

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

Cambridge Antiquarian Society,

17 OCTOBER—5 DECEMBER 1910.

WITH

Communications

MADE TO THE SOCIETY

MICHAELMAS TERM 1910.

No. LVIII.

BEING No. 1 OF THE FIFTEENTH VOLUME.

(NINTH VOLUME OF THE NEW SERIES.)



Cambridge:

DEIGHTON, BELL & CO.; BOWES & BOWES.

LONDON: G. BELL AND SONS, LTD.

1911

Price 5s. net.

W. L. H. DUCKWORTH, M.D., Sc.D., then read the two following papers, illustrated with lantern slides, on

1. ÖLAND, A SWEDISH ISLAND.

Öland is a narrow limestone bank about sixty miles in length, placed nearly north and south in its long axis, and forming a natural breakwater for the eastern Swedish coast near Kalmar. The narrow Kalmar Sound separates Öland from the mainland.

Not only is this a long and narrow island, but in its whole length, its greatest elevation above sea-level barely surpasses 150 feet. Geologists assign the limestone rock to the lowest series of the Silurian period, and the evidence of adjacent areas, as well as the local fossil fauna (abounding in Trilobites and the cephalopod *Orthoceras*) is so clear, that no doubt remains on this subject. The strata are inclined, dipping slightly to the east. As a result of this, the western side of Öland presents a landscape differing very greatly from that of the eastern shore. For on the west, a distinctive feature is the low escarpment of the limestone, rising often at some little distance from the actual shore, separated from it by a boulder-strewn tract, but following the general trend of the coast from north to south. On the east the whole island slopes very gradually into a shallow sea.

From the time of Murchison, British geologists seem to have paid special attention to Öland and its associate, Gothland. The flora of Öland is said to be remarkable in many ways, and even an unskilled observer can see that the conditions are likely to make a considerable demand upon the adaptive capabilities of the vegetation. For large tracts of Öland consist of broad tabular slabs of limestone which are almost denuded in autumn. Such tracts face the east and must be greatly exposed to wind and weather. But again we may see beneath the low escarpment just mentioned, a very different environ-



Fig. 1. "Noah's Ark," the representation of a Viking ship, near Borgholm, Öland, Sweden



Fig. 2. Part of a stone circle near Köping Church, Öland, Sweden. Each stone in the circle is supported by three or four smaller ones

ment, where soil derived from the disintegration of the solid rocks provides roothold protected from the colder winds, and in virtue of its western aspect designed to catch the maxima of heat and light.

In regard to Archaeology, the interests connected with Öland are no less definite. It must be noticed at once, however, that palæolithic objects do not occur, and that there is a paucity even of neolithic representatives. The reason for this is to be found in the geological history of this part of Sweden, for it is now held that as recently as 7000 years ago, large tracts in this region were still submerged. But from the Bronze Age onwards to the period of the Vikings, the materials for reconstructing the history of man occur in such abundance as is hardly to be equalled elsewhere in Northern Europe. In particular, Öland has yielded an example¹ of the early goldsmith's art, remarkable even among the magnificent specimens obtained in Scandinavian lands: while the number of gold "solidi" (Roman or Byzantine coins of the 5th century A.D.) found in this seemingly barren isle is quite extraordinary.

Although most of the archaeological treasures of Öland have been transferred to the National Museum at Stockholm, numerous monuments of antiquity still remain *in situ*, and this communication deals with three examples which appear to me worthy of special note.

The first of these is the so-called "Noah's Ark" of the local peasantry. On an extensive moorland near Borgholm (the largest village of Öland), a number of large stones will be found grouped so as to form a spindle-shaped figure (Fig. 1) measuring about 100 feet in length with a maximum width of some 18 feet. A great boulder occupies a central position, and more or less perfect rows of smaller stones are arranged transversely within the figure just described. The illustration (Plate I, Fig. 1) is from my own photograph. A diagram of the monument is given by Professor Montelius in his volume on the early civilization of Sweden (p. 332).

The antiquary will at once assign this monument to the well-known class known as the "ship-form." Yet it may be

¹ The splendid gold collar from Torslunda, Öland, now in the National Museum at Stockholm.

doubted whether an equally perfect example exists elsewhere. By means of a comparison with the prehistoric ships preserved in the various northern museums, it is seen that the central boulder indicates a mast, and the transverse rows of stones are the cross-benches or thwarts for the oarsmen. Evidently the monument belongs to the Viking period, and it is a matter for speculation whether beneath it the ship of a dead hero exists, containing his body with arms and armour as well as his horse.

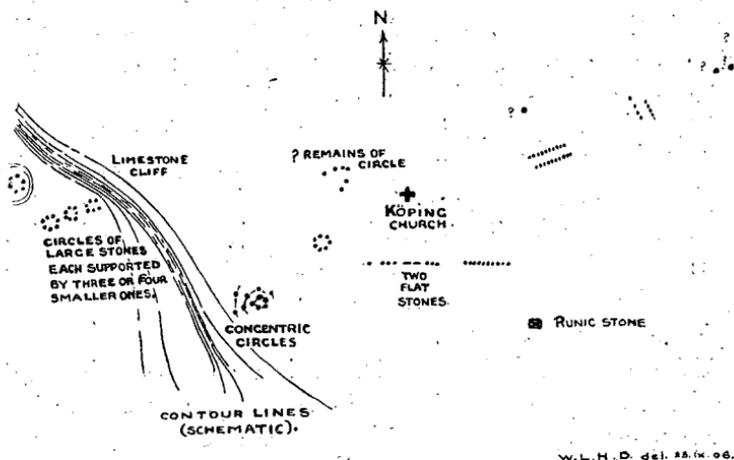


Fig. 1. Sketch-plan of the megalithic remains grouped around Köping Church, Öland.

and hound and the remains of animals slaughtered on the occasion of the interment. The discoveries at Wendel¹ brought all these objects to light. In this connexion, it is not out of place to remark that the helmet of the warrior of Wendel was adorned with metal plaques with designs, which can be exactly matched among the prehistoric finds at Torslunda in Öland.

From "Noah's Ark," we pass to the consideration of a curious variant in the construction of stone circles. Near Köping Church (about four miles N. of Borgholm), several stone circles are disposed in systematic fashion on the elevated plateau overlooking a sea-beach and the lower ground on which the church stands. The disposition and orientation of these circles are given in my sketch (Fig. 1 in the text); together

¹ Cf. Montelius, *Kulturgeschichte Schwedens*, p. 243.

with indications of other megalithic monuments so grouped around the modern church as to shew that the latter still occupies ground which from an early period has been regarded as sanctified. The photograph (Plate I, Fig. 2) exhibits the peculiarity just mentioned, and this consists in the fact that in the circles, each large stone rests upon three or four smaller ones. Such a detail in the rude architecture of stone circles is uncommon, and therefore I wish to place it on record, though I am unable to offer any explanation of this unusual feature.

My last note deals with an object of much later date, viz. the early mediaeval font at Alböke. This village church was restored or rather rebuilt about 1830, like so many of the churches of Öland¹.

From my notes², the small amount of interest possessed by the actual church can be quickly gleaned. But in the church-yard stands a gnomon or sundial, in the construction of which the old font of the church has been employed. The decoration of this font is romanesque or possibly byzantine; the animals here represented correspond closely with those to be seen on stone panels now inserted in the south wall of the church at Bro in Gothland. It is interesting to find that this artistic influence should have penetrated so far north without substantial modification. As a pendant to this font at Alböke, I have submitted a note upon the old font at Skanör in Skåne, but it seems appropriate to make the latter the subject of a special communication. What I have described in these notes may however serve to shew that wind-swept Öland can yet provide the antiquary with ample materials for study.

¹ It is a matter of satisfaction that the churches of Gothland escaped the hands of the "restorers," for the latter have made sad havoc with the old churches of Öland.

² Alböke church, Öland. The church is built N. and S. (not E. and W.). The tower is square, with a turret, and like most of the rest of the present fabric, is of modern date. The roof is red-tiled and uninterrupted from end to end. The chancel (at the southern end) is square-faced not apsidal. Doors: none on the W. side: but on N., S. and E. Vestry at the N. end. Windows both E. and W. Inside the church is an ancient hour-glass as at Gardslösa in Öland. The old lych-gates remain but are roofless.

These notes were made for comparison with others relating to a large number of the churches in Gothland and Öland.

2. AN ANCIENT FONT AT SKANÖR, SKÅNE, SWEDEN.

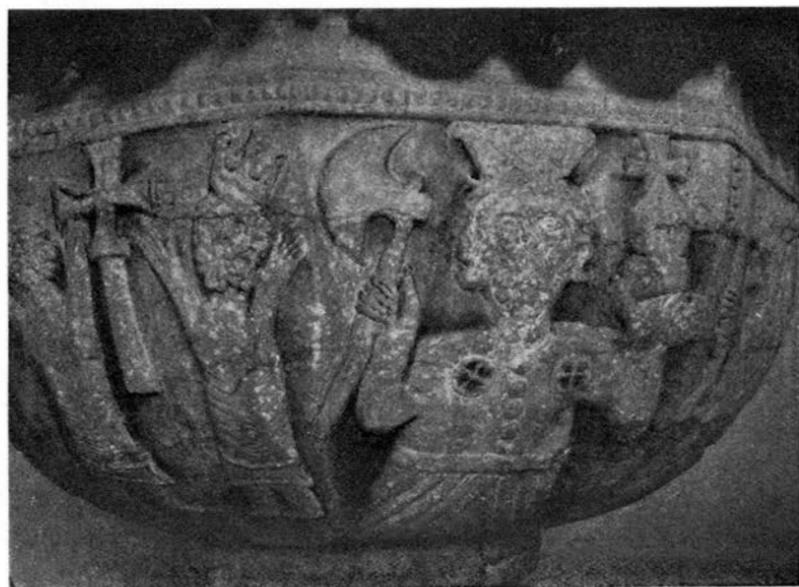
The special points of interest can be easily seen in the photograph of the font reproduced herewith (Plate II). The figures stand out in fairly high relief and, speaking generally, the character of the work may be described as romanesque. Three features appear to me deserving of special mention.

In the first place, the central figure of the Deity is represented holding an axe. The axe as an emblem of power and majesty is unfamiliar to us, but doubtless it owes its presence here to the fact that it was the most suggestive object wherewith the imagination of the early Swedish people might be impressed by the pioneers of Christianity. We may note that according to Montelius¹ the axe is the special symbol of a Sun-God worshipped in the Bronze-Age of Sweden.

In the second place, we see on the breast of the same figure, two wheels of primitive form. Wheels such as these appear in connection with representations of gods and heroes in many lands, and in periods both before and after the Christian era. Indeed the wheels as decorations are almost as certainly borrowed from pagan art as is the axe, and at least one Bronze-Age grave in Skåne (at Kivik : cf. Montelius, *Kulturgeschichte*, &c., Figs. 230 and 231) bears on one stone the wheels and upon the other two axes (and they all agree closely in form with those on the font at Skanör).

Thirdly, the Deity holds an orb surmounted by a cross, while a cross appears again in the adjoining panel, where it is the subject of adoration by two individuals wearing crowns. In form the cross approaches those known as the Maltese or the Greek cross, or the *croix pâté*. And in the side panel, the cross is supported on a staff. This particular mode of representing the cross seems to have been usual in the early days of Scandinavian Christianity. But as regards the figure holding

¹ *Kulturgeschichte*, &c., p. 135.



Ancient Font at Skanör, Skåne, Sweden

the cross, we have the best authority for saying that this is a very exceptional combination, so far as the decoration of fonts is concerned. Through the kindness of Mr Cranage, of King's College, the photographs were submitted to Mr Bond. As a result I am advised that the font might date from about 1150 A.D., but Mr Bond added that he had never previously seen a figure holding a cross.

Upon such considerations, I venture to bring these photographs to the notice of members of the Cambridge-Antiquarian Society. The inferences touch the fringe of a number of subjects of great interest, but of such extent that I shall not attempt to compile a bibliography in this case. I must, however, refer to certain articles of recent date, which I believe to be indispensable to the student of comparative iconography of this kind. This reference will be found in the footnote¹.

¹ Montelius in *Nordisk Tidskrift*, 1904: "Solens Hjul och det Kristna Korset."

„ *ibidem*, 1907: "Det Latinska Korset."

„ in *Prometheus*, 1904/05, No. 16-18: "Das Rad als religiöses Sinnbild in vorechristlicher und christlicher Zeit."

Mr S. GASELEE made a communication on

THE CULT OF THE TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS IN EGYPT.

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