

THE MONUMENT OF ALES STENAR A SUNSHIP TO THE REALM OF THE DEAD

(KASEBERGA, SOUTH COAST OF SWEDEN, c.500 BC)

by

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Summary

The huge megalithic ship monument of Ales Stenar, overlooking the Baltic Sea on the South Coast of Sweden, is shown to be a Sunship to the Realm of the Dead. The quadrants of the ends of the ship both contain 23 menhirs at 23 degree angles, encoding the 23 degree Tropic of Cancer, a holy latitude of the Sunreligion that is a numeric feature of all megalithic monuments. Latitudes encoded in the monument, often based upon the site latitude, show the sailing route used on voyages to Central America, located at the other side of the waters, and symbolizing the Land of the Dead. Ales Stenar turns out to be one of the last megalithic monuments of Europe, dated c.500 BC.

Introduction

The huge monument of Ales Stenar is located near Kaseberga, 15 km east of Ystad, obliquely overlooking the sea on the south coast of Sweden (the port side, or SW quadrant, faces the sea)(Refs.1-4). There are hundreds of ship-like formations in southern Scandinavia, but this is reported to be the largest one. It may be considered the most important megalithic monument in Sweden (Fig.1). It is a formation of 58 big menhirs, having a length of 67 meters, and a width of 19 meters. (In reality only 57 menhirs are present, because menhir #46 is missing, but

the foundation is still there.) The axis of the ship points exactly to 45 degrees NW of true north. Fifty six of the menhirs have average diameters of about 1 meter, and heights of 1.5m, and the remaining two menhirs on the axis are larger, with heights of about 3 meters (Photos.1-4) On the average, the menhirs are placed about 2.5 meters apart.

AT LEAST four menhirs of white sandstone, among these the two big menhirs on the axis, are thought to have been brought a considerable distance, some 40km, down the coast from the northeast, near the town of



Photo 1

Ales Stenar from the SE, showing the big SE menhir (1) on the axis. The photo illustrates the big size of the menhirs, compared to Dr. de Jonge.
(Kaseberga, South Coast of Sweden, August, 2003)

Photo 2

Ales Stenar from the SE, showing the big SE menhir (1), and the small keelstone (59) in front of it, at the right side below.
(Kaseberga, South Coast of Sweden, August 2003)



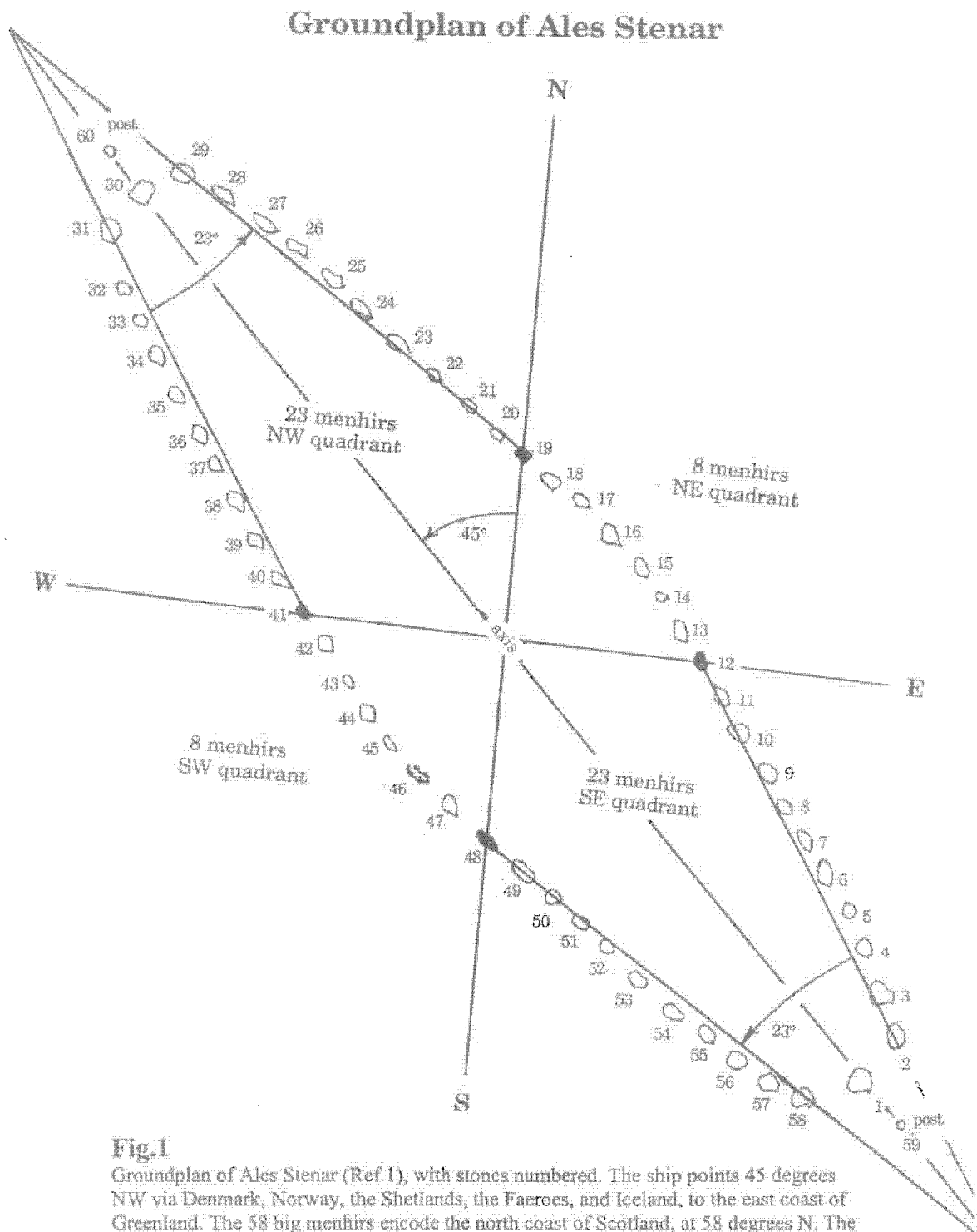


Fig.1

Groundplan of Ales Stenar (Ref.1), with stones numbered. The ship points 45 degrees NW via Denmark, Norway, the Shetlands, the Faeroes, and Iceland, to the east coast of Greenland. The 58 big menhirs encode the north coast of Scotland, at 58 degrees N. The 23 menhirs in the NW end, (or 23.5 including the keelstone), encode the holy Arctic Circle, at $90-23=67$ degrees N. In total there are $58+2=60$ stones, encoding the south cape of Greenland, at 60 degrees N. (Kaseberga, South Coast Sweden, c.500 BC)

Table 1

**The Sailing Route to Central America, The Realm of the Dead
(The Important latitude encodings of Ales Stenar)**

The list below illustrates the beauty of the methodology used to encode large numbers. Rather than construct a huge, laborious monument of a great many stones, they used a few combinations repeatedly, as an encoding convention. These rules of encoding in this monument used the 60 total stones, 1 end post stone, the 2 end post stones, the 4 cardinal stones, the 8 stones of each of the side quadrants, the 23 stones of the end quadrants, and complementary numbers (from 90). Clearly, the most important encodings of the monument are the 23° Tropic of Cancer, and the 60° Cape Farewell of South Greenland. Using these numbers (60,23,8,4,2, and 1), all these encodings were done:

Locations:	Latitude:	Menhirs of Encoding:
Ales Stenar, site	56°N	60-4 (total-cardinal)
Nile Delta	30°N	60/2
Tropic of Cancer	23°N	23 (each end of ship)
North Scotland	58°N	60-2
Faeroe Islands	62°N	60+2
SE Iceland	64°N	60+4
NW Iceland	66°N	Scotland (58)+8
Cape Holm	67°N	90-(23) Tropic of Cancer
Arctic Circle	67°N	90-(23) Tropic of Cancer
South Greenland	60°N	60 (total stones)
SW Greenland	61°N	South Greenland (60)+1
Labrador	56°N	South Greenland (60)-4
Belle Isle Strait	52°N	South Greenland (60)-8
Mississippi Delta	30°N	60/2 (=Nile Delta)
South Florida	25°N	Tropic of Cancer (23)+2
North Cuba	23°N	Tropic of Cancer (23)
NE Yucatan	21°N	Tropic of Cancer (23)-2
Honduras	16°N	8+8 (sides of ship)
Gulf of Campeche	18°N	Honduras (16)+2



Photo 3

Ales Stenar from the NW, showing the big NW menhir (30) on the axis, and a number of northern menhirs of the monument. (Kaseberga, South Coast of Sweden, August, 2003)

Photo 4

The main NW menhir (30) of Ales Stenar from the NE, with Dr. de Jonge behind it. In the background the Baltic Sea in the SW. (Kaseberga, South Coast of Sweden, August, 2003)



Simrishamn. The other boulders could have been collected at different spots in south Skane at comparable distances, probably not close to the site. Most of the menhirs have nice smooth surfaces, but they are not dressed. The smoothness is from the working of the ice sheets during the Ice Ages in Scandinavia. Inside the NW end, and beside the axis, is a small stone. It is highly probable that it was moved from an original position behind the big NW menhir (shown as #60 in Fig.1), making this part of the ship symmetrical with the other end. These two stones (59 and 60, Fig.1) are called "keelstones", at each end of the ship. Their diameters and heights are only about half a meter. Adding these two small posts to the 58 menhirs, gives a total of 60 stones.

The monument is situated on a flat hilltop, a 37 meter high ridge, about 100 meters from the sea. The latitude of the site is 55.5 degrees N, or rounded off to 56 degrees N. Some scientists believe the monument dates from c.700 BC (late Bronze Age), while others believe a date from c.600 AD (late Iron Age). The site was partially excavated in 1916, and again in 1956, when mainly sand that had blown over the site was removed.

Egypt & the Sun Religion

ALES STENAR is basically a Sunship, with its destination in the west. The symbol of the Sunship was of central importance in the religion of Egypt. The cosmic Sunship is still seen today carrying the SunGod Ra across the ceilings of the tombs which dot the west bank of the Nile River. The name "Ales" (or "Als") means "Sanctuary" in old Nordic, while "Stenar" means "of stone". Seen from the center of the monument, the four cardinal points are occupied by menhirs: N (stone #19), S (#48), E (#12), and W (#41) (see Fig.1). Perhaps these four stones were originally painted, or perhaps were decorated when the monument was still in use. Like the rectangle of the four Stationstones at Stonehenge, these four "cardinal" stones,

here in a perfect square, help mark the equinoxes and solstices observed at the site. Including the cardinal stones, there are 23 menhirs in both ends of the ship. These menhirs also form 23 degree angles in both ends, as shown on Fig.1.

OUR GLOBES today still show the 23 degree Tropic of Cancer, a holy latitude of the Sunreligion. This latitude is as far north as the sun appears overhead in summer. Also at the latitude of 23 degrees N was located the center of the Southern Egyptian Empire, the geographic center of the Sunreligion. Where the Tropic of Cancer crosses the coast of Africa, at 23 degrees north, was of course an early focus for ocean explorations (Refs.5-7). The Egyptian Sun-God Ra has said: "The Realm of the Dead is in the west, at the other side of the waters, in the land where the Sun sets. After death you will reunite there with your ancestors, your family, your relatives, your friends, your acquaintances!" This Sunship monument memorializes the sailing route that was used to reach the west.

Extending the axis of the monument to the SE at 45 degrees on a globe, you see it points to the delta of the River Donau, at 45 degrees north. By sailing the rivers Wista (in Poland) and Dnister (in Ukraine) to this delta, traders accomplished the first half of the shortest route from the Baltic to the Black Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean. The direction from Ales Stenar to the Nile Delta, the center of the Northern Egyptian Empire, is 60 degrees SE (60 stones), and the complementary angle $(90-60) = 30$ degrees, is the latitude of the Nile Delta at 30 degrees N. (Complementary angles are used in megalithic sites to encode large numbers, because this was easier than moving large numbers of stones. Think of the labor involved.) The two halves of the ship each contain 30 menhirs, confirming the 30 degree latitude of the Delta. If you exclude the 3 bow and 3 stern menhirs, which are slightly taller, the sides of the ship each contain $52/2 = 26$ menhirs, the 26 degree latitude of the United Egyptian Empire,

halfway between the Tropic of Cancer and the Nile Delta. This latitude marks the center of government in Egypt.

The Crossing Via the Upper North

THE AXIS of the monument points 45 degrees NW via the northern tip of Jutland (Denmark), the southern tip of Norway, the northern tip of the Shetland Islands and the Faeroes, to the SE and West Coasts of Iceland, and the East Coast of Greenland (at 65 degrees N.) The 58 big menhirs of Ales Stenar correspond to the north coast of Scotland at 58 degrees N, which is very important (Refs.8,9). From this location, it is a 45 degree angle to sail via the SW coast of Iceland to Cape Holm, Greenland, on the Arctic Circle, at 67 degrees N. From megalithic monuments, such as Stonehenge, and Loughcrew, Ireland, we have shown that Greenland was found by explorers from Iceland at the latitude of 67 degrees (Refs.5-7). The complementary angle of 23 ($90-23$) = 67 degrees, provides this other holy latitude, the Arctic Circle, which was holy to the Sunreligion, because it is the northernmost latitude where the Sun shines at midwinter. Seen from the center of the monument on the winter solstice, the Sun rises exactly behind the big SE menhir on the axis (Refs.1-4).

In total, Ales Stenar consists of 60 stones, which encode the S and SW Capes of Greenland, at 60 degrees N. The sailing direction from the SW Cape to the coast of Labrador is 45 degrees SW, which appears to them as they reach the latitude of 56 degrees N, the same latitude as Ales Stenar, as shown by the $58-2=56$ menhirs in the two sides of the ship. The SW side of the central part of the ship, including the cardinal stones, contains 8 stones (#41-#48), encoding the sailing distance of $8dl=8$ degrees = 8 Egyptian Moira = 480 Nautical Miles (NM). Significant sites always contain their latitudes encoded in the site design, and it is done here by the 60 stones minus the 4 cardinal stones.

These stones simultaneously encode the 56 degree latitude where a big new land was found on the other side of the Ocean, which is one of the main reasons why this monument was built, and why it is located where it is. (Note that there are significant parallels with Stonehenge, such as the 56 Aubrey Holes inside the circular wall of this monument.) By dropping off the 3 bow and 3 stern menhirs, we find the latitude of important Belle Isle Strait, at $58-6=52$ degrees N. So the sailing route west of Newfoundland is shown to be preferred. The sailing direction from the SW Cape of Newfoundland to Cape Breton Island is 45 degrees SW, again shown by the orientation of the ship at 45 degrees.

Central America

Sailing continues to the south along the East Coast of the US. The 2 big menhirs on the axis encode the south cape of Florida, 2 degrees above the Tropic of Cancer, at $23+2=25$ degrees N (see also Table 1). The same 2 menhirs provide the sailing distance to Cuba, $2dl=2$ degrees = 120 NM. The four sides at the ends of the ship each contain 11 menhirs (Fig.1), encoding the sailing direction from Cuba to Yucatan, 11 degrees WSW. Again, the 2 big menhirs on the axis provide the sailing distance involved, about 222km.

THE 16 MENHIRS in the central part of the ship provide the latitude of the culture of the North Coast of Honduras, Belize and Guatemala, at 16 degrees N. Adding the 2 big menhirs on the axis again, gives us the latitude of the civilization around the Gulf of Campeche ("Egyptian Bay"), at 18 degrees N. This is the center of the Realm of the Dead, called "the Land of Punt". These two latitudes are common in late megalithic monuments and petroglyphs (Ref.5). The complementary angle of the monument's 60 stones ($90^{\circ}-60=30^{\circ}$) reveals the Mississippi River Delta at 30 degrees N, gateway to the Poverty Point complex. It was of importance for the copper trade with the hinterland.

The visits to Punt took place in the so-called Formative Period in Central America, which lasted from about 1500 BC to 200 AD. In this period the most striking characteristics of the civilization developed. Around 500 BC the first towns and states are in evidence, in several places, more or less at the same time. The mouth of the Motagua River, at 16 degrees N, leads south to the Old Maya Culture, which developed from about 2000 BC, and flourished after c.1600 BC, when permanent villages appeared along the river valleys. The main center formed around Copan, Honduras. Around 500 BC, the time of these visits, a gradual expansion of these settlements took place, and the growing town of Tikal began to develop. The Zapotecs lived further west, and ruled the valley of Oaxaca from a town on Monte Alban ("the hill of the jaguar"), which had at least 5000 inhabitants in this time period, and possesses interesting petroglyphs indicating cultural diffusion. The Olmec culture flourished from c.1200-300 BC, famous for their unique art, and their religion and calendar. The colossal Negroid stone heads with Egyptian-style helmets found around the ceremonial plazas date from before 500 BC (Refs.15-20).

The Southern Crossing

CENTRAL AMERICA could also be reached via the Southern Crossing of the Ocean (see Ref.5). The departure point is the Cape Verde Islands, at 16 degrees north, again encoded by the 16 menhirs in the central part of the ship. The sailing direction from the Cape Verde Islands to the closest Brazilian shore is 60 degrees SW, again encoded by the 60 stones. The two ends of the ship each contain 23 menhirs, corresponding to the sailing distance, $23dl = 23 \text{ degrees} = 1380 \text{ NM}$, which is correct. The big SE menhir on the axis corresponds with the southern Atlantic island of St. Paul at 1 degree N. The 4 menhirs of the cardinal directions correspond with the two islands of Fernando de Noronha, at 4 degrees S, and together these 5 correspond

with Cape Sao Roque (the "Holy Rock"), Brazil, at 5 degrees South.

The Return Routes

AN ALTERNATIVE return route from Central America to Europe proceeded via the isolated island of Bermuda. The 3 bow menhirs (#29,#30,#31) correspond to Bimini near Florida, 3 degrees above the Tropic of Cancer, at $23+3 = 26$ degrees N. The 2 big menhirs on the axis encode Bermuda, 2 degrees above the Nile Delta, at $30+2 = 32$ degrees N, as well as the initial sailing direction (ISD) from Great Abaco to Bermuda, 32 degrees NE. Between the cardinal stones in the center quadrants are $6+6 = 12$ menhirs, corresponding to the sailing distance involved, $12dl = 12 \text{ degrees} = 720 \text{ NM}$. Bermuda was discovered from the American coast, about 2200 BC, as shown by the Devil's Head petroglyphs in Harmony, Maine (Ref.5). However, from Bermuda to the West Azores is a long sailing distance.

For that reason, most ships sailed along the East Coast of the US to the north. The 3 bow and 3 stern menhirs encode Cape Hatteras, the East Cape of the US, 6 degrees above the Nile Delta, at $30+6 = 36$ degrees N. It is located at the same latitude as the famous Strait of Gibraltar, at the entrance of the Mediterranean. The main departure point for returning, with the winds and currents, was the east coast of Nova Scotia, at 45 degrees N, again encoded by the 45 degree axis angle. They oriented on Cape Race, Newfoundland, 2 degrees higher, encoded by the 2 big menhirs on the axis, at $45+2 = 47$ degrees N. It is the East Cape of North America. The sailors focused upon finding the West Azores, in mid-ocean at 39 degrees N, encoded by adding together the 23 menhirs of the south end of the ship, with the 16 central menhirs ($23+16 = 39$). The mathematical encoding is beautiful in its simplicity. Other encodings are of course possible, but are less likely.

The ship is sailing SE from Newfoundland. So the 3 bow menhirs (#1, #2, and #58) symbolize the 3 island group of the Azores, which had been discovered by 3600 BC, as shown in the Tumulus of Gavrinis, in the Gulf of Morbihan, Brittany (Ref.5). Excluding these 3 bigger stones, the end of the ship has 9 stones on each side of the end, symbolizing the 9 islands of the Azores. The 9 menhirs on each side add together to the initial sailing direction (ISD) from Cape Race to the important West Azores, 18 degrees ESE, and the sailing distance of $18dl = 18 \text{ degrees} = 1080 \text{ NM}$, which is correct. The 3 stern menhirs and the 30 stones at the SE half of the ship encode the terminal sailing direction (TSD) in the neighborhood of the West Azores, $30+3 = 33 \text{ degrees ESE}$. The difference between the sailing directions is due to the curvature of the Earth. The image is striking, the lonely stones of Ales Stenar on the high ridge overlooking the Baltic is like a small ship sailing the endless ocean!

From the West Azores they sailed along the other islands to the East Azores. The big SE menhir on the axis encodes Sta Maria, East Azores, 1 degree above Gibraltar, at $36+1 = 37 \text{ degrees N}$. The latitude of the Eastern Canaries (at 29 degrees N) corresponds to the ISD from Sta Maria to Madeira, 29 degrees ESE. Half the 16 menhirs in the center correspond to the sailing distance to Madeira, $8dl = 8 \text{ degrees} = 480 \text{ NM}$. The latitude of Gibraltar (at 36 degrees N) corresponds to the terminal sailing direction (TSD) in the neighborhood of Madeira, 36 degrees SE. The 3 bow menhirs encode the latitude of Madeira, 3 degrees above the Nile Delta, at $30+3 = 33 \text{ degrees N}$.

ALL THE 58 menhirs of the ship correspond to the sailing direction to the eastern Canary Islands, 58 degrees SE. The 29 menhirs of the SE half of the ship encode the Eastern Canaries, at 29 degrees N. This is the end of the religious voyage to Central America, the Land of Punt. The whole ship of Ales Stenar

symbolizes the pilgrimage to the west. The northern menhirs (#2-#29), represent the northern route, which is from the Old World (stern menhir) to the New World (the bow menhir), while the southern menhirs (#31-#58) represent the main southern return route.

Dating and Discussion

DATING THE monument of Ales Stenar poses a real problem. It is surely after the discovery of America via the Atlantic, c.2500 BC, because of the encodings we see in the monument (Refs.5-7). It describes the crossing of the Labrador Sea from South Greenland to mainland North America, which points to a date after c.1600 BC. Ales Stenar is a highly stylized ship, telling a story by reference latitudes, and these show a very late megalithic date, after c.1000 BC. The article clearly shows a relation with the Egyptian SunGod religion, so it was probably built before the Second Persian Rule of Egypt, which lasted from 341 BC to 333 BC. Surely it was built before the Hellenistic Period, which lasted from 332 BC until 642 AD. During the Hellenistic Period in Egypt, Greek was the official language in Egypt.

The fact that cup marks have been found on many of the menhirs (Refs.1-4), points to the Bronze Age, which ends in Scandinavia c.500 BC. However, it has been observed that some of these marks were carved in strange places, some hardly visible. The idea was put forth that these menhirs were taken from old Bronze Age monuments in the neighborhood. We doubt this, since the stones are thought to have been brought large distances, and in general sanctuaries were not built by demolishing older sanctuaries. Usually, megalithic monuments were only seriously disturbed in recent centuries. But Ales Stenar is a Scandinavian ship-setting, and these kinds of structures, though generally much smaller, usually date from the Iron Age, or even later. For all these reasons we think Ales Stenar dates from the very end of the Late Bronze Age, which is c.500 BC.

However, a strong relation with the Egyptian SunGod religion is a typical megalithic tradition. The date of c.500 BC implies that Ales Stenar is by far the latest megalithic monument of Europe! The megalithic culture officially ends c.1500 BC.

THE BIGGEST carved rock petroglyph of a ritual boat in Sweden (Fig.2), having a length of 4.13 meters, has the same date, c.500 BC (Ref.11). It is from Rikeby in Uppland (north of Stockholm), which is situated at the latitude of Cape Farvel, Greenland, at 60 degrees N. It contains 6 full sized and dressed rowers, encoding the NW peninsula of Iceland, at $60+6=66$ degrees N. The whole boat is carried by another man, the SunGod, encoding Cape Holm, Greenland, at the holy Arctic Circle, at $66+1=67$ degrees N. He carries the ship to the Realm of the Dead in the west (from Greenland to America). The lower petroglyph in Fig.2, dated from c.3200 BC, is a ship with 67 rowers, showing that it too, sailed to Cape Holm at the Arctic Circle. Note the long time span of this Megalithic, religious tradition.

Beneath one of the Ales Stenar menhirs (#6) a piece of birch charcoal was found, and carbon-dated to c.600 AD (Ref.4). This result is definitely not in line with the previous arguments. We have to presume this sample was not representative. We recommend further research in this field, if possible, to clarify these conflicting indications. The Danish island of Als (meaning "sanctuary" again) is 270 km west of this monument. On this island a now famous ship of 19m length has been excavated, which has been dated from the Iron Age, c.150 BC. The remains contained tens of iron shields, spears and swords, but also Roman beakers and dishes, which points to trade with the Roman Empire. Compare this with the monument of Ales Stenar, with its religious orientation on Egypt; the Ales Stenar monument is clearly of a much earlier date.

Table 1 shows the menhir encodings for the sailing route to Central America. The Table illustrates the beauty of the methodology used to encode large numbers. Rather than constructing a huge, laborious monument of a great many stones, they used a few combinations repeatedly, as an encoding convention. These rules of encoding in this monument used the 60 total stones, 1 end post stone, the 2 end post stones, the 4 cardinal stones, and the 8 stones of each of the side quadrants, the 23 stones of the end quadrants, and complementary numbers (from 90). Clearly, the most important encodings of the monument are the 23 degree Tropic of Cancer, and the 60 degree Cape Farvel of South Greenland. All the encodings of Table 1 were done using these numbers: 60,23,8,4,2, and 1.

This description of the pilgrimage to Central America, the Realm of the Dead, is confirmed by the menhir distances within the monument. This is a particular feature of this late megalithic construction, and important to mention. As an example, we will illustrate the main goal of the voyage. The width/length ratio of Ales Stenar, at 56 degrees N, confirms the latitude of the North Coast of Honduras, at $(19.1\text{m}/67.0\text{m}) \times 56=16$ degrees N. This and similar results of other distance/length ratios contribute to the beauty of this ancient, sacred monument.

THE NUMBERS of the huge menhirs in these monuments is not happenstance, but carefully designed by the human mind. As in other megalithic sites, astronomic and calendrical meanings appear to have been also built into the monument (Ref.2). This complex entwining of encodings is particularly clear at Stonehenge in England, and at America's Stonehenge in New Hampshire (Ref.5). Given their known level of astronomic expertise, the encoding of their adventures and commercial routes in numbers and petroglyphs should have been expected. Remember that these people could not write their spoken language, but they

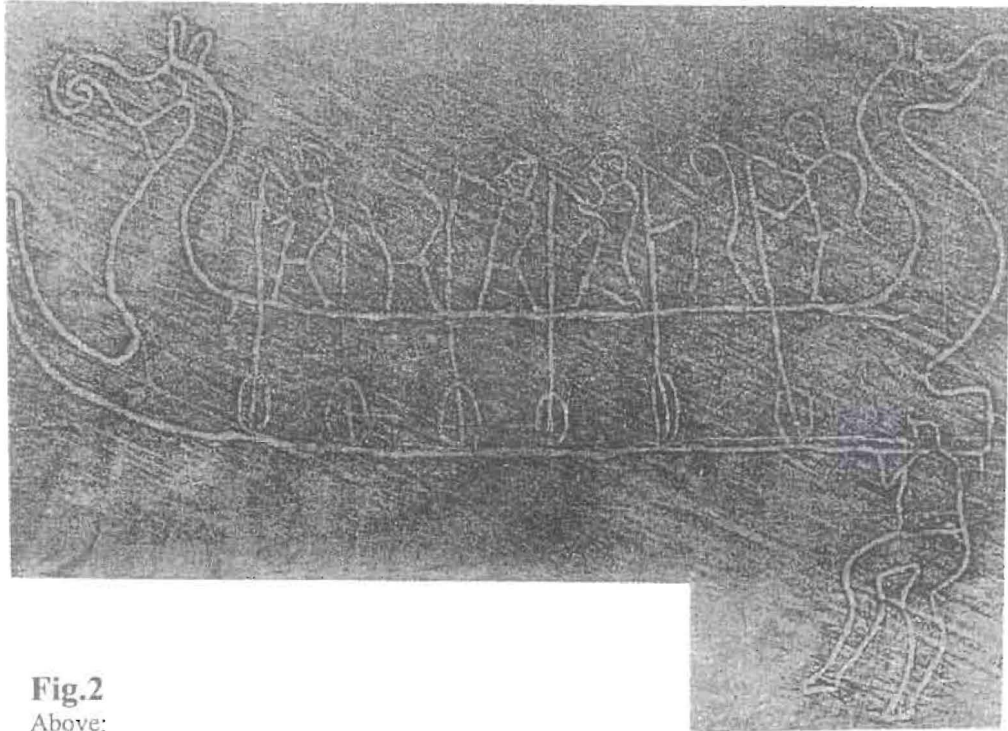


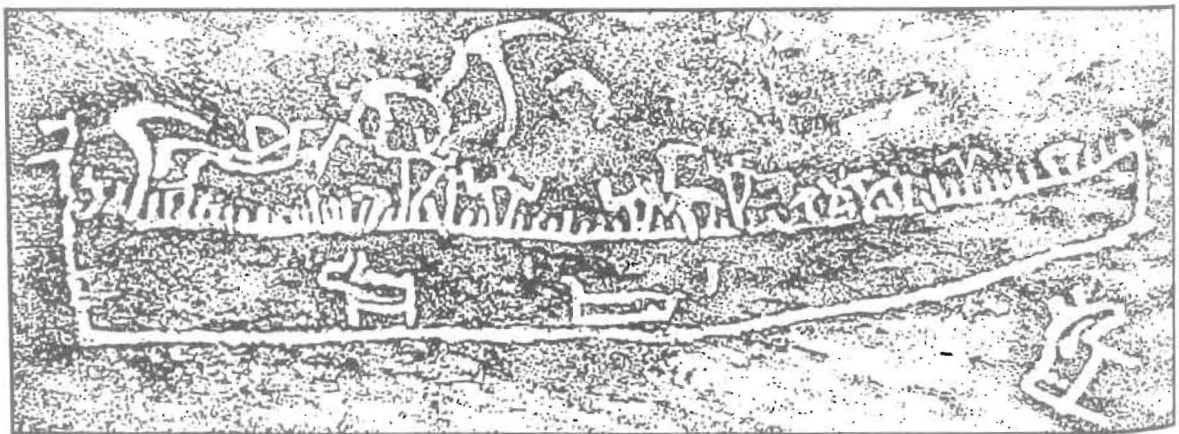
Fig.2

Above:

Petroglyph of a ritual boat (with a length of 4.13m) which is carried to the Realm of the Dead in the west (America), via the holy Arctic Circle, at 67 degrees N. Rikeby, at 60 degrees N, Uppland, north of Stockholm, Sweden, c.500 BC (Ref.11).

Below:

Petroglyph of ritual boat from Namforsen in Angermanland, near the east coast of Central Sweden. It is a huge fantasy boat (with a length of 2.4m), containing 67 rowers, showing the latitude of the holy Arctic Circle, at 67 degrees N. Above the crew are carvings of features of the newly discovered coast of Greenland. (Namforsen, Noton Island, Angermanland, Sweden, c.3200 BC (Ref.11).



lived outdoors much of the time, and must have been very capable of physical exploits, in a world full of wildlife, prior to commercial fishing. That so much information, both astronomic and geographic,

could be encoded in so few stones must have seemed holy, or special to them, as it seems amazing to us.

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