

A newsletter from the rocks: To place a fire – now with Bornholm evidence

In *Adoranten* 2020, folklore material is presented illustrating the beliefs that a potential devastating fire in a magical way could be placed in a sacred stone or boulder. The most interesting example is Dyvelstenen on the Danish island of Samsø (Kaul 2020; Kaul 2021).

In 2021, archive studies, Bornholms Museum, have revealed further evidence as to these ideas of a fire being 'kept' in a powerful stone, only released, if the stone was broken or destroyed. In a diary of a local antiquarian, Hans Anker (1858-1923), hitherto unknown information has been found, concerning a fine rock carving stone, covered with more than 100 cup marks, at Ringeby, east of Rønne, Bornholm, Denmark.

At about 1900, the owner of the Ringeby-stone wanted to break the stone into pieces. This did not happen, because a neighbor mentioned that a dangerous (potential) fire in a magical way was placed under the stone: As soon as the

stone was damaged or removed, a devastating fire would be released, set free, aiming his house and farm. The farmer listened and understood. Consequently, the stone was left unharmed, today as protected prehistoric monument.

In the next issue of *Adoranten*, the reader will learn more about the Ringeby cup-mark stone, as well as other evidence of remains of fire being used in magic and folk medicine in past and present.

Flemming Kaul,
flemming.kaul@natmus.dk
Finn Ole Nielsen,
fon@bornholmsmuseer.dk

Literature:

Kaul, Flemming 2020. Dyvelstenen, Sacred Stone on the Island of Samsø, Denmark – History, Myths and Cult. *Adoranten* 2020: 41-56.

Kaul, Flemming 2021. Dyvelstenen ved Nordby på Samsø – en indholdsrig hel-
ligsten: Fortællinger fra
mikrokosmos til makrokos-
mos. In: (Nymark, Andreas,
ed.), *Samsø, et Sted af
Betydning*. Studier i Samsøs
Arkæologi og Historie vol.
1. Samsø Museumsfor-
ening, Tranebjerg: 297-326.



Fig. 1. A large boulder at Ringeby, Bornholm, covered with more than 100 cup-marks, was saved from destruction due to the beliefs that if damaged, a devastating fire would be released in the nearby farm. Photo: Gerhard Milstreu.