



AN ESKIMO GRAFFITO IN EAST-ERN GREENLAND

During my ethnographical expedition in the Angmagssalik area in the summer of 1963 I had the opportunity to make a short stop at Kutdlek Island (61°30'N. 42°30'W.) where the Danish ice-breaker *Nella Dan* discharged supplies for the men of that Loran station in Greenland.

A Danish friend of mine, Ing. Erik Peters, accompanied me to a little peninsula of that uninhabited island where two years before some Eskimo graves had been discovered and studied; scientists believe they date back to 800 A.D.

Hoping to find other evidence of early habitation, I began an intensive search along the shore where I noticed some openings in the chaos of rocks that could have been used as landing places for kayaks and umyaks.

My researches were very successful: on a large granitic block about 6 m. long and 3 m. in height and width I discovered a wonderful graffito representing a running dog (see photograph).

The cut is generally deep and full of dried lichens except for the drawing of the extremely expressive head where the cut is less deep and more delicate. The complete drawing is 45 cm. in length.

It is very difficult to ascertain the culture to which the graffito belongs but it is probably of the *Sarqaq culture* (ca. 2000-500 B.C.) because it has been executed with a pointed stone and is previous, therefore, to the *Thule culture*¹.

The discovery, I believe, is very important because it demonstrates that the paleo-Eskimos drew and cut for amusement and not only for religious or propitiatory reasons.

SILVIO ZAVATTI

¹Zavatti, S. 1964. L'arte rupestre eschimese. *Sapere*. No. 653, pp. 270-274.

*Istituto Geografico Polare, Italy.