

PENTTI AALTO — EDWARD TRYJARSKI

A Runic Tombstone Inscription Presumedly from Minusinsk

We have no clear evidence of the circumstances in which this stone was discovered. One thing is, however, certain: it was an object of J. G. Granö's (1882—1956) interest and a photograph of the stone was found among scientific papers left by the eminent Finnish scholar. We are greatly indebted to J. G. Granö's daughter, Mrs. Siine Schauman for having put this photograph at our disposal. As far as we know, it has never been published and it became the only authority for our edition.

At a point 65 km. south east from Minusinsk there was the colony Verhne Suetuk, founded in 1857 for deportees from Finland. J. G. Granö's father, J. Granö acted there as priest in favour of those deportees in 1885—91 and 1902—13, partially living just in Verhne Suetuk. It is known that J. G. Granö started his expedition of 1906 from Minusinsk, and lost his camera somewhat later when crossing the Ha-Kem. It is probable, that the photograph in question might be taken during the same expedition. It is also very possible that the stone might have belonged to the celebrated Martyanov Museum in Minusinsk (Минусинский Государственный Музей им. Н. М. Мартянова). This museum was founded in 1877 and in 1931 divided into ten departments such as: "Natural History", "Archaeology", "Handicraft" etc.¹ As shown by the photograph, our stone was placed (maybe especially for taking a photograph) in front of a wall made of bricks, some parts of which are clearly visible (see Plates 1 and 2). It is to be noted that among the papers left by J. G. Granö there are some other photographs taken, as it seems, at the same place and representing fragments of a similar and most probably identical wall. Since there have existed in Minusinsk one museum only and it was located in a building made of red bricks, our guess is that all these photographs, that of our stone included, had been taken in the courtyard of the same museum.²

¹ Cf. *Сибирская Советская Энциклопедия* III (Moscow 1931), col. 462. The importance of the Siberian collection found in this Museum is emphasized by R. F. Martin, *L'âge du bronze au musée de Minoussinsk*, Stockholm 1893, p. 1.

² Cf. its photograph published in the above mentioned encyclopaedia, also that taken by J. G. Granö, p. 37 below.

Much to our regret, we do not know the actual fate of the stone. For this reason we consider the publication of its photograph very important, as it may be the only existing one.

On the other hand, we realize that the importance of this text is rather modest as compared to great runic inscriptions. This is due, on one hand, to the fact that the text itself is very short and that it belongs to a well known type of tomb inscriptions, on the other, to its very bad state of preservation. As a matter, out of some forty signs one can be certain of few ones only.

The surface of the stone looks very rough and the signs are rather scratched than carved on it what makes reading much more difficult. Notwithstanding all our efforts to decipher all signs (a series of copies in different light conditions and positive enlargements up to 26×95 cm. as well) the result is not quite satisfactory. The principal difficulty consists in eliminating numerous additional lines and dashes which probably belong to main signs in rare cases only. It is also to be noticed that even undoubted outlines of the letters are on the photograph in two shades, viz. grey and black what might be the result of a direction and inclination of the tool.

Black spots scattered all over the surface do not show, as it might seem, the state of the deteriorated stone but are holes in the negative. The letters run in two curved lines starting from a presumable top of the stone to its centre. In the lower part of the stone no signs are visible. It is possible therefore that the stone was primarily placed in a standing position and that this part was wedged in the ground.

There is no doubt that we have to do with an epitaph. This is corroborated before all by some typical words generally used in earlier known inscriptions of the kind.³

Untidy writing (and perhaps consequently also a lower social rank of a dead person) is shown not only by different size of the letters and their capricious arrangement, but also by omitting colons which seem to be never used here.

Transliteration

Line 1 "bash" $n^2 ?$. $\ddot{u} ? .. \check{c} b^2$ $\ddot{a} . \check{s} a t^1 . d^1 a ? m$ $^a r^1 \ddot{u} l d \ddot{u} m$

Line 2 $\ddot{a} r^2 d \ddot{a} m i m$ $\ddot{a} b^2$ $i \check{c} i m i z$ $^a m t^1 a$ $d^1 m$ $a . i$

Translation

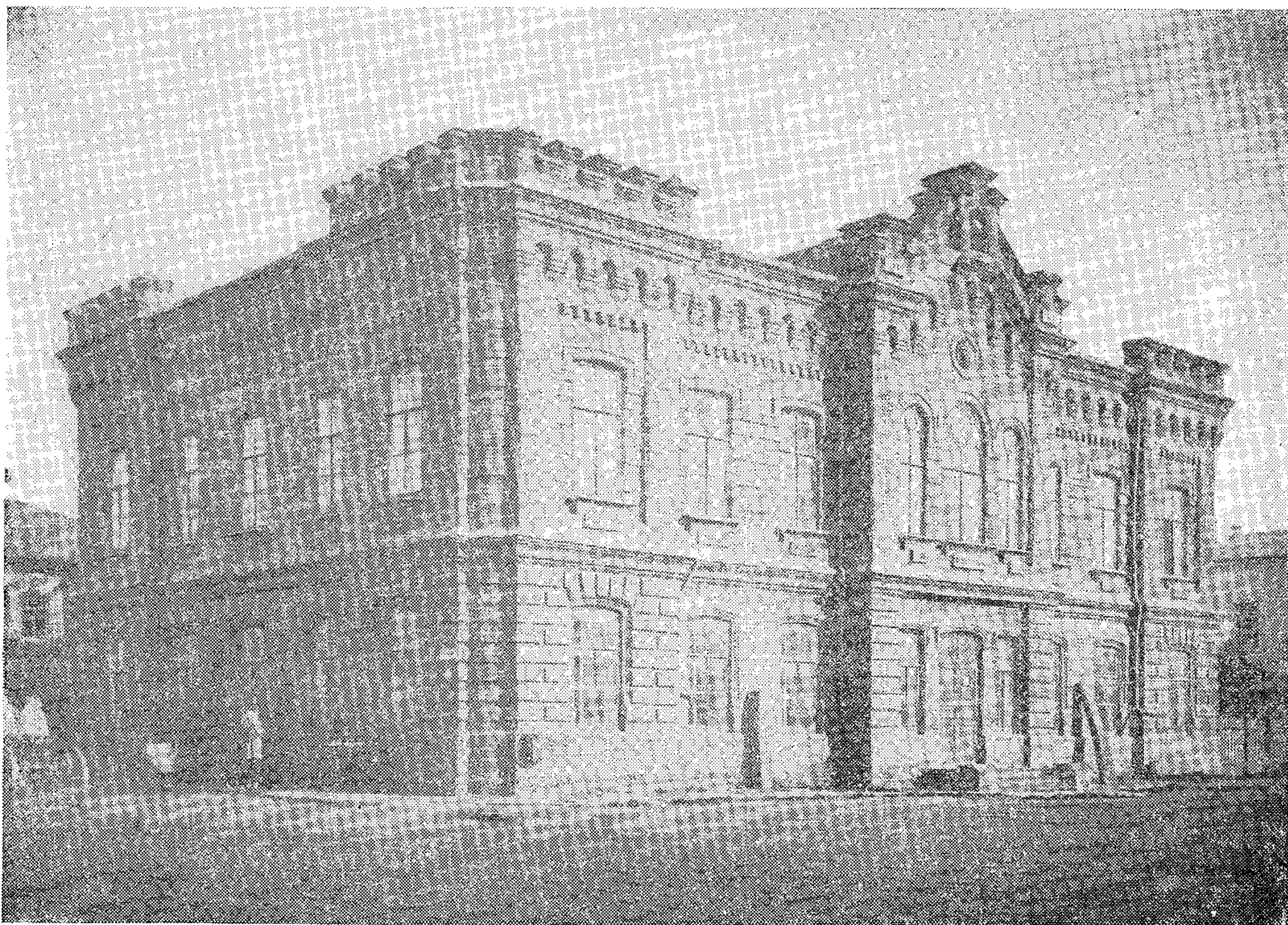
Line 1 ... I separated (from) ...

Line 2 ... my heroic bravery, house, our elder brother (or: interior ?)

³ Cf. Е. С. Малов, *Енисейская письменность тюрков*, Москва—Ленинград 1952. Е. С. Малов published two inscriptions from Minusinsk Museum in "Язык и мышление", VI—VII, pp. 259 ff. Three tombstone runic inscriptions from the same collection were lately published by Д. М. Насилов, *О некоторых памятниках Минусинского музея*, "Народы Азии и Африки", 6, 1963, pp. 124—129.

Commentary

- Line 1 (1) It is very difficult to know whether we have to do with a “bash” starting the inscription, a *tamya* or a simple crack of the stone. In JSFOu XXVIII, 2, p. 57 G r a n ö published a plate showing the *tamyas* he had met. There are among them such as: 15: $\times$, 22: $\times$ or 58: $\times$. It would be therefore suggested that the initial sign of our inscription might be also a *tamya*.
 (19—24) *arildim* instead of expected *adirildim*? It should be noted, however, that this verb has several parallel form, e.g. in the *Xwāstwānift* 1, 16 (L e C o q, p. 9) we read *atrilti*.



Museum in Minusinsk

Photo by J. G. Granö

Handwritten symbols and numbers arranged in a grid-like pattern, possibly representing a cipher or a code. The symbols are written in a stylized, cursive script. The numbers are arranged in a sequence from 1 to 44, with some numbers appearing multiple times. The symbols are organized into rows and columns, with some symbols appearing in multiple positions. The overall layout is irregular, with the symbols and numbers scattered across the page.

Text

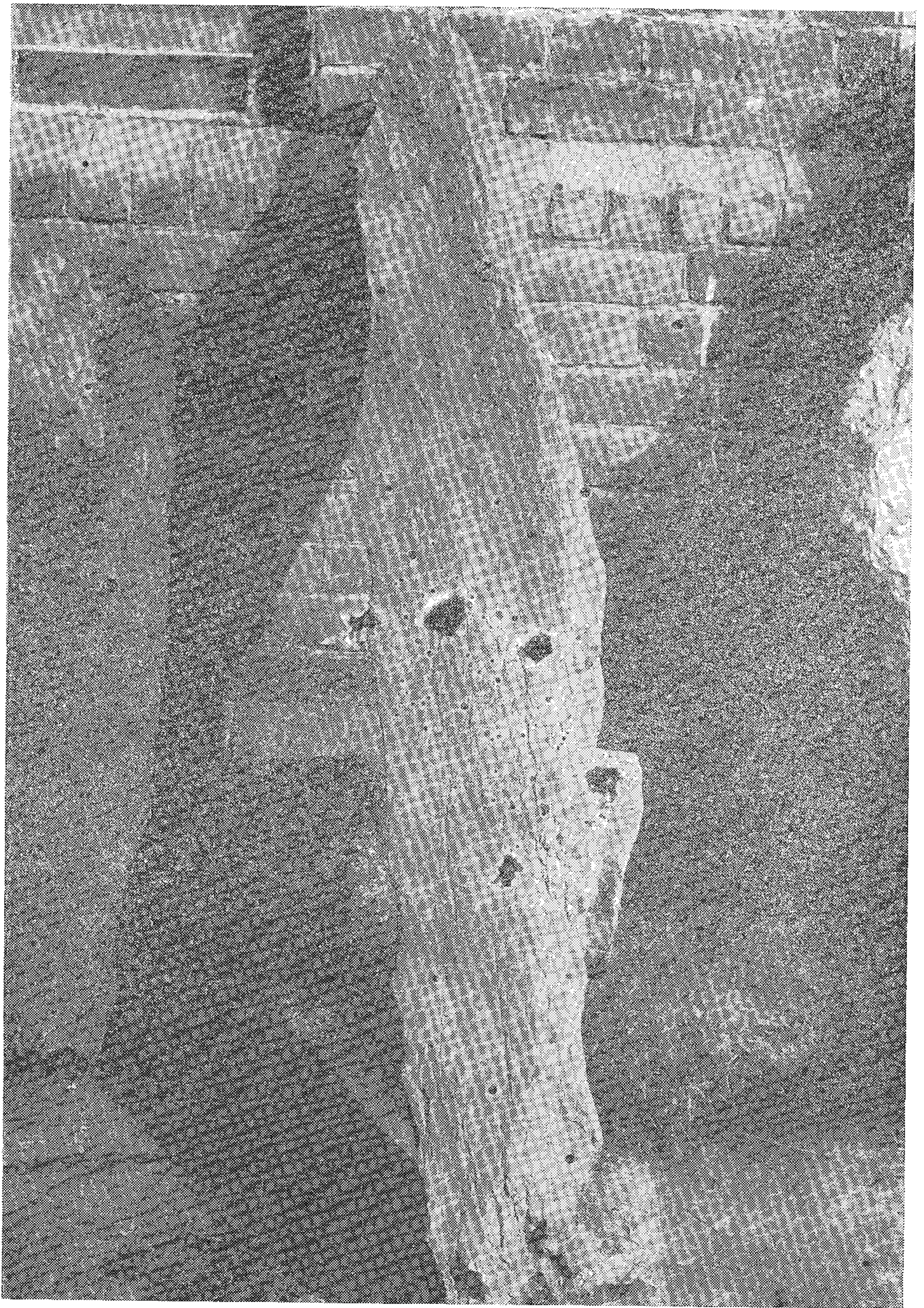


Plate 1. The tombstone presumedly from Minusinsk
Photo by J. G. Granö

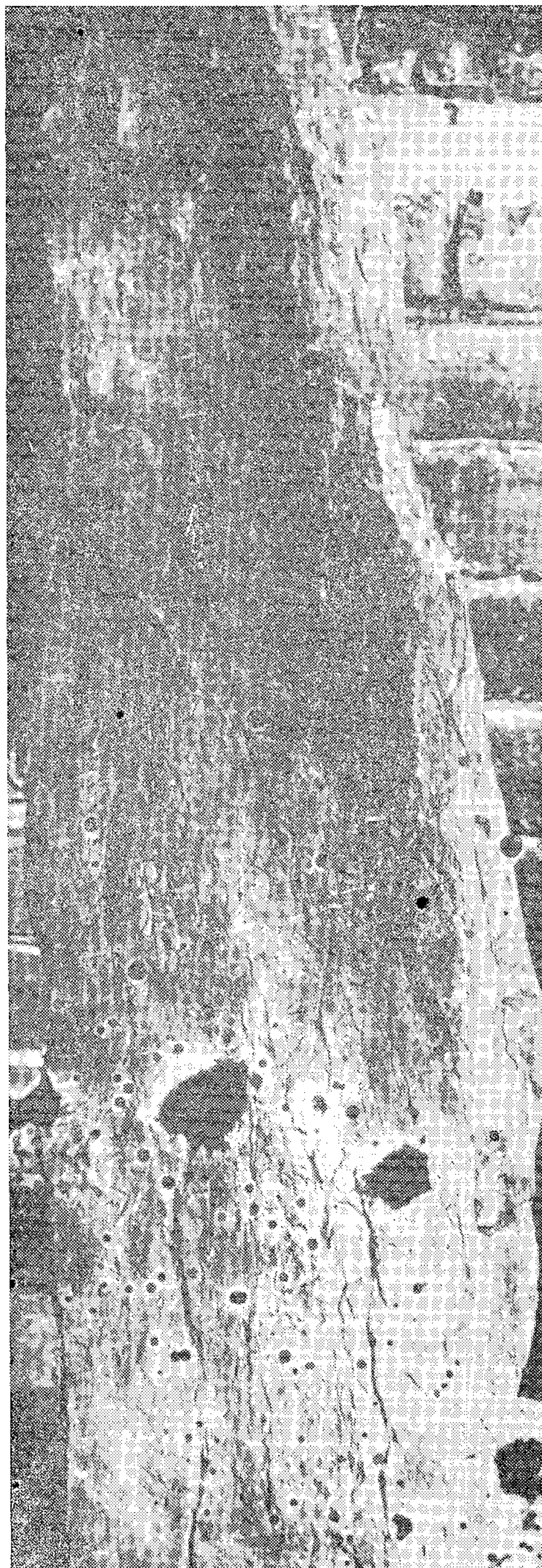
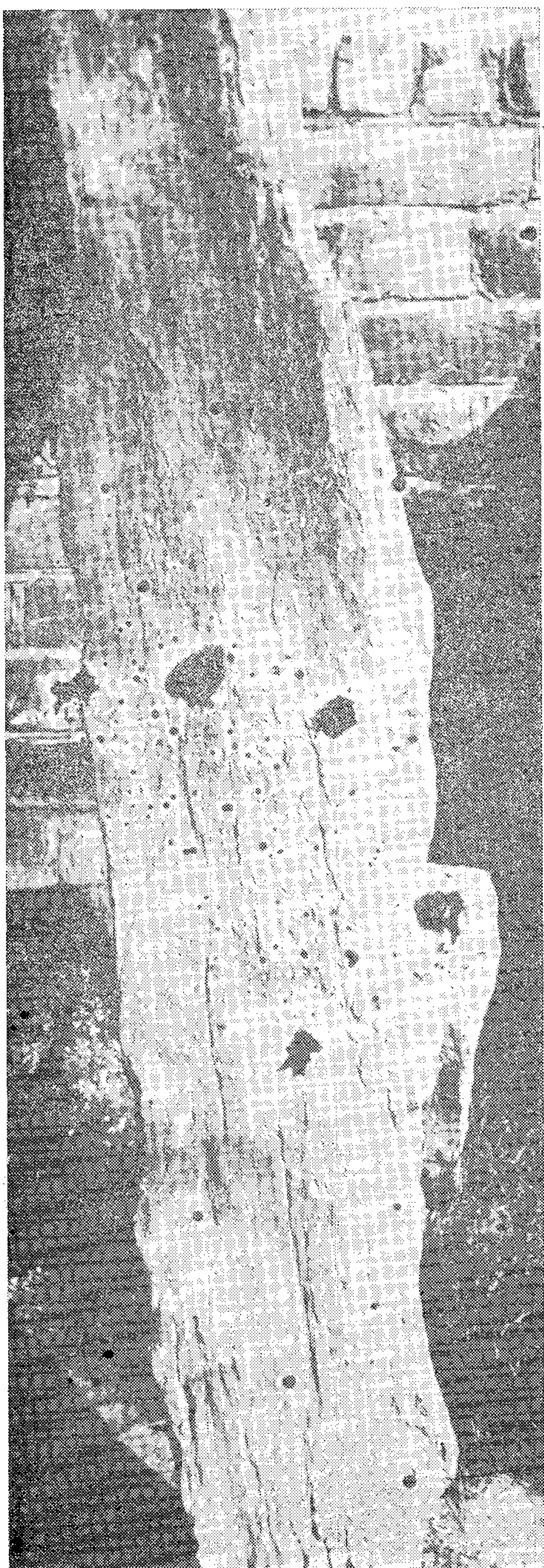


Plate 2. The same stone (enlargements)