

“Those stones, those objects,
give forth mysterious emanations
which seem to cause
the intervening centuries
to melt away.”

M. Pallottino, *The Meaning of Archaeology* (1968) 11.

The Kivik Petroglyphs

A Reassessment of Different Opinions

By Koen Verlaeckt¹

Ever since its fateful discovery by farmers, who were looking for building materials, the famous Kivik tomb² has been subject to a wild variety of often opposing and confusing theories. Almost 250 years later, time seems to be appropriate for a review³.

Situated on the south-eastern coast of Sweden, in the Skåne-district, the central stone cist of a since long known huge grave mound was discovered on June 14, 1748 (*Fig. 1*). Descriptions of an extended pillage, as documented during consequent legal proceedings, suggest that a very wealthy burial had been unearthed. The few bronze fragments preserved are most unlikely to tell us much more on the chronology; Marstrander⁴ illustrates some fragments of what could have been a dagger or sword pommel.

An unpublished archaeological investigation in 1931 by G. Hallström and J. Forsander put the original diameter of the grave mound at approximately 75 m, elevating it to the status of the most impressive in Scandinavian prehistory. On the same occasion the monument was reconstructed⁵, close to its original shape and size (*Fig. 2*).

The central cist, orientated north-south, consists of ten standing slabs and three heavy cap-stones. The two long sides are covered by a series of interesting petroglyphs, numbered from 1 to 4 in the east and 5 to 8 in the west⁶. Originally, the scenes were carved on the rocky surface; now they have been painted to offer the present visitors a more appealing view.

¹ Research Assistant National Fund for Scientific Research, Belgium; Vakgroep Archeologie en Oude Geschiedenis van Europa, University of Ghent. – The author wishes to thank Prof. Dr. Klavs Randsborg, Copenhagen University, for his useful remarks on this “tricky” subject. – The manuscript was finished in June 1991.

² The site is locally known as the Bredarör monument.

³ L. Grinsell, *The Kivik Cairn, Scania. Antiquity* 62, 1942, 160 sqq. still provides a usable description of the tomb. – For more detailed information on the find history, see C.-A. Althin, *Studien zu den bronzezeitlichen Felszeichnungen von Skåne* (1945) 62 sqq.; C.-A. Moberg, *Kiviksgraven – The Kivik Tomb – Das Grab von Kivik. Svenska Fornminnesplatser* 1 (1957); P. Glob, *The Mound People. Danish Bronze-Age Man Preserved* (1974) 108 sqq.

⁴ S. Marstrander, *Østfolds Jordbruksristninger. Inst. for sammenlignende Kulturforskning, Ser. B, 53* (1963) 329 sqq.

⁵ S. Curman, *Hur vår historia räddas. Fornvännen* 5, 1938, Fig. 3. The badly needed restoration was undertaken on the occasion of the 300th anniversary of the Swedish Royal Antiquary office and the 40.000 kroner paid for by the Gustaf Adolf-Fund; J.-P. Mohen, *The World of Megaliths* (1989) 275.

⁶ For conventional reasons, the numbers applied by Grinsell op.cit. (note 3) are used. However, there is no guarantee that they represent the original sequence of the slabs. Althin op.cit. (note 3) 62 sqq. fig. 25 suggests that at least some of the stones must have been moved. The big dimensions of slab 2 are also disturbing the idea of a perfect symmetric concept.

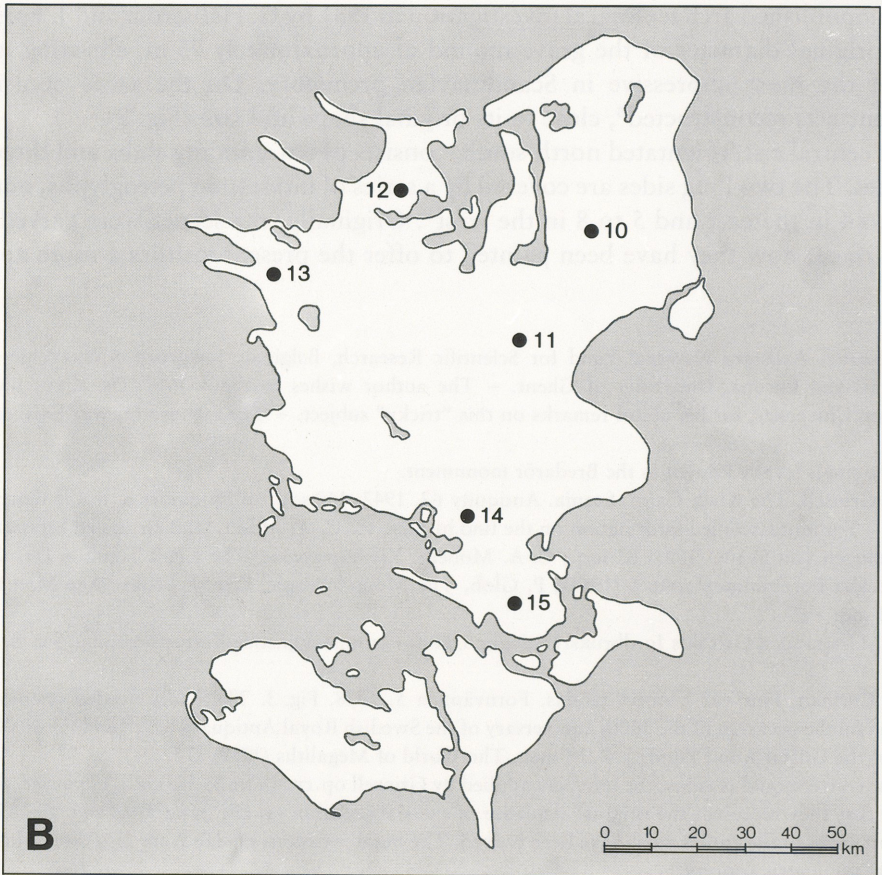
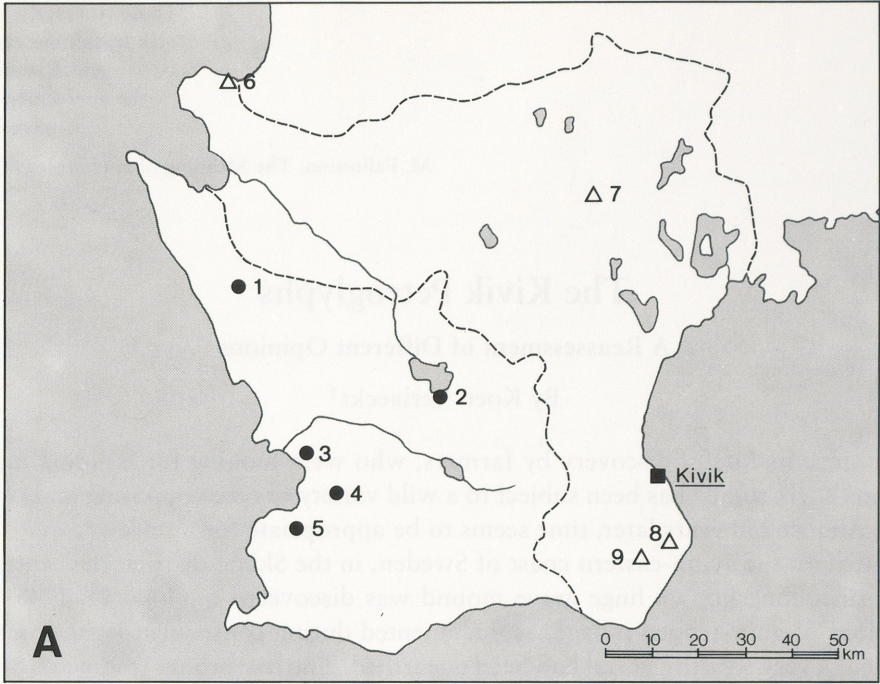




Fig. 1. A. Detail map of the Skåne-district in Sweden. Lur finds: 1. Påarp, 2. Fogdarp, 3. Borgeby, 4. Gullåkra, 5. Hindby; Other sites: 6. Båstad, 7. Frännarp, 8. Simris, 9. Villfara; B. Detail map of East-Denmark: 10. Veksø, 11. Viby, 12. Grevinge, 13. Rørby, 14. Grevensvaenge, 15. Skallerup. C. Other Scandinavian sites mentioned in the article: 16. Borum Eshøj, 17. Egtved, 18. Gallehus, 19. Stubberup, 20. Mjeltehaugen, 21. Berget, 22. Bohuslän rock-carving district (Sotorp, Fossum, Hoghem, Tossene), 23. Sagaholm, 24. Langkärra, 25. Klinta, 26. Ekenberg, 27. Eskilstuna, 28. Rickeby, 29. Håga.

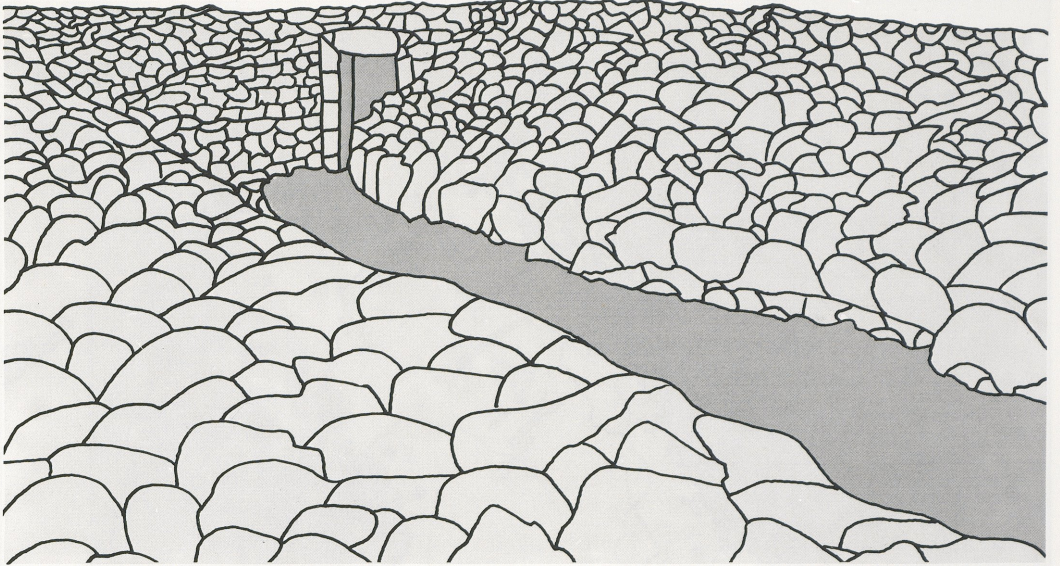


Fig. 2. The partially reconstructed Kivik cairn, with the entrance to the burial chamber. Redrawn after Mohen (note 5) 275.

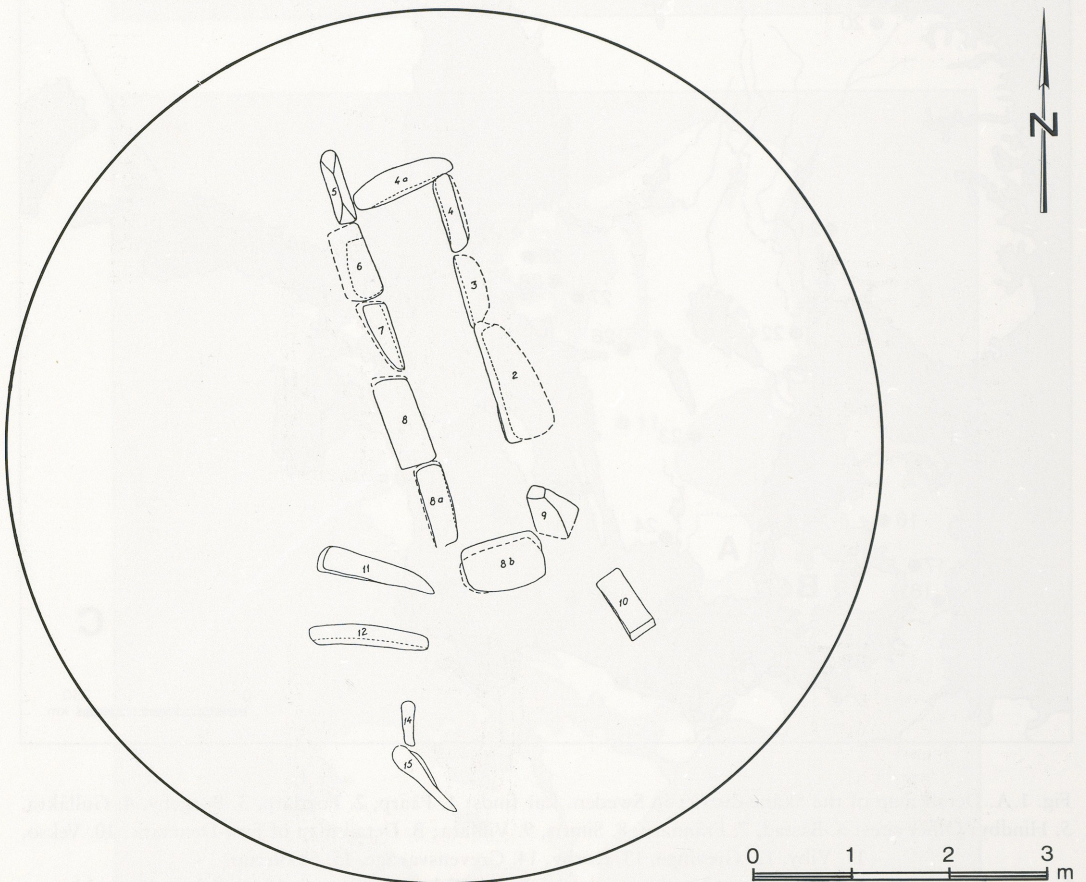


Fig. 3. The 1931 excavation plan of the main stone cist, containing the petroglyphs under discussion, suggests that at least some of the slabs are no longer in their original position. After Althin (note 3) fig. 25.

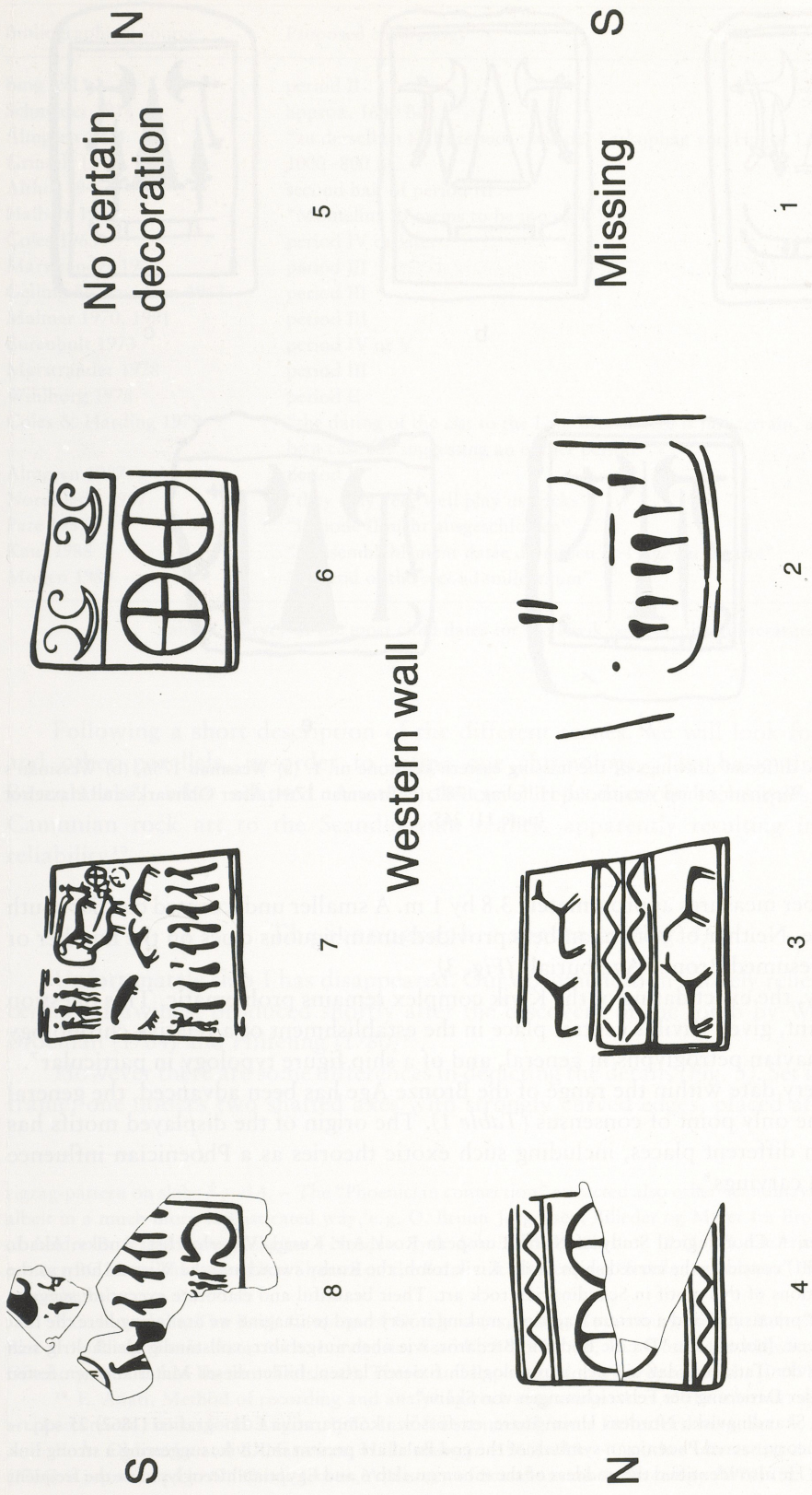


Fig. 4. Reconstructed position of the eight slabs, showing what is left of the original decoration. After Burenhult (1973) (note 9) 61. - M. 1:25.

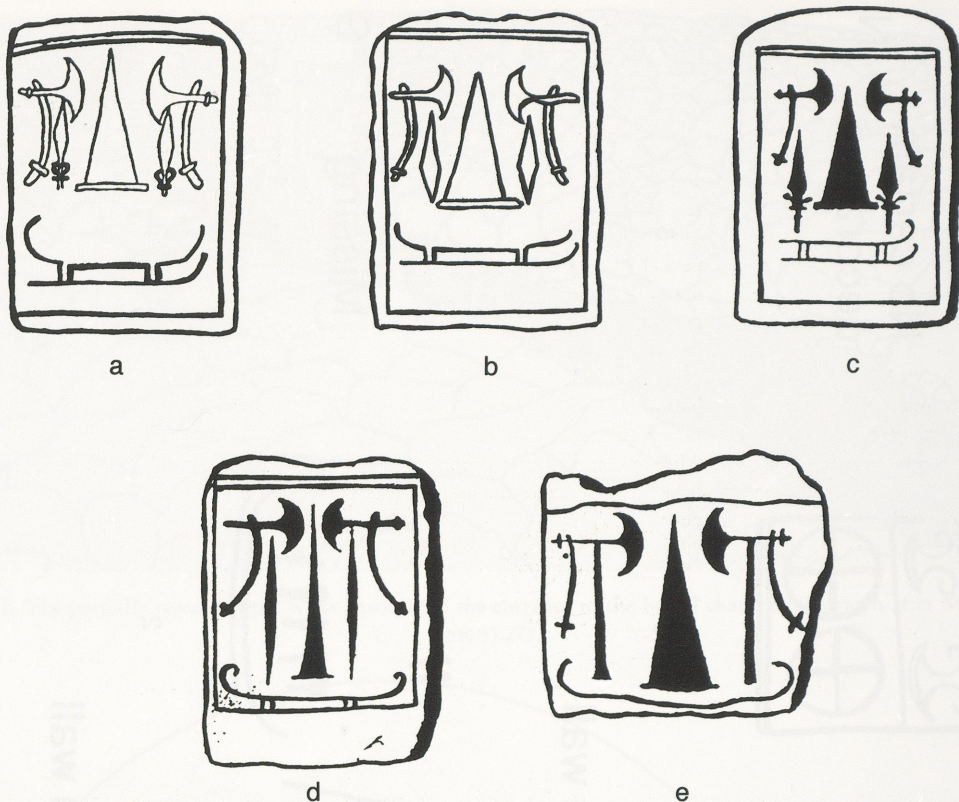


Fig. 5. Some of the different drawings of the missing eastern keystone nr. 1. (a) Wessman 1756, (b) Wessman's second version, (c) Wessman's third version, (d) Hilfeling 1780, (e) Brocman 1764. After Ohlmarks and Hasselrot (note 11) 245.

The chamber measures approximately 3.8 by 1 m. A smaller undecorated cist lies south of the main one. Neither of both chambers provided unambiguous clues on the number or character of presumed Bronze Age burials (Fig. 3).

Even today, the exact dating of the Kivik complex remains problematic. This question is very important, given Kivik's central place in the establishment of a relative chronology for the Scandinavian petroglyphs in general, and of a ship figure typology in particular⁷.

Almost every date within the range of the Bronze Age has been advanced, the general period being the only point of consensus (Table 1). The origin of the displayed motifs has been sought on different places, including such exotic theories as a Phoenician influence on the Swedish carvings⁸.

⁷ M. Malmer, *A Chorological Study of North European Rock Art*. Kungl. Vitterh. Hist. Antikv. Akad., Antikv. Ser. 32 (1981) considers the carved ships of the Kivik tomb, the Rörby sword and the Wismar horn as the earliest representations of this motif in Scandinavian rock art. Their beautiful and elaborate execution suggests a longer period of "practising" and a certain tradition, making it very hard to imagine we are facing here the first species; Althin op.cit. (note 3) 71: "Da die Bilder in Bredarör, wie oben ausgeführt, vollständig gleichartig sein müssen, und dank der Tatsache, daß sie sich chronologisch fixieren lassen, bildet dieses Material einen festen Anhaltspunkt bei der Datierung der Felszeichnungen von Skåne".

⁸ S. Nilsson, *Skandinaviska Nordens Ur-invånare, ett försök i komparativa Ethnografien* (1862) 25 sqq. – According to his theory, sacred Phoenician symbols of the god Ba'al are present in Kivik, suggesting a strong link with the solar cult. He also identified the goddess of the moon on slab 6 and Egyptian hieroglyphs in the frequent

Bibliographical source	Proposed chronology
Bing 1915	period II
Schneider 1918	approx. 1600 BC
Almgren 1934	“zu derselben Kulturepoche wie der Sarkophag von Hagia Triada”
Grinsell 1942	1000–800 BC
Althin 1945	second half of period III
Halbert 1955	“Montelius III seems to be too early”
Coles 1963	period IV or later
Marstrander 1963	period III
Gelling & Davidson 1963	period III
Malmer 1970, 1981	period III
Burenhult 1973	period IV or V
Marstrander 1978	period III
Wihlborg 1978	period II
Coles & Harding 1979	“the dating of the cist to the Late Bronze Age is not certain, and there may be a case for suggesting an earlier period”
Almgren 1987	period II
Nordbladh 1987	“they may very well play us tricks”
Pare 1987	“Periode II nicht ausgeschlossen”
Kaul 1988	“vraisemblablement datée du milieu de l’Age du Bronze”
Mohen 1989	“the end of the second millennium”

Table 1. Survey of the most cited dates for the Kivik petroglyphs in literature.

Following a short description of the different scenes, we will look for iconographic and other parallels, in order to refine our chronology. The basic drawing used is Burenhult’s⁹, who adapted Anati’s objective reproduction techniques designed for Camunian rock art to the Scandinavian reality, apparently resulting in an increased reliability¹⁰.

The iconographic spectrum (Fig. 4)

Unfortunately slab 1 has disappeared. Our documentation entirely relies on a few 18th century drawings, produced shortly after the discovery of the tomb by Wessman (1756), Brocman (1764) and Hilfeling (1780)¹¹.

However there are some differences in depicting the details (Fig. 5). Set in a rectangular frame, one notices two shafted axes with strongly curved edges, placed at each side of a

zigzag-pattern on slabs 3 and 4. – The “Phoenician connection” attracted also other Scandinavian archaeologists, albeit in a much more sophisticated way, e.g. O. Bruun Jørgensen, *Billeder og Myter fra Bronzealderen. Træk af Aeldre Bronzealderens Religion i Norden*. Jysk Ark. Selskabs Skrifter 19 (1987). He tries to link the 14th century BC historical texts of Ras Shamra on the Ba’al-cult with certain “fixed picture types” on the Scandinavian petroglyphs.

⁹ G. Burenhult, *The Rock Carvings of Götaland (excluding Gothenburg county, Bohuslän and Dalsland). Part II – Illustrations*. Acta Arch. Lundensia, Ser. 4^o, 8 (1973) 61; Id., *Götalands hällristningar del I (utom Göteborgs och Bohus län samt Dalsland)*. Theses and Papers in North European Arch. 10 (1980).

¹⁰ E. Anati, *Method of recording and analysing rock engravings*. Acts of the internat. symposium on rock art. Lectures at Hankø 6–12 August, 1972. Inst. for sammenlignende kulturforskning, Ser. A, 29 (1978) 145 sqq.

¹¹ Å. Ohlmarks and P. Hasselrot, *Hällristningar* (1966) 245. – Another interesting drawing by E. Feldt (1756) is reproduced in O. Klindt-Jensen, *A History of Scandinavian Archaeology* (1975) fig. 32.

central pyramid-like structure. Two other objects of rhombic design stand between axe and pyramid. Wessman interpreted them as spearheads, while Brocman sees them as a pole for the axes. Hilfeling's reproduction seems to be the most objective. At the bottom row a sledge or ship-like figure is portrayed, the outline of which differs on the different drawings.

A heavily weathered slab 2 shows us in the lower part of a framed scene the faint traces of a simple ship, probably with double prow and inward bent gunwales, manned by a six member crew.

Four horses are the main subject of slab 3. The upper two are running north-south, the lower two face each other. Both scenes are separated by a double zigzag-motif.

The zigzag is repeated on slab 4. A symmetric scene features two identical wheelcrosses. Although the original picture is severely damaged, it could be reconstructed without any problem thanks to the 18th century drawings.

Slab 5 is completely weathered and has consequently been described as undecorated¹². Nevertheless, other illustrations indicate parts of a – rectangular? – frame¹³. Considering the symmetric structure of the cist, it seems highly unlikely that the slab in question was really undecorated.

The motifs on slab 6 are very simple: above one notices two crescent moon-like figures with outward bent spirals, underneath the wheelcross-motif from stone 4 is repeated. A rectangle frames the whole scene.

Slabs 7 and 8 are unique, because of their dynamic way of expression and their variety of human, animal and other figures. In the upper left corner of slab 7 a small group of four people, probably men, march in front of a light two-wheeled chariot. Three of them seem to carry weapons, but their arms are not displayed. The driver of the horse-drawn chariot holds the bridles rather tightly¹⁴.

At the bottom a gesticulating (dancing?) man heads a "procession" of eight disguised women. Grinsell and others explained the sharp outlines of the head as bird-masks¹⁵. In the middle a big fish, a small unidentifiable animal (dog?) and two taller ones are depicted. Their rather static attitude might suggest that they have been slaughtered. Both have generally been described as horses, but recent copies indicate little horns for the rightmost animal¹⁶.

Slab 8 is very close to its neighbour in repeating the same dynamic style and a certain number of figures. Only few fragments from the original stone do survive, but enough to enable a satisfying reconstruction (*Fig. 15, b*).

A bizarre scene fills the upper left corner: a woman holds or touches a half-open circle, from which a vertical pole protrudes. Since the stone is considerably damaged, we cannot know if a complete circle was meant or not. Two men stand inside, manipulating two circular objects, hanging from the pole. To the right we see two horn-players and an accompanying man, who holds a rectangular object. In the central scene we re-find our disguised women, grouping around a cauldron or an altar. Their total number, eight or

¹² Grinsell *op. cit.* (note 3) 166.

¹³ Ohlmarks and Hasselrot *op. cit.* (note 11) 246.

¹⁴ W. Messerschmidt, *Der ägäische Streitwagen und seine Beziehungen zum Nordeurasisch-vorderasiatischen Raum. Acta Praehist. et Arch.* 20, 1988, 38: this should be the only known representation of a chariot with highly curved pole in Scandinavia.

¹⁵ Grinsell *op. cit.* (note 3) 170; A. Oldeberg, *Die ältere Metallzeit in Schweden II* (1976) 33 sqq.; D. Evers, *Fugl og fuglemenneska på helleristninger. Adoranten* 1990, fig. 13.

¹⁶ Burenhult *op. cit.* (1973) (note 9) 61; F. Kaul, *Les gravures rupestres nordiques. Avant les Celtes. L'Europe à l'âge du bronze 2500 – 800 avant J-C* (1988) 129.

nine, is debatable¹⁷. The bottom row depicts twice a nearly similar scene: a group of four men stands in front of an omega-shaped structure. Three men are armless, the fourth holds a kind of stick or weapon.

Looking for parallels

Neither the type of the Kivik cist nor the size of its mound can be used in a chronological appreciation of the petroglyphs. Although the cairn-type is generally believed to have prevailed in Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age Scandinavia¹⁸, there are some exceptions. The famous Håga-burial in the Swedish district of Uppsala dates from Late Bronze Age period IV. Under a huge mound, approximately 50 m in diameter, a wooden chamber was found, containing a 2.5 m long oak coffin, the traditional inhumation trend during the Early Bronze Age. In this coffin an extraordinary rich cremation burial was placed, proving the coexistence of old traditions and new concepts¹⁹.

Chronologically even later, the Hinzerberg near Kreuzburg (district Brandenburg) contained a rich male cremation grave from period V. The impressive nonagonal burial chamber reminds of the Mediterranean tholos-tombs. Painted plaster fragments probably adorned the walls²⁰.

Fortunately, all known 18th century drawings of slab 1 are unanimous in their presentation of the curved axes. So our information is reasonably reliable (*Fig. 5*). Although we cannot tell the exact axe-type (palstave, socketed or flanged) for sure, the strongly bent edges suffice to find iconographic and archaeological parallels, an important task since Althin considered them as the only chronological criterium for the Kivik-tomb.

The so-called ceremonial axes of Eskilstuna (also called Skogstorp in literature), discovered during peat-digging in 1864 in the Swedish province of Södermannland, are perfect real-size counterparts (*Fig. 6, d*). Oldeberg²¹ dates them in the transition period between the Early and the Late Bronze Age. We do not agree on such an early date. In our view, they fit perfectly in a clear evolution from Oldeberg's heavy type C "ceremonial" axes of the Early Bronze Age towards the light-weight axes with extremely curved edges from the Late Bronze Age (*Fig. 6*). Examples of the latter type are also known from Brondsted Skov, Jutland, and northern Sealand (Denmark)²² and the Swedish site of Galstad (*Fig. 6, e*), where they could be assigned to period V/VI based upon five associated neck-rings of the "Wendel"-type. They are also represented on the Late Bronze Age razor

¹⁷ Grinsell op. cit. (note 3) 168 (eight figures) is in contradiction with fig. 4 in the same article (nine figures).

¹⁸ M. Stenberger, *Vorgeschichte Schwedens*. Nordische Vorzeit 4 (1977) 170 sqq.

¹⁹ O. Almgren, "Kung Björns Hög" och andra fornlämningar vid Håga (1905) – The mound is named after a 9th century AD Swedish king, mentioned in the *Hervarar-saga*. The site was excavated in the autumn of 1902 at the request of Prince Gustav Adolf, who was very interested in archaeology. The burial contained a sword, four studs, a fibula, two razors, two tweezers, spiral-twisted pieces and pottery sherds, the majority being decorated with sheets of gold.

²⁰ A. Kiekebusch, *Das Königsgrab von Seddin*. Führer Urgesch. 1 (1928). – The mound was approx. 11 m high and surrounded by a stone circle. After being used for some years as a stone quarry, which suggests the existence of a huge cairn, workers came upon the burial chamber in september 1899. Five days later, a thorough archaeological investigation was conducted, yielding lots of bronze items, pottery and two iron needles. – See also note 123.

²¹ A. Oldeberg, *Die ältere Metallzeit in Schweden I* (1974) fig. 2729a.

²² J. Jensen, Votive axe. *Journal Danish Arch.* 1, 1982, 171 sqq.; id., *Kultøkser fra bronzalderen*. Fra Nationalmus. Arbejdsmark 1978, fig. 10.

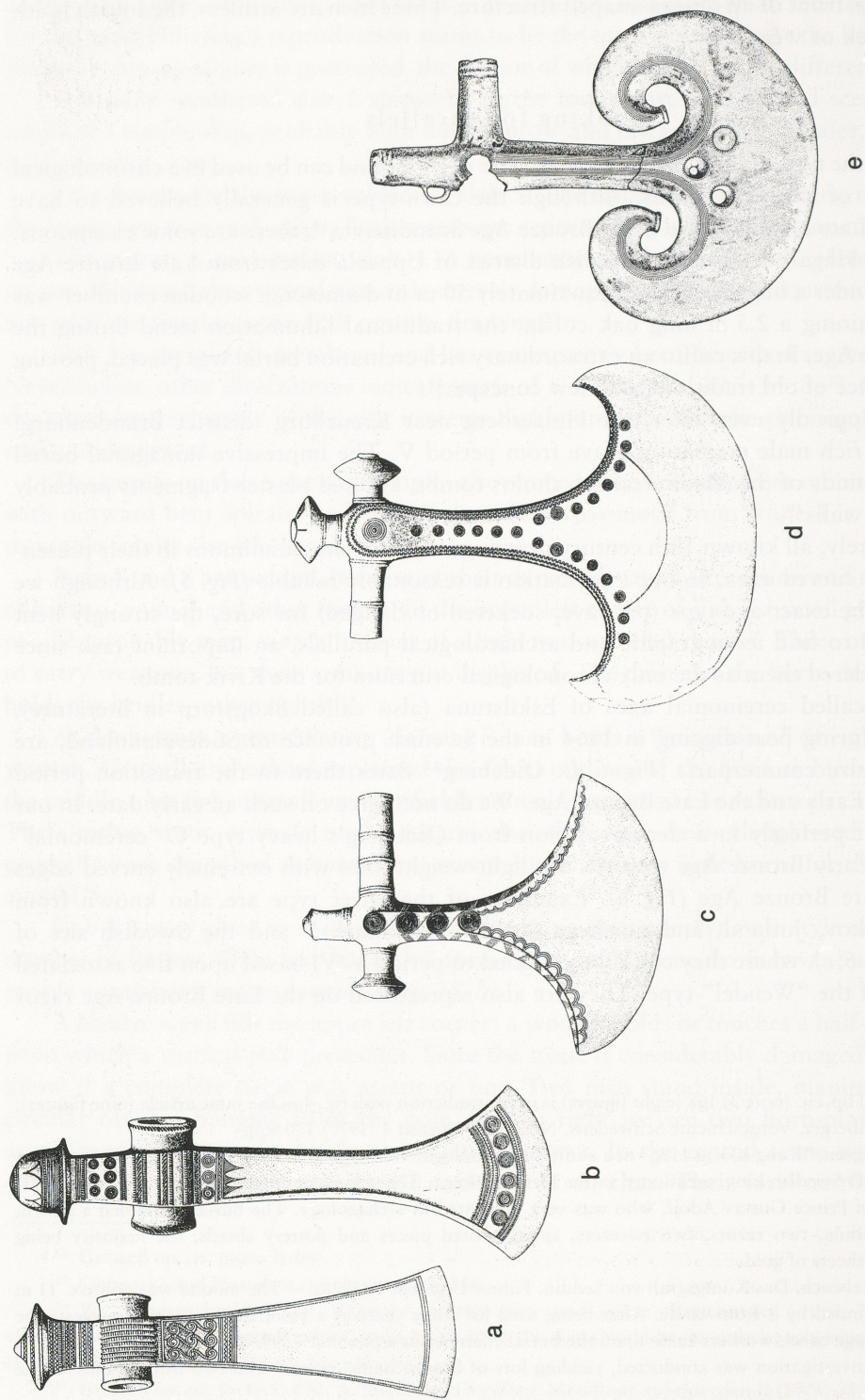


Fig. 6. "Ceremonial" axes of the Swedish Bronze Age: a. Arby (27 cm), b. Sloinge (32.4 cm), c. Båstad (30 cm), d. Eskilstuna (38.5 cm), e. Galstad (36 cm). Presumed typological evolution from the heavy Early Bronze Age type 1 (a, b) via (c) to the Late Bronze Age type 2 axes with extremely curved edges (d, e). After Müller-Karpe (note 42) nrs. 526.B, 526.A, 524.6, 524.5; Stenberger, *Det forntida Sverige* (1979) fig. 133.

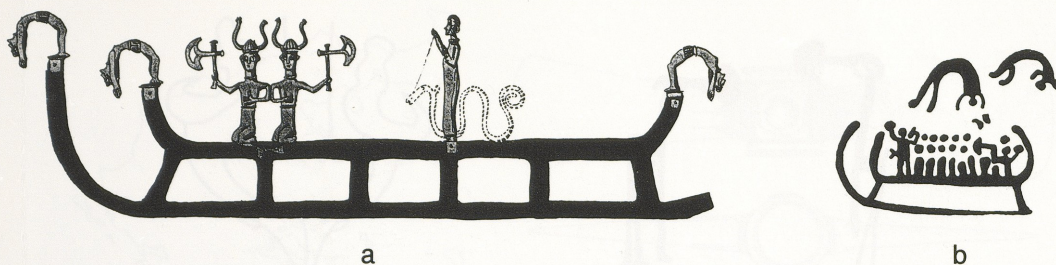


Fig. 7. a. Hypothetical reconstruction of the Grevensvaenge figures on a wooden boat-model. After Glob (note 31) fig. 6. – Height of the axe-bearer: 10.5 cm; b. Rock-carving from Sotorp, Bohuslän. After Gelling and Davidson (note 51) fig. 20. b.

from Äpplerum²³ and on other bronze items²⁴. Therefore, we prefer to refine and adapt Oldeberg's typology by splitting his – at first sight – homogeneous type C in an Early Bronze Age subtype 1 and a Late Bronze Age subtype 2. The Båstad axe²⁵ (Fig. 6, c) bridges the gap between the two types.

The sharp decrease in weight – an early axe from Viby weighs 5.230 kg, the late Sealand one only 200 g – is the result of an important technical change. The new preference for the lost-wax method might have been caused by an outspoken wish to continue the axe-cult of the Early Bronze Age, notwithstanding a sharp decrease in metal imports from period IV onwards, as shown by Kristiansen²⁶. This necessity of keeping old traditions alive at all cost may be reflected in a remarkable “ceremonial” continuity, observed by, among others, Jensen²⁷.

A dating of the Eskilstuna axes, and thus the Kivik petroglyphs, in Late Bronze Age period IV or V seems fairly reasonable, especially against the background of some outspoken iconographic parallels.

The famous twin figures of Grevensvaenge are an important source (Fig. 7, a). Parts of them are missing, but 18th century drawings by the priest Marcus Schnabel inform us on their original shape²⁸. The symmetric men wear a horned helmet and held a now disappeared curved axe of the type in question. The helmets have their exact, but real-size counterparts in the Danish Veksø-fund²⁹, which contained two specimens featuring parts of the human face like round eyes and a hook-shaped nose.

Also comparable is the hoard find from Fogdarp in Sweden³⁰. Incised on the head of two small human figures, parts of a tube-based decoration for horses, is the image of an axe (Fig. 8, b). And if this were not enough, one spots on the small heads also horns identical to those of Veksø, Grevinge and Grevensvaenge. Besides, the Fogdarp hoard

²³ M. Malmer, *Bronsristningar. Kuml 1970*, 189 fig. 3.

²⁴ E. Sprockhoff, *Nordische Bronzezeit und frühes Griechentum. Jahrb. RGZM 1*, 1954, fig. 26 a. 4.

²⁵ Oldeberg op. cit. (note 21) nr. 107. – The axe was found in a bog, and is kept nowadays in the National Museum in Copenhagen (inv. nr. B5485).

²⁶ K. Kristiansen, *Ideologie und Gesellschaft während der Bronzezeit in Südsandinavien. Veröffentl. Mus. Ur- u. Frühgesch. Potsdam 20*, 1986, fig. 4.

²⁷ Jensen op. cit. (1978) (note 22) 17 sqq.

²⁸ R. Djupedal and H. Broholm, *Marcus Schnabel og bronzealderfundet fra Grevensvaenge. Aarbøger 1952*, 5 sqq. fig. 1.

²⁹ H. Norling-Christensen, *Bronzealderhjaelmene fra Viksø. Fra Nationalmus. Arbejdsmark 1943*, 5 sqq.; id., *The Viksø Helmets. A Bronze Age Votive Find from Zealand. Acta Arch.*, 17, 1946, 99 sqq. – A second pair of similar horns, unfortunately without helmet, was discovered in Grevinge parish, Holbaek Amt.

³⁰ L. Larsson, *The Fogdarp Find. A Hoard from the Late Bronze Age. Meddel. Lund 1974*, 169 sqq.

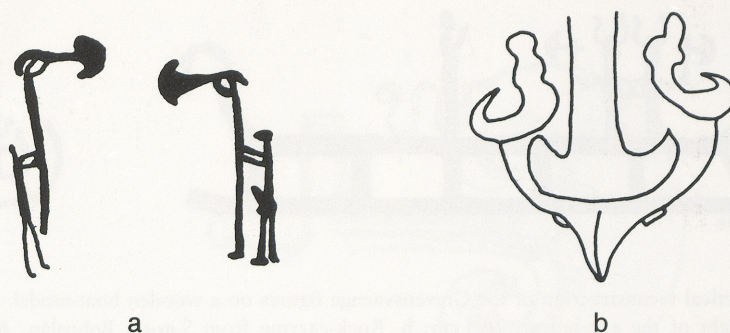


Fig. 8. a. Human figures carrying oversized “ceremonial” axes from the Simris-27 (left) and Simris-19 (right) petroglyph-areas. After Burenhult (1973) (note 9) 45; 51; b. The axe-motif on the head of one of the Fogdarp-figures, seen from above. Redrawn after Larsson (note 30) fig. 7, d.

contained fragments of two lur-instruments and other metal items, which date it in period V, providing at the same time a chronology for the other sites.

In addition, we mention similar axe forms on the Vestrup razor, used by Glob³¹ for his hypothetical reconstruction of the Grevensvaenge figures on a boat-model, and on the petroglyphs from Sotorp in Bohuslän and Simris-19 in Skåne.

Sotorp shows an acrobat, performing a salto above a ship, manned by one axe-bearer and several crew members³², which on its turn strengthens the link with the three acrobats from the Grevensvaenge find, suggesting that horned men, curved axes and acrobats belong to one and the same cultural complex (*Fig. 7, b*). This observation casts some doubts on Bertil Almgren’s new method of dating the Scandinavian petroglyphs, which is solely based on an analysis of the curvature in the drawing style. He dates the Sotorp scene in period III, while an almost similar one on the same rock surface is placed in period IV³³.

Some axes of the Simris-19 field (*Fig. 8, a*) probably belong also to the Kivik-type³⁴. Almgren identified them quite confidently as period I flanged axes of the Lilla Bedinge- and Pile-type, a remarkable statement since flanged axes generally are not considered to be of purely ceremonial value³⁵. At first sight, the often represented axe-bearers from Simris-27³⁶ also seem to carry Kivik-like weapons (*Fig. 8, a*). But a closer and more objective inspection³⁷ raises some doubts.

A second contested item on slab 1 is the centrally placed pyramid-like object. Different authors advanced almost as much theories, pretending to recognize the basis for a tiara, a throne for the gods³⁸, a pyramid symbolizing death and eternal life³⁹, a ritual drinking-

³¹ P. Glob, *Kultbåde fra Danmarks Bronzealder*. Kuml 1961, 9 sqq.

³² B. Almgren, *Die Datierung bronzezeitlicher Felszeichnungen in Westschweden*. Acta Mus. Antiqu. septentrionalium regiae Univ. Upsaliensis 6 (1983) fig. 157.

³³ Ibid. fig. 157–158.

³⁴ Burenhult op. cit. (1973) 47; H. Jankuhn, *Axtkult. Reallexikon Germ. Altkd.* 1 (1973) 562 sqq.

³⁵ K.-H. Willroth, *Die Hortfunde der älteren Bronzezeit in Südschweden und auf den dänischen Inseln*. Offa-Bücher 55 (1985) 235.

³⁶ O. Almgren, *Nordische Felszeichnungen als religiöse Urkunden* (1934) fig. 89.

³⁷ Burenhult op. cit. (1973) (note 9) 51.

³⁸ C. Schuchhardt, *Stonehenge. Prähist. Zeitschr.* 1910, 333.

³⁹ H. Schneider, *Die Felszeichnungen von Bohuslän, das Grab von Kivik, die Goldhörner von Gallehus und der Silberkessel von Gundestrup als Denkmäler der vorgeschichtlichen Sonnenreligion. Ein Deutungsversuch*. Veröffentl. Provinzialmus. Halle 1, 2 (1918).

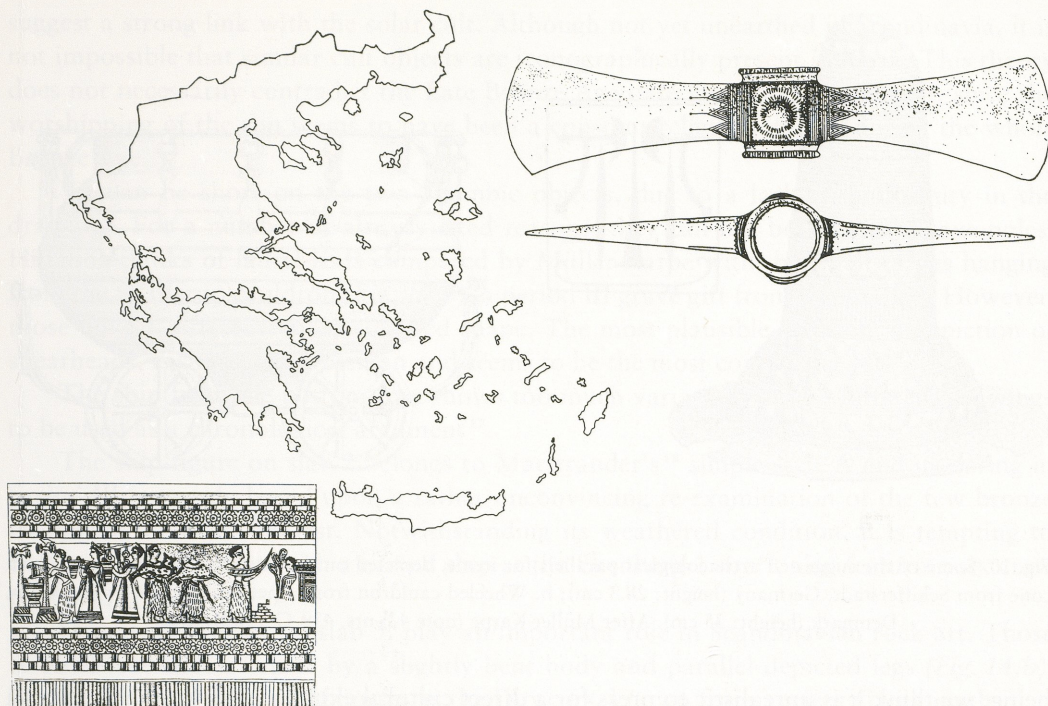


Fig. 9. The Minoan Bronze Age civilization has been regarded as a radiating influence centre for contemporary Scandinavia, as “reflected” in the relation between Kivik and Hagia Triada (left) and the double axe, found in Langkärra, Sweden (right; 23.9 cm). After Müller-Karpe (note 42) nr. 207. 1; Oldeberg (note 21) nr. 1512.

vessel, a mitre, the crowning of a wooden pole⁴⁰, an axe-standard, an imitation of Phoenician hair-dress⁴¹, a solar cone, the symbolic representation for fire⁴², and even the axis of the world⁴³.

An identification as axe-standard is the most common, based upon a comparison with the decorated sarcophagus from Hagia Triada on Crete, generally dated around 1450 BC⁴⁴ and showing a double axe on top of a similar pyramid. Those standards are known from archaeological sites like Gournia⁴⁵. Oscar Almgren was one of the first to point out some possible connections between the Kivik and Hagia Triada iconography (Fig. 9)⁴⁶. Together with the Kivik petroglyphs, the Minoan paintings are said to be the main iconographic sources for European Bronze Age funerary rites⁴⁷.

The proposed interpretation is not very convincing, given the depiction of shafts, attached to the axes and thus removing the need for a standard. Brocman’s drawing even transformed the rhombic objects alongside the pyramid into supporting poles. For the time

⁴⁰ G. Raschke, *Ein Goldfund der Bronzezeit von Etzelsdorf-Buch bei Nürnberg*. *Germania* 32, 1954, 1 sqq.

⁴¹ J. Briard, *L’âge du bronze en Europe (2000–800 av. J.-C.)* (1985).

⁴² H. Müller-Karpe, *Handbuch der Vorgeschichte IV. Bronzezeit* (1980) 700.

⁴³ J. Briard, *Mythes et symboles de l’Europe préceltique. Les religions de l’âge du bronze (2500–800 av. J. C.)* (1987) 69 sqq.

⁴⁴ J. Sakellarakis, *Heraklion Museum. Illustrated Guide to the Museum* (1985) 113 sqq.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 82.

⁴⁶ Almgren *op.cit.* (note 36) 176 sqq. – Grinsell *op.cit.* (note 3) lists the similarities and differences between the Kivik and Hagia Triada iconography.

⁴⁷ J. Coles and A. Harding, *The Bronze Age in Europe. An Introduction to the Prehistory of Europe c. 2000–700 BC* (1979) 520.

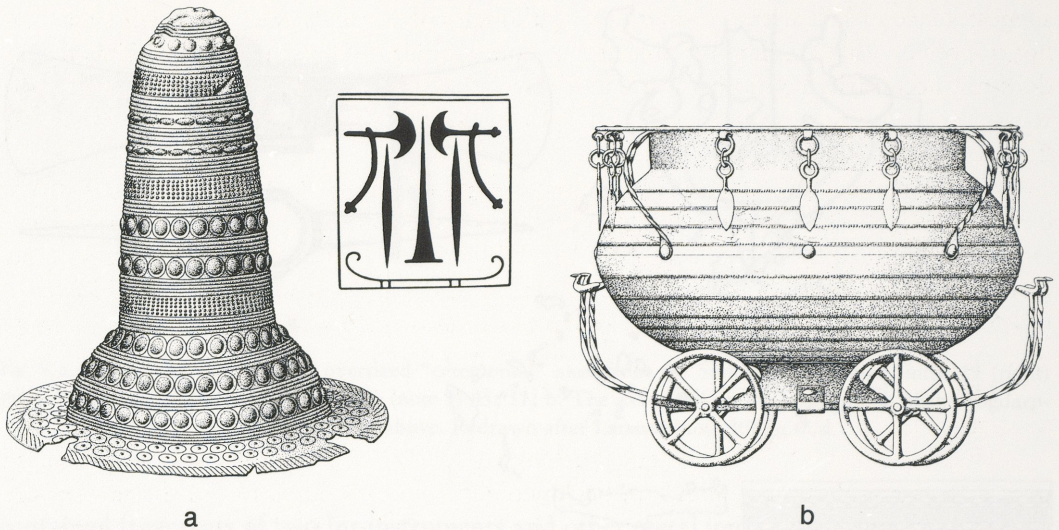


Fig. 10. Some of the suggested archaeological parallels for items, depicted on the missing slab nr. 1: a. Golden cone from Schifferstadt, Germany (height: 28.3 cm); b. Wheeled cauldron from a period III-grave in Skallerup, Denmark (height: 35 cm). After Müller-Karpe (note 42) nrs. 439. C.3; 521. C.5.

being, we think it is unrealistic to press for a direct cultural exchange between the Aegean and Scandinavian Bronze Age spheres⁴⁸. The only piece with southern associations found on Swedish territory is the double axe of Långkärra (Fig. 9), not so far from Kivik⁴⁹. Another so-called proof for contacts between north and south is the rock carving from Rickeby⁵⁰, interpreted by some as a Minoan “horn of consecration”⁵¹, by others as a real scale reproduction of clothes, offered to the axe-god⁵². The scarcity of direct imports is probably no coincidence, observing the same situation in nearby Denmark⁵³.

According to the most appealing hypothesis, the pyramid is a solar cone⁵⁴. Archaeological finds testify of their existence; three pieces, made in hammered gold sheet, have been found in Avanton (France), Schifferstadt and Eitzelsdorf (Germany)⁵⁵ and are dated to the Middle Bronze Age (Fig. 10, a). The metal used and the decoration with circular motifs

⁴⁸ A. Harding, *The Mycenaeans and Europe* (1984) 262.

⁴⁹ Oldeberg op.cit. (note 21) nr. 1512; H. Buchholz, *Die Doppelaxt – eine Leitform auswärtiger Beziehungen des ägäischen Kulturkreises?* *Prähist. Zeitschr.* 38, 1960, 39 sqq.; H. Thrane, *The Mycenaean Fascination: A Northerner's View. Orientalisch-ägäische Einflüsse in der Europäischen Bronzezeit. Ergebnisse eines Kolloquiums.* *Monogr. RGZM* 15 (1990) 165 sqq.; P. Schauer, *Spuren orientalischen und ägäischen Einflusses im bronzzeitlichen Nordischen Kreis.* *Ibid.* 160 sqq. – The axe is generally dated in period II and probably produced in the Scandinavian area, imitating East-European pieces from the Black Sea area. Double axes also occur as small amulets in a Danish grave at Kirke Vaerløse. However, it should not a priori be taken for granted that the double axe concept had the same meaning in Scandinavia as in the Mediterranean; see H. Müller-Karpe, *Bronzezeitliche Heilszeichen.* *Jahresber. Inst. Vorgesch. Univ. Frankfurt* 1978–79, 22 sqq.

⁵⁰ E. Kjellen and Å. Hyenstrand, *Upplands hällristningar. The Rock Carvings of Uppland, Sweden* (1976) fig. 59.

⁵¹ P. Gelling and H. Ellis Davidson, *The Chariot of the Sun and other Rites and Symbols of the Northern Bronze Age* (1969) 103.

⁵² B. Almgren, *Hällristningar och bronsåldersdräkt.* *Tor* 6, 1960, 19 sqq.; Malmer op.cit. (note 7) 54 sqq.

⁵³ K. Randsborg, “Aegean” bronzes in a grave from Jutland. *Acta Arch.* 38, 1967, 1 sqq.

⁵⁴ Müller-Karpe op.cit. (note 42) 700; Raschke op.cit. (note 40); Willroth op.cit. (note 35) 233.

⁵⁵ Müller-Karpe op.cit. (note 42) nrs. 412. A; 439. c3; 472. 11; P. Schauer, *Die Goldblechkegel der Bronzezeit. Ein Beitrag zur Kulturverbindung zwischen Orient und Mitteleuropa.* *Monogr. RGZM* 8 (1986).

suggest a strong link with the solar cult. Although not yet unearthed in Scandinavia, it is not impossible that similar cult objects are iconographically present in Kivik. This theory does not necessarily contradict the Late Bronze Age date we propose for Kivik, since the worshipping of the sun seems to have been a constant religious dogma during the whole Bronze Age.

We can be short on the two rhombic objects, due to a lack of uniformity in the drawings. For a number of already cited reasons, they can not be Brocman's axe-poles. Hilfeling thinks of laurel-leaves compared by Müller-Karpe with the small rattles hanging from the Skallerup cauldron (*Fig. 10, b*), a period III grave gift from Denmark⁵⁶. However, those have a different, more rounded shape. The most plausible solution, a depiction of spearheads, is shown by Wessman and seems to be the most convincing yet.

The ship from the bottom row shows too much variations on the different drawings to be used as a chronological argument⁵⁷.

The ship-figure on slab 2 belongs to Marstrander's⁵⁸ simple style A and its dating in period III is mainly based upon a rather unconvincing re-examination of the few bronze fragments found in the cist. Notwithstanding its weathered condition, it is tempting to compare the depiction with a carved ship at the Ekenberg-1 site⁵⁹, also featuring six crew members (*Fig. 13*).

Horses, dominant on slab 3, play an important role in Scandinavian rock art. Those at Kivik are characterized by a slightly bent body and parallel depicted legs (*Fig. 14, b*). Bing⁶⁰ identified the pair of horses as the Dioscurs, known from ancient Greek myths.

The wheel-cross from slab 4 is traditionally seen as a pan-European symbol for the sun⁶¹. In second instance, it could be a wheel, as represented on stone 7. Sprockhoff puts the emergence of this symbol in period IV⁶², most unlikely given its decorative presence on the "ceremonial" bog-found drum from Balkåkra⁶³.

Slab 5 of course is useless for the interpretation. The wheel-cross is twice repeated on the bottom row of slab 6. Above it stands an enigmatic symbol. Schneider⁶⁴ called it a combination of bull and moon-motifs; others thought of a double-edged axe⁶⁵. In 1983 an almost identical figure was found on a rock carving at Tossene (*Fig. 11*), accompanied by a wheel-cross, a cup-mark and two humans⁶⁶.

⁵⁶ E. Aner and K. Kersten, Holback, Sorø and Praestø Amter. Die Funde der älteren Bronzezeit des nordischen Kreises in Dänemark, Schleswig-Holstein und Niedersachsen 2 (1976) nr. 1269 pl. 142.

⁵⁷ L. Grinsell, The Boat of the Dead in the Bronze Age. *Antiquity* 15, 1941, 368 sqq.: "... a carving of what may be a boat but is probably a sledge".

⁵⁸ Marstrander op. cit. (note 4) 329 sqq.; Burenhult op. cit. (1980) (note 9) 56, type 4/1.

⁵⁹ Burenhult op. cit. (1973) (note 9) 138 squares B3, B4.

⁶⁰ J. Bing, Das Kivikdenkmal. *Mannus* 7, 1915, 61 sqq.

⁶¹ E. Fett and P. Fett, Relations West-Norway – Western Europe Documented in Petroglyphs. *Norwegian Arch. Review* 12, 1979, 67 sqq.; E. Anati, La civilisation du Val Camonica. *Mondes Anciens* 4 (1960); Gelling and Davidson op. cit. (note 51).

⁶² Sprockhoff op. cit. (note 24).

⁶³ O. Montelius, Minnen från vår Forntid (1917) nr. 847; Oldeberg op. cit. (note 21) nr. 14; B. Nerman, Vartill har Balkåkrakrapjäsen använts? *Fornvännen* 1937, 193 sqq. – This remarkable object from the early period I was first interpreted as the bottom of a ritual container, subsequently as the decoration of an altar and now as a drum, the last view being substantiated by the perforations, intended to hang the instrument.

⁶⁴ Op. cit. (note 39).

⁶⁵ U. Bertilsson, The Rock Carvings of Northern Bohuslän. *Spatial Structures and Social Symbols* (1987) 80; Burenhult op. cit. (1980) (note 9) 73 type 1/8.

⁶⁶ U. Bertilsson, Nyregistrering av hållbilder i Bohuslän 1982–83. *Arkeologi i Sverige* 1982–83 (1983) 213.

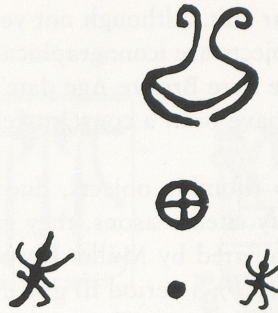


Fig. 11. Detail of a rock carving in Tossene, Bohuslän, which might be compared with the upper motifs on slab 6. After Bertilsson (note 65) fig. 52,5.

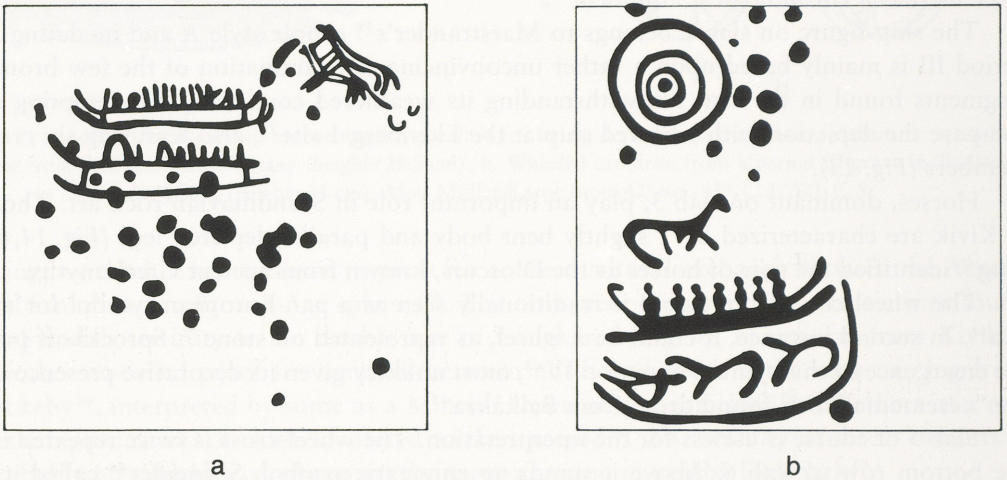


Fig. 12. Swedish petroglyphs from burial contexts: the Villfara (a) and the Klinta stone (b). After Burenhult (1973) (note 9) 66. – M. 1:25.

None of these theories is very attractive. By our knowledge the moon occurs nowhere else in Scandinavian rock art; nor do we know any other depiction of a double-edged axe. A more plausible explanation is to see it as a stylized ship with double prow and outward bent gunwales. The combination of absolute symmetry and a double prow suggests a Central-European influence, as might be observed on the Late Bronze Age razors from Fanefjord, Håstrup or Boitzen⁶⁷. One can also mention the symmetric ship-figures on the island of Bornholm⁶⁸.

The two-wheeled chariot from slab 7, by different authors dubbed as a Mycenaean type, is a focal point of interest⁶⁹. It has been compared with a rock carving from Valcamonica⁷⁰ and the famous chariot scene from Frännarp in Sweden, dated by Messerschmidt⁷¹ in the 16th century BC. However, there is one important stylistic differ-

⁶⁷ Sprockhoff *op.cit.* (note 24) fig. 20.1; 20.2; 23.17.

⁶⁸ F. Rieck and O. Crumlin-Pedersen, *Både fra Danmarks Oldtid* (1988) 51.

⁶⁹ Ch. Pare, *From Dupljaja to Delphi: the ceremonial use of the wagon in later prehistory*. *Antiquity* 63, 1989, 80 sqq.; Gelling and Davidson *op.cit.* (note 51) 102; Messerschmidt *op.cit.* (note 14) 38; Marstrand *op.cit.* (note 4) 167 sqq.; Burenhult *op.cit.* (1980) (note 9) 82 type 1/2.

⁷⁰ E. Anati, *op. cit.* (note 61) fig. 24.

⁷¹ *Op.cit.* (note 14) 38.

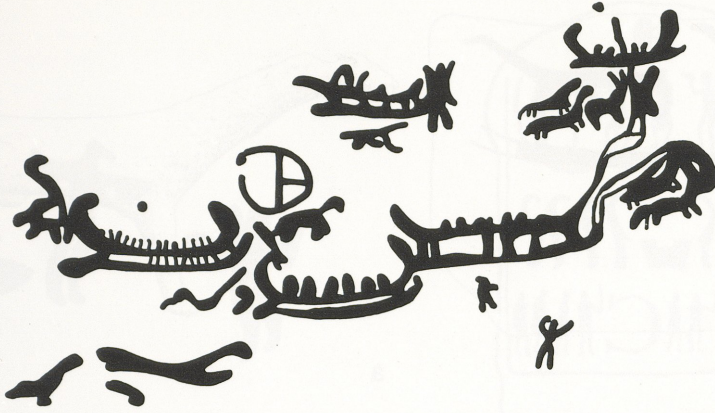


Fig. 13. Detail from the Ekenberg-1 carving, showing horses, ships, human figures and “penguin”-style forms. After Burenhult (1973) (note 9) 138. – M. 1:25.

ence: the artist who executed the Kivik engravings had apparently less problems in dealing with perspective than his colleagues at Valcamonica and Frännarp with their overturned horses.

Marstrander cites the Villfara stone discovered in the parish of Östra Tomarp as comparable to Kivik (Fig. 12, a). Althin however questioned its authenticity, and suggests that at least one ship and the chariot depiction have been falsified, probably in the period shortly after the Kivik discovery (1748–1780). Burenhult’s copy of the Villfara stone confirms this thesis at least partially⁷².

For the way of displaying the bridles and their attachment to the horses, we only know of a parallel on the Ekenberg-1 carving in Östergötland (Fig. 13), where two horses draw a double-prow ship⁷³.

The majority of horses and the women on the bottom line are characterized by a sharp but slightly curved body, a style we prefer to call penguin-like. Similar figures occur on the Ekenberg-1 field, where the style even affects a ship⁷⁴. The Sagaholm funeral carvings and the Klinta stone (Fig. 12, b), which is loosely associated with a burial context, are often mentioned as usable Kivik-references⁷⁵. We should stress however some main points of divergence: the horses from both sites are static and have only two legs depicted, consisting of a straight line in front and a curved one at the back. Similar plastic figures are the Tågaborg-horses, generally dated in the Early Bronze Age period II (Fig. 14)⁷⁶.

Some men of the small group in front of the chariot resemble, once more, human beings at Ekenberg-1⁷⁷. The irrefutable recognition of the bottom line procession participants as women is entirely based upon a “sacred marriage” scene (Fig. 15, c) from Hoghem in

⁷² Op.cit. (1980) (note 9) 45. – See also Burenhult op.cit. (1973) (note 9) 64.

⁷³ Burenhult op.cit. (1980) (note 9) 53. It belongs to motif-group 4, type 2/4 and is unique in his research area.

⁷⁴ Burenhult op.cit. (1973) (note 9) 138 squares A4, B4, C7; id. op.cit. (1980) (note 9) 69 type 2/6 table 26. – The only known carvings of this type are concentrated in Skåne and Östergötland, strengthening the proposed stylistic link between these two areas.

⁷⁵ A. Wihlborg, Sagaholm. A Bronze Age Barrow with Rock-Carvings. Meddel. Lund 1978, 111 sqq. – Compare to Burenhult, op.cit. (1973) (note 9) 85 for important differences.

⁷⁶ Montelius op.cit. (note 63) nr. 980; Oldeberg op.cit. (note 21) nr. 296.

⁷⁷ Burenhult op.cit. (1973) (note 9) 138 squares D4, D5.

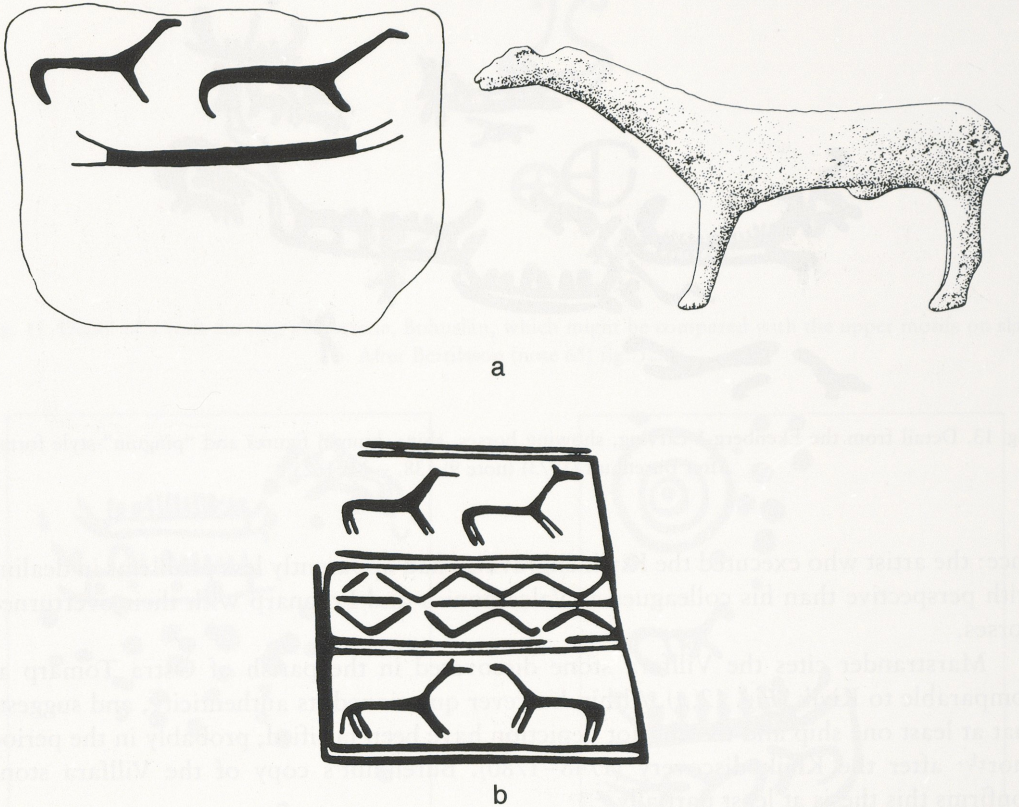


Fig. 14. a. The horse-depictions on Sagaholm slab 32 (left) and the bronze sculpture from Tågaborg (right) show obvious similarities. After Wihlborg (note 75) 121; Müller-Karpe (note 42) nr. 509. C.1; b. The different horse-style on slab 3 in Kivik. After Burenhult (1973) (note 9) 61.

Bohuslän⁷⁸. Oldeberg⁷⁹ has interpreted their sharp, protruding heads as birdmasks, important elements in shaman-lead rites. In this context he refers to a bronze figure with hook-nose, from Glasbacka in Halland, placed in the Late Bronze Age. Other interesting examples could be the Fogdarp-figures and the Veksø-helmets. Grinsell considers this disguise as deliberate, “so that they will not be recognized or molested by the ghost of the deceased”⁸⁰.

Personally we are very reluctant to accept the birdmask-theory; we prefer to explain the phenomenon rather in stylistic terms as another emanation of the penguin-style. If the artist had intended to show such a disguise, he could have chosen the unambiguous way, as on the Kallsängen carvings (Fig. 15, a)⁸¹. A second argument is the Hoghem carving, where the woman from the sacred marriage scene has absolutely no reason for disguise.

⁷⁸ Almgren op.cit. (note 32) fig. 169A. – O. Montelius, Sur les sculptures de rochers de la Suède. Congrès international d’Anthr. & d’Arch. préhist. Compte rendu de la 7e session, Stockholm 1874, I (1876) fig. 18 depicts a similar penguin-like figure associated with a ship, unfortunately without mentioning the site.

⁷⁹ Op.cit. (note 21) 31; Moberg op.cit. (note 3) mentions “clothed human figures, which are perhaps disguised as birds or seals”.

⁸⁰ Op.cit. (note 3) 170.

⁸¹ T. Capelle, Geschlagen in Stein. Skandinavische Felsbilder der Bronzezeit. Begleith. Ausstellungen Abt. Urgesch. Niedersächsischen Landesmus. Hannover 1 (1985) fig. 21.

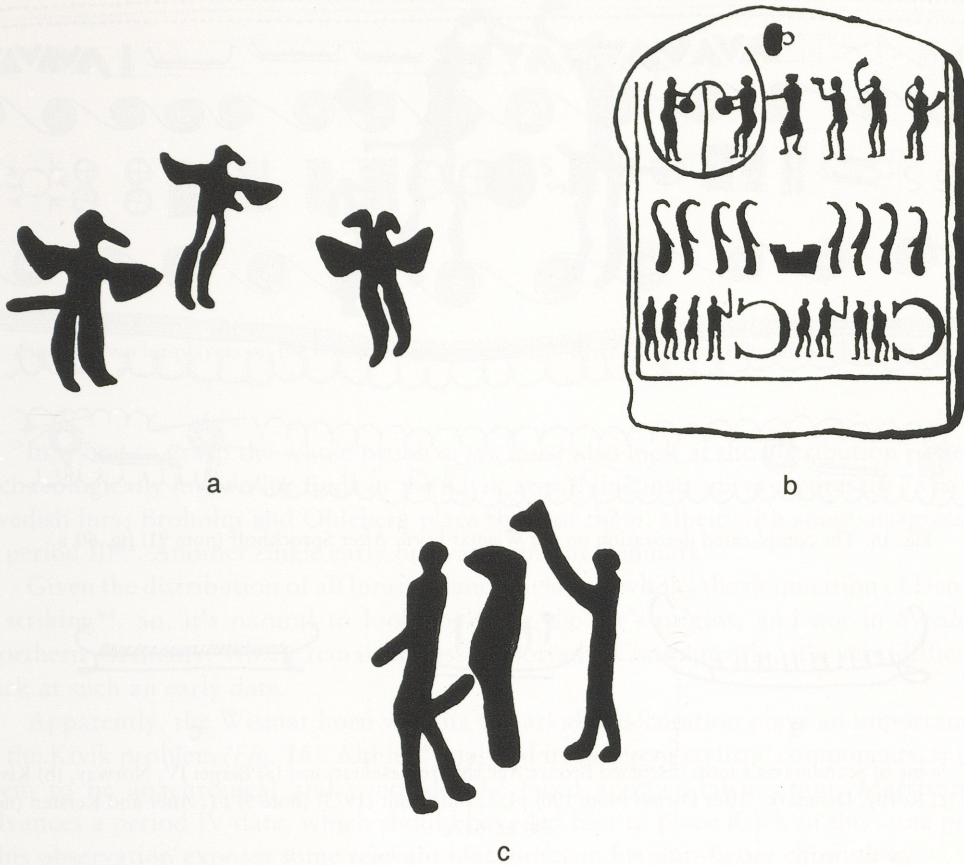


Fig. 15. (a) Bird-men on a rock carving from Kallsängen, (b) Reconstruction of slab 8 in Kivik, (c) Holy marriage-scene from Hoghem, Bohuslän. After Capelle (note 81) fig. 21; Schneider (note 39) fig. 8; Gelling and Davidson (note 51) fig. 30. c.

The fish as a motif goes back to the Early Bronze Age, but gains in importance only from period IV onwards. Its appearance on razors could suggest some link with the cult of the sun⁸². According to Grinsell, its depiction on the grave slab ensures the deceased of food for his or her eternal journey. The identification of the small four-legged animal in the middle left as a dog is purely speculative. Beneath the chariot one sees two – dead? – animals, commonly described as horses. However, recent reproductions suggest the right one to represent a horned species⁸³. Maybe this is the same animal as on slab 31 in the Sagaholm tomb⁸⁴.

The horn- or lur-players on slab 8 constitute another interesting chronological problem (Fig. 15, b). The oldest lurs are traditionally placed in period III⁸⁵, a date advanced by

⁸² Sprockhoff op.cit. (note 24) fig. 30.

⁸³ See note 16.

⁸⁴ Wihlborg op.cit. (note 75) 121.

⁸⁵ H. Broholm, *Lurfundene fra Bronzealderen* (1965); A. Oldeberg, *A Contribution to the History of the Scandinavian Bronze Lurs in the Bronze and Iron Ages*. Acta Arch. 18, 1947, 1 sqq.; see also C. Lund, *Second Conference of the ICTM Study Group on Music Archaeology*. Stockholm November 19–23, 1984, II. – *The Bronze Lurs*, Publications by the Royal Swedish Acad. of Music 53 (1987) for a recent and comprehensive reappraisal.

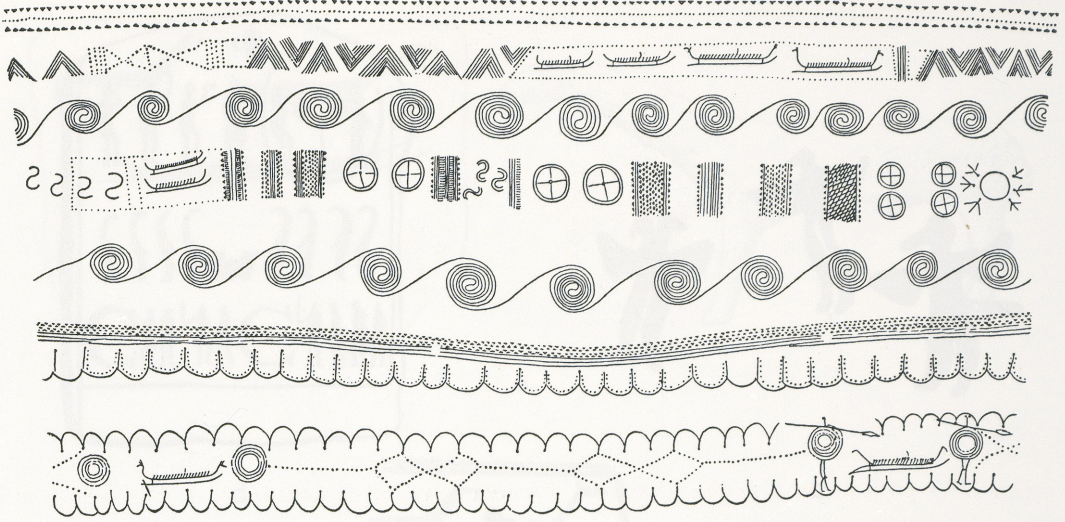


Fig. 16. The complicated decoration on the Wismar horn. After Sprockhoff (note 91) fig. 60. a.

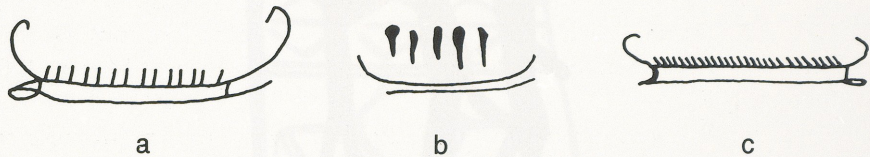


Fig. 17. Some of Scandinavia's most discussed Bronze Age ship representations: (a) Berget IV, Norway, (b) Kivik, slab 2, (c) Rørby, Denmark. After Østmo (note 100) pl. 3; Burenhult (1973) (note 9) 61; Aner and Kersten (note 56) nr. 617.

Oldeberg and Broholm and based upon an assumed Early Bronze Age chronology for the German horns of Teterow, Wismar and Bochin, which are considered to be the immediate predecessors of the first lurs⁸⁶.

The different way both Kivik-players are holding their instruments is seen by Holmes⁸⁷ as a reflection of an experimental quest for the most comfortable method, "proving" in fact that we face early lur-forms. Nordbladh⁸⁸ takes an opposite position in suggesting that some lurs may very well be of Early Iron Age date, trying to link them with later examples like the famous gold horns from Gallehus.

Apart from the possibility that some of the German "prototypes" could be drinking horns, there are other important objections to the proposed early chronology. Considering comparable Hungarian and Irish material, Coles⁸⁹ convincingly proved that an early date for the three Mecklenburg area horns is simply untenable. Moreover, Schmidt's⁹⁰ Early Bronze Age parallels for the Wismar horn should be dated in period V, as shown by Sprockhoff's analysis⁹¹.

⁸⁶ H. Schmidt, Die Luren von Daberkow, Kr. Demmin. Prähist. Zeitschr. 7, 1915, H. 3/4, 108 sqq.

⁸⁷ P. Holmes, The Scandinavian Bronze Lurs. In: Lund op. cit. (note 85) 72 sqq.

⁸⁸ J. Nordbladh, The Bronze-Age Lurs in the Light of Rock Art Research. In: Lund op. cit. (note 85) 133.

⁸⁹ J. Coles, Irish Bronze Age Horns and their Relations with Northern Europe. Proc. Prehist. Soc. 11, 1963, 345 sqq.

⁹⁰ See note 86.

⁹¹ E. Sprockhoff, Jungbronzezeitliche Hortfunde der Südzone des Nordischen Kreises (Periode V). Kat. RGZM 16 (1956) 248 sqq.

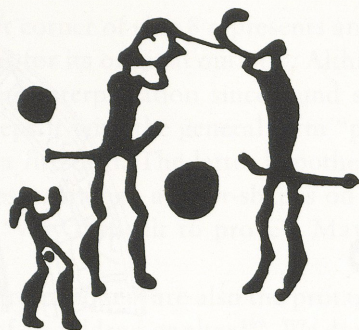


Fig. 18. Two lur-players on the Fossum carving, Bohuslän. After Gelling and Davidson (note 51) fig. 33.

In trying to grasp the whole problem we must also look at the distribution pattern of archaeologically known lur-finds in the Kivik area. Nine instruments represent 75% of all Swedish lurs; Broholm and Oldeberg place three of them, albeit with some disagreement, in period III⁹². Another single early lur was found in Denmark.

Given the distribution of all lurs in Scandinavia as a whole, the domination of Denmark is striking⁹³. So, it's natural to look there for the lur's origins, and not in Sweden or Northern Germany, which remained less important. Consequently, it's very difficult to stick at such an early date.

Apparently, the Wismar horn with its remarkable decoration plays an important role in the Kivik problem (Fig. 16). Althin⁹⁴ analysed its different stylistic components, thought them to be anachronical and concluded he faced another falsification. Marstrander⁹⁵ advances a period IV date, which should have led him to place Kivik in the same period. This observation exposes some relevant inaccuracy in his ship-figure chronology.

Almgren⁹⁶ proposes period III after an analysis of the curvature. Sprockhoff on the other hand prefers period V, referring to similar decorations in Hungary. In his opinion, which we think to be correct, the Wismar horn belongs to a group, not yet found in the pure Scandinavian cultural sphere, but originating in a peripheral zone (Mecklenburg) where Central-European influences have always been very stimulating.

An additional argument for such a late date is the continuous decoration with arcs ending in a point, a current motif on Late Bronze Age pendant vessels⁹⁷. Hatched triangles and simple spirals are favourite decorations, belonging to the Urnfield-tradition⁹⁸.

⁹² Lund op.cit. (note 85) table 2.

⁹³ At least 60 lurs are known from Northern Europe. Denmark has 38 registered finds, the last two discovered as recent as 1988; see P. Lysdahl, *Fanfare*. Skalk 1989, H. 4, 3 sqq. – Three Danish lurs are kept in foreign museums, one in Sint-Petersburg, one in Paris and one in the British Museum. The provenance of the last piece, which was part of the Worsae collection, is unknown (personal communication from Dr. S. P. Needham, The British Museum, May 2, 1989). It should not be excluded that this one is identical to the missing lur, reportedly found in southern Jutland; see Oldeberg op.cit. (note 85) 89. Sweden has 13 lurs, Germany 5, Norway 4 and Latvia 1.

⁹⁴ Op.cit. (note 3) 144 sqq.

⁹⁵ Op.cit. (note 4) 335 sqq.

⁹⁶ Op.cit. (note 32) 39 sqq.

⁹⁷ E. Sprockhoff and O. Höckmann, *Die gegossenen Bronzebecken der jüngerer Nordischen Bronzezeit*. Kat. RGZM 19 (1979) fig. 316; 371.

⁹⁸ H. Müller-Karpe, *Beiträge zur Chronologie der Urnenfelderzeit nördlich und südlich der Alpen*. Röm.-Germ. Forsch. 22 (1959) fig. 91, B1.

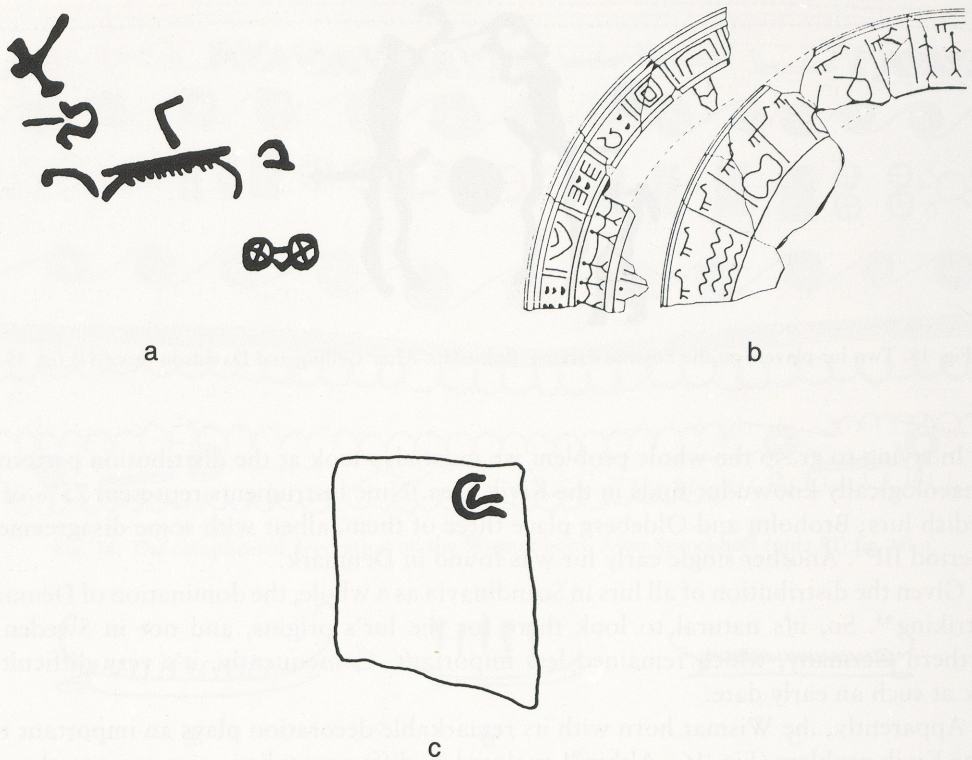


Fig. 19. Possible parallels for the omega-like symbols on slab 8: (a) Rock-carving at Simris-19, (b) Decorated sherds of Late Bronze Age pottery from Moras-en-Valloire, (c) Sagaholm, slab 25. After Burenhult (1973) (note 9) 45; Briard (note 43) 139; Wihlborg (note 75) 121.

The ship figures on the Wismar-horn are often compared to their counterpart on the curved sword from Rørby (*Fig. 17, c*), which was apparently produced in period II⁹⁹. Notwithstanding a certain similarity in the representation of the crew, the general impression is one of differences. The Wismar gunwales, crowned with animal heads, are bent outward, those of Rørby the other way. Both stem and stern are different, and the majority of the Wismar ships are put in a frame. For the same reasons, the Norwegian rock carvings from Berget-IV (*Fig. 17, a*) cannot be used as a parallel for Wismar either¹⁰⁰.

An often listed parallel to the Kivik horn-players is the Fossum-carving¹⁰¹, where two phallic blowers face each other, positioned close to a fierce combat scene and apparently worshipped by a small woman (*Fig. 18*). Unfortunately there is no chronological appreciation possible. The man preceding the Kivik horn-blowers holds an object, possibly an axe or a rattle¹⁰². We do not know any parallel.

⁹⁹ E. Lomborg, *Donauländische Kulturbeziehungen und die relative Chronologie der frühen Nordischen Bronzezeit*. *Acta Arch.* 30, 1959, 113 sqq.; B. Jacobsson, *Ein neues Krummschwert aus Schonen*. *Arch. Korrb.* 16, 1986, 283 sqq. – Seven pieces are known, four from Denmark (Rørby: 2; Viby: 1; Favrskov: 1 in flint) and three from Sweden (Södra Åby, Norre, Lilla Slågarp).

¹⁰⁰ E. Østmo, *Helleristninger av sørskanadinavisk former på der indre Østlandet*. *Fylkene Buskerud, Akershus, Oslo, Oppland og Hedmark*. *Univ. Oldsaksaml. Skrifter Oslo* 12 (1990) pl. 3.

¹⁰¹ Nordbladh *op.cit.* (note 88) fig. 2.

¹⁰² Schmidt *op.cit.* (note 86) 140 sqq.

The scene in the upper left corner of slab 8 represents another problem, since we have to rely on the ancient drawings for its original outlook. Althin¹⁰³ and Lund¹⁰⁴ regard both men as drummers, an amazing interpretation since Lund shows them without arms in another article¹⁰⁵. Grinsell keeps it with the general term “percussion instrument”, while Schneider¹⁰⁶ was thinking of a fire-drill. The latter hypothesis is shared by Marstrander, who looks for identical figures in framed anchor-shapes on the Norwegian Leirfall-carvings¹⁰⁷, concluding that it is “very difficult to prove”. Maybe a stylized version of it is depicted at Ekenberg-1¹⁰⁸.

The penguin-like women from stone 7 are also the protagonists in the central scene of slab 8, standing at both sides of a cauldron or altar¹⁰⁹. We don't catch a glimpse of eventual sacrifices. This scene is also unparalleled.

In the bottom scene Kivik provides us with a last mystery. Althin searched for an omega-like motif on the Simris-19 engravings (*Fig. 19, a*), where it's surrounded by a horizontal line, ships and an axe¹¹⁰. Or maybe there is a correlation with Sprockhoff's motif of the “Leierschiffe”, his third type of solar ships¹¹¹, dated in period IV. Nor can we exclude any degree of correspondence with the horseshoe shapes from e.g. the Norwegian carvings at Helgaberget¹¹². On the other hand, a comparison with the obscure motif on slab 25 of the Sagaholm-burial remains doubtful (*Fig. 19, c*).

Grinsell considers the omega forms to be cages, or maybe it is a depiction of the underworld's entry¹¹³. In this case, the “guard” leading his three victims or prisoners, could be holding a torch. According to Moberg we are facing the still open grave¹¹⁴.

Briard¹¹⁵ thinks of oversized torcs. In the same publication however, he also mentions the Late Bronze Age earthenware dishes from Moras-en-Valloire in southern France, a much more appealing parallel. The decoration is grouped in concentric friezes and consists of an omega-like sign combined with undulating motifs, humans, horses and a swastika (*Fig. 19, b*).

A few words should be said on the framing of the different Kivik-scenes, an uncommon trend in Bronze Age Scandinavia. According to Malmer¹¹⁶, working with zigzag-friezes and rectangular frames was inspired by garments, imported from the Mediterranean basin. He refers to the preserved textiles from the Early Bronze Age burials at Egtved and Borum Eshøj, considering them too thin for the Nordic climate and – consequently – imported

¹⁰³ Op. cit. (note 3) 70.

¹⁰⁴ C. Lund, The archaeomusicology of Scandinavia. *World Arch.* 12, 1981, 3; 254.

¹⁰⁵ Id. (note 85) fig. 14.

¹⁰⁶ Op. cit. (note 39) 17 sqq.

¹⁰⁷ S. Marstrander, A newly discovered rock-carving of Bronze Age type in Central Norway. *Valcamonica Symposium. Actes du symposium international d'art préhistorique 1968 (1968)* fig. 121.

¹⁰⁸ Burenhult op. cit. (1973) (note 9) 138, squares B3, B4.

¹⁰⁹ Burenhult op. cit. (1980) (note 9) 66: it belongs to the unique motif type 1/9.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. 45; square E 18. – The omega belongs to Burenhult's op. cit. (1980) (note 9) 66, type 2/4.

¹¹¹ E. Sprockhoff, *Das bronzene Zierband von Kronshagen bei Kiel. Eine Ornamentstudie zur Vorgeschichte der Vogelsoonnenbarke.* *Offa* 14, 1955, fig. 28; 29.

¹¹² Fett and Fett op. cit. (note 61) 71.

¹¹³ Bing op. cit. (note 60); see also Nilsson op. cit. (note 8).

¹¹⁴ Moberg op. cit. (note 3).

¹¹⁵ Op. cit. (note 43) 129; 139; A. Nicolas, *Inventaire des picto-idéogrammes de la fin de l'âge du bronze et du début de l'âge du fer.* *Bull. Soc. préh. franç.* 75, 1978, 62 sqq. mentions a similar example from the cave site at Cheval Blanc.

¹¹⁶ Op. cit. (note 23); S. Janson, E. Lundberg and U. Bertilsson, *Hällristningar och hällmålningar i Sverige (1989)* 62 sqq.

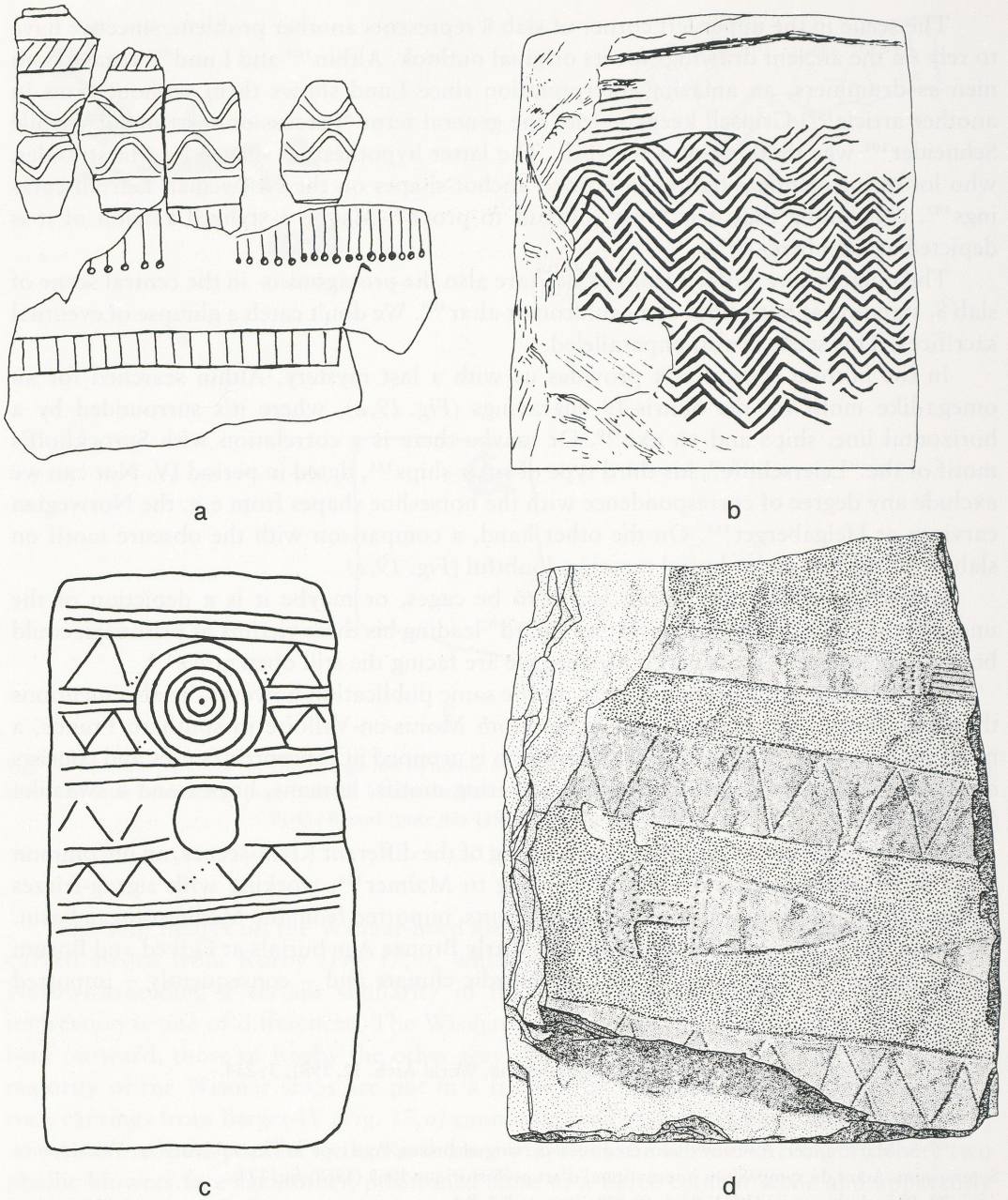


Fig. 20. Decorated slabs from Late Neolithic and Bronze Age burial chambers in Scandinavia (a) and on the continent (b, c, d): (a) Mjeltehaugen, Norway, (b) Dölauer Heide, Germany, (c) Illmitz, Austria, (d) Petit-Chasseur, Switzerland. After Marstrand (note 120) fig. 1, 7; Gallay (note 126) 21.

from the south. However, it does not mean that they must have come a priori from the Mediterranean¹¹⁷. It is quite possible that these clothes were only worn during summertime,

¹¹⁷ Marstrand *op.cit.* (note 4); H. Masurel, *Tissage et habillement à l'âge du bronze. Avant les Celtes. L'Europe à l'âge du bronze 2500–800 avant J.-C.* (1988) 84; Thrane *op.cit.* (note 49) 170: "The 'exploded view' of the Scanian chariot representations must indicate that the tapestries (if they ever existed) were Barbarian, not Mycenaean".

when temperatures close to today's reigned¹¹⁸, or at special occasions. Although Malmer's theory remains possible, it's more logical to look for comparisons on other funeral engravings.

Framing does not occur at Sagaholm, despite Wihlborg's reference to a small vertical line on slab 6¹¹⁹. The same goes for the Klinta-stone (*Fig. 12, b*).

Outside the Scandinavian core area, framing and zigzag-motifs are already present in the Late Neolithic cists of Göhlitzsch, Dölauer Heide, and Lohne/Züschen in Central Germany. The presumed association with the Single Grave Culture is no longer generally accepted¹²⁰. Göhlitzsch shows the most orderly concept with columns of alternating horizontally and vertically placed zigzags; a bow, a quiver and a battle-axe are also depicted¹²¹. The small cist at Dölauer Heide was excavated in 1953 and contained five carved slabs with triangles (*Fig. 20, b*), vertical zigzags and five axes, giving the impression "it is the inside of the man's house with his weapons conveniently at hand"¹²². A sixth slab was painted, a seventh combined carving and painting¹²³. In Lohne/Züschen, the decoration consisted of a zigzag-pattern and bull-motifs, reminding of the Ligurian rock-art in the Mont Bégo-region¹²⁴.

On the site of Ellenberg-I, a recycled stone was found in the outer circle of a grave-mound. It is all over decorated with skilfully executed triangles¹²⁵.

Comparable motifs frequently occur on the decorated tomb-slabs from Petit Chasseur in Switzerland (*Fig. 20, d*)¹²⁶. The concept continues well into the Bronze Age, as illustrated in the early Bronze Age cist of Mjeltehaugen (Norway)¹²⁷. Tassel-like lines suggest an imitation of real textiles (*Fig. 20, a*). On the continent, the Austrian tomb at Illmitz illustrates the survival of these motifs on the European continent until period IV of the Bronze Age (*Fig. 20, c*).

However, the majority of these slabs are covered with purely geometric motifs, stressing once more the absolutely different character of the Kivik petroglyphs. In some exceptional

¹¹⁸ See J. Jensen, *The Prehistory of Denmark* (1982) 134 sqq. for a climatic survey of the period.

¹¹⁹ *Op. cit.* (note 23) 126.

¹²⁰ S. Marstrander, *The Problem of European Impulses in the Nordic area of agrarian Rock Art*. Acts of the international symposium on rock art. Lectures at Hankø 6–12 August, 1972. Inst. for sammenlignende kulturforskning, Ser. A, 29 (1978); G. Mandt, *Tradition and Diffusion in West-Norwegian Rock Art*. Mjeltehaugen revisited. *Norwegian Arch. Review* 16, 1983 H.1, 14 sqq.; W. Dehn and J. Röder, *Hessische Steinkisten und frühes Metall*. *Fundber. Hessen* 19–20, 1979–80, 163 sqq.

¹²¹ Mandt *op. cit.* (note 120) fig. 11.

¹²² T. Powell, *Megalithic and Other Art: Centre and West*. *Antiquity* 34, 1960, 180 sqq.

¹²³ *Ibid.* – The occurrence of painting, imitating the interior of the daily house in the grave, is one of Powell's main arguments against an influence from the West-European megalithic culture. He looks for parallels in the long-standing tradition of "house-graves" of the Caucasus-region. This view is contested by e. g. A. Häusler, *Innenverzierte Steinkammergräber der Krim*. *Jahresschr. Mitteldeutsche Vorgesch.* 48, 1964, 59 sqq., who opts for an influence from Central-Europe to the east. – For other examples of painted tombs in Germany, see W. A. von Brunn, *Zu den Spätbronzezeitlichen Steinkisten mit Wandbemalung im unteren Saalegebiet*. *Ibid.* 46, 1962, 207 sqq.

¹²⁴ Dehn and Röder *op. cit.* (note 120) 174; fig. 2, 3 raise doubts on this connection, and point towards the Caucasus region for similar scenes.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.* fig. 6.

¹²⁶ A. Gallay, *Le site préhistorique du Petit Chasseur (Sion, Valais)*. 8. Secteur oriental – Documents annexes. *Cahiers d'Arch. Romande* 48 (1989) 21.

¹²⁷ See note 120. The date of the cist(s) in the Early Bronze Age is not yet certain. Some elements indicate a later date within the Bronze Age.

cases human figures are present¹²⁸, but the bad and fragmentary condition of the stones hinder further conclusions. Maybe future research should look for new evidence in this direction.

The trend to group scenes in fact only appears on the Wismar horn (*Fig. 16*) and various imported objects from Central Europa during the Late Bronze Age, a reason more to consider a later date for the Kivik tomb than generally assumed.

What do the Kivik engravings in fact represent?

Looking at their position in a burial chamber, it's obvious to look for a religious or ritual explanation. Of course, different theories are possible.

Bing e.g. regarded the scenes, especially on slabs 7 and 8, as parts of a season-linked cult, where the women are performing some kind of a rain-dance.

The solar symbols (slabs 4 and 6), and maybe also the slab 1 pyramid, stress the importance of sun-worship in the Bronze Age, overwhelmingly documented on rock engravings and artistic masterpieces like the Trundholm sun-chariot. Closely connected are the horses, privileged animals for the transport of the sun.

Apart from their economic transport-function, ships must also have had a funeral meaning (stone 1 and 2), as indicated by the engravings of Sagaholm and Klinta, and the numerous ship-like funeral stone-settings scattered throughout Bronze Age Scandinavia¹²⁹.

Evidently, the cult of the sun is related in an intimate way with fecundity rites. Other relevant symbols in this context are the axe and the lur, although this may seem rather paradoxical at first sight. The axe, as portrayed on slab 1, is not an unusual motif in burial chambers. It occurs as early as the third millennium BC in French neolithic tombs¹³⁰.

For other combinations of death and fecundity, we refer to Sagaholm's slab nr. 30 and the famous petroglyphs from Bohuslän, featuring sacred marriage and deadly combat scenes next to each other, although their contemporaneity cannot be taken for granted (*Fig. 15, c*)¹³¹.

The symmetric structure of the Kivik iconography is striking. In most cases, a motif is repeated at least twice on the same slab, suggesting that duplication is a basic concept. Even when a pair of identical motifs is depicted more than once on the same or on different slab(s), the symmetry is kept at all cost (*Table 2*). This preoccupation with the number two is also reflected in different "ritual" hoard-finds of the Bronze Age, like the large ceremonial axes, the Veksø helmets or the lurs¹³².

The dynamic scenes on slabs 7 and 8 probably portray both pictures from the deceased's daily life – it's e.g. most unlikely that the two-wheeled chariot served as funerary cart –,

¹²⁸ Marstrander op.cit. (note 120) fig. 2. – We refer to the Solhaug-stone in Norway, showing a herringbone-pattern, a concentric circle-motif and two humans beings. The style however is completely different from Kivik.

¹²⁹ M. Müller-Wille, *Bestattung im Boot. Studien zu einer nordeuropäischen Grabsitte*. Offa 25, 1968, 7 sqq.; M. Strömberg, *Die bronzezeitlichen Schiffssetzungen im Norden*. Meddel. Lund 1961, 82 sqq.; Grinsell op.cit. (note 57).

¹³⁰ Mohen op.cit. (note 5) 245: most probably ceremonial stone axes are imitated; P. Schmidt, *Beile als Ritualobjekte in der Altbronzezeit der Britischen Inseln*. Jahresber. Inst. Vorgesch. Univ. Frankfurt 1978–79, 311 sqq.; fig. 2, 4 cites some of the few depictions of bronze axes on the walls of stone cists, related to the Wessex-culture.

¹³¹ Almgren op.cit. (note 36) fig. 81.

¹³² Bruun Jørgensen op.cit. (note 8) 110 sq. correlates the duplication-concept with the regular depictions of duels on the rock carvings.

Motif	Slab	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Ship		1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Axe with shaft (?)		2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Spearhead (?)		2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Horse		—	—	2 × 2	—	—	—	2 + 1	—
Wheel-cross		—	—	—	2	—	2	2	—
Moon-crescent (?)		—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—
Group of 4 men		—	—	—	—	—	—	1	2 × 1
Procession of 8 women		—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
Lur-player		—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Drummer (?)		—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Omega		—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Zigzag-frieze		—	—	2	2	1?	—	—	—
Rectangular frame		1	1	1	1	1?	1	1	1

Table 2. Distribution of repeated motifs on the Kivik slabs.

and parts of the burial ceremony. One cannot exclude the possibility of human sacrifices at this occasion, as might be suggested on top of slab 7 and the bottom of nr. 8.

Skeletons found in Bronze Age burials from Denmark (e.g. Stubberup) and Sweden can only be interpreted in such a way. Of utmost interest is the Håga-burial from period IV, of a size similar to Kivik, where the deceased was accompanied by three slaughtered men and several animals, including horses. At least one individual's bones were split in order to extract marrow¹³³. The occurrence of human sacrifices in the period V tomb at Kreuzburg is debatable¹³⁴.

The German tomb of Anderlingen¹³⁵ contains another potentially relevant scene, suggesting the practice of human sacrifice in period II. A man with raised axe is on the point of striking a woman next to him (*Fig. 21*).

It is not clear whether the Scandinavian Bronze Age society intentionally discerned among the west and the east in terms of death and life, nor whether this is reflected in the positioning of dominantly solar scenes on the eastern and death-related depictions on the western slabs.

Kivik's petroglyphs are also unique in another way. The scenes are all depicted on the inside of the stone cist, as if they were only meaningful for the deceased. Grinsell suggested that "the Kivik pictures had the two-fold object of securing a comfortable passage for the dead during his last journey, and preventing him from returning to molest the living"¹³⁶.

Among the first to do so, Oldeberg voiced his impression that these stones were intentionally turned away from the outside world, either to shield their esoteric knowledge or their magical destruction power.

The Sagaholm scenes on the contrary face the exterior and must have been visible for some time, a context in which Grinsell's theory seems more plausible.

¹³³ E. Lomborg, *Gravfund fra Stubberup, Lolland. Menneskeofringer og kannibalisme i bronzealderen*. Kuml 1963, 14 sqq.

¹³⁴ Kiekebusch *op. cit.* (note 20) 26.

¹³⁵ K. Jacob-Friesen, *Einführung in Niedersachsens Urgeschichte II. Bronzezeit* (1963) 287; D. Evers, *Neue Bildelemente am Stein von Anderlingen*. Arch. Korrb. 11, 1981, 105 sqq.

¹³⁶ *Op. cit.* (note 3) 173.

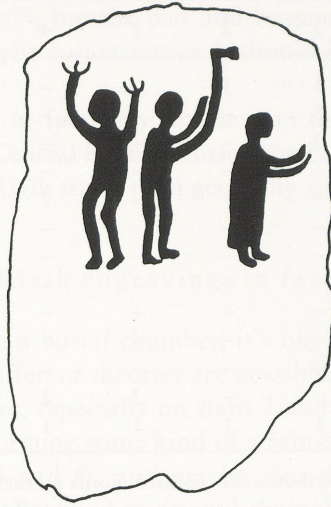


Fig. 21. A human sacrifice scene (?) in the Anderlingen-tomb, Germany. After Jacob-Friesen (note 135) fig. 273.
– M. 1:16.

Conclusive remarks

Any chronological appreciation of the Kivik complex entirely depends on the petroglyphs, since neither grave goods nor the form of the stone cist can tell us more.

A majority of cited arguments suggests a Late Bronze Age dating, almost certainly in period IV. The axes and the lurs are the most reliable chronological elements. Stylistic considerations point towards the same direction.

Direct Aegean influences, especially the comparison with the Hagia Triada sarcophagus should be discarded because of the very small number of import products with southern characteristics. It's frankly exaggerated to state that "at Kivik most of the Aegean elements become so-to-speak translated into the dialect of the Nordic Bronze Age religion"¹³⁷.

Central-Europe might be responsible for some clear impulses in the Kivik-iconography. Symmetry and a sense for order and clarity, completely strange to Early Bronze Age petroglyphs, are in this view the most eye-catching elements.

Next to the Central-European influences, some original Nordic traditions survive: the dominance of axes, horses and lurs. A typical "penguin"-style probably also originates in the North, as suggested by the Ekenberg-1 engravings. At Kivik, this whole set of known motifs and styles is integrated in a new symmetric framework.

Ekenberg shows close stylistic parallels to Kivik. We mentioned already the "penguin"-style, the horse-bridle, a ship-figure and some armless humans. The whole engraving looks remarkably homogeneous, with only a few superpositions visible. There are some indications that may support an independant Late Bronze Age date, like the undulating motif on the hull of the impressive central ship¹³⁸, or the four-branched spiral worshipped

¹³⁷ Grinsell, op.cit. (note 3) 173. – This comparison with Hagia Triada even persists today, e.g. Thrane op.cit. (note 49) 169: "The Kivik cist is a northern equivalent of the Hagia Triada sarcophagus, a Bronze Age pictorial saga or mythology".

¹³⁸ S. Müller, *Nordische Altertumskunde nach Funden und Denkmälern aus Dänemark und Schleswig I. Steinzeit-Bronzezeit* (1897) nrs. 214; 215.

by a little figure¹³⁹. Most ships are characterized by a long protruding bow, strenghtening our impression of uniformity.

Finally, one should warn for the use of the badly preserved Kivik ship-figures in any attempt to establish a typology for such pictures in Scandinavian rock art. If a Late Bronze Age dating for Kivik is correct, then there is something wrong with Marstrander's scheme and with Almgren's exclusive reliance on the analysis of curves as a dating method for the rock carvings. Kivik emerges as a typical exponent of Scandinavian concepts, put in a new framework. It's therefore a unique source, unlikely to be paralleled by new discoveries in a foreseeable future.

Authors address:

Koen Verlaeckt
Smidsestraat 83
B-9200 Dendermonde

¹³⁹ Marstrander op.cit. (note 4) 281; Burenhult op.cit. (1980) (note 9) 66, type 7/5.