

# REPRESENTATION OF KETTLEDRUMS AT SEVERAL MEGALITHIC SITES IN INDONESIA: THE RELATION WITH SOUTHEAST ASIA

Rr. Triwurjani

*Pusat Penelitian Arkeologi Nasional, Jalan Raya Condet Pejaten No.4, Jakarta Selatan 12510, Indonesia  
demplon1@yahoo.com*

**Abstrak. Representasi Nekara pada Beberapa Situs Megalitik di Indonesia: Hubungannya dengan Asia Tenggara.** Nekara pada awalnya dikenal sebagai alat tabuh banyak ditemukan di Asia Tenggara. Persebarannya yang luas di Asia Tenggara dengan pusatnya di Dongson (Vietnam) sampai ke Indonesia dalam berbagai variasi bentuk serta ukuran menunjukkan bahwa nekara dikenal cukup luas. Penemuan nekara direpresentasikan dalam berbagai bentuk dan teknik pembuatan antara lain ada nekara yang digambarkan pada bukit batu sebagai relief dan arca batu sebagai motif hias; dan ada pula yang dipahat pada lempengan batu yang merupakan salah satu bagian dari dinding suatu kubur batu pada sebaran temuan megalitik Pasemah, Sumatera Selatan. Aspek historis nekara menunjukkan bahwa ia tidak sekedar alat tabuh dengan bunyi-bunyian dan berfungsi sakral untuk mendatangkan hujan misalnya, melainkan sebagai salah satu wujud representasi dari kehidupan suatu masyarakat tertentu pada masa tertentu pula. Berkenaan dengan representasi sebagai suatu konsep keterwakilan, maka diperlukan suatu interpretasi agar dapat diungkapkan maknanya, minimal mendekati makna yang sesungguhnya. Metode interpretasi bersifat kualitatif yang digunakan dalam bahasan ini setidaknya dapat menjawab mengapa variasi bentuk nekara tersebut terjadi. Tujuannya adalah untuk mengetahui mengapa gambaran nekara tersebut bervariasi. Hasil penelitian mengungkapkan nekara sebagai benda sakral dapat menjadi identitas dan memori kolektif bagi masyarakat pendukung budaya megalitik Pasemah, dimana kepercayaan kepada arwah leluhur dianut dengan sangat kental.

**Kata Kunci:** Representasi, Nekara, Megalitik, Dongson, Pasemah

*Abstract. Kettledrums, which were initially known as percussion instruments, are found in abundance in Southeast Asia. Their widespread distribution from Southeast Asia, with its centre in Dongson (Vietnam) up to Indonesia, in various shapes and sizes, shows that kettledrums were extensively known artifacts. Discoveries of kettledrums were represented in a range of shapes and manufacturing techniques, such as carved on a rocky hill as reliefs and sculpted into statues as ornamental motifs; or carved on a slab of stone, which is part of a stone burial chamber among the dispersed megalithic finds of Pasemah in South Sumatera. The historic aspect of kettledrums shows that they were not merely a musical instrument, a metal percussion, with sacred function to ask for rain, for example, but also one of the representations of the life of a certain society in a particular period. In respect of representation as a concept of representativeness, an interpretation is needed to reveal its meaning, at least one that comes close to the actual meaning. A qualitative method of interpretation used here is hoped to reveal why variation of kettledrums' shapes came about. The aim was to understand why the the kettledrum representation varies. Results of research show that as sacred objects, kettledrums can serve as the collective identity and memory of the communities that bear the Megalithic Culture of Pasemah where ancestor worships are strongly adopted.*

**Keywords:** Representation, Kettledrum, Megalithic, Dongson, Pasemah

## 1. Introduction

Kettledrums (*nekaras*) are bronze objects shaped like a drum, each of which consists of three parts, namely the upper part (*tympanum*) in form of a flat circle and convex shoulder with two couples of handles; the cylindrical middle part (often called the waist part); and the widened lower part (the foot). They are decorated with geometric patterns as well as motifs of spirit's boat, human figures, and animal figures. Their dispersal areas include Mainland Asia up to Indonesia (Poesponegoro, Marwati Djoened dan Nugroho Notosusanto 1984: 322). There are several terms to name kettledrums, for instance *An-naqqarah* (Arabic) that means tambourine (hand percussion), *bulan sasih* for the big kettledrum at Pejeng in Bali, *tifa guntur* for those in the Moluccas, *moko* for the ones on Alor Island, *makalamau* in Sangeang Island, *wulu* on Pantar Island and East Flores Regency (Kempers 1988: 3-5); Bintarti 2000: 30). In Europe *nekaras* are called *pauke* in German, *bronze pauke* in Dutch, *tambour metallique* in French, and *kettledrum* in English, all which have the general meaning of percussion (Bintarti 2000: 30; Soejono 2008: 295).

Van Heekeren, who studied the dispersal of bronze artifacts in Indonesia, stated that based on Chinese sources, kettledrums were made by Miao-tse and Lolo people that live at the border of Vietnam and China in  $\pm$  1200 CE. The kettledrums were placed on top of mountains or hills and were taken down in times of ceremonies, such as the ceremony to summon people to go to war with the sound of their beatings or an object to place offerings on (Heekeren 1958: 13). Kettledrums are used by the ethnic groups on the mountainous areas of Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, and Myanmar and were distributed up the Island Southeast Asia including Indonesia (Kempers 1988: 15-16).

Another researcher who studied kettledrums was F. Heger from the Netherland, who investigated the dispersal of kettledrums

in Southeast Asia and classified them into four types. The classification is still being used by other researchers until now. The Heger-typed kettledrums in Indonesia are found among others on the islands of Java, Sumatera, Kalimantan (Borneo), Lombok, Sangeang, Sumbawa, Gorom (Molucca), Alor, Rote, Selayar, and Papua (Poesponegoro, Marwati Djoened dan Nugroho Notosusanto 1984: 244-266).

In Southeast Asia, the use of kettledrums are known based on their roles, among others as religious objects that generate special (magical) sound or rhythm when beaten during worship and death-related ceremonies, ceremonies to ward off evil power and to appoint someone as a nobleman, as well as declaring the coming of a king, and as a war declaration. In Indonesia, based on archaeological data and ethnographic studies, kettledrums of Pejeng type were used as a musical instrument during ceremonies to ask for rain; and the Heger I type ones were used as burial containers like those found at the sites of Manikliyu in Bali and Plawangan in Central Java. Small-sized kettledrums were used as funeral gifts, while some Pejeng-typed ones were also functioned as family heirloom, prestige symbol, and dowry (Bintarti 2000: xi). In Alor, kettledrums of Pejeng were called *moko* and functioned as currency, dowry, and ceremonial object. During ceremonies, drum, gong, and moko are used as background music for dances.

The kettledrums owned by the leader of an ethnic group or people from certain social status have higher value. In Adonara Island, Flores, kettledrums are being kept at the roof part of houses and are only taken out during ceremonies (Soejono 2008: 356). Sanctified kettledrums are regarded as where the spirits of the ancestors reside and are kept at special high places like the space under the roof. As musical instruments, kettledrums have similar function to *tifa* percussions and were used in ceremonies to welcome guests. These functions differ

depending on the communities and the type of environment where they were used.

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Based on the above data, kettledrums can be perceived as representations (representativeness) of certain groups within a society. The representations indirectly show the identities of certain groups of people, and act as distinct characteristics of each group to distinguish it from the other group(s).

Through carvings of kettledrums on stones and statues, not the actual bronze objects, it is hoped that the presentation of a cultural phenomenon that is constructed to portray kettledrums as a system of representation can be known and understood.

Representation is a word that means representing something or a group. In the Learners Dictionary from Merriam Webster Dictionary, representation is a painting, sculpture, etc., that is created to look like a particular thing or person (<http://www.learnersdictionary.com>).

According to Stuart Hall, representation is a cultural construction, which produces and exchanges meaning. To think and to feel are systems of representation that can also mean 'giving meaning to something' (Hall 2003:

18). Thus representation is a process in which an individual, with his/her senses, perceives an object to be managed and produces a concept/idea that will be represented (*mental template*).

According to Noerhadi Magetsari, who states that material culture is analogous to language as a structured system of signs, representation works within the system of representation. Material culture as a system of representation is a cultural construction that connects signs as a structure in a system of signs. The relationship between material culture and meanings is arbitrary and non-arbitrary. The meaning of a sign that is non-arbitrary in nature usually belongs to the category of icon and index, and the meaning a sign as a symbol is usually arbitrary. There are also signs that are seen as both icons and symbols, and the meanings of those signs can be revealed by investigating their implementations (Magetsari 2003: 147-162; 2016: 279-280).

Ian Hodder is of the opinion that material culture, in which there are written texts and artifacts, are silent evidences that physically can survive for quite a long time, and therefore can be separated spatially and temporally from the author, producer, and user. Often these material traces have to be interpreted without the help of indigenous commentary from the original authors. Written texts differ from oral words. Therefore, in studying material culture, at least to a certain limit, basic theories of the significance of written texts (language) can be applied to other material cultures. Language can function socially due to a language system that is accepted by a community; therefore like language represents something, material culture is also regarded as representing something (Hodder 1997: 399-402).

In relation to kettledrums as a symbol, it is hoped that by attempting to understand concepts, pictures, and ideas, which in archaeology is known as contextual analysis as part of the structure of signs, the meanings that are the

closest to the actual meanings can be revealed. This is due to the limited archaeological data. We can only yield the traces of activities, while the people were no longer existed

It is due to the above that the various representation of kettledrum is often being debated. As a system of representation, why did kettledrum is portrayed in various forms, both as whole objects or visualized in form of reliefs on statues, stone slabs and rocky hills, particularly those found among the megalithic finds of Pasemah, South Sumatera?

## 2. Methods

The method used in this article is interpretation or explanation. In the phases of archaeological research, interpretation is applied on data that have been patterned. Therefore primary data in form of artifacts, and secondary data or related references are used. Primary data were obtained through direct field observation on statues and reliefs that portray kettledrums among the megalithic finds of Pasemah, such as the statues from Kota Raya Lembak and Belumai, as well as reliefs at Selayar Hill and Airpuar, South Sumatera.

During data processing description was made based on the kettledrums' attributes. Not all of the attributes were used, but only certain attributes that are thought to be able to reveal the pattern, namely technological attributes in relation to shape/form and stylistic attributes in relation to the Pasemah style. The pattern resulted from this process was then placed on temporal and spatial contexts. The temporal context here is the megalithic period in Pasemah area, South Sumatera, while the spatial context includes their relations with other finds in the surrounding areas as well as the natural environments where they were found. Only after the material data was patterned that interpretation can be done although indirectly the process has been going on since the phase of analysis on pattern identification.

Observation on the shapes of statues shows that the original forms of stone material can still be clearly seen, like oval, round, or a combination of round and oval that show the original shapes of the material (stones). This resulted in depictions of human and animal figures that seem to move: carrying kettledrum, for instance. Such representation is very different from previous megalithic statues that are usually merely consists of body and head, sometimes without extremities, and genitalia. It is the shapes of statues in accordance with the shapes of materials (stones) that become the characteristic of the Pasemah statues, which are then called the Pasemah style like mentioned by Hoop (1932).

The interpretation method is focused on trying to understand (*verstehen*) by observing what we see, with the assumption that people always actively interpret their experiences by giving meaning to anything they (Magetsari 2016: 355).

This interpretation phase works with data or material evidences that have been patterned and connected to archaeological context to be given meaning. This includes identifying contexts by means of processes of finding similarities and differences with the material culture as an attempt to reconstruct the types of activities and artifacts whether they are ideofacts or sociofacts and so forth, so that their contexts can be clearly identified.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1 Kettledrums in Indonesia

As ideofacts, which are objects that are considered sacred, kettledrums are often found in archaeological context as burial gifts or burial containers. These burial-related objects were found in association with other metal objects like axes, spatula, spearheads, daggers, miniatures of kettledrum, human remains (skeletons and skulls) at the sites of Songhong Valley, North Vietnam, South China, for instance during an

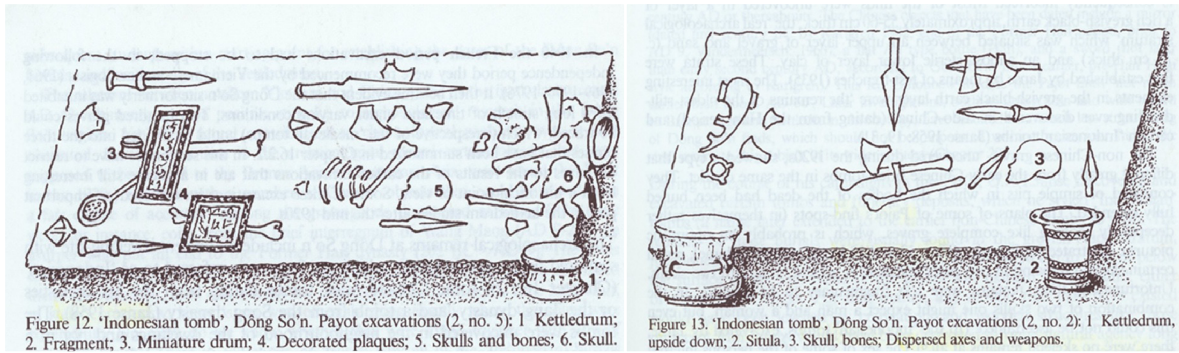


Figure 12. 'Indonesian tomb', Đông So'n. Payot excavations (2, no. 5): 1 Kettledrum; 2. Fragment; 3. Miniature drum; 4. Decorated plaques; 5. Skulls and bones; 6. Skull.

Figure 13. 'Indonesian tomb', Đông So'n. Payot excavations (2, no. 2): 1 Kettledrum, upside down; 2. Situla, 3. Skull, bones; Dispersed axes and weapons.

**Figure 1.** Kettledrums found in burial context (Source: Kempers 1988: 271)



**Figure 2.** Miniature of kettledrums from Cibadak, Sukabumi, West Java, and miniature of moko from Alor Island, East Indonesia (Source: Heekeren 1958: pl 5)



**Figure 3.** Kettledrum miniature of Kerinci, West Sumatera (Sumber: Aziz 2010:17-44)



**Figure 4.** Heger I type kettledrum from Central Java with a diameter of 150 cm. (Source: Arcandiago blogspot. co.id/2011/04/nekara-benda-upacara-zaman-perunggu.html 2011)

investigation by Pajot, a French researcher. Description about the discovery is presented by Bernet Kempers (Kempers 1988: 270-271). The burial-related finds show that kettledrums have sacred function.

Miniatures of kettledrums with heights of less than 10 cm as burial gifts were found at several places in Indonesia, among others Cibadak, West Java; Kerinci, West Sumatera; Bali. In their place of origin within the Dongson cultural area, Vietnam and China, there are also small-sized kettledrums. In its big or actual size, a kettledrum can have a tympanum diameter between 20–100 cm and high 40-100 cm. Assorted types of kettledrums and their dispersal in Asia and Europe had been investigated by F. Heger at around 1920, which resulted in a classification of Heger I to Heger IV. Bintarti stated that the Heger I type, which upper and lower parts are almost of the same size, is the

most widely found in Mainland Asia up to Indonesia, while the other types are distributed in Mainland Asia (Bintarti 2000: 10).

Meanwhile, the name Pejeng type is taken from the name of a village where the kettledrum was found, which is the village of Pejeng in



**Figure 5.** Pejeng typed (Source: <http://www.google.co.id/nekara+tipe+pejeng>)



**Figure 6.** Relief depicting two human figures carrying kettledrum, Airpura, Sout Sumatera ( Heekeren 1958 pl 131)



**Figure 7.** Two human figures carrying a kettledrum, Airpura, South Sumatera, (Kempers 1988: 476)

Tampaksiring district, Gianyar regency, Bali. Now the kettledrum is placed on a pedestal in Pura Penataran Sasih. Pura is a sacred building for Hindu followers in Bali. The distribution of this type covers nearly all over Bali like Pacung, Bebitra, Seririt, Manikliyu etc; and also Lombok, Nusa Tenggara Timur, and several places in Java. The Pejeng type kettledrum found during a research at Manikliyu was a burial container (Bintarti 2000: 128).

At several places in East Indonesia, like Flores, Alor, Roti, Leti, kettledrums have slightly different shape. They are more slender and are named moko. Their functions are either as dowry or as a symbol of social status for their owners. They are placed at the roof part of houses, which shows that *mokos* are sanctified (Simanjuntak, Truman; Retno Handini, Dwi Yani Yuniawati 2012: 65-80). Thus both Heger and Pejeng types have similar sacred functions in the daily life of their communities.

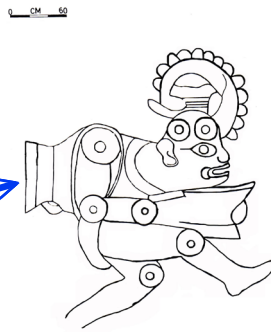
Kettledrums are also represented in reliefs on rocky hills, stone slabs, and stone megalithic statues. The carving of a kettledrum on a stone slab that is thought to be part of a stone burial chamber walls is found at Airpura, Sumatera (Heekeren 1958: 476). The kettledrum is depicted with two human-like figures carrying it together. A dog is seen under it, while a water buffalo is carved each on the left and right sides. The human figures have bulging eyes, and thick,

wide, slightly opened mouths showing their teeth.

A shallow carving of a man carrying kettledrums is also sculpted on a hill on Bukit Selayar (Selayar Hill), which is named batu balai, which is located at the district of Tegur Wangi, Lahat Regency, South Sumatera Province. Representation of kettledrums is found in form of shallow carving on a hill, depicting a human figure carrying two kettledrums. One of the kettledrums is carried by his two hands at the front, while the other one is carried on his back.

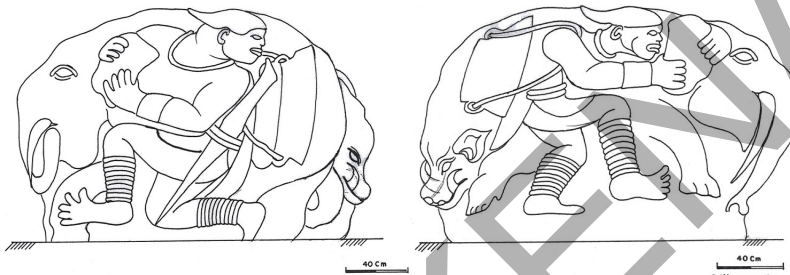
The human figure has head ornament. There are round carvings on his ankles, wrists, and knees. The face has wide, bulging eyes, and thick, wide and slightly opened mouth with a row of teeth. His posture is slightly bent forward, his left leg is bent and his right leg is lifted a little as if he is running while carrying the two kettledrums.

Another representation of a kettledrum is found on the carving on a statue at Kota Raya Lembak, Lahat Regency and the town of Pagar Alam, South Sumatera Province (Triwurjani 2015: 170), portraying a couple of human figures with an elephant between them. Both figures carry a Heger I type kettledrum, which tympanum and the lower part have the same size. Besides carrying a kettledrum, the figures also carry long daggers, wear helmet-like head dress, and also wear necklaces, bracelets and a

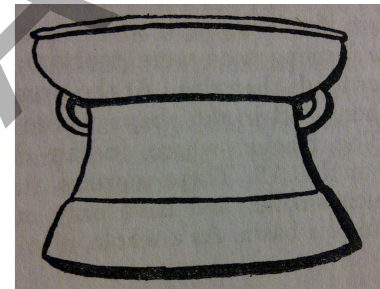


**Figure 9.** Relief of a human figure carrying a kettledrum (drawn by Armadi, Source: Wiyana 1996; 2015: 27)

**Figure 8.** Bukit Selayar, where a relief of a human figure carrying kettledrums is sculpted. Another figure is carved under it. Tegur Wangi Village, Pagar Alam, South Sumatera (Triwurjani 2015)



**Figure 10.** Statue depicting two human figures flanking an elephant. Kota Raya Lembak (KTL), Pasemah, South Sumatera. Drawn by: Hidayat (Source: Triwurjani 2015: 170)



**Figure 11.** Heger I typed kettledrums like depicted on a statue (Source: Hoop 1932: 101)

set of bangles. Their clothes are tunics with wide sash tied on the waist. The statue is often called ‘*batu gajah*’ (the elephant stone). At the back of the elephant is carved a wild boar. This statue, in its context, is located at the center of a tetralith.

Kettledrums are carved on both sides of an elephant that is flanked by a couple of human figures who each carry a kettledrum. The kettledrums are carried on the backs of the human figures, tied by ropes. Compared to the figures’ bodies, the size of the kettledrums is the same with the bodies. The human figures wear a type of head dress called *destar*, tight-fitting tunics, loincloths, and belts. They also wear necklaces, bracelets in forms of wide band, and sets of bangles/anklets. Besides kettledrums, they also carry quite long daggers. On the other side of the elephant is carved another human figure carrying

a kettledrum in similar way, which is carried on its back, tied with a rope. The figure wears a helmet, a long dagger on his back, necklace bracelet, and a series of bangles. A wild boar’s head is carved on the rear part of the elephant as if to show that the elephant is bigger and greater than the wild boar. The depiction of this figure, with all his attributes, seems to indicate that he is not an ordinary human being but a person with special status. The statue is located at a burial complex; most of its walls are covered by paintings of human and animal figures, including a dragon-like figure and a figure that looks like poultry. Spatially, this statue is located on a quite high area on the slope of Mount Dempo.

Based on observation on statues, the carvings of Heger I kettledrums and daggers are similar to Dong Son daggers. This can be used

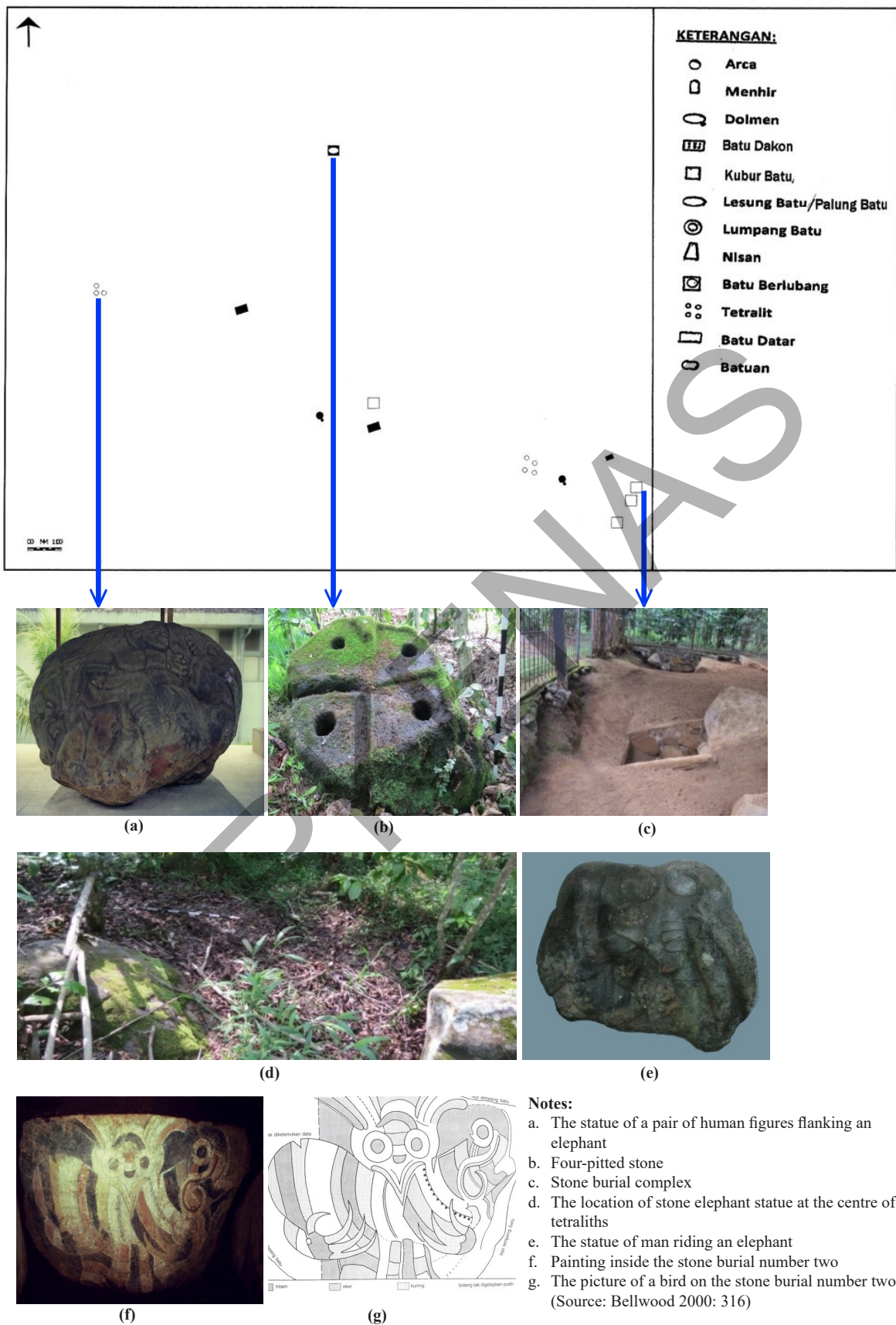
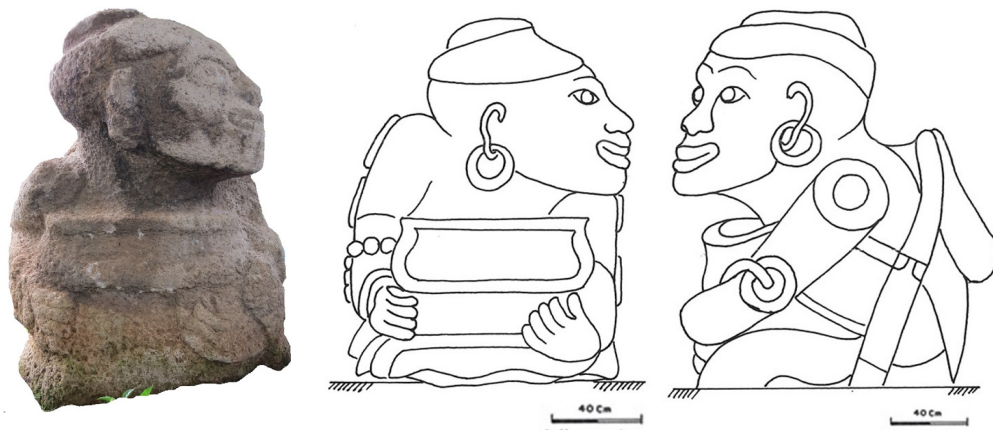
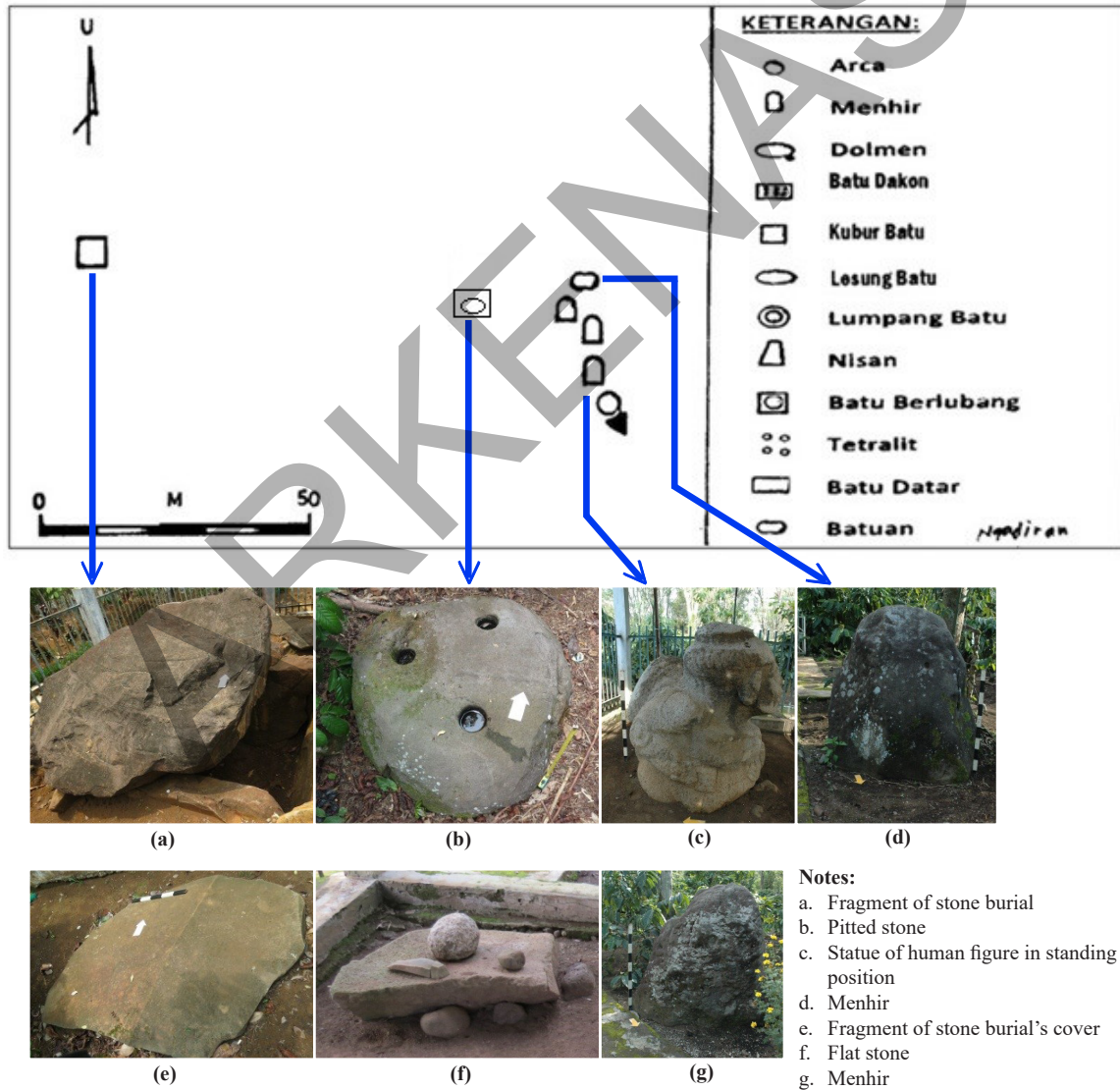


Figure 12. The positions of KTL statues and other finds (Source: Triwurjani 2015: 212)





**Figure 13.** Belumai 1 (BLM 1) statue and the picture of a kettledrum carried by a human figure that carries a weapon and wearing ornaments. Drawn by Hidayat (Source: Triwurjani 2015: 174)



**Figure 14.** The position of BLM 1 statue among other finds (Source: Triwurjani 2015: 191)

as a reference to the relative age of the Pasemah culture in South Sumatera. Besides statues and paintings, there are also fragments of bronze artifacts and beads in the stone burials, which show that the megalithic tradition in South Sumatera occurred during the palaeometalic period (Soejono 2008: 262). The KTL statues are now being kept in Palembang as the Balaputradewa Museum's collections.

Another kettledrum representation is the carving on a statue at Belumai. A human figure with a head dress called *destar* is depicted with a machete on his back, beads and a bracelet that looks like a metal band on his arm, and earrings is sculpted carrying a kettledrum with both hands. He does not look like an ordinary figure (Hoop 1932: 75-77; Triwurjani 2015: 170-172).

The Belumai statue is associated with two stone burials, a pitted stone, and two menhirs. Two big menhirs are located to the southwest. One of the menhirs is 155 cm high, 155 cm long, and 137 cm wide, while the other is shorter with a height of 53 cm, a length of 135 cm, and a width of 135 cm. About 100 m to the southeast of the statue are a stone burial and three-pitted stone. The stone burial is big, with a length of 186 cm, width of 250 cm, and height of 153 cm. The three-pitted stone is 109 cm long, 106 wide, and 32 cm high. Each of the pits has a diameter of 15 cm and a depth of 17 cm. The flat stone in the middle is 65 cm long, 30 cm wide, and 15 cm deep, with a hole (pit) that has a diameter of 10 cm and a depth of 17 cm.

It seems like the megalithic statues and reliefs of human figures carrying kettledrums in South Sumatra Province are depicted as 'special' figures, for instance carrying weapons, fully dressed with head dresses and jewelries. One of them portrays a kettledrum carried by a couple of human figures, accompanied by a dog and water buffaloes. Here the representations of kettledrums show that kettledrums are special objects that have to be carried by special people, and have stone burial as their contexts. The

Pasemah communities in the past were the bearers of a culture that considered kettledrums as very important objects.

### 3.2 Discussion

Contextually, those statues and reliefs are found near stone burials and the highest areas of Pasemah highland, which also show that the areas are considered more important and sacred by the followers of the megalithic belief than the lower areas. Therefore the kettledrums represented in various sizes and on different material, and are always portrayed as being carried of human figure(s) that show special quality than the others with complete attributes, such as carrying a weapon, wearing a head dress, wearing jewelries (earrings, necklaces, bracelets, and a series of bangles), must have been special as well. Furthermore, the kettledrum carriers are also depicted with certain animals like elephant, water buffalo, and dog. In the Pasemah community, elephants are the most honored animals, followed by water buffaloes and other animals, as proven by the representation of an elephant flanked or ridden by human figures in stone burial context, and sit on the lap of a fully-dressed human figure and is very big (more than 2 m high) at Tinggi Hari III Site, Lahat Regency, South Sumatera. Another depiction in relation with elephants as honored animals is the human figure with a long machete on his back, wearing corset, loincloth, and wide belt with wavy lines motif, as well as a necklace with a big medallion pendant and bracelets, like the statue of Tanjung Telang at the lowest area of Pasemah highland. The Pasemah highland is  $\pm$  1000 m above sea level, and is located at the foot of Mount Dempo, the highest mountain in South Sumatera ( $\pm$  3159 m above sea level).

The second kind of animal honored by the Pasemah people is water buffalo, as proven by the depictions of water buffaloes being ridden or flanked although not in the context of stone burial. The two kinds of animals seem to be

honored due to their utilities to human beings as means of transportation in their daily life and in burial context as the vehicle to the spirit world. They also symbolize greatness and power, especially after they are domesticated out of their natural habitat in big and wild forests. The use of those animals also shows that the Pasemah communities have been able to adapt to the surrounding environment and are able to exploit the environment. Because elephants and water buffaloes bring great utilities to humans, it is natural that they were loved and honored by the Megalithic communities of Pasemah.

If kettledrums were 'migration artifacts' like stated by Bernet Kempers (1988: 243-248), which were brought by the owners, then automatically the idea and notion are included in them. The idea and notion had generated a similar but local idea, as proven by the Pejeng type kettledrum in Bali. According to Stuart Hall (2003: 17-23), representation from the same idea is due to similar background and view of life that resulted in the same understanding

about a matter, in this case a belief about life after death, in which by honoring the spirits of the ancestors as the holder of divine power, the living humans will be safe now and in the after world (Koentjaraningrat 1993: 35; Geldern 1945: 148-152).

In line with Hall, the representation of kettledrums depicted on stone media reminds the communities of a collective memory that was once happen in their place of origin. The identity of those kettledrums show that there were fellow bearers of kettledrum culture within the Megalithic communities, as well as the fact that they were still using kettledrums as valuable, sacred, and important objects, as proven by their locations on the highest part of stone hills of Tegur Wangi, with stone burial complex around it. Human figures with certain attributes that are depicted as carrying kettledrums and weapons also reveal that kettledrums were not for ordinary people, but for special ones. In this case, the use of kettledrums as ideofacts was maintained not through the actual bronze objects but depicted



**Figure 15.** The long-distance movement of kettledrums from their origin in Southeast Asia (Source: Modified from Google, downloaded 10 April 2016)

on stone media in certain figures and areas and in the context of stone burials that were considered sacred. Only people with certain position can be buried in stone burials, because of its intricate manufacturing technique that requires plenty of manpower and raw material (big stones) as well as good cooperation and coordination.

In relation to migration like what was assumed by Bernet Kempers, there are several determining factors in the process of kettledrum representation. It is assumed that long distance human migration across islands through the oceans, great effort and determination are needed. The objects they brought were not only practical ones but also some big ones. It is proven among others by the discovery of kettledrum on Sangeang Island as well as the dispersal of Heger I kettledrums in Indonesia, Laos, China and other places in Mainland Southeast Asia. If we observe the places of discovery in Indonesia, the big-sized kettledrums are found on the islands in the east and west that have access to marine transportations. At places far from the coast, in the interior areas, kettledrums are rarely found intact. Some intact ones are of local type made by recycling the already available metal objects.

At the interior part of West Sumatera, the Kerinci Mountains, kettledrum was found in miniature form as burial gifts. That is also the case at the interior areas of South Sumatera, like Pasemah, where statues and other megalithic objects are found on the east slope of Mount Dempo. At this area, kettledrums as metal objects have been made with different technique and media, although the shapes and function remain the same, which is as religious objects. This is possible because the makers had the same understanding about kettledrums in their original place, which is Vietnam (Dongson Culture). It is also probable that the makers were the descendant of the migrants that came to South Sumatera.

Another determining factor is unavailability of sufficient raw material at the

new place, so that it was impossible to make them. As a substitute, the concept is implemented in sculptures and carvings on stone hill slopes. Because they were made by artisans with the same understanding, the function is the same, which is sacred object. That is why they were dedicated to certain figures and were made near stone burial places on certain elevations. As for the stone kettledrum on the slope of a hill in Bima-Sumbawa, the situation and condition were probably the same, which include insufficient raw material to make kettledrums, so that the concept was implemented on stone media. Based on those facts, kettledrums can be considered as the connecting media among the places in Mainland Asia.

#### 4. Conclusion

Kettledrums in the aspect of representation reflect the variation of thoughts, which seem to be closely related to the condition of the surrounding environment. Kettledrums in their intact forms have for one or another reason been able to survive the long journey through islands and vast oceans as a symbol of belongingness and belief. They represent a high social status that the owners liked to maintain within a community. The idea was preserved in the various shapes, sizes, and technologies of kettledrum representations, and it could survive because the communities have and understand the same idea, particularly in term of cultural identity through kettledrums as ideofacts.

According to Stuart Hall's theory of representation, the kettledrum representation belongs to the third definition of representation, which is *to re-present*, that is a sign that can present a cultural phenomenon just like it was in the past.

It is also based on the above definition that Hall mentioned that the represented culture was indirectly constructed in the production process and reception, which in this case was done by the communities that bear the kettledrum culture,

which were most probably came from Vietnam and migrated until they came to Sumatera Island, in this particular to Pasemah. Hall is of the opinion that individuals are said to belong to the same culture if they share the same experiences, codes, and cultural concept. The goal is to show their identity that an individual or a group of individuals is originated from the same place with a certain community. In other words, there is a acknowledgement from a certain community so that they are considered as having a clear origin. In the context of movement/migration through long distance, hampered with extreme weathers and climates, it is understandable that identity is needed not only to reveal self existence but also to protect them from other communities that might be hostile.

The study on kettledrum representation is still limited to the concept of manufacture and raw material and has not fully touched the very rich and intricate decorations that are the icon of the Dongson Culture. Study on the decoration motifs of Dongson will answer better the phenomenon of kettledrum representation in connection to the Megalithic tradition in Indonesia, particularly the living tradition, although the archaic ones are also important.

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