

Melanie Wrigglesworth



## Explorations in social memory – *rock art, landscape and the reuse of place*

Recent rock art research has provided new perspectives on the meaning of rock art, particularly in relation to religion, ritual, and cosmology (e.g. Goldhahn 1999, 2006; Helskog 1999; Fredell 2003; Nordenborg Myhre 2005; Syvertsen 2003, 2005; Wold 2005). In this paper, I will explore yet another perspective, the concept of social memory in relation to rock art, based on two case studies from West Norway and Central Norway (Fig. 1 and 11). Rock art dated to the Late Mesolithic, the Neolithic (6400–1700 BC) and the Bronze Age (1700–500 BC) will be discussed. There are two traditions of rock art in Scandinavia, “hunter’s rock art”, dated to the Stone Age, and “agrarian rock art”, dated to the Bronze Age and Iron Age. Here, the terms Stone Age rock art and Bronze Age/Iron Age rock art will be used.

Our experience of the present depends on our knowledge of the past (Connerton 1989). Rock art sites have been used and reused and are places where the past in terms of earlier carvings would have existed in the present. Social memory is “(...) an expression of collective experience: social memory identifies a group, giving it a sense of its past and defining its aspirations for the future” (Fentress & Wickham 1992:25). Several types of memory can be distinguished: personal memory, which is related to personal experiences in the past; cognitive memory, remembering knowledge that one does not need to have experienced; and “habit-memory”, remembering through reproducing a performance or action, such as swimming, riding a bike, etc. (Connerton 1989:22p). These types of memory are all linked to individuals – this is how individuals remember. As memory is a mental act, how can societies remember (Fentress & Wickham 1992:ix; Alcock 2002:15)? Memory is both collective and personal – it is subjective and individual, but is also structured by language, images, collectively held ideas and experiences shared with other people, effectively making memory social (Fentress & Wickham 1992:7). Memory must also be transmitted and articulated in order to be social, and methods of transmitting are through speech, rituals and body language (*ibid*:47). Social memory is closely linked to both personal and group identity; although experience shapes a person’s memories and personal identity, groups are a stable frame for identity and memory, providing individuals with frameworks where memories are localised (*ibid*:37).

In order to create a collective identity, determining who belongs to that identity is necessary (Straub 2002:68). Memory is composed of images, speech, experiences, and emotions. Images are metaphors, they contain information that persons with the same cultural identity can “read” and understand. Metaphors involve taking a term from one frame of reference and

using it within a different frame of reference (Tilley 1999:4). The metaphor links individuals and groups in that it refers to specific cultural knowledge, hence metaphors may not be understood by someone who is not a member of a specific cultural group (*ibid*:9). Identity and metaphors are thus closely linked, and this creates a basis for constructing a collective experience and social memory. Like metaphors, images have important cultural connotations, but they have to be simple enough that everyone can understand them. Complex images are proportionately difficult to understand (Fentress & Wickham 1992; Bradley 1997). In the case of rock art, this would mean that simple motifs would have contained information available to a larger group, while complex motifs may have contained specialised information only understood by a small number of people.

According to Paul Connerton (1989), there are two types of social practice: inscribing practices, where memory is stored in books, computers etc. and incorporating practices, where memory is stored through bodily activity or presence (Connerton 1989:72 p). The latter is associated with commemorative practices and ceremonies that are performative. Social memory is found in commemorative ceremonies, such as rituals, where repetition accentuates continuity with the past (*ibid*:44 p). Rituals are a formalised method of remembering or commemoration. Traditions are created and upheld by ritual, however, at some point, the origins of a particular tradition may be forgotten, or the tradition changes, without people being aware of the process (e.g. Bell 1992:118). Rock art can be seen as an inscribed practice. However, making rock art or performing rituals at a rock art site can be considered as incorporating practices.

### **Landscape, memory, monument**

Memory is preserved by referring to the material world - mental spaces refer to the material spaces that a group occupies (Connerton 1989; Fentress & Wickham 1992:37; Taçon 1994; Ingold 2000:122 p; Stewart & Strathern 2003:4 p). Social memory cannot exist without reference to a specific spatial framework (Halbwachs 1992). Personal memories are often attached to specific places, and memories may be triggered by places or actions. The landscape consists of places and topographical features imbued with meaning and linked to social memory. For instance, water is the dominating landscape element in coastal Norway. The majority of rock art is found near water, or near paths or other lines of communication (Mandt Larsen 1972; Mandt 1978, 1991, 2002; Wrigglesworth 2000, 2002, 2005). Water appears to be an important element in the location of rock art, in both the Stone Age and the Bronze Age, and it may have played an important part in structuring the perception of the world. It is no coincidence that the ship is the dominating motif in coastal Norway. Although water is a natural element and maritime activities were an everyday occurrence, water may still have had significance in terms of social memory. The sea is a vital means of communication and transportation, and would have been essential in terms of acquiring bronze and other commodities as well as new ideas.

Places may be marked by monuments. The term “monument” comes from Latin “memore” which means to remind (Bradley 1993:2, 2002). Monuments are to all intents and purposes about remembering, commemoration. Through monuments, the past exists in the present and in the future. Monuments are meant to last; they are eternal and timeless, and as such are fundamental in the transmission and maintenance of social memory. They are also a means of communication – ideas, cultural and social identity can be communicated through monuments. Yet neither their meaning nor their form is fixed, the meaning of a monument

may change drastically from the time of its construction (e.g. Barrett 1999; Bradley 1993, 2000; Edmonds 1999). New ideas are legitimised through references to the past. By referring to the past, traditions are upheld or given new meaning; however, traditions may also be constructed in order to create continuity where none existed (Edmonds 1999). In either case, the past is essential in legitimising ideas and traditions.

Rock art sites generally show stylistic and chronological variation, indicating modification over time: stylistically different motifs, changing techniques, re-carving older images, or superimposed images. Different sites have different points of completion – some have only two or three images, likely made within a short period; at other sites there are scores of stylistically different images that have been created over a very long period, perhaps centuries.

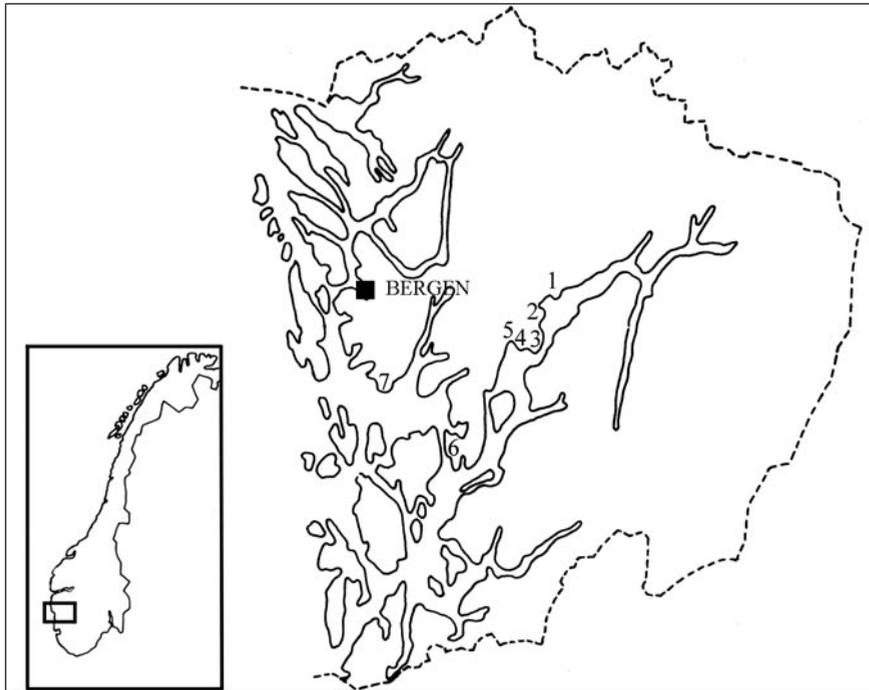
Moving through the landscape, passers-by would have seen monuments such as barrows and rock art sites and might have associated them with certain persons or groups. This could have applied to other places as well - places that had no monuments but had specific associations, e.g. to mythical or historical events. Some places might have been associated with specific rituals and as a result would have been significant. Such places would consequently have served as constant reminders of communal history and mythology, shaping and maintaining social memory.

How is social memory expressed through rock art in the Bronze Age? I have selected two separate regions, Hardanger in West Norway and Trøndelag in Central Norway, as case studies. Both areas have a large amount of rock art as well as other material culture from the Bronze Age. A comparison between the two regions may give an idea as to how social memory works in different areas.

### **Hardanger, West Norway**

The area known as Hardanger has a large concentration of Bronze Age rock art, mainly concentrated along the Hardanger fjord system (Fig. 1). The landscape is hilly and is characterised by narrow strips of arable land wedged between the fjord and the mountains. The rock art sites are spread along the fjord in the lowland, quite close to the sea. Most cup-mark sites are located on the steep hillsides, near paths leading up to the mountains or in the mountains, near summer farms. The rock art is found on outcrops and boulders, near the sea, between approx. 10 and 40 metres above sea level. Most of the rock art in Hardanger can be dated to the Bronze Age; only two sites have been dated to the Stone Age (Mandt Larsen 1972; Bakka 1973). However, as their location in the landscape is identical to that of the Bronze Age art, they will be included here. Seven sites comprising eight panels will be discussed.

The sites are located to the north of the Hardanger fjord; all are found at the foot of a hill or large outcrop, and the rock art is found on vertical panels. In general, sites are located on more or less horizontal or slanted surfaces or boulders. This means that vertical panels are unusual; consequently, it is interesting to find seven such sites over a relatively small distance and along the same coastline. These sites have several points in common apart from the vertical surface. They are located at the foot of medium-sized hills or large outcrops, close to the sea. The dominating motifs are boats (of a type dated to the Early Bronze Age, although this does not apply to all sites) and the oldest carvings appear to be located at the top of the panel, getting progressively younger near the bottom.



**Figure 1.** The Hardangerfjord area. 1=Rykkje, 2=Fonnaland, 3=Vangdal 1-2, 4=Linga, 5= Berge, 6= Hammarhaug, 7=Halhjem.

| Site       | Motifs                                   | Date                      |
|------------|--|---------------------------|
| Berge      | Boats, concentric rings, crosses, spiral | Early and Late Bronze Age |
| Fonnaland  | Boats                                    | Bronze Age                |
| Halhjem    | Boats, cup-marks, rings                  | Late Bronze Age           |
| Hammarhaug | Boats                                    | Late Bronze Age           |
| Linga      | Boats                                    | Early and Late Bronze age |
| Vangdal 1  | Boats                                    | Early Bronze Age          |
| Vangdal 2  | Deer, anthropomorphs, geometric designs  | Stone Age (Mesolithic?)   |
| Rykkje     | Deer                                     | Stone Age (Mesolithic?)   |

**Figure 2.** Vertical rock art sites along the Hardangerfjord.

The Early Bronze Age type of boat, classified as type A1 by Gro Mandt (1991), has a square hull, flat keel and the stern is either straight or at a slight angle (Fig. 3). Type B1 boats are also found at some of the sites, this type is identical to type A1, except that it has no gunwale and is most likely a variety of type A1. The A1 boat is commonly found at a small number of sites in West Norway and Central Norway, and is similar to boats dated to the Stone Age (Sognnes 1987; Mandt 1991). Consequently, this type has been seen as a development of the Stone Age design and has been dated to the very beginning of the Bronze Age. A1 type boats have been recorded in the burial chamber in a barrow, Mjeltehaugen, Northwest Norway, dated to the Early Bronze Age (Linge 2004, 2005; Mandt 1983). Rock carvings are notoriously difficult to date; however, contemporary decorated bronze artefacts as well as shoreline data

may indicate an approximate date (Kaul 1998; Sognnes 2003; Ling 2005). Here, Gro Mandt's chronological typology (Mandt Larsen 1972; Mandt 1991) will be used.

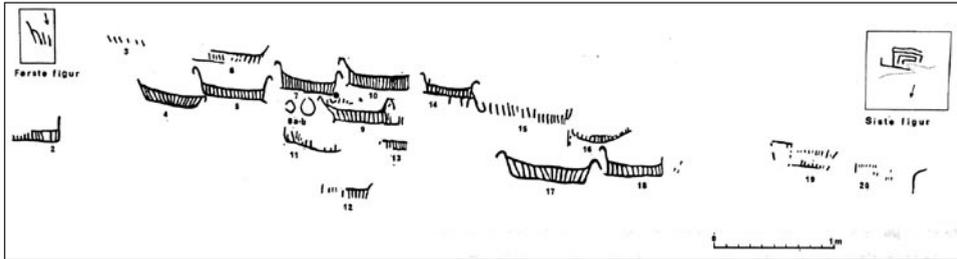


Figure 3. A1 type boats at Vangdal 1 (Mandt Larsen 1972, Pl. 37).

## Rykkje

The site is located at the foot of a hill, ending in a small cliff near a red deer track (Gjerde 1998:71). Only one carving is recorded at Rykkje, a depiction of a deer. The site is easily accessible; it is visible from a large area and commands a wide view as well. Bronze Age carvings, now lost, were found in the area in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Mandt Larsen 1972).



Figure 4. Rykkje. The arrow indicates the carving. Photo: M. Wrigglesworth.

## Vangdal

The site (Fig. 5) consists of three panels, two of which are found at the top and the foot of a large outcrop. The third panel is placed at some distance from the outcrop, and is of uncertain date. The highest panel is Vangdal 2, situated precariously on the edge of the outcrop. The motifs are deer, anthropomorphs and geometrical designs. Based on shoreline data as well as typology, the carvings may have been produced in the Late Mesolithic (Bakka 1973; Gjerde 1998). Vangdal 1 is located at the foot of the outcrop, and consists of boats type A1/B1, suggesting an Early Bronze Age date; and possibly that the carvings were made within a

relatively short period. One boat appears to have been re-carved, indicating repeated visits to the site. The outcrop is a dominating feature in the landscape and is visible from a considerable distance from the fjord, but not necessarily when moving on land. The outcrop does not face the sea directly. With a higher shoreline than at present, Vangdal would have been a good landing place for boats.



**Figure 5.** Vangdal. The arrows indicate the location of the rock carvings. Photo: M. Wrigglesworth.

### Fonnaland

The site consists of three boats of general Bronze Age date, most likely Late Bronze Age. The panel is located at the foot of a small hill that ends in a cliff, facing the water and commanding a wide view of the fjord. It is accessible and visible from the fjord.



**Figure 6.** Fonnaland. The arrow indicates the rock carvings. Photo: M. Wrigglesworth.

## Linga

The site is located on a small outcrop that does not face the water directly. More than 70 boats are depicted on the rock, most of which are Mandt's type A1, dating the site to the Early Bronze Age. The remaining boats can be dated to the Late Bronze Age. The outcrop is small and less dominant in the landscape; although the place would have been visible from a distance, the outcrop itself might not be as easy to spot. The site is accessible and has a wide view of the fjord.



**Figure 7.** Linga. Note the relation to the sea and the similarities to Vangdal. Photo: M. Wrigglesworth.

## Berge

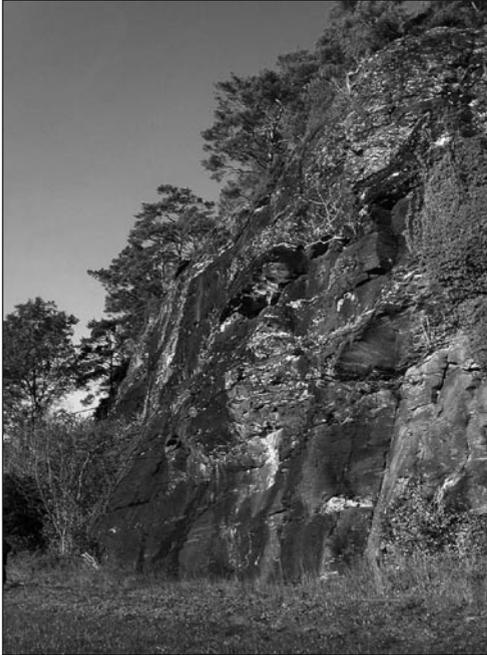
The site is located at the foot of a small mountain. The site commands a wide view, facing the fjord. The small mountain is visible from a great distance and is a dominant feature in the surrounding landscape. Three B1 type boats are recorded, about 4 metres above ground and set slightly apart from the other images. The remaining boats are of Late Bronze Age types; some may possibly be dated to the Early Iron Age. A small excavation in front of the panel revealed deposits of sand and charcoal, which were radiocarbonated to the Early Iron Age (Lødøen 2005:203). This does not necessarily indicate the date of the rock art, although some carvings could well have been made in the Early Iron Age. The site is easily accessible; however, based on the excavation and shoreline data (Gjerde 1998, 2002; Lødøen 2005), it is likely that at times the site was only accessible by boat.



**Figure 8.** Berge. Photo: M. Wrigglesworth.

## Hammarhaug

This site is located at the foot of a small hill, and the location in the landscape is identical to Berge. The site faces the sea, which would have been very close to the hill. The motifs are several boats of Late Bronze Age date.



**Figure 9.** Hammarhaug. Photo: M. Wrigglesworth.

## Halhjem

This site is not located in Hardanger, but further to the north in Bjørnefjord. I have included it here because the panel is vertical and thus similar to the sites mentioned above. The site is located at the foot of a very small hill. The location in the landscape differs from the other sites – the hill is close to the sea, but the rock art was made at a point from which the sea is not visible. Although the site is accessible, the terrain slopes down towards the panel, effectively creating a basin. There is no view from the site and it is not visible until one gets quite close. The motifs are boats, cup-marks and rings of Late Bronze Age date.



**Figure 10.** Halhjem.  
Photo: M. Wrigglesworth.

The seven sites presented above have specific properties in terms of structure, motifs, and location in the landscape. There are no other sites with the same type of motifs on horizontal or slanted panels north of the Hardangerfjord. There is no shortage of suitable outcrops, which indicates that for some reason, rock carvings had to be made on vertical surfaces. No sites south of the fjord have A1 type boats, and their location in the landscape differs slightly (cf. Mandt Larsen 1972). If we accept that this type of boat is among the earliest types (Mandt 1991), then three of the seven sites are the earliest Bronze Age rock art sites in the area. Consequently, these sites would have been present in the minds of people at an early stage. As there are two Stone Age rock art sites in visible and partially accessible locations in the area, it is possible that the locations for the Bronze Age carvings were chosen because of the older carvings. As both Stone Age sites are vertical, choosing structurally similar sites could have been one way of linking to the past. The stylistic variation at the seven sites also indicates that they were repeatedly visited. Sometimes, several hundred years may have passed before new carvings were made, as is the case at Berge. Throughout the Bronze Age, people returned to these places and in turn, the carvings from the Early Bronze Age would have been perceived as the past, made by the ancestors.

In the case of Vangdal 1 and 2, a continuity of place from the Stone Age to the Bronze Age is evident. The same also applies to Linga and Berge, where the presence of A1 type boats and Late Bronze Age ships also indicate that the places were continually used. At Rykkje, the now lost Bronze Age carvings would indicate some continuity of place here as well. Fonnaland, Hammarhaug and Halhjem are different; based on style, they were created in the Late Bronze Age and it is difficult to say whether these sites were used over a similarly long period. However, I suggest that there is a continuity of place at these sites, based on the properties of the places and the structural similarities to Rykkje, Vangdal, Berge and Linga. Although the places may not have been used in the Early Bronze Age as far as making rock art is concerned, they might have had significance in terms of associations to stories and myths, and images were carved at a later stage. Alternatively, these places came into existence because they were structurally similar to Vangdal, Berge, Linga, and were thus associated with whatever stories and forces that existed at those sites.

Thus, a likely interpretation is that Vangdal 1, Linga and Berge were the first Bronze Age sites in the area, possibly mimicking the older sites Rykkje and Vangdal 2. The sites were re-used throughout the Bronze Age, although stylistic variation indicates that rock art was not made continually. People may still have come to these places in order to perform rituals, existing images might have been painted, or new parts added to old images (cf. Wahlgren 2002). In the case of Berge, most images were actually made in the Late Bronze Age. During the Late Bronze Age, new sites were created at Fonnaland, Hammarhaug and Halhjem; like the Early Bronze Age sites, they have vertical panels and have the same location in the landscape, i.e. they are visible and accessible, they are close to the sea and with the exception of Halhjem, there is a wide view from the sites. It could well be that in these cases it was felt that rock art could only be made in places that were similar to the places chosen by the ancestors. Thus, the Stone Age sites structured the location of the Early Bronze Age sites, which in turn structured the later sites.

Above, I have only discussed sites that have certain similarities in terms of location. Other rock art sites that do not have this specific location in the landscape and do not have vertical

panels may also be interpreted in terms of social memory. There are at least 43 rock art sites in the Hardanger area, and all could potentially be expressions of social memory.

### Trøndelag, Central Norway

Trøndelag, Central Norway (Fig. 11) has a large concentration of rock art from both the Stone Age and the Bronze Age. A small number of sites include vertical panels, all of which are dated to the Stone Age: Bøla, Hammer, Hell, and Stykket. A number of rock painting sites are also known; they are always found on vertical panels and their date is not established – they have a general Neolithic/Bronze Age date, some may even date to the Iron Age. At Bardal, Homnes (Gjessing 1936) and Hammer (Bakka & Gaustad 1975; Bakka 1988) carvings from both the Stone Age and the Bronze Age are found on the same panel. The sites have varying locations in the landscape, but Stone Age rock art in particular appears to be closely associated with water (Bakka 1975; Bakka & Gaustad 1975; Sognnes 1994). However, the appearance of the landscape has changed dramatically since the rock art was created, mainly due to land uplift, landslides and agriculture. Rock art in Trøndelag is located on outcrops and boulders, between approx. 14 and 120 metres above sea level (Sognnes 2001). In the following, I will single out and discuss two sites, Bardal and Hammer, in relation to social memory.

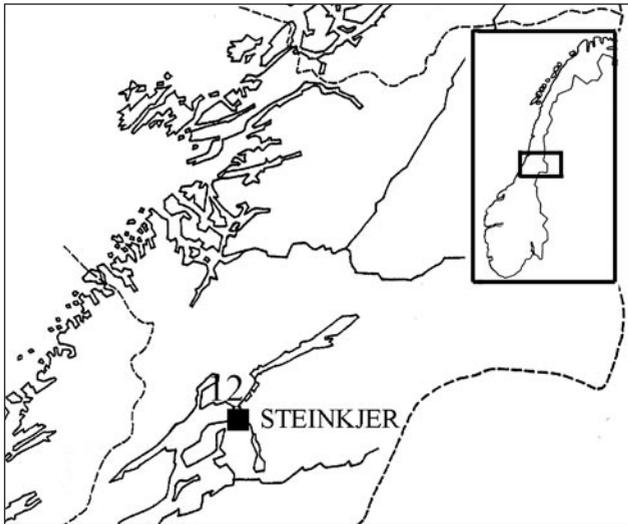


Figure 11. Trøndelag. 1=Hammer, 2=Bardal. After Sognnes 2001:10, redrawn by Melanie Wrigglesworth.

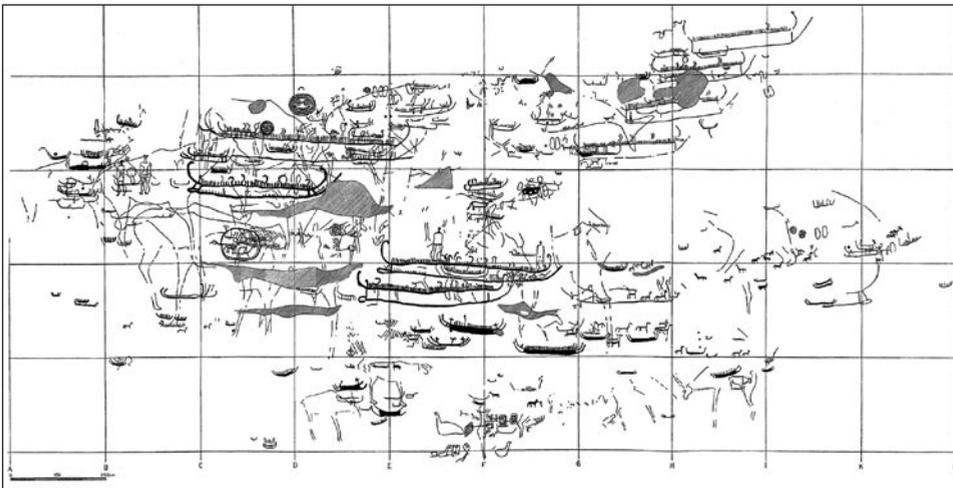
### Bardal

The site consists of five panels scattered over a small area, two of which have Stone Age carvings. Bardal 1 is located on a large outcrop, forming a dominating feature of the landscape (Fig. 12 and 13). Today, the site is located in a relatively flat and open agricultural landscape, although when the first carvings were made, this would have been a maritime landscape. The site is easily accessible and would have been visible from a large area, especially with a higher shoreline. The outcrop is covered by images dated to the Stone Age: a large whale, deer/elk, birds, anthropomorphs and various geometric designs. A large number of Bronze Age carvings (boats, concentric rings, spirals, anthropomorphs, horses, footprints, horse riders)

are superimposed on the older images (Gjessing 1936). Some boats may have an Iron Age date. The stratigraphy of Bardal 1 is complicated – not only are there images from different chronological periods, but images within each period are superimposed (Fig. 13). It is evident that this site has been used and reused regularly, and that it must have been a prominent feature in the changing landscape and in the minds of people for centuries.



**Figure 12.** Bardal 1. Photo: M. Wigglesworth.



**Figure 13.** Tracing of part of Bardal 1 (Gjessing 1936 Pl LV)

## Hammer

Seventeen panels have been recorded at Hammer, six of which have Bronze Age and Iron Age motifs such as boats and horses. Two panels, Hammer 1 and 9, have carvings from both the Stone Age and Bronze Age/Iron Age (Bakka & Gaustad 1975; Bakka 1988). The Bronze Age carvings are not superimposed on the older images. The panels are located on outcrops spread in a flat and open agricultural landscape. However, this was once a seascape: one of the largest panels at Hammer was covered by marine deposits, and the rock is weathered by wave action (Bakka 1975). The site is easily accessible, particularly with a higher shoreline, and there would have been a good view of the fjord. The places where the rock art is located would have been visible from the fjord; although visibility would have changed to some degree as land uplift progressed. Hammer 1 is located on a vertical rock face; images of birds and an elk are carved



Figure 14. Hammer 1. Photo: M. Wrigglesworth.



Figure 15. Tracing of Hammer 1 (Gjessing 1936, Pl LIV)

high above ground and boats and horses are carved closer to the ground. An approximate date is the Neolithic and Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age (Bakka & Gaustad 1975; Bakka 1988). Hammer 9 has a number of animal depictions as well as one boat. Based on style, the boat may be dated to the Early Iron Age. The images are juxtaposed, rather than superimposed.

The fact that two traditions of making rock art merge at these sites can be seen as an indication of a continuity of place. In the case of Bardal in particular, this monumental place would have been significant - it would have been hard to miss simply because of its sheer size. There is a strong continuity of place at Bardal. The site was repeatedly visited during the Stone Age, as the large number of superimposed carvings attest – this place had a strong presence in the minds of people for centuries. This continued into the Bronze Age and the Iron Age. In fact, the tradition of making rock art at this site may never have stopped; it merely took on a different meaning and iconography. Each layer of rock art could have been made by a different group as part of a strategy to control the site. By controlling the site and the images imprinted in the rock, a group or person(s) could control the forces associated with the site. Carving new images on top of existing ones could be an attempt at appropriating the ancestors and the past, through which tradition and the order of things could be upheld. Continuity of place is also evident at Hammer, where some panels have been used for both Stone Age and Bronze Age/Iron Age carvings. There is little superimposition of the older carvings, which could perhaps be seen as a mark of respect to the people who made them. Contrary to the situation at Bardal, new panels were created near existing, older panels. This place clearly was significant for centuries, and returning in order to make new rock art in a different style may have been one way of connecting with the past and the ancestors. In this way, cultural identity could be created and reinforced.

### **Rock art and social memory**

The case studies demonstrate parallels as well as differences between the two regions. In Hardanger, there is some superimposition and the oldest carvings are placed at the top of the panel at a number of sites. The sites that can be dated to the Early Bronze Age appear to have the same location in the landscape as the sites from the Stone Age and in the case of Vangdal, the Stone Age and Bronze Age panels are found on the same outcrop. Later, new places that were similar to older and established places were created. At these sites, memory is preserved through a specific location in the landscape and to some extent through the choice of motifs – relatively simple boats appear to have been preferred.

In Trøndelag, identity and memory were expressed in several ways. There is a great deal of superimposition at some panels, in particular at Bardal 1, where new images clearly had to be carved on top of the existing ones. At Hammer, there were both Stone Age and Bronze Age motifs on the same panel, but no superimposition. There are also panels with motifs dated to the Bronze Age and Iron Age near the Stone Age panels. At this particular site, the situation is reminiscent of that in Hardanger – social memory is preserved through location in the landscape. Both case studies indicate that the sites were places that people returned to over a long period, in order to make new rock art and to perform rituals.

The sites discussed above demonstrate various practices – perhaps different incorporating practices. In both areas, established places were reused: by carving new images on top of older ones, by carving new images on the same panels, or by creating new panels near existing ones

or in similar locations. The sites were already significant and this could be seen as a way of tapping into that significance. Social memory is thus expressed through repeated visits and at times superimposition, and through reusing panels at existing sites.

Rock art was not placed randomly in the landscape, it was located in places that were significant to people in the Bronze Age. Some of those locations were at spectacular or dominant features in the landscape, as the sites in the case studies demonstrate. The sites discussed above are all located in open and accessible places, near water and lines of communication. These sites were public, located between the sea and the mountains, in highly visible places. The rituals that included making rock carvings may thus have been communal or collective, aimed at a large group of people. The rituals could have commemorated specific events in the past, creating and upholding group identity. Making rock art near older rock art or imitating the properties of earlier sites would have been a means of connecting with the past and legitimising social positions within the group. The motifs are simple, particularly in Hardanger, and the information they contained could thus have been available to a group sharing the same cultural identity and the same past.

Reused sites are part of an incorporating social practice, where social memory is maintained through ritual (cf. Connerton 1989). Rock art can be seen as both an inscribing and incorporating practice – the monuments are physical representations of the past as well as the places where memory was transmitted and upheld. All rock art sites can potentially be seen as the physical remains of rituals, where the transmission of social memory through ritual performance may have been one element. By reusing sites and creating new sites that are similar to the older sites, it would have been possible to share or create a common identity and ideology. Reusing a specific site could well be a means of legitimising certain structures in the community, confirming cultural identity and social positions. Rock art could thus have been part of a cultural construction of memory.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank Liv Helga Dommasnes, Ole Magne Nøttveit, Ørjan Engedal, Janicke Larsen Zehetner, Per Ditlef Fredriksen and Irene Baug for reading and commenting earlier drafts of this paper.

## **Summary**

The concept of social memory is discussed in relation to rock art sites from the Stone and Bronze Ages in two geographical areas: Hardanger, West Norway and Trøndelag, Central Norway. Social memory is linked to cultural identity, ritual, monuments and places in the landscape, offering a different perspective on rock art. Seven sites in the Hardanger area are discussed; they are located near dominating features in the landscape and have similar motifs. It is suggested that two Stone Age sites structured the location of the Early Bronze Age sites, which in turn structured the location of the Late Bronze Age sites. Two sites in Trøndelag where rock art dated to the Stone Age and the Bronze Age is found on the same panels are also discussed. Rock art is seen as part of an incorporating social practice, where social memory is maintained through ritual. It is suggested that rock art was significant in constructing and upholding cultural identity and legitimising social positions, through references to the past.

## References

- Alcock, S. 2002. *Archaeologies of the Greek Past. Landscape, Monuments, and Memories*. Cambridge University Press.
- Bakka, E. 1973. Om alderen på veideristningane. *Viking*: 151-187.
- Bakka, E. 1975. Geologically dated Rock Carvings at Hammer near Steinkjer in Nord-Trøndelag. *Arkeologiske skrifter, Historisk museum, Universitetet i Bergen* 2: 7-48.
- Bakka, E. 1988. *Helleristningane på Hammer i Beitstad, Steinkjer, Nord-Trøndelag. Granskingar i 1977 og 1981*. Rapport Arkeologisk serie 1988:7. Universitetet i Trondheim, Vitenskapsmuseet. Trondheim.
- Bakka, E. & Gaustad, F. 1975. *Helleristningsundersøkelser 1974 i Beitstad, Steinkjer, Nord-Trøndelag*. Rapport, Arkeologisk serie 1974:8, Det Kongelige norske videnskabers selskab, Trondheim.
- Barrett, J.C. 1999. Chronologies of landscape. In: Ucko, P. & Layton, R. (eds.) *The Archaeology and Anthropology of Landscape*: 21-30. Routledge.
- Bell, C. 1992. *Ritual theory, ritual practice*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Bradley, R. 1993. *Altering the Earth*. Society of Antiquaries of Scotland Monograph Series no 8. Edinburgh.
- Bradley, R. 1997. *Rock Art and the Prehistory of Atlantic Europe*. Routledge, London.
- Bradley, R. 2000. *An Archaeology of Natural Places*. Routledge, London.
- Bradley, R. 2002. *The Past in Prehistoric Societies*. Routledge, London.
- Connerton, P. 1989. *How societies remember*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Edmonds, M. 1999. *Ancestral Geographies of the Neolithic*. Routledge, London.
- Fentress, J. & Wickham, C. 1992. *Social Memory*. Blackwell, Oxford.
- Fredell, Å. 2003. *Bildbroar*. Gotarc Serie B. Gothenburg Archaeological Thesis no 25, Gothenburg.
- Gjerde, J.M.S. 1998. *A different use of landscape? The visual landscape study of rock art styles in Hardanger, Western Norway. A method of dating?* Unpublished MA thesis, University of Reading.
- Gjerde, J.M.S. 2002. Lokalisering av helleristninger i landskapet. In: Goldhahn, J. (ed.) *Bilder av bronsålder*. Acta Archaeologica Lundensia, Series in 8 (37): 23-51.
- Gjessing, G. 1936. *Nordenfjelske ristninger og malinger av den arktiske gruppe*. Instituttet for sammenlignende kulturforskning, Serie B, Skrifter 30. Oslo.
- Goldhahn, J. 1999. *Sagaholm. Hällristningar och gravritual*. Studia Archaeologica Universitatis Umensis 11.
- Goldhahn, J. 2006. *Hällbildstudier i norra Europa – trender och tradition under det nya millenniet*. Gotarc serie C. Arkeologiska skrifter no 64, Gothenburg.
- Halbwachs, M. 1992. *On Collective Memory*. Edited, Translated, and with an Introduction by Lewis A. Coser. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Helskog, K. 1999. The Shore Connection. Cognitive Landscape and Communication with Rock Carvings in Northernmost Europe. *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 32(2): 73-94.
- Ingold, T. 2000. *The Perception of the Environment. Essays on livelihood, dwelling and skill*. Routledge, London.
- Kaul, F. 1998. *Ships on Bronzes. A Study in Bronze Age Religion and Iconography*. PNM Studies in Archaeology & History Vol. 3:1/2. Copenhagen.
- Ling, J. 2005. The fluidity of rock art. In: Goldhahn, J. (ed.) *Mellan sten och järn*. Rapport från det 9:e nordiska bronsålderssymposiet, Göteborg 2003-10-09/12. Gotarc Serie C, Arkeologiske skrifter 59: 437-460.
- Linge, T. 2004. *Mjeltehaugen – fragment av bronsealderens gravritual*. Unpublished thesis in archaeology, University of Bergen.
- Linge, T. 2005. Kammeranlegget i Mjeltehaugen – eit rekonstruksjonsforslag. In: Goldhahn, J. (ed.) *Mellan sten och järn*. Rapport från det 9:e nordiska bronsålderssymposiet, Göteborg 2003-10-09/12. Gotarc Serie C, Arkeologiske skrifter 59: 537-559.
- Lødøen, T.K. 2005. Berge i Strandebar. In: Mandt, G. & Lødøen, T.K. (eds.) *Bergkunst. Helleristningar i Noreg*: 194-205. Det Norske Samlaget, Oslo.
- Mandt Larsen, G. 1972. *Bergbilder i Hordaland. En undersøkelse av bildenes sammensetning, deres naturmiljø og kulturmiljø*. Årbok for Universitetet i Bergen, Humanistisk Serie 2.

- Mandt, G. 1978. Is the location of rock pictures an interpretative element? In: Marstrander, S. (ed.) *Acts of the international Symposium on rock art*. Institutt for sammenlignende kulturforskning, Serie A, XXIX: 170-184.
- Mandt, G. 1983. Tradition and Diffusion in West-Norwegian Rock Art. Mjeltehaugen revisited. *Norwegian Archaeological Review*. 16(1):14-32.
- Mandt, G. 1991. Vestnorske ristninger i tid og rom. Bd. I-II. Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Bergen.
- Mandt, G. 2002. Hardanger – en mangfoldig ristningsregion. *Arkeo* 1: 9-14.
- Myhre, L.N. 2005. *Trialectic Archaeology. Monuments and Space in Southwest Norway 1700-500 BC*. AmS-Skrifter 18, Arkeologisk Museum i Stavanger.
- Sognnes, K. 1987. *Bergkunsten i Stjørdal 2*. Gunneria 56. Trondheim.
- Sognnes, K. 1994. Ritual Landscapes. Toward a Reinterpretation of Stone Age Rock Art in Trøndelag, Norway. *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 27(1):29-50.
- Sognnes, K. 2001. *Prehistoric Imagery and Landscapes: Rock Art in Stjørdal, Trøndelag, Norway*. BAR International Series 998. Archaeopress, Oxford.
- Sognnes, K. 2003. On shoreline dating of rock art. *Acta Archaeologica* 73: 189-209.
- Stewart, P. J. & Strathern, A. 2003. Introduction. In: Stewart, P.J. & Strathern, A. (eds.) *Landscape, Memory and History*: 1-15. Pluto Press, London & Sterling.
- Straub, J. 2002. Personal and Collective Identity. A Conceptual Analysis. In: Friese, H. (ed.) *Identities. Time, Difference, and Boundaries*: 56-76. Berghahn, New York & Oxford.
- Syvetsen, K.J. 2003. *Ristninger i graver – graver med ristninger. Om ristningers mening i gravminner og gravritualer. En analyse av materiale fra Rogaland*. Unpublished thesis in archaeology, University of Bergen.
- Syvetsen, K. J. 2005. Rogalands ristninger i graver som transformerende og stabiliserende faktorer i tilværelsen. In: Goldhahn, J. (ed.) *Mellan sten och järn*. Rapport från det 9:e nordiska bronsålderssymposiet, Göteborg 2003-10-09/12. Gotarc Serie C, Arkeologiske skrifter 59: 503-520.
- Taçon, P. 1994. Socializing landscapes: the longterm implications of signs, symbols and marks on the land. *Archaeology in Oceania* 29:117-129.
- Tilley, C. 1999. *Metaphor and Material Culture*. Blackwell, Oxford.
- Wahlgren, K. H. 2002. *Bilder av betydelse*. Stockholm Studies in Archaeology 23. Bricoleur Press. Stockholm.
- Wold, M. 2005. Å skrive om bronsealderreligionen. In: Goldhahn, J. (ed.) *Mellan sten och järn*. Rapport från det 9:e nordiska bronsålderssymposiet, Göteborg 2003-10-9/12. Gotarc serie C: Arkeologiska skrifter 59: 521-535.
- Wrigglesworth, M. 2000. *Ristninger og graver som sted. En visuell landskapsanalyse*. Unpublished thesis in archaeology, University of Bergen.
- Wrigglesworth, M. 2002. Ristninger og graver i landskapet. In: Goldhahn, J. (ed.) *Bilder av bronsålder*. Acta Archaeologica Lundensia, Series in 8(37): 185-199.
- Wrigglesworth, M. 2005. Vognmotivet i vestnorsk bronsealder. In: Goldhahn, J. (ed.) *Mellan sten och järn*. Rapport från det 9:e nordiska bronsålderssymposiet, Göteborg 2003-10-9/12. Gotarc serie C: Arkeologiska skrifter 59:561-570.