LANDSCAPE AND ORIENTATION OF MEGALITHIC CHAMBERS IN MECKLENBURG-VORPOMMERN (NORTH GERMANY): PHENOMENOLOGY PERSPECTIVE

(Bentang Alam dan Orientasi Megalitik di Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Jerman Utara: Perspektif Phenomenologi)

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ABSTRACT

Phenomenological perspective is one of the approaches in archaeology especially applies to the use of sensory experiences of the past peoples through material cultures. Phenomenological approaches is based of some German philosopher such as Edmund Husserl, MartinHeidegger which put their attention to perceptions and knowledge which are based on experience of daily lives. Phenomenological approach have been produces a great impact through some works of archaeologist especialy from the group of Post-Procesualist such as Christian Tilley and others in attempt to interpretated the landscape phenomenon in Britain archaeological sites. In relations with that, the phenomenology approaches will be used to analysed the groups of megaliths chambers in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (northern Germany) according to the cosmological significance.

Keywords: phenomenology, megalithic, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

ABSTRAK

Penomenologi adalah salah satu pendekatan yang digunakan dalam arkeolologi terutama dalam menganalisa 'experience' atau pengalaman manusia pada masa lalu melalui budaya material yang ditinggalkan. Pendekatan ini diadopsi dari filosof Jerman seperti: Edmund Husserl dan Martin Heidegger yang menekankan bahwa esensi dari presepsi manusia adalah terletak pada 'pengalaman' yang ditemukan di setiap hari. Pendekatan ini kemudian diadopsi oleh arkeolog terutama yang berasal dari grup Post-prosesualis seperti Christian Tilley dan lainnya terutama dalam menginterpretasikan arkeologi landskap. Merujuk pada hal ini, megalitik di Mecklenburg-Vorpommern diindikasikan sebagai 'buah' dari pengalaman oleh manusia pada masa lalu dalam menginterpretasikan alam sekitar mereka terutama dalam hubungannya dengan kosmologi.

Kata kunci: penomenologi, megalitik, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

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INTRODUCTION

Megalith buildings is a product of the human culture in the past which found spread in prehistoric sites in Europe and also in the other parts of the world. The distribution of megaliths in some areas in Europe. is estimated to have begun in the era of transition between Mesolithic and Neolithic time (Tilley, 1994:86), For example, the evidence can be shown in the coastal areas of south-west Wales, Britain, where the megalithic chambers are situated in the same general areas that habitually exploited during the Mesolithic (Tilley, 1994:87). In the region of Pembrokeshire, some of archaeology sites namely the Caldey rock, Nab Head, these sites are sets at the natural topographic features such as coastal, waters and marsh areas (Tilley, 1994:83). This evidence shown by the fact of the local environmental conditions, availability of exploitable resources indicating by faunal collections associated with human activities. Beside as a complex of economic resources, the natural topographic also provide some other functions refers to the specific locales (Tilley, 1994:87). The number of preference areas, is proximately have an interpretation of the meaning which symbolized the cosmological significance.

In Neolithic times the life is changed especially in economical and social aspects. For the economy aspect, the fundamental of life was changed to the farming activities and the herding animals, the life becoming 'domesticated' (Hodder, 1990; Whittle, 1996). In social aspect, the domestication became 'ritually', it something more ideological orientation. The importance paths, locales such as coast, hills, it filled by ritual and ceremonial and intepreted with the different conotation (Tilley, 1994:207). The life is connected with narratives.

telling stories, mythologies and ancetral perspective.

In Neolithic times, the landscape became more important. Especially for the megalithic building, it was understood in terms of its relationship to the specific places. The main topic have appeared such as: which topograpy features that will used to placed the buildings?

In Germany at Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, the megalithic buildings have been found in some areas and built in a certain places. This building is various in forms that estimated evolve by local style such as 'urdolmen' (simple dolmen), erweiterter dolmen (extended dolmen), großdolmen (great dolmen), ganggrab (passage grave), steinkiste (stone cist) and hünenbett (long barrow). Related to the types of megalithic buildings in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, it functioned as the burials which it shown by the remains of the deceased body associated with the differences of the good-graves (Schuldt, 1972; Sprockhoff, 1892-1967). The megalithic buildings have been constructed in the Neolithic period (early and middle Neolithic), during the Trichterbecherkultur (Funnel Beaker culture) about 4100-2800 BC (Müller, 2011; Schuldt, 1972; Sprockhoff, 1892-1967).

The presence of megaliths which distributed in some prominent landscape features in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern is appeared to be specific items of archaeological interest in this research. Since the work of archaeologists tended to treat the megalithic buildings and the relations to the landscape as culturally meaningful and rich of phenomenological perspective.

Phenomenological Perspectives

Phenomenological perspectives have been used as an approach to answered the questions that arise in in archaeology research, especially

addressing the perception of the landscape in the past. This approach based on Edmund Husserl (1931), Martin Heidegger (1927), Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962) studies and others which put their attention to the essences of human perception through some lived experiences.

This approach as a result of antropology theory to interpretated the space and places which used by archaeologist such as Christian Tilley (1994); Cummings & Whittle (2004) in their interpretation to landscape archaeology in Britain.

Phenomenological landscapes as an abstract dimension in which human activities and events took place (Tilley, 1994:9: Cummings & Whittle. 2004). Space and places had some impact of human activity which related to each other; without places there can be no spaces (Tilley, 1994:15). The impact of space activities can be interpreted culturally or other meaning depends of how people give it meaning based of daily experience. Related with that, the interpretation is expressed through some symbol which contain with the series of meaning as outlined with action and event. According to Geertz, man need some 'symbolic thing' orient theirself as a media to expressed their life thought (Geertz, 1973:45).

In term of cultural, symbols often expressed in rituals activities through some significance relevance between peoples and places that it contains some ideas of how humans view of universe (Spencer, 1996:535). The mainly ideas which contribute with different views regarding symbolic forms of expressions. This symbolic forms just only makes sense and will be meaningful if it bound with its context (Hodder, 1990; Whittle, 1996). According to this understanding, megalithic chambers as a human cultural products just can be interpreted if concerned on the view of its context related to the landscape or place where the monument were build.

The impact of human activities in some places such as megaliths building serves as 'text' which basically without a meaning at all. The meaning arises if text is placed into thecontexts such as landscape. Meaning arises because of the process of 'construction' and should be understood according to the framework of every group of culture (Hodder, 1990).

According to some ethnogaphie data, the presence of megalithic building is always associated with the worship of ancestral spirits. The ancestors is serve as mediators by providing acceses to spiritual guidance and power (Encyclopedia Brittanica). spiritual quidance through the personal relationship with some phenomenal experience. The phenomenal experience is involves the understanding and descriptions of things as they are experienced by a subject (Tilley, 1994:12). It something abstract; natural view of the world and just can be explained with daily experience in this cases the physical and biological experience of landscape component such as earth water, wood, stone, high places, the wind, rain, mountains, sky, stars, sun etc (Tilley, 1994:11, 26). Phenomenology is something undeniable, one aspects of the world which perceived through a particular sense. Phenomenology is contained with some logical principles. general and comprehensive looking at the universe as an answer of ideology issues (Tilley, 1994:24).

Related to the megalithic graves, each of them is assumed have a specific form of position within the cosmological landscape, in any form containing some perspective of power (Tilley, 1994; Cummings &Whittle, 2004). The power can be obtained from multiple objects such as ancestors as a main source and significant place as a medium or intermediator.

Ancestral and its powers

In many cultures, ancestors is an accepted and honored some ritual tradition and considered to have a mystical powers and a strong authority (Morphy, 1991). Ancestors preserve a functional role in the world and control especially in every day life. The ritual tradition which involved some interpretation and view of life which focusing on the relationship with ancestors will have affected lives, individually and also collectively.

The manifestation of ancestors sometimes described through the boundaries of the knowledge system and mythologies (Tilley, 1994:39). Myth is generally refers to the phenomenal physical world that it is rationally understand by touch, sight and can be measured in standard units of time and space (O'Flaherty, 1980:93).

The way of the myth believed can be seen through data ethnographic, surviving in some parts of the world for example in aborigin tribe. For the aborigines, the earth came into being as a result of the actions of ancestors which symbolized in the form of snake. The ancestral snake created some prominent places such as watercourses etc (Tilley, 1994:40). The particular object believed to have a certain power. Also in the Foi tribe, Mistassini Cree, the Koyukon and the Kaluli (still part of aboriginal group), all the life of these groups keys are consisting of ancestral power. In Melanesien tribes in Papua New Guinea, the spirits of ancestors are not visible in their real forms, unexplained phenomena, but are visible in metamorphosed transformations in the form of animal, trees, some plant, rivers, mountains etc. (Tilley, 1994:58). The ancestral spirits believed to occupy the certain parts in the landscapes features, the places are considered sacred, prominent and physiographic features. In this manner becomes humanized and the land

socialized as something replete with ancestral energies that requires care and constant sustenance through ritual magic (Tilley, 1994:58).

The correlation between topography and ancestral past and extending into the future (Tilley, 1994:47; Morphy, 1991:298). This can be seen from Yolngu group of culture at North- east Arnhem land, Australia which also bound up their topographic with some set of mythological system. They used and appreciated the topographic and environment into the seasonal resource exploitation and the mythological system (Morphy, 1991:299).

mythological ln system, connections brings the power of the ancestral to the people which still alive in the present (Morphy, 1991:275). The ancestral past has to be continually brought into and related to activity in the present. This death of body as a component of ancestral power is something dangerous that it can kill (Morphy, 1991:273) and also had the power of bringing into existence the plants and animals of their totem and will be appear by the rites (Tilley, 1994:49).

Deceased body and its orientation

In relation to the orientation, the deceased body often placed at some certain of specific points of cardinal virtues, inside the monument. The majority of the meanings are represented by some sign or symbol for example through the deceased body (Morphy, 1991:266). This mode of experiencing the world may even extend to the human body itself (Tilley, 1994:52). This phenomenon, addressed a ritual function understood as have some ideological role (Tilley, 1994:197). Ideologies are those forms of discourse of knowledge which explain the world or its cultural values in particular and functionally coherent way (Bradley, R 1991). This knowledge which gives this dominant reading to the elements of the symbolic system is reproduced through ritual.

According to this term, the ancestral powers became a subject of knowledge, resources to be worked upon and manipulated for the sectional social interest of individuals or particular social groups. The orientation of the dead body to the specific points is visibly brought the presence of the ancestral past to awareness. Their settings were deliberately chosen to fix a certain vantage point in relation to perception of the world beyond (Tilley, 1994:204).

At general level, the ancestors will be associated with the land and only keep the particular connections with the social group who keep the relation in existence, continuance and maintain a good relations through some ritual practice.

The significant place and its relation with ancestors

Megalithic chambers are often build in the certain places of landscape were visible and invisible all around (Fontijn, 2011: 437, Tilley, Cummings & whittle, 2003; Bradley, R 1991). The visible and invisible are consisting of two items which is identical and have some special corelation. Visible means something able to be seen while invisible is something unable to be seen. When these words are put in the context of megalithic buildings and its landscape features, it will bear an attachment which can not be separated. The megalithic buildings are something that can be seen, is something real while the significant places related to the ideologies which 'hiding' in every prominent features. Every prominent feature is associated with a mythological event and its being bound with the power of ancestral.

Related to the landscapes, it by

definition is a human modification of the environment, and more importantly it only becomes landscape rather than environment when filtered human perception through and interpretation. Landscape is about viewpoints, in all senses of the world (ECL, 2002:29). According to the present of megaliths chambers in every areas, one important point is. the building is visually transforms the landscape. Each chambers created a Vast mortuary landscape and together created the perception of the world (Bourgeois, 2013:5). It is important not to forget that the contemporary term 'landscape' is highly ideological, rather limited definition, are images which are created and read, verbal or nonverbal texts and related to the element of cosmological (Tilley, 1994: 24-25; Cummings & whittle, 2003).

The appearance of landscape features which is described in terms of topography, countours relief, and something related to the geographical descriptions is establish narratives conceptions and became a guides in each activity. According to this understanding, the activities occurs in a place where the particular events happen which better known as locales (Tilley, 1994:27). The locales in a landscape may be natural features such as bays or inlets on a coastline or high points, or humanly created places such as monuments or settlements where embedded in the social times of memory providing a synthesis of heterogeneous phenomena 1994: 25-32). Natural features may be related to events inside enclosures, and perhaps provided the reason for blocks of land being defined as they are in the first place. It may be particular rocks and watercourses were perceived as being inherently powerful or auspicious, and that this power was appropriated through the act of enclosure (Darvill & Thomas, 2001:15).

According the particular to landscape features. there is boundaries which related to prominent land forms such as hills, mountains, cliffs, streams, rivers and watersheds, A boundaries may be marker by changes in gradient on a slope or changes in vegetation or soil or rock types and constituted the symbolism and acts as a sign system for mythological events (Tilley, 1994:39; Williams, 1982:141).

The significant places is always something that can be understood in relation to others. To do some actions is can be successful if supported by the 'rightful place', the cult place by ancestors, the place where occupied by the ancestors such as hill, mountaintops, etc. Every types of significant places in landscape are arise through some experience of individual and groups, it which serve as a something that can 'control' life.

In relation to the ancestral power, the form of megaliths axis is also in the full of 'control'. The axis can be show by entrance, mound, facade, which establish control over the topographic perspective. The significant point will make ancestral powers in the land visible; to be seen and remembered, but always from a particular perspective provided by the vantage points of the monuments (Tilley, 1994:206).

In this cases, the directional line of megalithic orientation is produced an axis outward from the monument and pointing towards to the certain events or objects which is believed to have a certain power. This pointing target is can be sacred places, particular season of the year, the stars event etc. Refers to the some ethnographic data, the tribes in Indonesia for example Torajan people, the ancestors power is 'alive' in some objects of cardinal points. West and east are two 'sacred' places which believed inhabited by ancestors. This characterized by the sun setting regularly, to rise in the east and set in the west every day along the year, belongs to these cardinal points, the power of ancestral have a full control of life. In Guugu Yimithirr (aboriginal people), also they exclusively refer to cardinal directions (Morphy, 1991).

In the end. the ancestral connections is established by the presence of the megalithic building in the landscape, through the significance place and preference orientations. Through their incorporation provides a framework for ordering the relations between people, ancestors and land. Ancestral is the ownership, ancestral is the power.

CONCLUSION

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