



KAREL VALOCH

## AN ENGRAVED FEMALE FIGURE FROM BÝČÍ SKÁLA CAVE IN MORAVIA

*ABSTRACT: From the Moravian Magdalenian so far three anthropomorphic depictions are known; ivory-carved figurine from Pekárna Cave, stick-like stylised female figurine with indicated breasts from Rytířská Cave, and engraving of a anthropomorphic face on a schist pebble from Býčí skála Cave. In the re-analysis of engraved schist pebbles from the Moravian Magdalenian, we found a specimen with an engraved tangle of straight and curved lines, in which two miniature female figures can be recognised. A complete figure can be seen at the right margin of the engraving, with its front part turned right. In the lower part it is intersected by a second typically curved line, which, however, lacks the anterior part. It is very unlikely that we will identify the meaning of these engravings and the relationship between the figural motifs and the linear scribble around them. It is, however, possible that they were engraved to form meaningful compositions based on customs and rites of that time. This article is a reprint of a previously published article (Valoch K., 1978: *Anthropologie (Brno)* 16, 1: 31–33).*

*KEY WORDS: Anthropomorphic depictions – Engravings – Magdalenian – Moravia*

From the Moravian Magdalenian so far three anthropomorphic depictions are known. First of all there is an ivory-carved figurine discovered by K. Absolon in Pekárna Cave, depicting the bottom part of a female statuette with accentuated buttocks (Absolon, Czižek 1932: Taf. XXII:9, Valoch 1970: Fig. VI:1). The next one is a stick-like stylised female figurine with indicated breasts from Rytířská Cave, perforated and used as a pendant, made of bone (Valoch 1965a: Fig. I:1, 1965b:

Taf. 15:1–4). The third object is an engraving of a grotesque anthropomorphic face on a schist pebble from Býčí skála Cave (Valoch 1965b: Taf. 15:6).

The surprising discoveries in Gönnersdorf, Rhineland and the identification of numerous female engravings among linear scribbles on slate slabs (Bosinski, Fischer 1974) motivated us to re-check the engraved schist pebbles from the Moravian Magdalenian, which were published some years ago (Valoch 1961). We did indeed

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FIGURE 1. An engraved Magdalenian schist pebble from Býčí skála Cave. Ca. 1:1

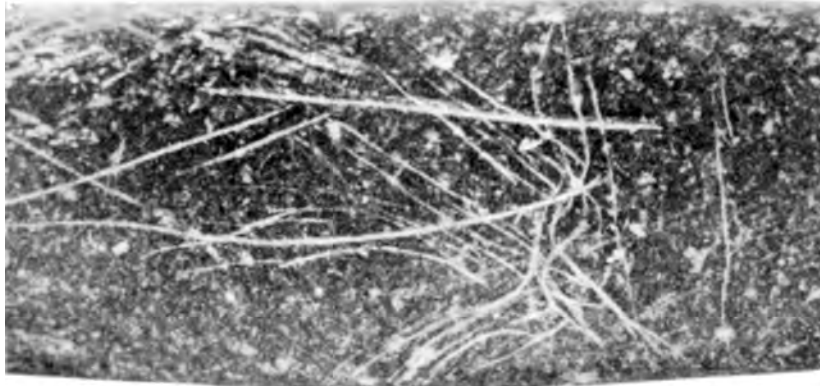


FIGURE 2. Detailed view of the engraving. Ca. 2:1.

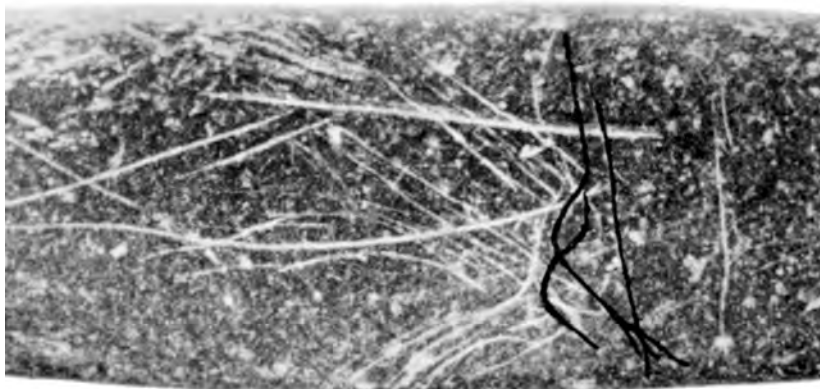


FIGURE 3. Detailed view of the engraving with highlighted female figures. Ca. 2:1.

find a specimen with an engraved tangle of straight and curved lines, in which two miniature female figures can be recognised (Valoch 1961: Taf. VI:5). The pebble is pictured here again in full size (*Figure 1*) and the figures highlighted in black can be compared with the photograph in the additional enlargements (*Figures 2, 3*).

A complete figure can be seen at the right margin of the engraving, with its front part turned right. In the

lower part it is intersected by a second typically curved line, which, however, lacks the anterior part.

Some years ago, B. Klíma published from his own excavations in front of the Pekárna Cave an engraved slate slab on which he also believes a similar female depiction can be recognised (Klíma 1974: 33, Taf. XXVII). This engraving appears to us to be less distinct so that the find from Býčí skála Cave can be regarded as

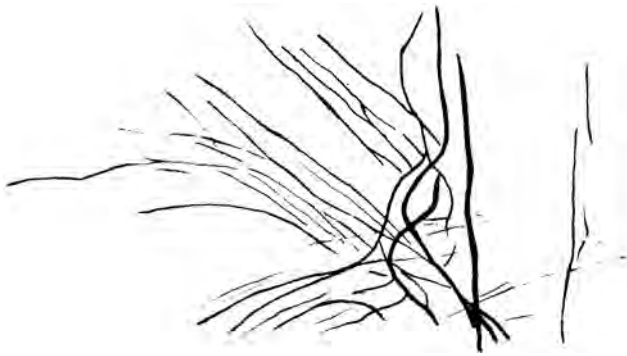


FIGURE 4. A sketch of the engraved composition. Ca. 2:1.

the first engraving of this kind in the Magdalenian of ČSSR.

A sketch of the engraving from Býčí skála Cave (Figure 4) pictures the entire composition including the female figures. Just the deep lines running horizontally slantwise were omitted, which seem to have been engraved additionally across the much finer image. All these straight and curved lines joining both of the female figures from the left do not appear to form any clearly definable picture but were most probably intended to form with them a joint composition.

The connection between zoomorphic and anthropomorphic depictions and tangled scribbles was recently accentuated by P. Leonardi (1976) who also gave many examples of this phenomenon (loc. cit., 81 sq., Figs. 43–65). Among them is a female figure of the same style from La Gare de Couze (loc. cit., Fig. 48) and a wall engraving from Gouy Cave (loc. cit., Fig. 41), which also includes elements of such a figure hidden in a tangle of lines. In another composition then a complete female depiction of this kind can be recognised (Martin 1972: Fig. 69).

It is very unlikely that we will identify the meaning of these engravings and the relationship between the figural motifs and the linear scribble around them. It is, however, possible that they were engraved to form meaningful compositions based on customs and rites of that time.

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Dr. Karel Valoch  
Anthropos Institute  
Moravské museum  
Brno