

4. ON THE STONES OF CHAMBERED TUMULI.

Many of the chambered tumuli and cairns which the ravages of time have spared us, have been diligently ransacked in search of their osseous and other contents; but the stones composing them have in very few instances been examined with the view of tracing any human tooling or sculpturing upon their surfaces. Perhaps a more extended search in this direction will yet be followed by success, as the following examples tend to show:—

Clava, Inverness-shire.—One of the most remarkable archaic cemeteries or cities of the dead in Scotland, is well known to be that of Clava, near Culloden. It is now much destroyed and dilapidated. Several cairns, however, and chambered sepulchres, still remain more or less entire, and have been described and figured by Professor Innes in the Proceedings of this Society (vol. iii. p. 47, Plates VI. and VII.) My friend, Dr Grigor of Nairn, has examined the chambered tumuli for me. He has found cup-markings on some of the stones in two or three of the Clava sepulchral chambers. Thus in Plate X. are represented, at figs. 1 and 2, the circles of supporting stones forming the walls of two of these chambers, and the entrances leading to them. The two stones painted dark in these sketches, both present, on their interior surfaces, cup excavations, as represented in figs. 3 and 4 of the same Plate.

As an instance of both cups and concentric circles found on the stones of chambered sepulchres in England, let me cite the observations

of Mr Tissiman of Scarborough, published in the "Archæologia" for 1851.

Cloughton Moor, Yorkshire.—On Cloughton Moor, near Scarborough, are the remains of a so-called "Druidical circle" and some sepulchral cairns. Within the area of the megalithic circle are the remains apparently of one side of a vault or chamber, "near which was found" a stone with cup excavations or "pecked holes." The figure of this "pecked" stone is copied into Plate XI. fig. 4. "In very numerous openings of tumuli," observes Mr Tissiman, "I have often found stones with pecked holes, varying in number of holes and sizes, and in most instances immediately surrounding the interments." At Ravenhill he met with a vault or cist, with four concentric circles incised on one of its end stones, as shown in Plate XI. fig. 3; and he represents two other slabs, "part of the sepulchral chamber of a cairn," covered over with cups and grooved concentric circles.¹ Copies of these figures are given in Plate XI. figs. 1 and 2; and an urn found in the tumulus is represented in fig. 5 of the same plate. The Museum at Scarborough contains, I am told, other cupped stones from the same locality.

I shall have to refer in the sequel to the existence of cups and circles, as well as of far more elaborate carvings upon the interior of some of the chambered tumuli of Ireland and Brittany.

PLATE X.

FROM CHAMBERED TUMULI AT CLAVA.

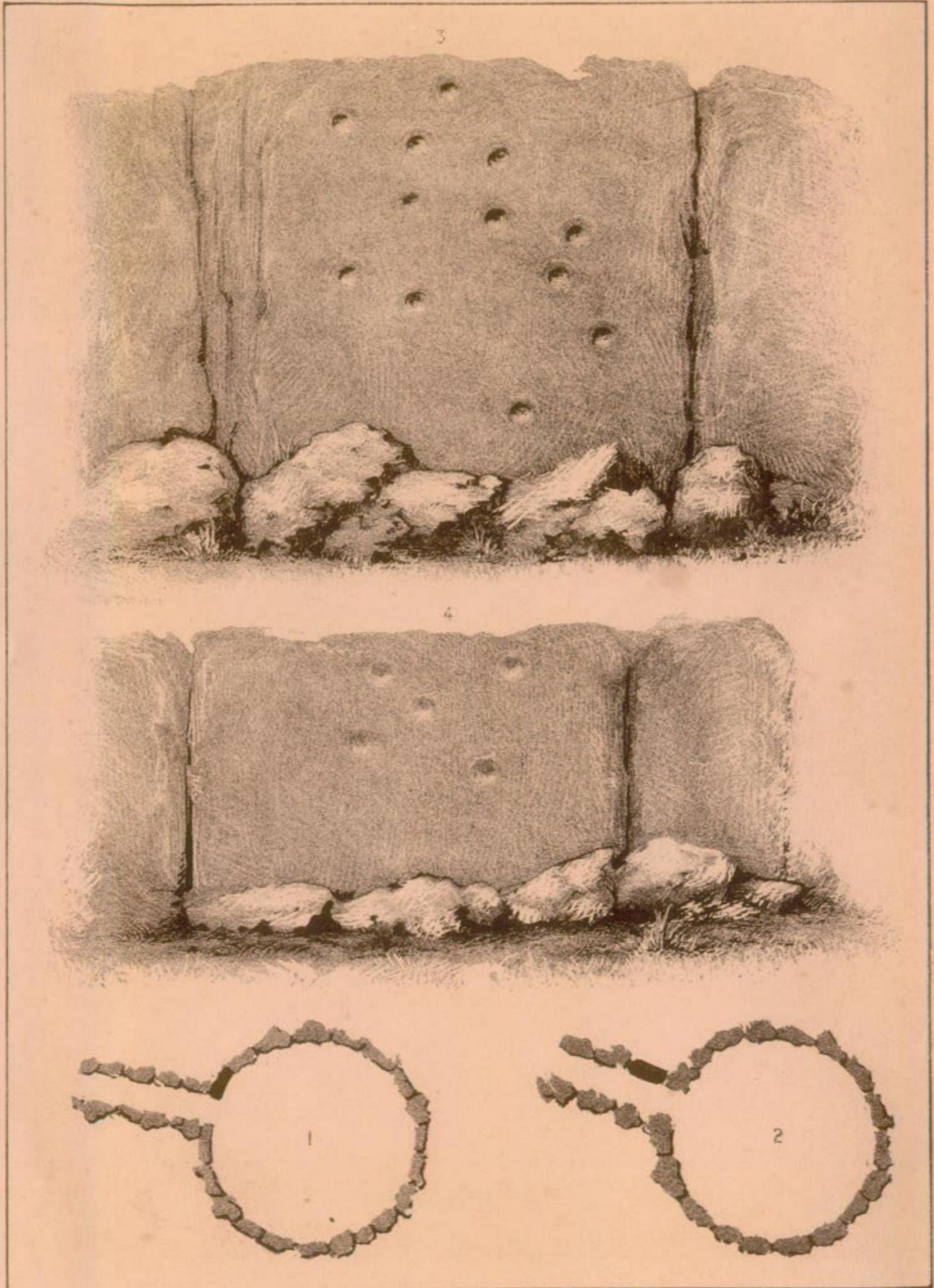


PLATE XI.

FROM YORKSHIRE AND BRITTANY TUMULI.

