

## Report 4, 27 of July

# A picture stone!

One of the inhumation graves gave us a rather big surprise. We saw quite early that the end of the grave and the stone packing covering the deceased was a stone slab of limestone. During the excavation it became clear that the slab was rather big, and there was also another limestone slab at the head of the dead.

After having cleared the skeleton as much as possible, we finally lifted the flat stone at the end of the grave, and to our very surprise it turned out to be a picture stone of a type that can be dated to the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> centuries. On it, there was a picture of a ship, and we could also see some people on the ship. The picture was surrounded by a decoration of lines at the outer end of the stone.

Very soon, it was clear to us that the stone found was the bottom part of a picture stone, being some 1.6 metres high. And it was soon realised that the missing top of the picture stone actually was the stone at the head end of the grave. We finally got also that part out into the sun, and it was covered, not so clear though, by some pictures, notably a horse and a female, probably a "Valkyria", giving a drinking horn to a person on his way to Valhalla.

The picture stone had a secondary use in the grave. It had been divided into two parts, where the head of the stone was placed behind the head of the dead person, and the foot of the stone, at the end of the grave. Both pieces of the stone had the pictures turned towards the dead person. As I see it, it is rather certain that they have used the stone in the grave for a specific reason, also



Grave number 15/99 is an ordinary stone packing, laying in a north- south direction, some 0,2 meters below the surface. The photo to the left has the grave number 15 in the foreground. In the background is the grave number 14. To the right, we have taken away the stone packing covering the grave number 15, and one can clearly see the stone slab at the end of the grave, as well as the other stone slab above the head of the skeleton. The stone above the feet has fallen in, and is covering the lower part of the legs. Photo Dan Carlsson



The part of the picture stone laying above the feet of the dead was upside down, so it was first until we lifted it up that we realised that it was a picture stone. To the right, Angela Helmer is holding the stone. The first thing that came to light was the sail of the ship. It was very well preserved, and under the sail we could see the ship with some other figures. Photo Dan Carlsson

because of the way the two parts were placed there. In other words, I see the stone as a connection between the person for whom it was originally made, and the person in the grave. A kind of sign of the relation between persons through generations.

Dan Carlsson



To the left, a close up look at the picture stone with the ship and its sail. Around the edge of the stone, there is a kind of decorative work. At the end of the day, we took up the part of the stone standing at the head of the dead person, and we could clearly see that it was part of the same stone as the one at the end of the grave. The upper part was decorated with some figures, probably a horse and a Valkyria.