelly and Todd (Kelly & Todd, 1988:235), pioneers in a landscape would not initially know the landscape. When moving into “new” or unfamiliar landscapes, they need to be “lived in”, hence, enacted to become familiar. Thereby the ethnographic landscapes or the ethnographic landscape knowledge is a result of people living within the area for generations, enacting with and creating stories of



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Figure 4 Theoretical diagram of Inuinnait perception of territory (landscape). After Collignon (2006:fig 16).

landscape. Within a changing landscape, sometimes dramatic due to eustatic processes, places would change, and memory connected to places would have to be negotiated. When looking at rock art, it may fit the term *memoryscape* and be part of such a fixation of the past related to memory and place. This can be viewed in the light of similar ideas presented for Australian rock art where it is seen as part of marking the landscape. Humans are communicating knowledge visually, thereby socialising landscapes (Tacon, 2002; Taçon, 1994). For hunter-gatherers the core of their lives is based on cynegetic activities. Thereby, cynegetic activities and the relation to places and journeys become important *memoryscapes*, hence depicted in the rock art.

Based on about 20 shamans describing their universe, a map of the upper, middle and lower world of the Oroch cosmography was described in detail by Avrorin and Koz'minskiy (Avrorin and Koz'minskiy, 1949 in Okladnikova, 1998:339, fig. 8.13). The map describes mystical journeys of shamans and souls of the dead. Images describe several Oroch legends about cosmogonic travels of souls of the dead and famous shamans. The animals and humans depicted on the map refers to fixed geographical places as part of the cosmological landscape of the Oroch. The geographical knowledge and journeys are integrated by descriptions of lakes, rivers, lands and islands linked to animals where animals refer to geographical references. Thereby geographical knowledge is referred to by animals or combinations of animals. By the reference to the animal, relation between animals or the order of the animals the Oroch would know where in the landscape the animals were referring to.

Collignon's (2006) theory on territory (Figure 4) based on Inuinnait perception of landscape and the Oroch cosmography drawn by the Oroch shaman, are strikingly similar when it comes to geographical references through areas with activity or defined by animals in the actual zone or area. It includes such full and empty zones

as described in the Inuinnait perception of territory (read landscape). The universe itself was conceived of as a living being and identified with images of animals in the concepts concerning it (Avrorin and Koz'minskiy, 1949 in Okladnikova, 1998:339, fig. 8.13). As the animals and humans are depicted according to the cosmological landscape of the Oroch, the geographical knowledge or references to their geographical knowledge and journeys are integrated through descriptions of lakes, rivers, lands and islands. The importance of both the geographical knowledge and the cosmological knowledge among hunter-gatherers leads me to suggest that it is central to the Stone Age hunter-fisher-gatherers; hence, a central part in the stories represented in the rock art, as their perception of landscape.

Geographical knowledge in Stone Age rock art at Nämforsen

Rock art scenes and compositions have been interpreted to be representations of maps in different parts of the world (Fossati, 2002, 2003; Lewis, 1998:57ff; Maggs, 1998; Montelle, 2003; Smith, 1982). Okladnikova has shown that rock art in northern Russia could be viewed as maps in terms of cosmological and geographical maps providing the earliest indications that hunter-fisher-gatherer societies could represent spatial understanding of things both mythical and non-mythical (Animosov, 1963; Okladnikova, 1998:329-330).

The geographical knowledge, understanding and the perception of spaces in zones might explain positioning of the rock art on the surface. The placing of the figures on the rock surface has "always" puzzled researchers. Why are there figures on this panel, the one further away and no carvings on the panels in between? Why is a particular part of the panel left unused? There seems to have been no explanation as to why the rock surface was not "fully" carved, or more figures added to the panel between the figures. That is why spaces on the rock panel are empty while other areas or zones were filled in with rock art. These

gaps or areas without rock art have virtually never received attention. However, relating the positioning of figures, scenes and compositions to an Inunniat perception of landscape, this sheds light to the positioning of figures in “empty” and “full” zones. The placing of the figures and scenes could be related to the hunter-gatherer perception of space, where the figures and scenes were placed in relation to points, lines and surfaces where “full zones” and “empty zones” are represented. This could also relate to the domination or sole choice of animals on certain panels / sites. It could also explain why one or a selection of animals; or one theme dominates some panels. They relate to the surfaces, or an area, in which the characteristics were of certain types or where a certain type of activity was performed. This area or surface might be rooted in the spatial landscape, the historical landscape or a cosmological landscape or a combination between these landscapes.

At Nämforsen, a study of the “Nedre Hällkaret”-area (Hallström, 1960:D5, D6 and D7) by Christian Lindqvist (1999) showed that the “Nedre Hällkaret” (little water collection) functioned as a lake (Figure 5). Figures are placed around it representing a miniature landscape where the local topography can be interpreted as a unity with the rock art – a prehistoric landscape in miniature imitating real activities in real landscapes (Lindqvist, 1999:108-110). Lindqvist further noted that the water represents lakes, tarns, river, tributaries, watercourses in a rocky Stone Age landscape in miniature, inhabited by elks, salmon and humans with their elkhead-stem boats (Lindqvist, 1999:107-108, planch I, Figur 1A). One can see how the elks are walking along the rivers. The dark lichen shows where the water runs and collects in pools (See Figure 5). At several places at Nämforsen, rock art interacts with natural elements, such as running water, miniature valleys, water collections etc. (Figure 5- Figure 7) One of the clearest

Figure 5 The pool with connected rivers and lakes at Laxön by Hallström (ID6). This might represent the macrolandscape where the figures are placed in a microlandscape within a miniature hydrosystem. Photo: Jan Magne Gjerde.





Figure 6 A boat figure at Bradön, Nämforsen in northern Sweden where the boat is situated in a miniature landscape. Photo: Jan Magne Gjerde.

examples is on the south-western side of Notön facing the southern riverbank at the Island Bradön at Hallström B:2. (Hallström, 1960:pl XXIII). The elk boat representation at Bradön is common in northern Fennoscandia. This boat representation is 1.35m long and includes 25 lines most likely representing people suggests that this was a large boat (Figure 6). The boat is located where the water runs when it is raining and where water from the rapids would run (see Figure 6). The dark blackish lichen represents where the water runs. Here one observes that the boat figure is placed where the water would be running in a miniature river on an island in the waterfall. Looking carefully at the micro topography in the rocks it resembles the macro topography at Nämforsen. I doubt that the placement of the figures is a coincidence. Here one can see that by documenting or observing the rock art anew, one might get a good impression of the landscape's character and tell us why they made the rock art exactly where they did. One can here see how the

figures are related to a micro-landscape that most likely acts as a miniature or a representation of the macro-landscape at Nämforsen.

Stone Age elk hunting at Nämforsen and in the Nämforsen area

In the eyes of Hallström: "The Nämforsen carvings tell us, that the elk (Amer. Moose) was the most desirable prey in the hunting activity. How the hunt was performed we do not know more than that the rapids must have constituted its finishing moment. Probably far-reaching battues provided the preliminaries. The violent rapids and the precipitous "nipas" (river-banks, here 60 m. high) were good instruments in such a method" (Hallström, 1960:377). Hallström regarded Nämforsen as linked to elk-hunting by the large numbers of elk depicted and saw the Nämforsen rapids as a huge hunting trap itself and Nämforsen as a hunting place linked to hunting magic (Hallström, 1960:341). He further describes

the elk hunt in connection to the crossing places in the river connected to the elk-hunting pits also suggesting an annual great communal elk-hunt drive (Hallström, 1958:60). On the other hand, Christopher Tilley favours a cosmological explanation for the numerous elk depictions (Tilley, 1991:66). Tilley continues his cosmological quest of rock art at Nämforsen claiming: "Just as the vast herds of elks depicted did not exist, neither did these accumulations of small vessels nor the massive ships. What we are dealing with is not reality but a cosmological depiction of it" (Tilley, 1991:77). Like Tilley, several researchers have questioned Nämforsen as an elk-hunting place. Looking at the Nämforsen rock art there are virtually no scenes depicting the actual killing of the elk, even though at Laxön at HID:9 a spear can be seen penetrating an elk (Figure 7).

One of the largest compositions at Nämforsen is at a rock outcrop on the southwestern side of Notön (Hallström IIQ1). The

panel has about 75 figures and includes elks, humans, boats and elk-head sticks (Figure 8). To make the different motifs more visible to the reader, the motifs are marked in different colours where the elks are red, humans are blue, boats are turquoise and elk-head sticks are green. The composition holds two scenes interpreted as communal elk-hunts – elk hunt drives.

The communal elk hunt includes people with elk-head staffs. This has previously been interpreted as a purely ritual artefact, e.g. the shaman elk-staff. However, the elk-head staff is found at many sites in northern Fennoscandia. I argue that the elk-head staff was actually part of the "right" way to finish off the elk during the hunt. Such a scene is found in a rock carving from Alta (Bergbukten 4) where it appears as if an elk is stuck in a pitfall being clubbed by an elk-head staff as suggested by Helskog (1988:45). Looking at the Alta rock carving it could seem as if the elk hunting pit is

Figure 7 Elk hunted with spear. The elks are placed in relation to the micro-landscape at HID:9. The rivers and valleys can be seen both to the right and to the left of the elks. The elk at the upper left is deliberately placed as if it is moving round a hilltop along a valley. Photo: Jan Magne Gjerde.



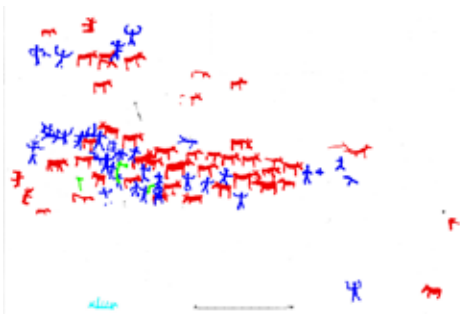


Figure 8 The elk hunt at Nämforsen (Hallström IIQ1) after Hallström (1960:plate 20). Tracing is reworked colouring in the different types of figures to visualize the elk-hunt scenes more clearly. Illustration: Jan Magne Gjerde.

depicted both seen from above and to the right of the elk being caught in the hunting pit. The Bergbukten 4 site in Alta is dated to c. 5200-4200 BC (Gjerde, 2010b:252). The example from Alta illustrates how the elk-head stick normally interpreted in a ritual "cosmological" context may be part of the killing of the elk. This does not mean that

I regard the artefact as purely functional. However, looking at the different contexts and the ethnography of elk-head staffs, they are central to the shaman paraphernalia and I regard the artefact as ambiguous. It represents the complex interplay between function and ritual in hunter-gatherer societies that was most likely also part of the lived world in the Stone Age of Fennoscandia.

Ideal hunting places for elk would be places where the landscape narrows or at crossing places. Such strategic hunting places for cervidae (elk, deer and reindeer) are ethnographically described in large parts of the northern hunter-gatherer area (e.g. Grønnow et al., 1983; Popov, 1948; Stewart et al., 2004). The river crossing places in northern Sweden would have been favourable places for elk-hunting by different hunting strategies. Pitfalls and pitfall-systems are placed strategically in relation to the routes of the elk. The man

Figure 9 The elk-head stick at Bergbukten 4. Suggested as the "right" way to kill the elk trapped in an elk hunting pit. Photo: Jan Magne Gjerde.



and elk project in northern Sweden shows that there is some correspondence between the elk migrations (movements) in the landscape and pitfall and pitfall systems with locational combinations providing access to elk, sandy ground for making pitfalls, and nodes in communication (meeting rivers) (Larsson, Grabowski, & Ericsson, 2009).

The pitfall hunting technique has been used in Finland, Sweden and Norway for thousands of years. A staggering 35,000 pitfalls have been surveyed in Sweden and pitfalls occur in vast numbers in the land surrounding Nämforsen in northern Sweden. Many of the pitfalls are part of large pitfall systems stretching for kilometres. Hunting pits are hard to date and not many are excavated. Of the 5000 found in the Västerbotten administrative area, about 100 have been excavated (Hansson & Rathje, 1999). An overview of 98 dated hunting pits shows that the earliest have a Late Mesolithic date, while the vast majority are dated to the Iron Age and historic times (Ramqvist, 2007). The pitfall hunting strategy was so successful that law abandoned the hunting method in historic times. Excavations of hunting pits in Sweden and Norway show that the earliest dated hunting pits were made in the Late Mesolithic (Bergstøl, 2015; Ramqvist, 2007; Spång, 1991). These early finds from the Late Mesolithic and the dated hunting pits from the Late Stone Age show that this hunting method was well established at this time. Thereby the hunting technique was contemporary with the Stone Age rock carvings at Nämforsen depicting a communal hunting strategy including hunting drives. A climatic change between 4200 and 3800 BP that may have caused a rapid and major drop in elk population may explain the scarcity of pitfalls dated between 2000-1000 BC (Larsson, Rosqvist, Ericsson, & Heinerud, 2012).

Inland from Nämforsen, there are about 15 sites with rock paintings (Viklund, 1999, 2002, 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2004d; Viklund & Tjärnström, 2006). All of these sites depict elk and encompass only a few figures. Viklund has defined this area as the space

of red ochre - *Alces Oera* (Viklund, 2004c) and there is a clear connection between rock art paintings and elk hunting pits at most of the rock painting sites, e.g. at Lillklippan by Bastuloken and Högberget (Gjerde, 2010b:363-368; Larsson, 2009, 2010; Lindgren, 2002, 2004). The Bastuloken site also has an extreme focus on elk-hunting in the area represented by elk-bones dated to the latter part of the Late Stone Age (Engelmark & Harju, 2005; Larsson, 2009, 2010, 2012; Sjölander, 2007).

A Stone Age rock art map at Nämforsen

With reference to maps by the Yukhagir (Jochelson, 1926:434-444), Tilley refers to the Nämforsen rock art where "It is interesting to note that the carvings at Nämforsen are of an entirely different nature from informational depictions with regard to hunting practices and game movements etc." (Tilley, 1991:66). Tilley refers to the drawings by the Siberian Tungus that have an obvious economic significance, showing routes, good fishing spots, game movements, etc. in relation to landscape. Tilley finds the drawings provide a total contrast with the depictions at Nämforsen, which have no apparent practical value. I do not question cosmology being part of rock art, however not to the extent of Tilley in the early 1990s.

Standing in front of the panel (Hallström IIQ1) (see Figure 10) having read the works of Hallström and Tilley, I have the advantage of going back to the site to look at the rock art anew. The panel is studied in relation to various approaches, from "hunting magic" to "the cosmological quest". In front of me I also have Hallström's tracing (the solid documentation of the rock art visualized in black and white). The figures stand out as the objective documentation of the rock art. According to Larsson and Broström (2011), the recent documentation shows there is little to add: "For this large panel, Hallström's and our documentation are perfectly matching. The southernmost images in Hallström's documentation are presented on next page as Q:1a and Q:1b".



Figure 10 The IIQ1 panel at Notön (Hallström IIQ1). Photo: Jan Magne Gjerde.

(Larsson & Broström, 2011:74). In their presentation, the panel is presented as three different “sections” of rock art that assumes they are not connected even though made on the same rock outcrop. This deconstruction does not aid a contextual interpretation of the rock art. Moving back to Hallström, he was puzzled by the grouping of the figures on the upper part of the rock. However, he explained this by boulders covering the lower part even though, in the same paragraph, he leaves this as an implausible explanation due to the observation that the boulders moved in front of the panel between his documentation in 1916, 1934, 1939 and 1944 (Hallström, 1945:18-19; 1960:234).

Aware of the natural features, including the possible interplay between the rock art and the elements and recent focus on documenting rock art (Gjerde, 2006, 2010a; Helskog, 2004, 2010), the deliberate placing of the figures becomes more interesting (see Figure 10 to Figure 11). The boats

are placed at the lower part of the panel (under the vein of quartz), covered by water at high water level. Further up is the large vein of quartz which I interpret as the coastline. Here, a human figure and an elk are placed standing on the shore (vein of quartz) at the right of the panel. Then, further up there is the central hunting scene followed by the second hunting scene. This shows how some of the figures are placed according to natural features in the panel.

Studying the rock art of the panel in relation to the local topography and surroundings, the boats would be placed in the bay, the human figure and elk would be standing (walking) on the shore and the elk hunting scenes are depicted on what represents the flat area of the terrace. At the top of the rock outcrop another elk hunting scene (further inland) is separated by an empty area with no rock art. The inland activities with the communal elk hunting occurs inland, on the “flat landscape” on top of the terrace. About 650 m and c. 1.5km

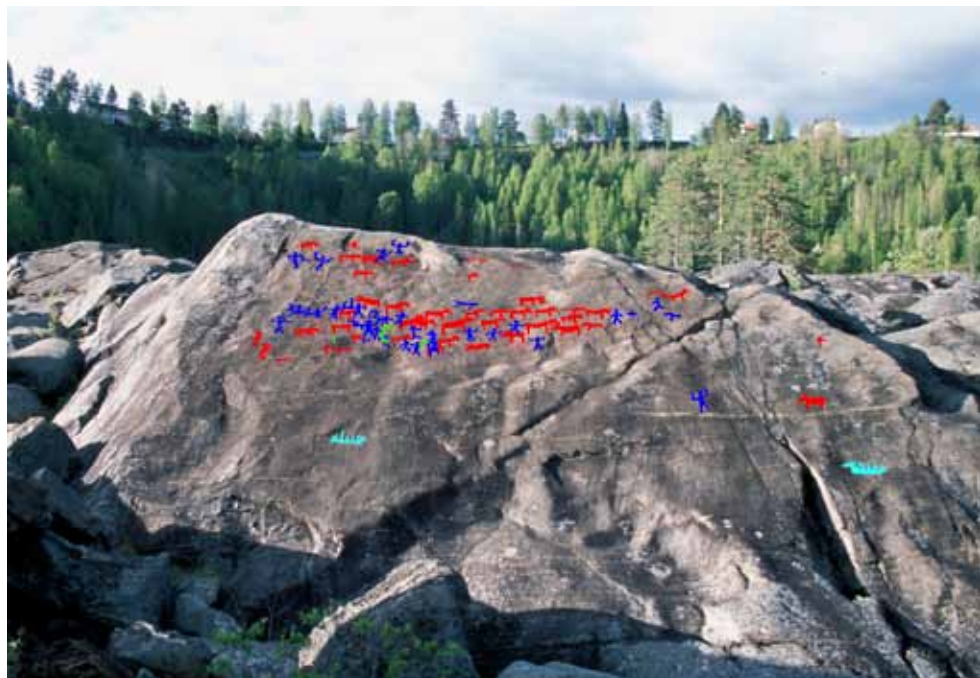
northwest of Nämforsen on the terrace above the Ångermanälven River, two large elk hunting pit systems are found. The nearest consists of 12 hunting pits and stretches for about 360 m, while the other is made up of 14 pits and more than 390 m in length. These would correspond with the area of the two elk hunts depicted on the panel. The figures at the panel are positioned representing the Nämforsen area from the viewpoint standing in front of the panel.

Comparing the rock art panel to Collignon's (2006) description of Innu perception of land, this would be reflecting rich and empty areas, cynegetic activities represented by the rock art with geographical references (see Figure 12). Comparing the rock art panel to, and including known Stone Age settlements and the hunting pit systems in the Nämforsen area, the whole panel is interpreted as a map or a depiction

of the land from the viewpoint in front of the panel. The IIQ1 panel at Nämforsen in my opinion represents geographical knowledge including informational depictions with regard to hunting practices and game movements etc. according to Stone Age cynegetic activities.

The panel represents the cynegetic activities in the landscape as seen from the panel shown as a map represented by, and the relation to, the different motifs and scenes. The composition represents a map with references to the bay (by the boats), the shore (by the human and elk standing on the quartzline), the eroding sandbank, scree (by the empty area between the figures standing at the shore and the elk hunting scene) and finally the representation of the second elk hunting scene further inland. The vantage point standing in front of the rock outcrop shows that it represents a cross-section

Figure 11 The figures are traced onto the photo to show how they are related to the rock surface at the panel (Hallström IIQ1). The figures are given different colours to better visualize the elk-hunt. Compare with Figure 10 and Figure 8. Photo and illustration: Jan Magne Gjerde.



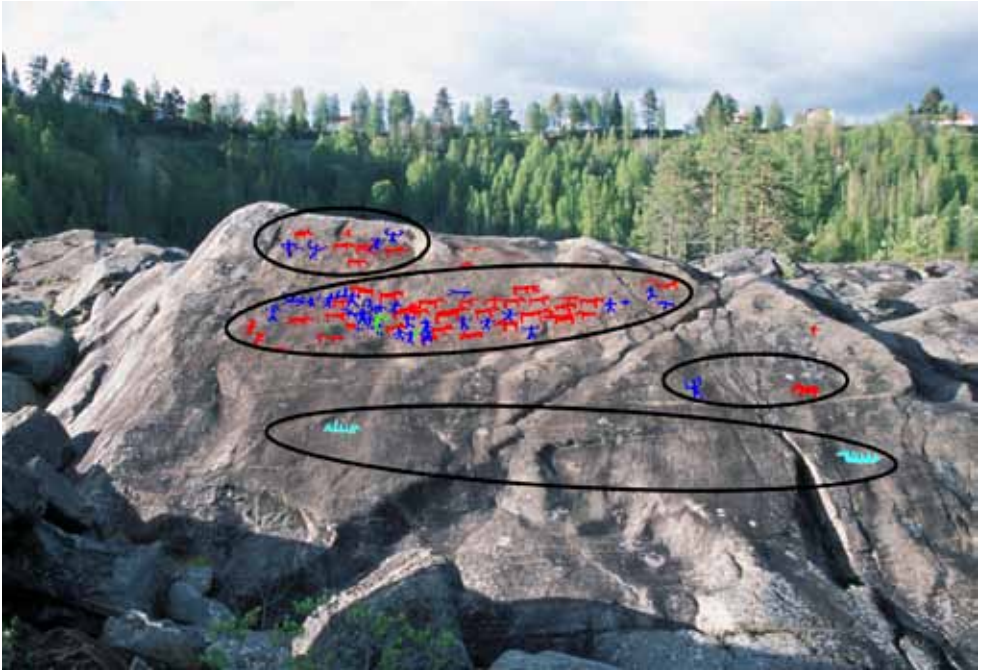


Figure 12 The cynegetic rich areas marked at the panel IIQ1. The areas correspond to the landscape observed in the background of the rock outcrop. Photo and illustration: Jan Magne Gjerde

of the land from the observation point in front of the panel.

Concluding remarks

Revisiting Nämforsen with new eyes on old art may give us a new interpretation of the rock art. The focus on the canvas of the rock art especially during the last decade or so has shown that the interplay between the rock art and the natural elements may be the reason why rock art figures, motifs, scenes and compositions are placed exactly where they are at rock outcrops. Relations between figures, motifs, scenes and compositions thereby have to be re-interpreted. This also includes a new manner in which to observe rock art and to document rock art.

The natural elements included could be quartz veins, running water or pools. They interact with the rock art. Moreover, the examples from Nämforsen presented in this paper show that the figures, motifs,

scenes and compositions include geographical knowledge. Including hunter-gatherer perception on land show that the rock art include information that are related to cynegetic activities. The rock art are placed to show the surrounding land. Some panels represents memoryscapes of hunter-gatherer lived worlds and it seems like the panels are representing maps, such as at the panel IIQ1 (Figure 11). The panel IIQ1 holds information on the boats in the bay, the shore, the scree and the elk hunting practice on the plateau above the Nämforsen area. It is a cross-section of the land visualizing the landscape. Moreover, it probably holds information on both the real and the imaginary landscapes of the people at Nämforsen in the Stone Age in what may be discussed as a cosmography of rock art (Gjerde, *in press-b*).

The paper show that we have to look at rock art anew since some of the context and the stories told in the storied rocks disap-

pear in the objective routine of documentation, tracing the rock art world in black and white.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank the Gustaf Hallströms Archive at the Research Archive, University of Umeå, Sweden for the permission to use Gustaf Hallströms photos in my research. I would also thank Beatrice Collignon for the permission to use her illustration in my research. Sincere thanks to Stephen Wickler for proofreading the English text; any errors are later additions.

Jan Magne Gjerde,
Department of Cultural Sciences, Tromsø
University Museum, UiT – The Arctic University
of Norway, N-9037 Tromsø, Norway.
jan.magne.gjerde@uit.no

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