



The cave *Große Scheuer*

Heritage protected by nature

With its impressive doors, the *Große Scheuer* shows off as an ample, light-flooded cave in which potentially archaeological layers are protected by thick deposits of sediment. There are only sporadic hints regarding the archaeological potential of the cave. An old document still begs questions even after a whole century after its noting.

(703 m above sea level, 44 m long)

Set towards the north, the *Große Scheuer* belongs to a cave system at the north-eastern ridge of the *Rosenstein*. It has already collapsed and caused a rockslide in prehistoric times. Due to this event, parts of the front and the forecourt of the cave got destroyed.

The cave is served with daylight by its large doors, though not that much with direct sunlight. Its setting at the end of a small gorge leads to a high sedimentation rate originating from the plateau. This seems to cover potentially archaeological layers being several meters high. The evidence of human presence in this cave in prehistoric times, however, is proven with the discovery of a grooved abradar from the surface of the western foyer. Grooved abraders were used from the Upper Palaeolithic to the Metal Ages to straighten arrow shafts or to sharpen needles or awls made of bone or antler. In erosional channels, small fragments of pottery in concentrated areas show the former occupation of the cave. It remains a mystery what the documents of the excavator of the *Kleine Scheuer*, R.R. Schmidt, want to tell us. Apart from the notes about the *Kleine Scheuer* he states that he also found more than 200 lithic artefacts in the *Große Scheuer*. Unfortunately, the archives don't give any indication of an excavation or the whereabouts of these stone artefacts.

finds

picture in the centre:

cave ground with pottery fragments

picture on the right:

Grooved abradar for straightening arrow shafts or to sharpen needles or awls made of bone and antler. Those pieces have been used from the Palaeolithic to the Metal Ages, so it cannot be used as a safe marker for dating the occupation.

picture at the right bottom:

Original document from *R.R. Schmidt*. He listed up more than 230 Upper Palaeolithic stone artefacts from his excavations in the *Kleine Scheuer*, but also mentions artefacts from the *Große Scheuer* that are still missing today.