

## CHAPTER VIII.—LAPIDARY SCULPTURINGS IN SCANDINAVIA.

I am not aware that the active school of Archæology in Scandinavia has hitherto paid any special attention to archaic pre-lettered carvings upon stones and rocks. But amidst their antiquarian literature, specimens are incidentally alluded to of lapidary cup and ring carvings, which are interesting in relation to the present inquiry; and some forms of ancient sculptures, different from ours, and peculiar to Sweden and Norway, have long attracted the attention of the northern antiquaries. One or two specimens and figures of each kind will be sufficient to illustrate my meaning.

Cup markings exist on a granite block, known as Balder's Altar, Baal's or Balder's Stone, near Falköping, in Sweden. The stone is of a somewhat ovoid shape, about six or seven feet long, and three feet high. Its upper surface is covered with cups of different sizes. Four of the largest and four small cups form a row obliquely across the middle of the stone; and along the side of the block there is another row of such cups, like those on the Bewick Stone, figured in Plate XXV. fig. 3. "Such holes," observes Professor Nilsson, "are frequently found in large stones both in Sweden and abroad, and are supposed," he adds, "to have been made upon heathen (or Baal) altars, in order to receive part of the blood of the sacrifice"—an opinion in which he seems inclined to join. But the cups, in some of their positions, as upon the sides of the Balder and Bewick Stones, and upon the surfaces of erect monoliths, could never possibly contain any fluid.<sup>1</sup> I have had copied into Plate XXX. fig. 1, a sketch of the Balder Stone, as given by Professor Nilsson in his "Scandaniska Nordens Ur-Invänare," p. 133.

Concentric circles are figured by the same author in another part of the same work (p. 167), as cut upon a large standing stone on Asige

perhaps wrong in conceiving that M. Bertrand states there were not above a dozen out of the many hundred cromlechs in France which were "holed" or perforated in their props; for since reading M. Brouillet's remarks, I believe M. Bertrand probably refers to incomplete and doubtful holes (*trous*), and not to complete perforations.

<sup>1</sup> Professor Nilsson thinks that these cupped Baal altar stones became the earliest holy water stones when Christianity was first introduced into Sweden.

Moor, in Halland, Sweden. The stone is probably one which formed the side of a tall trilithon, like those in the middle circles at Stonehenge, but one stone is now prostrate; and near them stand, six feet apart, two similar stones, from fourteen to sixteen feet in height, above three broad, two in thickness, and flat on the top, where apparently a transverse impost was formerly placed. These great pillars are known under the name of "Haborg's Gibbet," or "Hanging Stones." The circles made on the standing stone are concentric, and six in number, as represented in the copy from Nilsson, given in Plate XXXI. fig. 2. Further, the circles are not cut in continuous lines, but as dots or pits, in the same way as some of the Irish stones. (See *ante*, p. 64.) In Nilsson's woodcut and brief description, there is no note of the presence of a central cup or radial duct. Remains of a megalithic avenue and large monoliths exist in the neighbourhood.

A sculptured cromlech in Denmark is described and figured by Axel Em. Holmberg in his "Skandinaviens Hällristningar," p. 79, and his sketch of it is copied into Plate XXXI. fig. 3. Among the many naked and mound-covered cromlechs of Denmark this is one of the very few that have been hitherto discovered presenting any appearance of tooling and carving. The cromlech in question is situated in the parish of Grevinge, in Zéeland. It was entirely concealed within an earthen mound or barrow, until it was accidentally discovered by adventurers searching for treasure, and now stands free and exposed. Some urns with tools and pieces of flint were found within its interior chamber, which is six feet high, and formed of six upright supports, covered by a large capstone. On the upper surface of this capstone are several figures, so slightly carved that they only become very distinct in a good light. These figures consist—1. Of two small circles, with a third and larger circle, each of them inclosing two lines, which cross or intersect at right angles; and 2. Of three very rude figures of ships, with crews varying from eight to twenty-four. There are three or four other imperfect linear markings on this capstone, which Holmberg<sup>1</sup> considers to be probably nothing but natural marks. "Some antiquarians," he observes, "look upon this monument as belonging to

<sup>1</sup> *Scandinaviens Hällristningar*, p. 80.

the very oldest age, when metals were unknown ; and they believe, therefore, that the sculptures must have been done with stone. Others, and among them Professor Worsaae,<sup>1</sup> ascribe it to a later date, because the vessels contain more men than single-tree canoes or skin boats could hold."

Circles, containing within them two right-angled lines, in the form of an equal-limbed cross—like the circles on this Zeeland cromlech—are very common on sepulchral and other stones and objects in Scandinavia. Some northern archæologists conceive the figure to represent a shield or wheel; but others of them hold that it, and the "fyllot," or four-angled cross, are symbols of Baal or Woden.<sup>2</sup>

Very rude sketches of ships and crews, like those on this Zeeland capstone, have been found carved in great numbers on rocks in Scandinavia; and the age of the earliest and latest forms of these "hällristningar" has by no means been as yet determined. In the latest, the ship outlines are often mixed up with wheels, simple and crossed, rows and groups of cup-like excavations, one or two volutes, and many rude figures of armed men, animals, &c.<sup>3</sup> Holmberg has published drawings of above one hundred and fifty of these "hällristningar," and each drawing contains several figures. Two boats with various accompanying figures were discovered a century or two ago sketched upon the interior stones of a chambered cairn at Kivik, and lately this Kivik tumulus has attracted much attention in consequence of a very learned and deeply respected Scandinavian archæologist—Professor Nilsson of Lund—maintaining that the figures are Phœnician in their origin, of the bronze age, and connected with the worship of Baal. Let us, therefore, for a moment consider this Kivik monument at somewhat greater length,—the more so as Professor Nilsson attributes this monument and our British ring sculptures to the same people and the same age.

The Kivik or Bredarör cairn is placed to the south of Kivik, in the county of Skåne, and district of Christianstad, Sweden, and stands about three

<sup>1</sup> Danmarks Oltid, oplyst ved Gravhöge, &c., p. 71.

<sup>2</sup> Holmboe, in the Christiania "Videnskabsselskabs Forhandling" for 1860, figures several of these cross markings, and seems to look upon them as emblems of death.

<sup>3</sup> For drawings of these "hällristningar," see Holmberg's work, and Dr Aberg, in the Annaler for nordisk Oldkyndighed, for Aaret 1839.

hundred yards from the shores of the Baltic. The great original size of the cairn cannot be now ascertained, as for many long years its stones have served as a quarry for the building of bridges, houses, walls; &c., in the neighbourhood. Before the middle of the last century its interior chamber was reached and examined. It measured thirteen feet in length, and three in breadth, and lay north and south. Its walls were found to be composed of upright stones or slabs, some of which were sculptured, others were not. Probably the chamber had been previously entered and harried, and two of the sculptured blocks were displaced. The chamber was roofed in above, not with flat slabs, but with large irregular stones of considerable size,—some of them laid edgewise, but sufficiently preventing the mass of small cairn stones placed above from falling in. The carved or sculptured stones lining the chamber were of granite, and on an average about four feet high, three feet broad, and eight or nine inches in thickness. The carvings upon them are rude and rough, yet confessedly graphic.<sup>1</sup> Various archæologists have discussed and figured these Kivik sculptured stones and sculptures, as Lagerbring,<sup>2</sup> Abrahamsen,<sup>3</sup> Sjöborg,<sup>4</sup> &c.; but I have drawn the notice and sketch of them (copied into Plate XXXII.) from Professor Nilsson,<sup>5</sup> as the latest authority on the subject. He holds that the figures on most of the stones are symbolical or religious; while those on the two last (figs. 7 and 8) are more strictly historical, and represent a victory, or rather the rejoicings and human sacrifices following it; and he believes that the representations upon the carved stones of the cairn show the victors and its builders to have been worshippers of the eastern sun-god Baal.

A granite block stands at either end of the sepulchral chamber. The

<sup>1</sup> A second smaller chamber or cist, only four feet in length, has been discovered in the Kivik cairn; its stones are quite unsculptured. It lies south of the larger and sculptured chamber.

<sup>2</sup> *Specimen Historicum de Monumento Kivikensi.* Lond. Gothen. 1780.

<sup>3</sup> *Scandinaviskt Museum,* 1803, p. 288–302.

<sup>4</sup> *Samlingar för Nordens Fornälskare,* tom. iii. p. 142.

<sup>5</sup> *Die Uereinwohner des Scandinaischen Nordens I. Das Bronzealter.* Hamburg, 1863. Lately Professor Nilsson has published, in the 4th volume of the *Transactions of the Ethnological Society of London*, p. 244, a remarkable essay on Stonehenge, as probably a Solar Temple of the Bronze Age. It formed originally a supplemental part to his “*Bronsäldern.*”

stone at the north end (fig. 5) has no carving upon it. That at the south end (fig. 1) has cut upon it below, the outline of a crewless and perhaps defeated boat; and above it two bronze axes and two other weapons, perhaps javelin-points, on either side. Placed intermediately between these instruments is a cone or obelisk, which Professor Nilsson maintains, from various eastern emblems and evidence, to be a symbol of the Sun-god, who, he adds, "granted the victory by means of the arms here represented." Fig. 2 contains merely a rude outline of a vessel and its crew, such as exists so frequently on Swedish rocks. Fig. 3 represents four animals (horses) in a square or panel, with a series of straight and interlaced zig-zag lines, and lozenge-shaped squares, separating two of these animals above from the two below. Fig. 4 represents a cartouche or panel, ornamented with zig-zag lines, and containing within it two quartered discs,—or, in other words, two circles, each with two inclosed cross-lines. Fig. 5 shows another panel, inclosing two quartered discs below; and two crescents above, with a horned or spiral line passing upward out of each end of the crescent. Professor Nilsson, and those who argue for the eastern origin of these symbols, find an emblem of Baal or the Sun-god in the obelisk, in the horses, and in the quartered circles or discs, and an emblem of the Moon-goddess in the crescents and horns.

The two next sets of sculptures are, as already stated, more historical. The first of the two, fig. 7, seems to represent in its first line a warrior in his double-horsed chariot, preceded by prisoners, who appear to have their hands tied behind their backs, and to be guarded by a person holding a raised sword; on the second line are two horses opposed to each other, and a boat(?); and on the third line is a row of men dressed, according to Professor Nilsson, in flowing priestly costume, and who walk in procession after a person holding on high a quadrangular implement or banneret in his right hand. Fig. 8 is more elaborate still. Its first line consists of a procession, which Professor Nilsson considers as a continuation of the conqueror's festival procession in the first line of fig. 7. First, there are two musicians, apparently playing upon large horns; a third holds a squared instrument like the figure in fig. 7; a fourth personage has his limbs, according to Professor Nilsson, set for dancing; and the two last play upon a kind of suspended double

drum or “tympanon,” a form of musical instrument which Nilsson holds to have been known to the Israelites and Egyptians in the East. The second line seems to consist of priests, advancing to an altar in the midst of them; while the third line contains, apparently in different attitudes, two small groups of the prisoners, with their hands bound behind their backs,—attended by a keeper with a drawn sword,—and having two circles incomplete, and with angled extremities,—like two inclosures or prisons,—for the reception of the captives.

Professor Nilsson, while believing this cairn at Kivik to have been erected in commemoration of some victory—probably a naval one—by worshippers of the eastern sun-god Baal, holds, further, that it is a monument which belongs certainly to the bronze age; although human figures, and any other objects,—except geometric circles and lines,—are rarely found on stones and implements of the bronze period. Farther, he believes—as we shall see in a subsequent chapter—that all the traces of Solar or Baal worship hitherto discovered in Scandinavia have been invariably found in connection with the bronze era; and on the Kivik monument he conceives that the long-flowing dresses of the priests are such as we would expect from the account of the peculiar vestments, mantles and pili, of the worshippers of Baal, as given by Herodian, Lucian, &c.

It is perhaps proper to add, that Professor Nilsson, like Mr Münter,<sup>1</sup> considers the two last Kivik stones (figs. 7 and 8) to represent an immolation of some of the vanquished, as sacrifices for the victory obtained, and that the priests are assembled around the altar or cauldron for that purpose. The immolation of prisoners of war was a practice followed among some old nations. When Carthage, originally a Phoenician city or colony, was besieged by Agathocles, the inhabitants sacrificed two hundred boys of the highest descent as burnt-offerings; and afterwards, when they had obtained the victory, they immolated the most beautiful captives in like manner (Diodorus xx. 14,565). We know from this and various other sources that the Phœnicians or Canaanites, and the worshippers of Baal, had no remorse against the barbarous sacrifices of the infants and subjects even of their own

<sup>1</sup> Antiquariske Annaler, Copenhagen, for aar. 1815.

race<sup>1</sup>. While conducting their sacrifices, some of the priests of Baal seem to have jumped or danced,<sup>2</sup> as Nilsson believes to be the act in which one of the personages or priests in the first line of fig. 8 is engaged; and perhaps each individual with the upraised four-sided instrument in figs. 7 and 8, may be looked upon as occupied in an analogous manner.

Professor Nilsson makes one critical remark on the position of the figures on the last two stones, which seems worthy of quotation. The figures are arranged on the slabs from right to left, and are only intelligible when taken in this order. They form, as it were, a writing in figures instead of letters, and in doing so, they followed the course of Phœnician and other Semitic documents in reading from right to left, instead of from left to right.

Such sketches as are cut on the Kivik stones are not unique in Sweden. Professor Sjöborg<sup>3</sup> has described a very heavy flat stone, a relic of another

<sup>1</sup> Professor Nilsson alludes to the large double drum or instrument, represented in the first line of slabs (fig. 8), as the eastern "tympanum." He does not advert to the circumstance, that our best Hebrew scholars derive the name of Tophet from the Hebrew word "Toph," signifying the drum or tabret, beaten to drown the cries of the human victims. See Milton's allusion to this in "Paradise Lost":—

"Though for the noise of drums and timbrels loud,  
Their children's cries unheard, that passed through fire  
To his grim idol."

It is well known that Tophet, or the valley of the son of Hinnom, placed near one of the gates of Jerusalem, was long noted for the sacrifices to Baal, perpetrated at it by the Israelitish followers of the Phœnician gods, who there burned "their sons and daughters in the fire" (see 1 Kings xxiii. 10, and Jeremiah vii. 31). Hence the title of the place is commanded to be altered to the significant name of "the valley of Slaughter" (Jeremiah vii. 32, and xix. 5, 6).

<sup>2</sup> About 900 years before the commencement of the Christian era, we find, in 1 Kings xxvii. 26, that the priests of Baal "leaped upon the altar which they made," an expression which Pyle, Patrick, Gotch, and other commentators, hold as meaning in the original, they "danced about the altar." Professor Nilsson cites the opinion of Dr H. M. Melin to the same effect. Herodian, in his History (Lib. v. cap. 3, 5), states that, under Heliogabalus, the worshippers or priests of Baal danced around the altar of the sun-god, in the Phœnician manner, to the music of drums, cymbals, and other instruments.

<sup>3</sup> Sammlung für Nordische Alterthumsfrounde, vol. iii. p. 146.

Swedish tumulus at Willfara, and cut with rough representations upon it, like those at Kivik, of a two-wheeled chariot, drawn by a pair of horses, three boats, and about a dozen cup excavations. That these excavations were, however, of an older date than the objective figures is proved by one simple fact. A line forming the side of one of the ships traverses one of the cups, and cuts its way along the concavity or bottom of it, so far proving that the cup marking was older than the line marking. In digging into the barrow, from which apparently this stone had been taken at Wallfara, Professors Sjöborg and Nilsson found a very perfect flint knife and a small piece of bronze ornament.

The school of sculpture that carved these Kivik figures is one which we naturally surmise to be much more advanced than that simpler and more primitive school which was content with cutting only the rude lapidary rings and cups which form the subject of the present memoir; and whatever may be the age at which the Kivik sculptures were cut, the age of the lapidary circles and cups in Scandinavia and in Britain must, I believe, be allowed by all to be at least either still more remote and archaic in point of time, or carved by a ruder race.

Let me here add, that the search after cup and ring cuttings in our own country has been only recently begun; and in the course of a few years many more specimens of them will doubtlessly be discovered. But the search for them among the archaic remains of distant countries in Europe, and in other divisions of the Old and New World,<sup>1</sup> will probably bring to light many new facts, both as to the sculptures themselves, and as to the ethnological relations which possibly they may help to prove among different portions and localisations of the human race.

<sup>1</sup> I have heard of cup markings in Switzerland. Miss Paterson, of Leith, a keen and accurate observer, saw some markings on stones behind Smyrna, in Asia Minor. In the bed of a winter torrent at Bournabat, seven miles beyond Smyrna, she discovered a large boulder, with several concentric circles on it, similar to drawings of lapidary circles which she had seen in my possession before leaving Edinburgh.

PLATE XXXI.

FROM SWEDEN AND DENMARK.

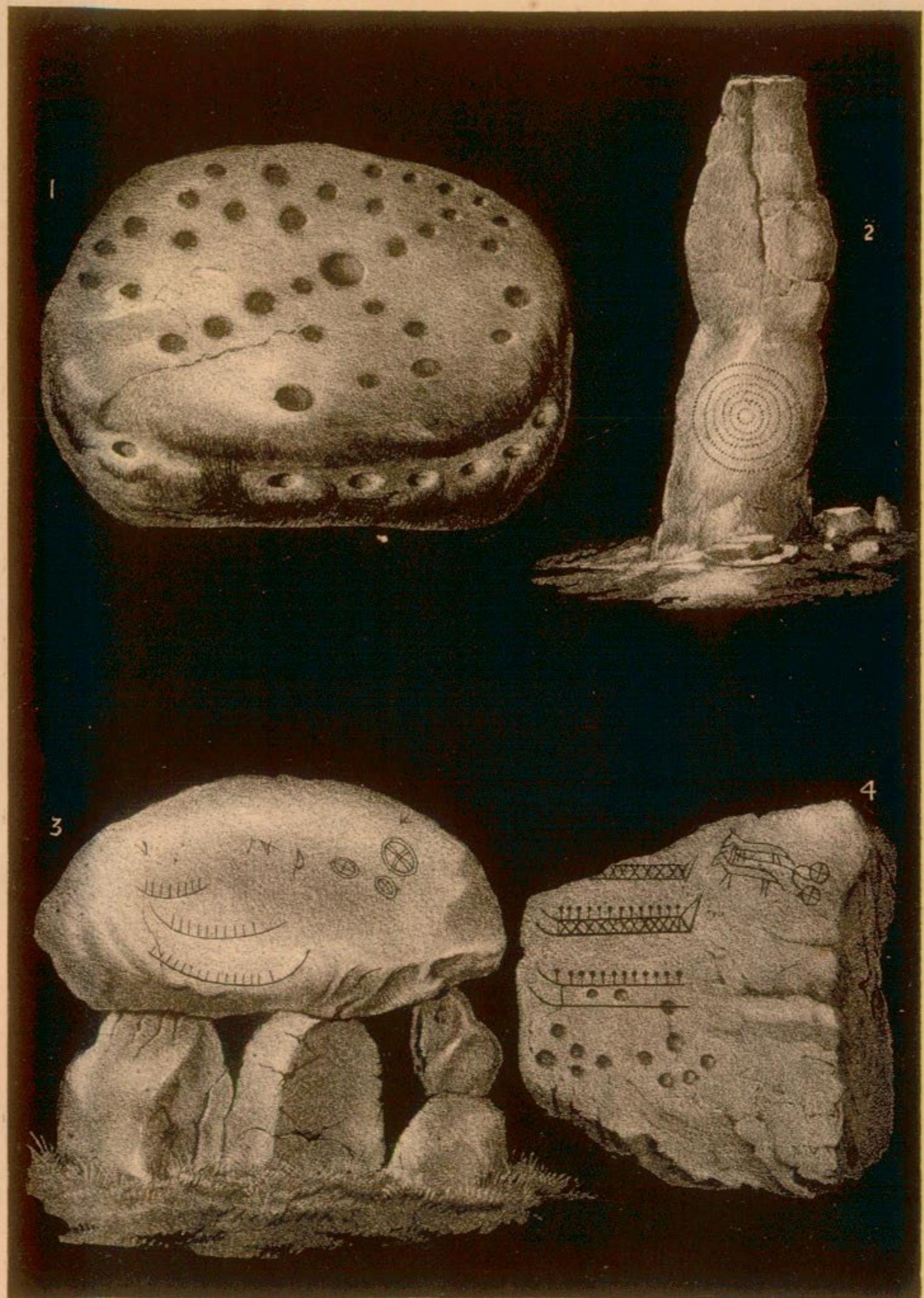


PLATE XXXII.

FROM KIVIK CAIRN, SWEDEN.

