THE ANALYTICAL PROBLEM OF SUBJECTIVITY IN THE MAKER AND USER

by

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The problem of "objectivity" in the analysis and documentation of symbolic archaeological material is immeasurably compounded in the study of the first widespread and complex body of imagery and "art" to appear in the human record. This difficulty is due not merely to the temporal distance and lack of ethnography for the Upper Paleolithic but, in large part, to the extraordinary variability of these early traditions and to the clear evidence for different classes and types of imagery and image production and use. Many of these symbolling modes appear in the human record for the first time.

The desire to address the difficulties that are due to this variability can be seen in the century long effort to break-up the imagery into such seemingly "objective" and easily discussed visual categories as animals/humans; mobiliary/parietal; engraved and carved/painted; realistic and abstract/schematic; male (phallic)/female (vulvas and figurines), as well as such categories as personal decoration, manufactured symbolic artifacts versus non-manufactured surfaces such as engraved stone plaquettes and unworked fragments of ivory, bone and antler, grave goods versus habitation site materials, etc. Each of these categories has, over the years, been additionally broken down into still smaller seemingly "objective" sub-categories. The abstract signs, for instance, have been "objectively" classified by their shape or appearance as tectiforms, scutiforms, claviforms, peniforms, or more simply as ovals, bundles of lines, sets of dots or arcs, thin signs, wide signs, etc. Though all of the above may seem to be "objective", they are, in fact, highly subjective contemporary categories devised by the analyst and often suggested by one or another contemporary theory. Upper Paleolithic imagery certainly did not function on the basis of such "objective" categories.

Without exception these efforts at objectivity have been what I would term end-product description or "product analysis". If symbol systems, however, are intended to *function* in a culture and to carry meaning and information by their *use*, and if the remnant products somehow represent the *participation* of the maker and the user in different symbolic and referential behavioral modes, then these attempts at "objectivity" are, in the name of "science", intended to remove these necessary semiotic and subjective parameters from the analysis and from theoretical discussion. This intention is often admitted and defended on the grounds that other forms of analysis would be "subjective", though the subjectivity of so many of the supposed objective analytical methods and attempts at categorization should be apparent.

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Even the relatively simple matter of recording or documenting the imagery of the Upper Paleolithic has gone through styles of so-called "objectivity", beginning with simple 19th century renditions based on what the eye could see and progressing to increasingly sophisticated means of documentation by use of the magnifying glass, microscope, tracing, photography, ultraviolet and infrared photography, chemical analysis of pigments and paints, and even electron microscopy of engraved strokes, etc. I have myself been involved in developing some of these empirical techniques. In a somewhat broader effort at "objectivity", Leroi-Gourhan attempted in mid-century to determine by statistical means the relationship and association among different classes of imagery in the Franco-Cantabrian caves. He then tried to interpret his statistical results by creating a model of the "ideal" topographic structure for the placement of images in a sanctuary cave. The result was a conceptual model or plan that was as subjective as any yet attempted.

If, in contrast to these efforts at "objective" product analysis and categorization, we assume that human symbol systems are the subjective creation of individuals and groups participating in diverse forms and modes of cultural behavior and expression, then the problem of subjectivity *in the maker*, i.e. in the *production* and the *use* of different types and classes of imagery can be addressed in a different manner. One can approach the analysis not so much in terms of the recognizable images or shapes, or of possible "meaning" which one can never adequately ascertain, but in terms of the individual and cultural *processes* involved both in the creation of symbolic products and in modes of symbolic use. Different classes of imagery not only have different modes of use, but also different types or levels of cultural and individual relevance and reference. Cultures can perhaps be as aptly described by these differences in the functional aspects of their symbol systems as by seemingly objective descriptions of the symbolic products. In any case, one must attempt to address the difficult theoretical problem of the "subjectivity" involved in the different types and modes of symbolic behavior fostered by a culture. I shall attempt to discuss this difficult problem at a number of levels. To the best of my knowledge this approach has not been undertaken before.

TYPES OF SUBJECTIVITY

I have elsewhere suggested that human symbol systems are always "time-factore", that is, they are either made, used or participated in at the proper time and place and for a proper or relevant cultural or individual reason. The concept of "time-factored" symbol systems is not simple. It involves an inquiry into the types of motivation and intent involved at different points in the process of production and use. These include *cultural* time (when an image is made or used), *subjective* time (when in the sequence of a person's life the image or symbolic behavior is relevant and used), and *referential* time (the "time-factored" concepts that may be encoded in the image or the ritual). The complexity of the problem can be seen in one of the simplest and earliest of Upper Paleolithic classes of image, the items of personal decoration.

At the site of La Madeleine in France a five to seven year old child was buried with shell and animal tooth beads forming a necklace, bracelets, armbands, anklets, knee bands, and a cap that was covered with shell beads (fig. 1) (Capitan and Peyrony, 1928 : 122). It is difficult to imagine an Upper Paleolithic child heavily decorated when at play, just as it is difficult to imagine that the decoration had anything to do with the level of that child's sense of "self awareness" as

has been suggested of "personal decoration" by White (1989a, b). The symbolic "awareness" involved was clearly that of the adults and the culture performing the burial. It was a cultural awareness that functioned at many levels.

Personal decoration is often an indication of a *loss* of self and a sign, instead, of membership in one or another cultural class or group. The concept of "self-awareness", not as a recognition of one's own ego in a modern sense, but in terms of membership and of the *loss* of self in a cultural category at a particular time in the life of an individual and at relevant or periodic moments in a culture is so well known as to hardly require elucidation. The La Madeleine child was being incorporated into a number of cultural groups, one of which, of course, was that of the dead.

The sense of "self" that is derived from membership in a culture or a cultural group did not originate and was not established by wearing beads or any other artifactually permanent form of personal adornment, but was probably initially established by other visually mediated behavioral equations that were at play in a culture, beginning with the changing roles that an individual played as infant, child, adolescent, initiate, male, female, mother, hunter, gatherer, etc. Rites of passage are probably more important as an indication of both the attainment and the loss of self by transition to membership in a class at a particular point in one's life than a wearing of beads or other forms of personal adornment. Beads represent a historical development in the elaboration of such traditions. They do not create or describe the beginnings of such traditions. Of greater importance, there are other more perishable and earlier forms of personal decoration that mark the "self" as the member of a class. The ivory, bone, antler, shell and stone beads found in the European Upper Paleolithic merely represent one of the many forms created historically by certain cultures for marking and differentiating individuals in their varying roles (Marshack 1991). These modes of marking "self" represent an aspect of "subjectivity" that is subtle and as difficult to ascertain by product analysis as is the subjectivity of the user or participant in any form of ritual or ceremony. Ethnography tends to provide descriptions of symbolic behavior but seldom explores the complexity of the subjective contents in such behavior, either within the individual or in terms of the variation among members of the group.

The most complex Upper Paleolithic burials, those at Sungir in Russia, suggest a complex form of personal decoration. The burial of one individual consisted of hundreds of hand carved ivory beads (fig. 2a, b). We must ask whether these were a form of decoration assigned by the group or the culture to burials, or the adornment belonging to the individual himself and perhaps utilized in life because of some special cultural role (and therefore included in the burial); or was it part of the role performed by that individual in death (and therefore created for that particular ritual occasion and burial). In one case we would have the subjectivity attaching to the individual's use of personal adornment at some point or stage in life, in the others we would have the subjectivity, not of the individual, but of the group itself. I here recall – as an aside – the elaborate rituals in Mesoamerica involving the extremely complex symbolic preparation and adornment of an individual for sacrificial death. The victim was a prisoner of the culture and had been made the member of a cultural class that was, as a matter of fact, not his. There was, of course, "self-awareness" in the personal adornment given the victim, as well as a "loss of self", but of what type ? The huge investment in labor evident in the Sungir "personal adornment" may have been indicative of the ritual, cultural moment instead of a personal marking. This aside is not offered as an explanation of the Sungir burial, but as an indication of the problems one faces

in attempts at interpretations of "self-awareness" at a distance from the mere presence of the artifacts. It also warns against the twentieth century presumption that elaborate grave goods necessarily indicate the presence of rank and status. Since I have argued that symbol systems are context bound and "time-factored" and occur or are made to be used at the proper time and place and for the proper reasons, I assume that the La Madeleine child, for instance was decorated for its "role" on that occasion. The beads were intended for the "self-awareness" of the family and the group rather than as an aspect of the child's own "self- awareness". The child was, in fact, being made, at the time of its burial, the marked member of a number of different cultural categories : a member of those dead, the member of a specialized ritual, the now specialized dead member of a family and "tribe", the presumed spiritual actor in a cultural moment, etc.

In a recent paper I have indicated that the Gravettian "Venus" figurines, c. 26,000 BP, provide evidence that women commonly wore "personal decorations" made of perishable materials, including elaborate coiffures as well as belts, bracelets, anklets, breast bands and collars made of twined cords or thongs apparently cut from animal hides (Marshack 1991a). These perishable materials do *not* show up as remnant products in the archaeological record but they were apparently ubiquitous and important and they apparently marked the mature, potentially fertile female as the member of a category in the culture and society. Significantly, depictions of carved beads are rare among these figurines. Forms of marking and individuation by perishable materials, and by performance of complex symbolic behaviors, probably existed long before the manufacture of beads and their appearance in the Aurignacian. There is a fundamental presumptive, subjective error on the part of archaeologists who consider the mere presence of a product in the archaeological record as the beginning of a cultural behavior. Besides, the evidence for variation among the subjective factors found in "personal decoration" is quite complex.

From the Gravettian site of Dolni Vestonice, Moravia, in Central Europe, there comes a carved set of ivory beads in the form of the female breasts (Absolon 1949; Marshack 1972a, 1991a). At the Gravettian site of Grimaldi in Mediterranean Italy a crudely carved double-sided pendant of black steatite depicts a female with two bodies and faces; she is pregnant on one side but non-pregnant on the other (Marshack 1986). At the Magdalenian site of Petersfels in Germany a set of black coal beads were found, carved in the "buttocks" style of representing the female torso. These different types of imagery are usually classified in the archaeological literature as "female" or as "personal decoration". Assuming, however, the inherent subjectivity of place, moment and context in the manufacture and the use of symbol systems, I have suggested that these beads and pendants were probably made to be worn by certain persons at particular times. They may, of course, have been worn by males, again at particular times, but I have assumed, theoretically, that because of the inherent uncertainties, dangers, fears and desires involved in the processes and periodicities of the mature female, the beads and pendants were probably worn by women at times when they wished to participate in symbolic and mythologized ritual equations related to pregnancy, birth, nurturance, etc. The beads and pendants would have represented a different, specialized class of "personal decoration" – and of *time-factored* "self awareness" – than was involved in wearing the twined cords, belts and bands made of perishable materials that merely marked a female as mature and therefore as potentially fertile (Marshack 1991a).

The "Venus" figurines, on the other hand, may have encompassed a more general concept of fertility and potential fertility, i.e. of motherhood, an ancestor, a female spirit, etc. and have served as a generic symbol intended for more variable long-term use. The specialized feminine images noted above, including the vulvar images that are found in all periods of the Upper Paleolithic, apparently addressed more specific and perhaps more subjective aspects of concern and relevance. I have indicated that there were also other types of female imagery in the Upper Paleolithic, including small crudely and quickly made images that may have been intended for short-term or one time ritual use (Marshack 1972a; 1976; 1986a, b; 1990; 1991a). There were, therefore, different levels or forms of "subjective" cultural reference in the production and use of these images.

As an aside, it is perhaps significant that while the generic naked "Venus" figurines (i.e. from Lespugue, Willendorf, Dolni Vestonice, Kostienki, Avdeevo, etc.) often seem to wear signs of their mature womanhood, males in the Upper Paleolithic often seem to wear indications of participation in a ritual or ceremonial performance (the masked "sorcerers" at Trois Frères, the masked dancers in compositions from Mas d'Azil or the Abri Mège) (Marshack 1972a). The Aurignacian ivory carving of a lion-headed therianthrope from Hohlenstein-Stadel, Germany (Marshack 1988, 1989, 1990) suggests someone wearing a lion skin and mask (fig. 3). We have the possibility, then, of personal decoration worn at a particular cultural, ritual moment and, therefore, of an assumed loss of "self" by the actor performing as a lion. The image may equally represent a lion "spirit" or mythological figure in human, therianthropic form, in which case it is the "spirit" that is assuming human form rather than the human who is assuming animal form. But given this possibility, it is therefore also possible that the image of the lion-headed human could be symbolically collapsed and serve in both modes or forms within the same culture.

While it is too early to do more than suggest the possibility of "male" versus "female" forms of personal decoration, used at different times for different purposes, the presence in the Pyrenean Magdalenian of beads "en contour découpé" representing animal heads (horse, ibex, bison) suggests that there may have been specialized types of male decoration : the accoutrements of a shaman, for instance, that may, like the lion-headed anthropomorph, have marked his role and status, or that may have represented his "spirit" animals. Such beads may have been worn only at particular times and occasions. Questions of this type, which are suggestive but cannot as yet be answered, go beyond traditional categories and classifications of image and address the inherent variability found in the human use of image and symbol. Would women, for instance, have worn or utilized other forms of image and symbol when participating in a ritual ? We have the example of the "Venus" of Laussel with a marked bison horn in her upraised arm. Was she being depicted as a female participant in a ritual or was she a more generic symbol carrying a sign or attribute. Does the recently discovered Aurignacian stone carving of a "dancing" female from Galgenburg, Austria (Neugebauer-Maresch 1988), represent a ritual performance ? If so, why do we have a depiction of the ritual, instead of it having been adequately actualized in the mere performance ? We also have the Aurignacian depiction of a human, perhaps a male, in a ritual or a dance in a crude carving on ivory from the German site of Giesenklösterle (Hahn 1986). Were these depictions of rituals that were performed for special purposes at particular points in time and space ? If so, do we classify them as human images, as "male" or "female" images, or as depictions of ritual performance ? And was a ritual performance more important than its depiction or the attribution of sex to the performer ?

The problem of interpreting the subjectivity that may have been involved in the creation and use of different classes of imagery is found also in the Upper Paleolithic Franco-Catabrian sanctuary caves.

THE FRANCO-CANTABRIAN CAVES

Anyone who has studied the Franco-Cantabrian decorated caves is struck by the variability of the imagery in any one cave and among different caves. It was in an attempt to provide coherence to this variability that Laming-Emperaire and then Leroi-Gourhan provided a structuralist hypothesis of oppositions to explain the association of different classes of imagery in the caves. These mid-century models assumed the existence of a relatively stable conceptual template, a structuralist philosophy within which images were placed on the walls as though on a chess-board of oppositional rules and topographical positions. Any "subjectivity" in the maker and any subjectivity in the "time" of the creation or use of an image, was eliminated, except as it was expressed in the skill of the creator working in a cultural style.

I began my studies of the cave imagery with different theoretical assumptions. These included the concept of "time-factored" and "time-factoring" symboling traditions. I was therefore at once struck by the subjective variability of the imagery in each cave, not merely differences in style and iconography but apparent differences in the "times" of manufacture and use of different types of imagery. There are areas and panels in all the major caves where the accumulation of images suggests ritual behaviors by individuals who were not interested in public performance or communication. The placement of the images suggests that the makers often sought isolated and difficult to reach corners or walls to indulge in *private*, often periodic acts of symbolic marking. The "communication" was, therefore, not between the maker and a public, but between the maker, the act of creation and the cultural image.

In the Spanish Cantabrian cave of La Pasiega (Puente Viesgo) there is an extremely narrow passage or gallery, hardly wide enough for one person to enter and bend an arm, that has an accumulation of geometric forms (tectiforms) clearly made at different times with different ochres and probably by different hands (fig. 4a, b). In the adjacent cave of Castillo there is a small chamber into which one must climb and kneel; the ceiling is covered with tectiforms different from those in the neighboring cave of La Pasiega. These geometric forms were periodically altered and overmarked, and sets of dots made by different paints and fingers were accumulated around the signs as though in periodic ritual use of both the chamber and the signs. In Castillo, also, there are tectiforms that have been renewed by overengraving, overpainting and even encirclement. In the southern Spanish cave of La Pileta, near Málaga, a tiny cubicle into which one must climb and squat has one wall covered with a complex accumulation of different classes of imagery; black horses and bovids that were overmarked by fingers dipped in red or black paint; there are also images of the ibex and serpentine "macaronis" made by different paints (fig. 5, 6). A macaroni section by one paint is often appended to another made by a different paint (fig. 7a, b). These data make it apparent that different individuals climbed into this cubicle to make images, marks and signs of different types at different times, with different skills and perhaps for different reasons. The public, open walls of the cave outside of this cubicle were covered with images of a different type. The variability of the imagery within the cubicle suggests that it was a "sanctuary" which was entered at certain times, by particular persons, for

different symbolic or ritual reasons. Not visible in any of the published photographs or renditions of the composition is the fact that the wall had been repeatedly touched or stroked by fingers not dipped in paint (fig. 8). Objective analysis could, of course, determine the early style of the animals and the fact that different paints or modes of marking were used. But the far more important inference, that different persons had climbed into the cubicle at different times for different "subjective" symbolic, ritual or cultural reasons, could not be derived from a two dimensional rendition or from an objective analysis of the styles of rendition, types of imagery, or even the differences in the paints.

On a limestone wall outside the tiny sanctuary, near a clear pool of water, is the large outline of a fish in black paint (1 m 50). It was renewed by painting a second outline within the fish, and by painting a third schematic fish oval and a small seal inside the fish (fig. 9). Neither the unrealistically large fish (an oceanic fish of the flounder family according to Breuil) or the seal could have been seen in the vicinity of the cave. But each may have been a water-related symbol ritually and mythologically associated with the pool of water. It is therefore possible that the inhabitants moved seasonally to the Mediterranean coast approximately a two days' walk to the south. The macaronis in La Pileta led this researcher to an investigation of ritual macaroni marking in the riverine homesites of Upper Paleolithic Europe in the major Franco-Cantabrian caves. As a result I have suggested that the macaroni image was a water-related motif of symbolic importance in these riverine cultures (Marshack 1975, 1976, 1977, 1979). I have found what I consider to be the water-related band and serpentine (an image almost totally neglected in discussions of Upper Paleolithic symbol except for its categorization as "bundles of lines") in many of the major Upper Paleolithic caves : La Mouthe, Lascaux, Gargas, Trois Frères, Tuc d'Audoubert, Rouffignac, Marsoulas, Castillo, Altamira, Hornos de la Peña, etc. (fig. 10, 11, 12). That insight, half formed at La Pileta early in the research, was purely "subjective", but the decade long inquiry it instigated and the huge documentation the inquiry subsequently provided, attempted to establish certain parameters for analytical and comparative objectivity concerning this class of imagery. It involved an attempt to determine regional variability in the use of this water-related motif, in much the way that the research attempted to determine regional variability in the use of the animal and female image (Marshack 1991a). If I am right in my suggestion for a water-related iconography we are faced with a question concerning the possible meaning that the ritual marking of a water-related macaroni motif could have had in these riverine cultures. The images are clearly not "art" but they are ubiquitous across Europe. Questions concerning subjectivity in the maker and the analyst are, therefore, inherent to the inquiry.

In the Pyrenean cave of Tuc d'Audoubert (Ariège), at the end of a narrow passage-way or gallery there is a tiny cubicle into which one must climb and into which only the head, shoulders and hands can enter. On the ceiling and walls of the tiny cupola above one's head is a crudely engraved small horse, not made with the skill in animal rendition apparent in so much of the other work of the "Cavernes du Volp". Around this crude horse is an accumulation of perhaps eighty "P" signs or "claviforms" discovered by R. Bégouën. There is evidence that these signs were made by a number of different tools and hands, suggesting again a secret place to which individuals came periodically to perform the ritual of marking a particular sign in association with a particular animal. For Leroi-Gourhan this association of an animal and sign might have been considered to be the structuralist opposition of a "female" sign (the claviform) with a "male" animal (the horse); in the time-factored model being suggested here one is instead concerned,

perhaps more objectively, with evidence for the repeated use of a particular sign with a particular animal. No interpretation of meaning is required at this level of analysis. If we assume that the "P" sign is a feminine symbol, its repeated association with the horse could be symbolic in a number of ways, none of which are necessarily those of "opposition"; there could have been supplication for a hoped-for-pregnancy or a safe delivery, with the marking recalling a myth of the horse as an animal somehow related to human pregnancy, etc. The possibilities are large.

The type of private ritual suggested by the tiny crude horse and its surrounding "P" signs is different from the complex "public" composition and melange of skillfully incised animals around the dancing "sorcerer" in the adjoining cave of Trois Frères. My short study of the animal images has suggested that these engravings occasionally depicted species with different seasonal pelages and the "sorcerer" overlooking the chamber may therefore have been performing a ritual of a different type than was conducted within the cupola of the nearby cave of Tuc d'Audoubert. At one side of the great chamber of animals in Trois Frères overlooked by the "sorcerer", there is another tiny, hidden, difficult to reach horse incised at the top of a rock on a wall in a high corner (1958 : 76). The horse was again overmarked with "P" signs, suggesting a private sequence of ritual marking intentionally separated from the context and contents of the great chamber. The ritual act was, in fact, hidden from the "sorcerer" and his public performance.

The interpretive problems caused by such indications of "subjectivity" are often compounded by analysis. Not only were "P" signs periodically marked in association with the small horses in the Cavernes du Volp, but particular "P" signs could at times be reused or renewed. One has a sense that the original maker may have renewed his or her own original image. Fig. 13 is a close-up photograph of a "P" sign near the cave's riverine entrance, associated with another "P" sign and a multiply "killed" or overmarked bison. It is interesting that this process of renewing or reusing an abstract sign or symbol is found as early as the Aurignacian. Incised vulvas in Dordogne homesites were often overmarked and sometimes had their outlines repeated or doubled (Delluc and Delluc 1978 : 266). These modes of image use, renewal and reuse, probably at ritually relevant times, occur from the beginning to the end of the Franco-Cantabrian Upper Paleolithic. I have found handprints in some caves reused or renewed by overmarking. Discussions of style, shape, category of image tend to ignore these processes of use and, therefore, of "subjectivity".

The well-known sculpted clay bison at the far end of the cave of Tuc d'Audoubert also suggests a limited "time-factored" creation, a set of images made at a particular time for a particular ritual. Apparently it was made and used and never again visited. That the images represent a bull and cow bison, with a small bison "calf" nearby, may indicate a "time-factored" seasonal reference in the carving and the ritual that accompanied its creation and use. These suggestions of subjective *and* time-factored differences in the production and use of different types of imagery in the caves are crucial. While they involve "subjective" readings and assumptions by the analyst, they indicate that the study of these materials should involve some discussion of the *problem*, at least, of the many forms of subjectivity in the production, the time, the place, and the use of different classes of imagery and even of the caves themselves. The present discussion also suggests a need for an evaluation of the types of objectivity and/or subjectivity that enter into an analysis, depending on the theoretical models that direct either an analysis or an interpretation.

If, as I have suggested, all symbol systems are, one way or another, "time-factored", then one must add to studies of style and depictive form, studies of the types of use and contexts in which certain classes of image are found. This is not a suggestion for *interpretation* of the images, but a plea for an elucidation or clarification of the range of behaviors and strategies that may have been involved in image production and use. Inferences concerning possible meaning might then be attempted, based not merely on the shape or form of an image, but also on these processual aspects of differentiated context and use.

THE STONE PLAQUETTES

A symbolic material and tradition that stands midway between items of personal decoration, the female image, and the decorated caves, are the non-utilitarian engraved stone plaquettes and fragments of ivory, antler, bone and stone found in certain habitation sites. These are often heavily overmarked with many classes of imagery. As available surfaces the stones are comparable to the open walls of a cave, but because they were marked within the confines of the habitation, rather than in a "sanctuary" cave, they often contain different ranges of imagery and use. They represent an important subset of the Upper Paleolithic corpus, often documenting unique and idiosyncratic *subjective* contents and symboling modes.

At the French Madgalenian site of La Marche (Vienne) one finds engraved "portraits" of humans (infants, children, young men or women, mature females, a "praying" woman, an old man, a dancing male, etc.) (Pales and St. Péreuse 1976). These human images are among the rarest in the Upper Paleolithic. With these human images one finds the more traditional animal images; horse, bear, lion, etc. Significantly, the La Marche stones and the images themselves were often heavily overmarked as though in a ritual use of both the images and the stones. One delicate profile is deeply overmarked both on the face and on the stone around the face suggesting that the image was made for this ritual use (fig. 14a, b). By contrast, at the Magdalenian site of Gönnersdorf in Germany hundreds of schematic female images made in the Magdalenian buttocks style are incised on slate plaquettes; but there are no human "portraits". Again, many of these images were ritually overmarked or reengraved, as they were overmarked on limestone slabs at the French site of Lalinde (Marshack 1976, 1991a). One stone from Gönnersdorf has the engraving of an overmarked female giving birth to an infant or fetus attached to it by an umbilical cord (Marshack 1975); the image is associated with two horse heads. An image that may be comparable occurs on a limestone fragment from the French Upper Perigordian site of Laussel. A head and shoulders seem to emanate from a female, suggesting a birth. Images of birthing are, of course, known in the ethnographic and later archaeological record, the most famous being that of the seated "goddess" or mother figure flanked by lions from the early neolithic site of Çatal Hüyük in Anatolia (Mellaart 1967). The assumption has always been that the image was typically neolithic and was related metaphorically to the renewal of animal, plant and human life. How are we to "read" comparable imagery in the hunting-gathering stage of the European Upper Paleolithic ? At Laussel and Gönnersdorf one also finds engraved images of the vulva and the phallus. Both images occur ethnographically and archaeologically throughout the world. Images of "birth" are rare in the Upper Paleolithic, but vulvas and phalluses are relatively common. We therefore have a problem, one that again raises issues that are in large measure subjective. Did images of birth represent a particular ritual moment at these two Upper Paleolithic sites, involving the depiction of an actual birth, while the

vulvas and phalluses were images that referred to related but somewhat different concepts ? Concepts related to a "nonbiological" awareness of fertilization ? At the Magdalenian site of Enlène (Ariège), part of the group of Cavernes du Volp, Bégouën *et al* (1984-85 : 66-69) have documented the engraving of a human copulation on a stone plaquette; the crude scene is in close association with a magnificent Magdalenian engraving of a bison. Did the human scene of "copulation" and the bison represent part of a conceptual whole, even if the two images, one realistic and the other schematic, crude and quickly made, were engraved at different times and for different reasons ? "Feminine" and sexual images in relation to animals are not uncommon in the Upper Paleolithic. An engraving on a fragment of bone from the Magdalenian site of Laugerie Basse (Dordogne) depicts a pregnant naked female lying beneath a standing reindeer bull with the phallus clearly rendered. From La Madeleine in the Dordogne there comes a fragment of bone with the engraving of two cojoined phalluses, one inside a vulva and the other in contact with a "sacrificed" or decontextualized bear head (fig. 15 a, b) (Marshack 1972 : 333; 1986b: 114). There is an emanation from the bear head to the large phallus. Such images raise questions which have not often been considered in descriptions or interpretations of the Upper Paleolithic corpus. How are they to be classified or considered ? Are they "art", depiction, metaphor, mythologized equations ? Was the La Madeleine composition made as part of a ritual moment ? Why and when, in fact, was the image made ? By whom ? How does one eliminate the subjective from our attempt at description ? It is perhaps significant as well that compositions of this type do not occur on the walls of the decorated caves. We seem to have, therefore, a class of symbolic depiction and composition limited to the habitation and apparently made at times that were symbolically and ritually different from those involved in the production and use of the cave images.

It may be of interest that in other regions, i.e. in Central, East and Mediterranean Europe, the variability of symbolic materials and traditions is also great, but the iconography is nevertheless often dramatically different from that in Western Europe (Marshack 1970, 1977, 1979, 1991a; Vandiver *et al* 1989). The regional differences and similarities in symboling traditions and iconographies present us with problems not only of documentation and categorization but with possible differences in the "subjectivity" of the artisans and the contexts, and with differences in the production, time, and uses of the imagery. This compounds the difficulty for the analyst attempting to be "objective" in terms of the descriptive categories he or she has created. I touched on one such regional difference in my description of the female breast images from Dolni Vestonice in Central Europe (See also Marshack 1979, 1991a). There are more difficult problems.

I have suggested the presence of "notation" in the Upper Paleolithic (Marshack 1972a, b, 1991b), indicating that no two instances of notation are alike. These accumulations apparently represented the problem-solving, conceptual efforts of a specialized elite, often apparently representing the *ad hoc* strategies of individuals who were keeping a record of the passage of time and the seasons. These individuals were presumably "specialists" involved in scheduling the economic and ritual sequences of the culture. It is interesting that all the notations document different personal modes and strategies of marking and accumulation, i.e. problem-solving variations within what seems to have been a widely known tradition. Only two examples of notation represent near "mirror" images and these come from a single Magdalenian level at the site of Le Placard (Marshack 1972a : 146-165) and were probably made by the same hand. That there was a widespread and long-enduring tradition of notation but no uniform "style" notation is

significant for our discussion of "subjective" variability. It goes to the heart of the nature of symbolic "style" and symbolic "variability" and the problem of subjectivity, on the one hand, and stylistic constraints on the maker, on the other hand. And this goes to the heart of the difficulties in any effort at "objective" analysis.

One may perhaps assume that as societies or cultures become more complex and politicized, moving from groups of nuclear families with kinship networks, to chiefdoms, villages, and to temples with priestly hierarchies, then to city-states, etc., that there would tend to be an increase in forms of ritual or political centralized authority, resulting in officially sanctioned standardized styles of symbolic production and use. We can perhaps further assume that the idiosyncratic, individual "subjective" variability found in the Upper Paleolithic symbolic materials may therefore represent an early hunting-gatherer stage in symbolic culture and image production and use, despite widely dispersed general concepts, skills and technologies. In the Upper Paleolithic we not only have regional, site, and temporal styles, but we also have the idiosyncratic "subjective" work of highly skilled specialists and, at the same time, often in the same site and level, the evidence of image production and symbolic ritual behavior by less skilled individuals. There is voluminous ethnographic evidence that such subjective differences in artistic and symbolic production and skill, and such variability in the times of image and symbol production and use, are common in what are termed "shamanic" cultures. Whether the Upper Paleolithic variability suggests such an early "shamanic" stage of symbolic specialization, coexisting with other more private "subjective" forms of symbolic, cultural expression, will be discussed in other papers.

The problem of "objectivity" in symbolic analysis, then, like the problem of subjectivity and variability in symbol production and use, needs to be addressed more profoundly and more carefully, both theoretically and methodologically.

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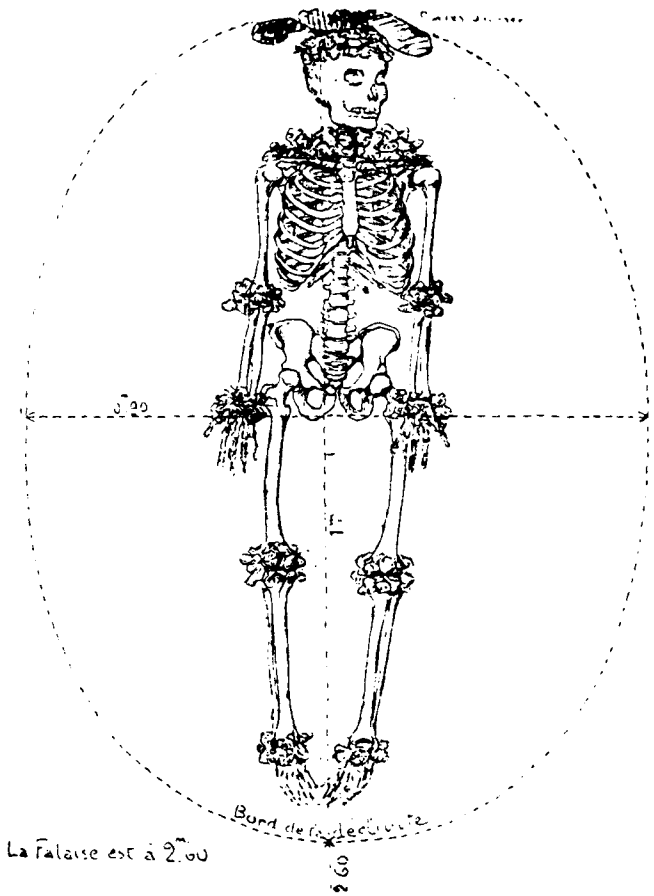

Fig. 1. The original drawing of the child buried at La Madeleine with heavily decorated garments and personal adornments. (After Capitan and Peyrony 1928).

Fig. 2a. Sungir, the USSR. Rendition of the elaborate burial of an adult male wearing beaded garments, bracelets of mammoth ivory and a beaded cap. More than 1,500 beads were carved. Compare to the decorations on the La Madeleine child.

Fig. 2b. Sungir, the USSR. The head of one of the buried adults showing the beaded cap. Compare this cap to the beaded cap of the La Madeleine child (Photo Bader).

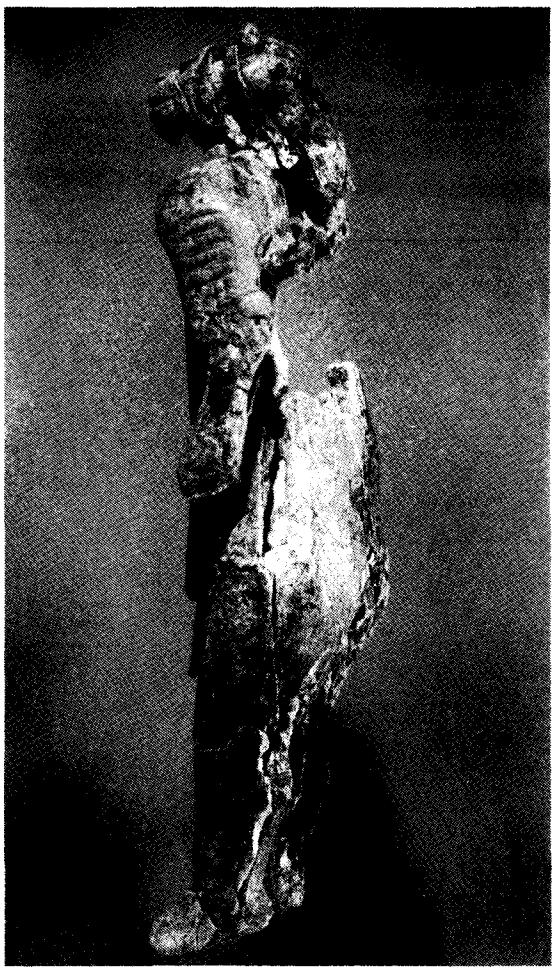

FIGURE 3

Hohlenstein-Stadel, Germany.
Mammoth ivory carving of a lion-headed therianthrope. Aurignacian.

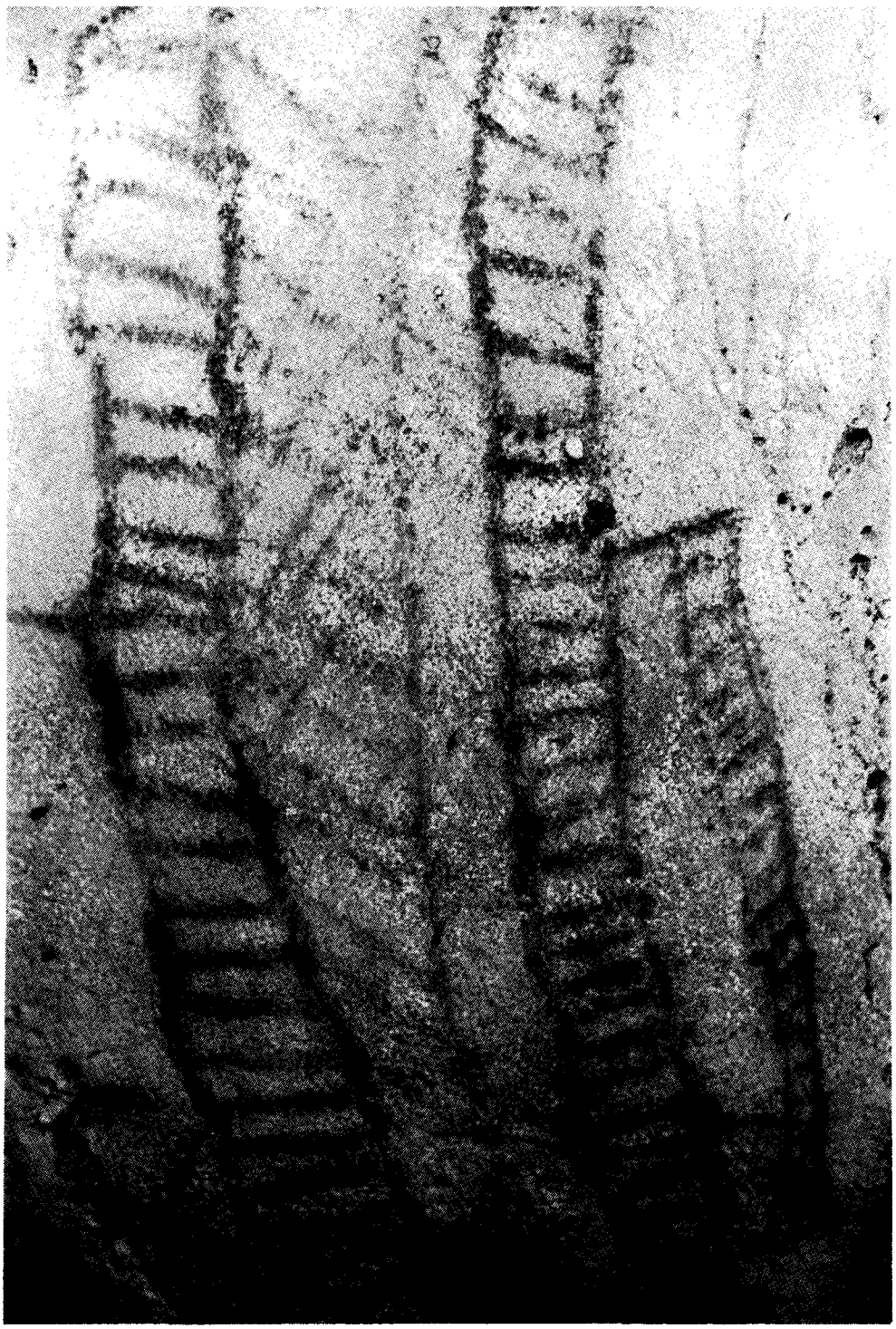

Fig. 4a. La Pasiega, Spain. Some of the signs accumulated in the narrow gallery. The four signs are made with different ochres and are attached to each other either by juxtaposition or lines of connection.

Fig. 4b. La Pasiega, Spain. Detail of some of the signs indicating the differences in the paints used, the juxtaposition of signs, the lines of connection, etc. In Lascaux the addition to earlier signs and the juxtaposition of elements took a different regional form.

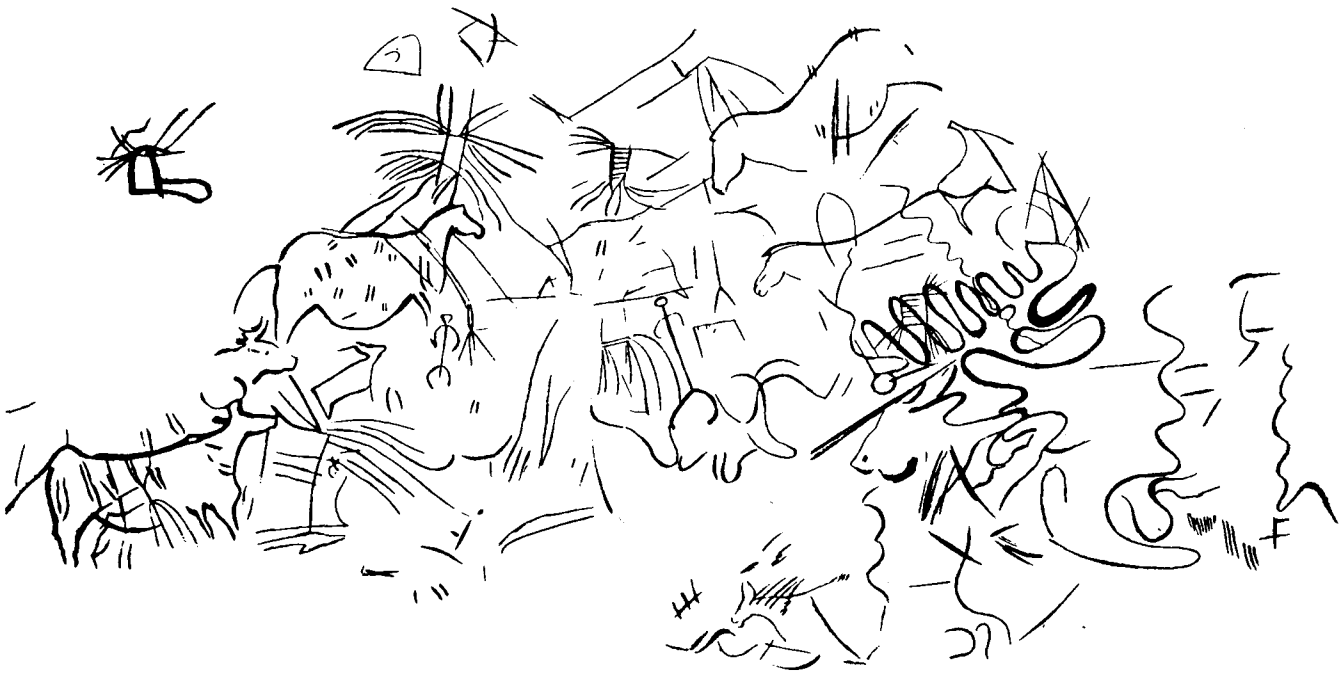

Fig. 5. La Pileta (Málaga), Spain. Schematic rendition of the painted images on the wall of the tiny sanctuary, indicating the overmarked animals, the signs at the top and the accumulation of serpentine "macaronis" at the right. (After Breuil, Obermaier and Verner 1915).

Fig. 6. La Pileta, Spain. Small horse in black paint with double finger marks in red and black paint made by different persons with fingers of different size and spacing. The repeated ritual use of an animal image is common in both home sites and caves in the Upper Paleolithic of Western Europe.

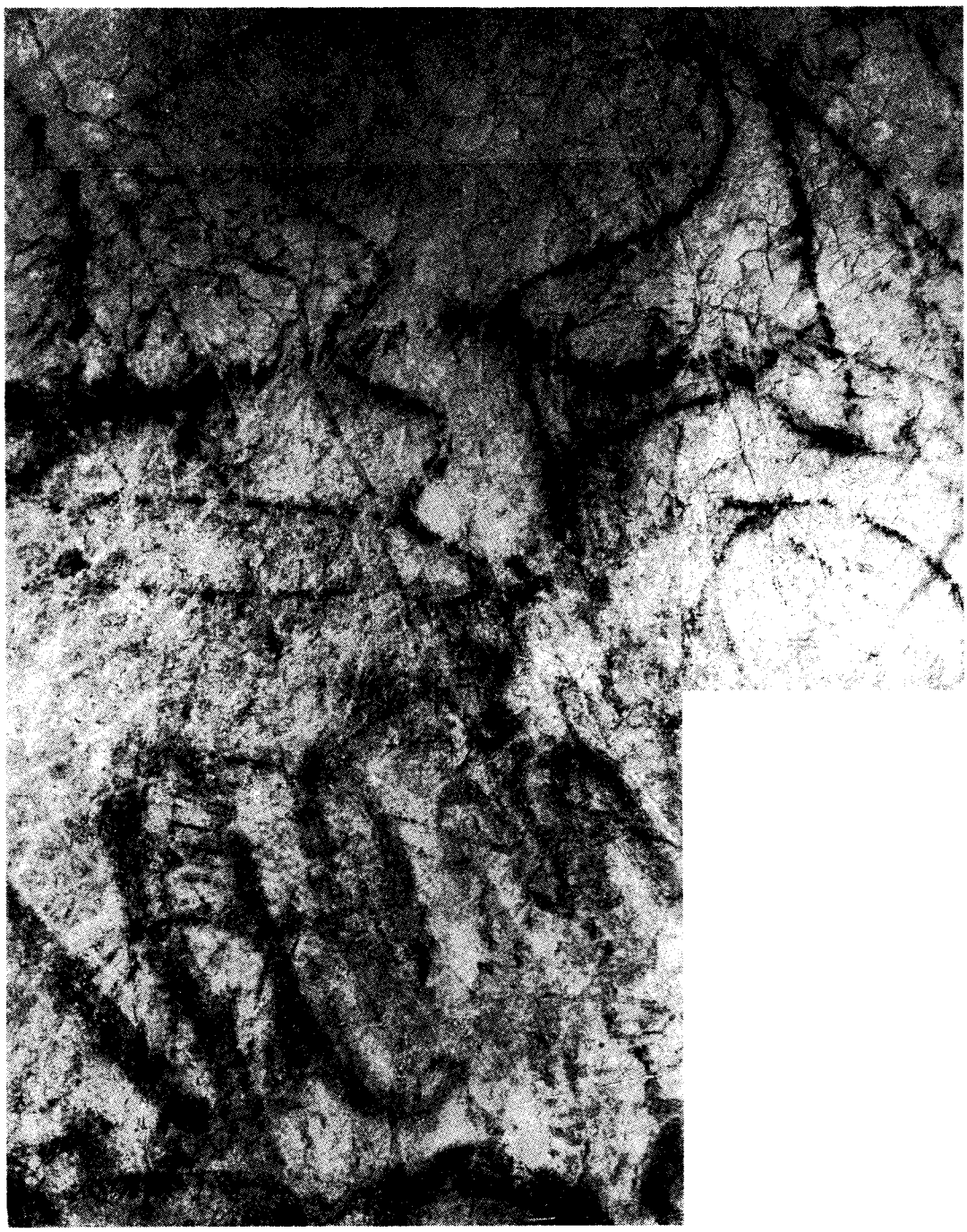

Fig. 7a. La Pileta. Detail of some of the painted macaroni sections made by black crayons and paints of different hardness and intensity, indicating a periodic ritual marking and accumulation of the serpentine motif.

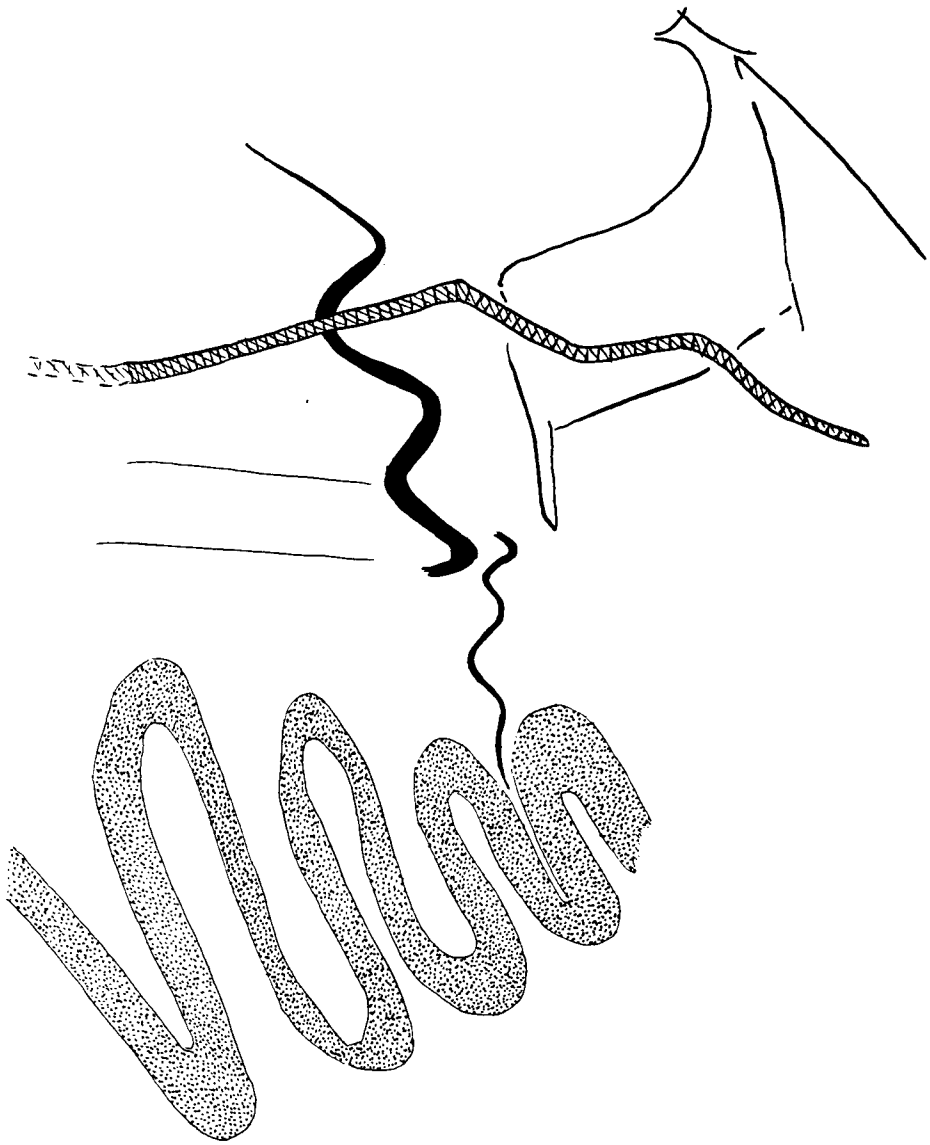

Fig. 7b. Schematic rendition of the photographic detail, Fig. 7a, indicating four serpentine macaronis sections made by different black paints and crayons.

Fig. 8. La Pileta. Close-up detail of the wall of the painted sanctuary in side light, indicating a marking of the wall with fingers and sticks.

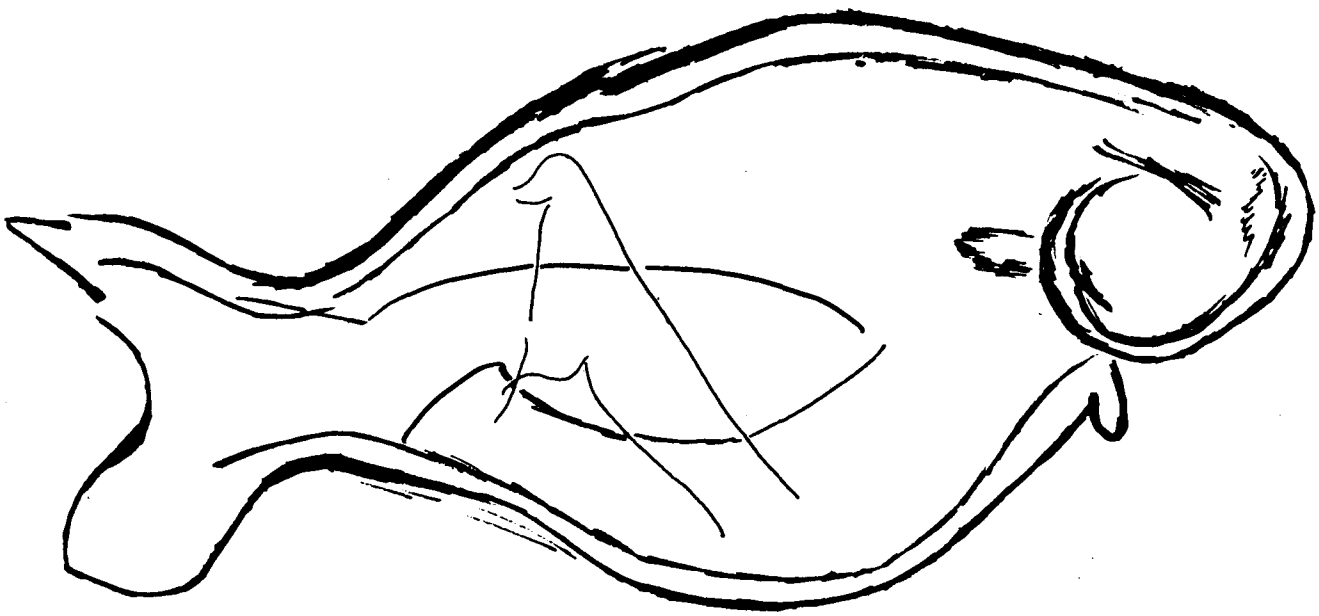

Fig. 9. Schematic rendition of a large fish in black paint that has been renewed with the outline of a second, inner outline and reused by the painting of a small seal and a third schematic fish oval.

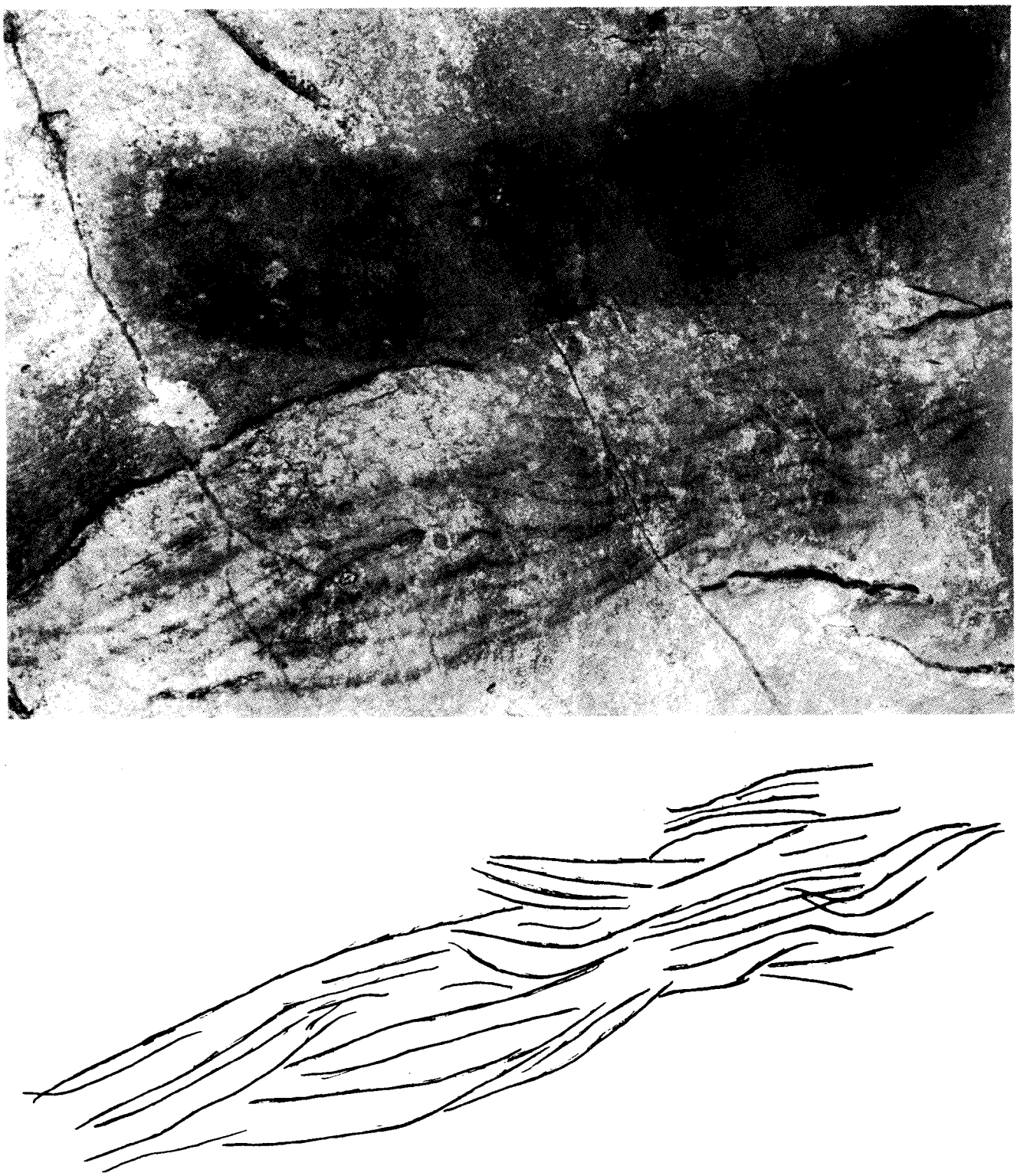

Fig. 10. Castillo (Santander), Spain. A painted red "macaroni" stream associated with a red tectiform. Variations of the "macaroni" band and stream tradition occur in many of the major caves.

Fig. 11. Altamira (Santander), Spain. Schematic rendition of the engraved "comets" and bands among painted signs. The "comet" as a variant of the macaroni/band tradition occurs as far as the Romanellian in Italy and the Mesolithic of Scandinavia. Evolved variants are found in Lascaux. (After Breuil and Obermaier 1935).

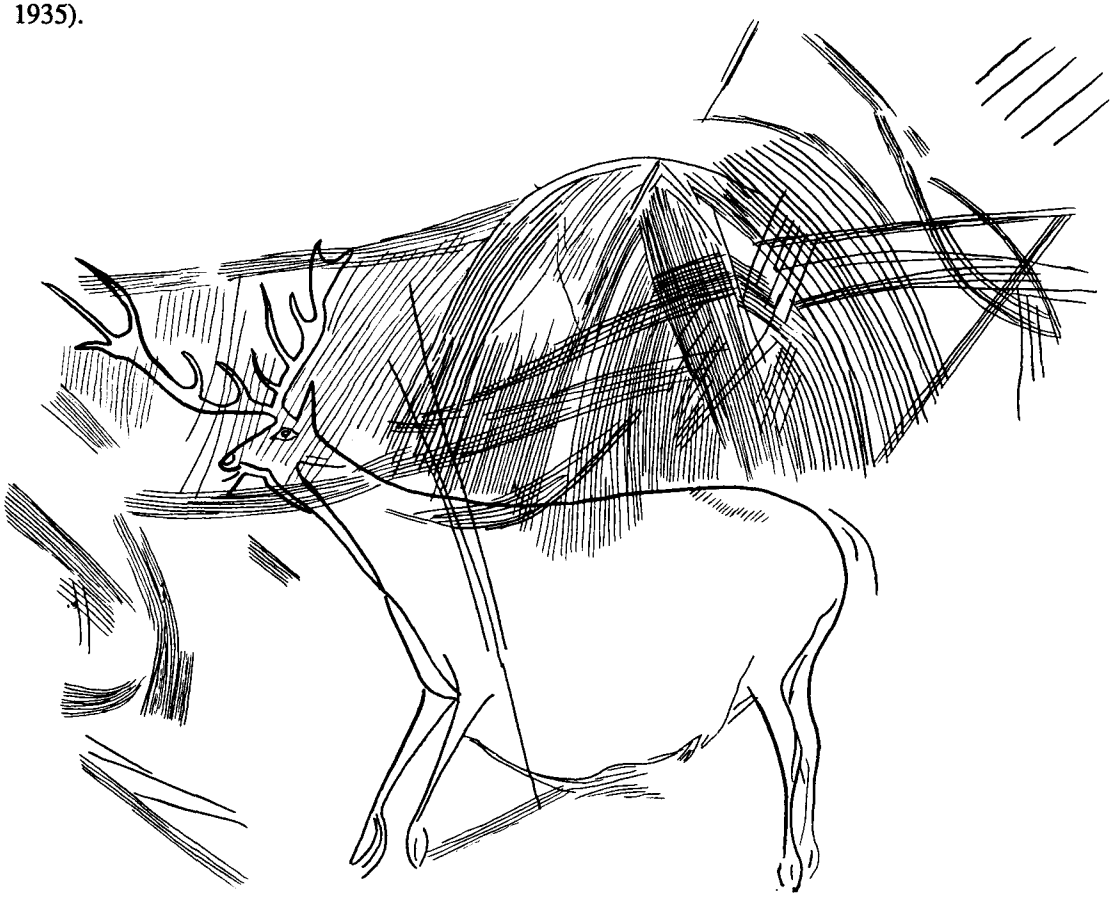

Fig. 12. Lascaux (Dordogne), France. Schematic rendition of some of the engraved "comet" and band motifs in the chamber of engravings at Lascaux. It is clear that band sections have been added to an original "comet" form. Compare to a variant of the tradition in Altamira, Fig. 11 (After A. Glory in Leroi-Gourhan and Allain 1979).

Fig. 13. Tuc d'Audoubert. An incised "P" sign near the cave entrance that has been renewed by the addition of a second arc. Another "P" sign is at the right. The overmarked or "killed" bison is below.

Fig. 14a – Tuc d'Audoubert. Close-up detail of a "P" sign that has been renewed or reused with an added arc made by a different point. (Photo J. Vertut)

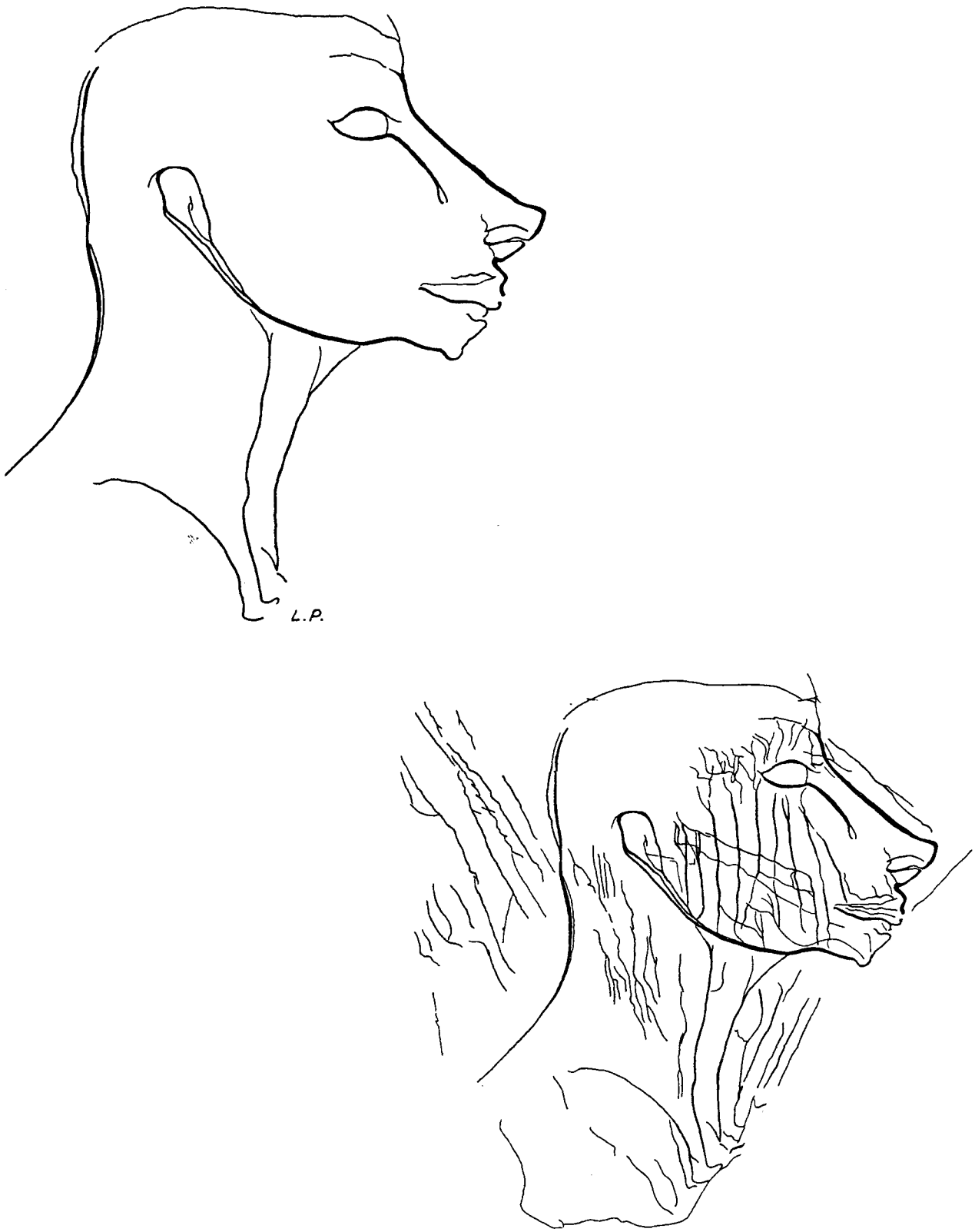

Fig. 14 a. b. La Marche (Vienne), France. Delicate head of a young adult incised on a limestone slate. Both the face and the stone are overmarked as though in ritual. (After Pales and de St. Pereuse 1976).

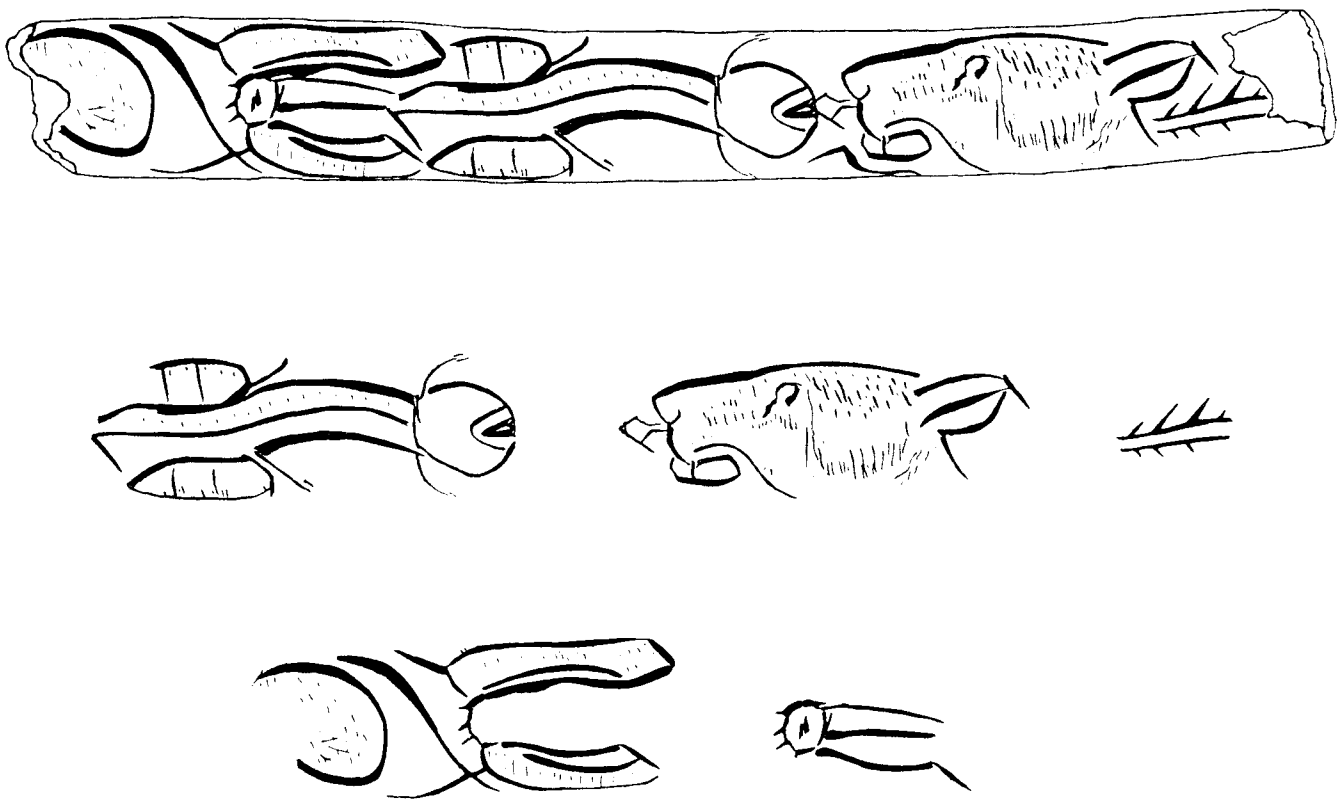

Fig. 15 a. b. La Madeleine (Dordogne), France. Fragment of antler incised with a composition containing two phalluses, one inserted into a vulva and the other in contact with a bear head. The "exploded" rendition indicates the separate elements or images making up the composition.