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Reading Europe's Paleolithic Writing

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READING EUROPE'S PALEOLITHIC WRITING

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Engraving on bone from Bilzingsleben

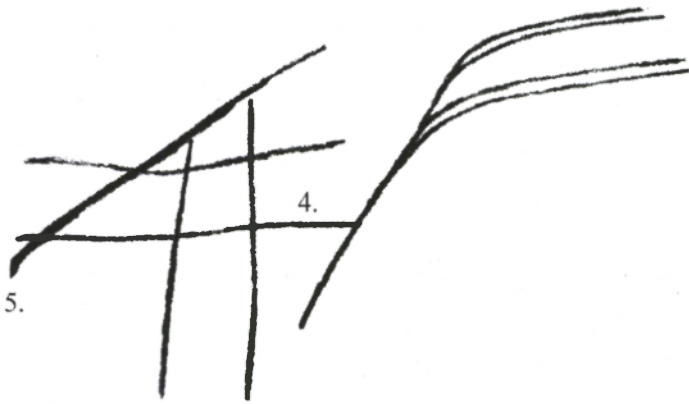
The open-air site of Bilzingsleben in the district of Halle in Germany was located by a brook flowing into a small lake. Evidence of three circular dwellings, 3 to 4 meters in diameter, with hearths in front, and stone, bone, wood and antler workshops was found. Several bones found in connection with the workshops were engraved. Homo Erectus skull bones and teeth were found. The site is dated to between 350,000 and 300,000 years ago.

A bone found at Bilzingsleben is engraved with a twist sign (1.) representing two double strands of fiber (2.) twisted together into one descending multi-ply strand.



To the left of the twist sign is a square hide sign (3.) comprised of two parallel horizontal lines intersecting two parallel verticals to represent an animal hide stretched-out on a rack for drying and scraping.

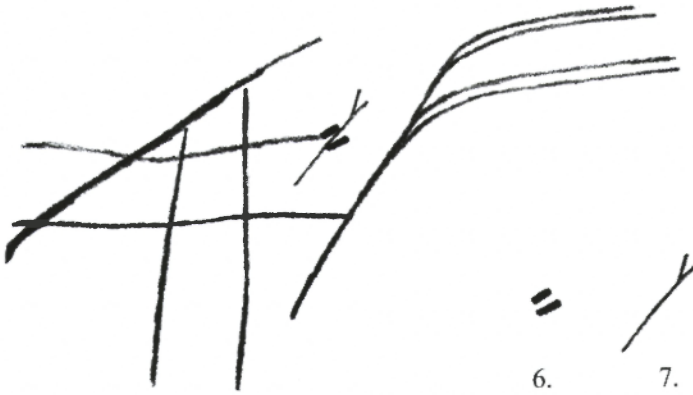




The hide sign's lower horizontal line (4.) intersects the twist's single strand to form a compound sign representing a hide sewn with multi-ply strands. The horizontal line extends from the twist sign to a deep straight groove (5.) incised to the bone's edge.

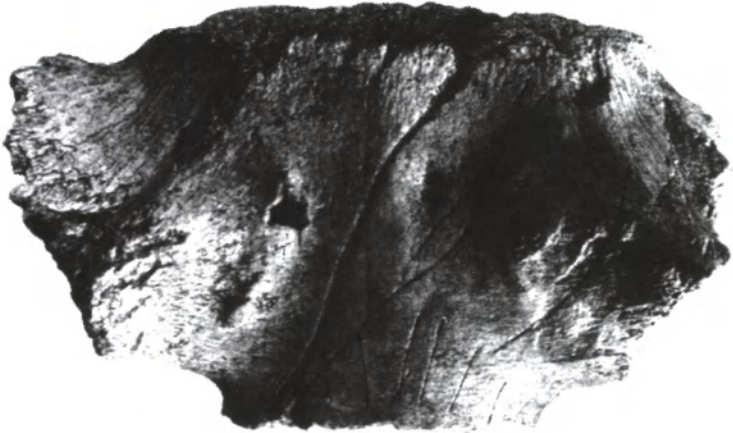
The groove is a spinster's attenuation tool to stretch and straighten twisted strands into uniform diameters along their lengths. A spinster sets newly twisted strands which are curly and of uneven weight along their lengths into the straight groove and pulls them down and around the bone's curved edge to stretch and straighten them.

The hide sign's horizontal line linking the groove's curve to the twist modifies the compound sign to signify that the multi-ply strands are straight, stretched fine and uniform. The compound sign of groove, hide and twist signifies that hides are sewn with uniformly straight and strong strands.



Two short parallel lines (6.) are engraved to the right of the hide sign's upper horizontal line to signify a doubling, an augmentation of the sign. The doublet modifies the hide sign the way an exponent written above and to the right of a mathematical expression raises it to a higher power. It indicates the higher quality of the hide's sewing.

A fine twist sign (7.) intersects the doublet to depict the fine strands of higher quality. The Homo Erectus spinster reads the engraved signs of her work's goal of quality as she uses the tool stretching and straightening strands.



Engraving on bone from Stránská Skála

Stánská skála is a rounded hill of limestone about 5 kilometers northeast of the city of Brno in the Czech Republic. Homo Erectus tools, remains of fires and an engraving were found there and dated according to the fauna and stratigraphy to approximately 600,000 years B.P.

The engraved fragment of bison sacrum bone found at Stránská skála contains a human figure sign (1.) representing a tall slender young female in profile silhouette facing left. The figure line descends to the bone's bottom edge which acts as the horizon and ground that she stands upon.

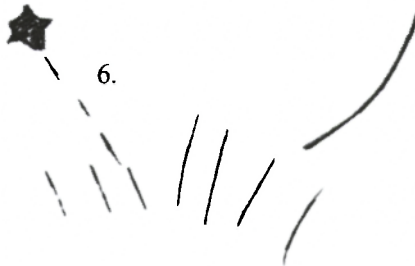


A long inverted twist sign (2.) is deeply incised to the left of the female figure. It is a wide groove ascending to the bone's top edge above her. The twist's short lines near the bottom edge represent fine fibers twisted together to form the long ascending cord.



The human figure sign's two converging lines are open above to form a twist sign shape signifying she is a spinster and a fine vertical link line flowing between her and the twist signifies that she is spinning it. Its inverted form and undulations indicate that the newly spun strand is unfinished and needs straightening.

Above the bone's bottom edge horizon, to the right of the young spinster, is engraved a first crescent of a new moon at solstice (3.) and to the left of the newly twisted strand is a star. (4.) Seven short lines (5.) counting the week of seven dark nights of a new moon arc over the horizon from east, on the left, to west. The arc describes the apparent path of the sun and moon across the sky. The center line, the highest above the horizon, is marked as the time of the new moon.



Stellar and lunar events are dated in the calendric arc by a line (6.) connecting the star to the third night line and the crescent's position above the sixth night line. The arc represents a sequence of celestial positions from east to west and a sequence of times flowing clockwise from left to right.

The twisting of the new strand by the young spinster is timed by where she stands on the eastern horizon nearer the star than the lunar crescent.

The female figure and the strand she twists begin at the horizon, before the first night mark, and ascend to the bone's top edge, the top of the sky, above the new moon mark, three nights later. The strand's diagonal orientation flows in time, its span connects the ground to the sky over three nights of twisting.

The Homo Erectus spinster spins a new strand that joins earth and sky as the new year begins.

The bone's bottom and top horizontal edges representing earth below and sky's top above provide a measure of the spinster's great stature. She stands on the horizon and nearly touches the top of the sky.



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