

The King's Grave

The ***King's Grave*** near Kivik (*Kungagraven i Kivik*, *Kiviksgraven*) in the southeastern portion of the Swedish province of Skåne is what remains of an unusually grand Nordic Bronze Age double burial c. 1400 BC.^[1]

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Site

The site is located about 320 metres (1,000 ft) from the shore of the eastern coast of Scania in southernmost Sweden. In spite of the fact that the site has been used as a quarry, with its stones carried off for other uses, and that it was restored carelessly once it was known to be an ancient burial, these two burials are unique.

In both construction and in size—it is a circular site measuring 75 metres (250 ft) in diameter—this tomb differs from most European burials from the Bronze Age. Most importantly, the cists are adorned with petroglyphs. The images carved into the stones depict people, animals (including birds and fish), ships, lurs being played, symbols, and a chariot drawn by two horses and having fourspoked wheels.

History

The site was used as a quarry for construction materials until 1748, when two farmers discovered a 3.25 metres (11 ft) tomb, with a north-south orientation, constructed with ten slabs of stone. They dug it out, hoping to find a treasure in the grave.

Soon rumour had it that the two men had found a great treasure in the tomb and the authorities had the men arrested. However, the two men denied having found anything, and as no evidence could be provided against them, they were released.

Several years passed before it was discovered that the slabs of stone in the tomb were adorned with petroglyphs, and a long series of speculations had begun. Still, the quarrying continued and some of the stones disappeared.

The King's Grave



The circular burial site near Kivik, Sweden



Shown within Sweden

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Location | Scania, Sweden |
| Coordinates | 55°41′N 14°14′E |
| Site notes | |
| Condition | In ruins |

Site notes



The entrance to the tomb

The site was excavated by archaeologist Gustaf Hallström (1880–1962) starting in 1931. Between 1931–1933, a thorough excavation was undertaken and the remains of a Stone Age settlement was found under the massive cairn, including a great deal of flintstone shards. Only teeth, fragments of bronze, and some pieces of bone were found, dating from the Bronze Age.^[2]

The mound contained two cists, however. On the left side of the cist's southern end, there were raised slabs of stone from a 1.2 metres (3.9 ft) long and 0.65 metres (2.1 ft) wide cist. It was named the King's Grave due to its size, long before it was known to contain two burials. Since the site has been subject to numerous lootings, there are no reliable finds, but it is believed that the two graves were built at the same time.

After the excavation, the tomb was restored, but no one knows whether it looks similar to its original state. A comparison with other contemporaneous graves suggests that the site might have been three times higher than the 3.5 metres (11 ft) as restored. The restoration was based on etchings from the 18th century and conjecture. A new chamber was constructed out of concrete and a tunnel extended into the cists. Today, it is possible for visitors to the site to enter the tomb and to see the graved stones.



One of ten slabs of stone shows a horse drawn chariot with two four-spoked wheels



One of the slabs of stone shows people (eight in long robes)



The stones of the grave facing the grave of Kivik



Stones within the cairn of Kivik

See also

- Egtved Girl
- Sagaholm
- Trundholm sun chariot
- Håga Kurgan

References

1. *Bredarör i Kivik* (Joakim Goldhahn, Department of Archaeology University of Gothenburg)(http://fornvannen.se/pdf/2000talet/2005_097.pdf)
2. *Gustaf Hallströms arkiv* (Research Archives, Umeå University)(<http://www.foark.umu.se/samlingar/hand07A.htm>) Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20100602140815/http://www.foark.umu.se/samlingar/hand07A.htm>)2010-06-02 at the Wayback Machine

Other sources

- Baudou, Evert *Gustaf Hallström: arkeolog i världskrigens epok* (Stockholm: Natur & Kultur. 1997)

External links

- Kiviksgraven

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