



THE CONTINUING TRADITION OF AUSTRONESIAN CULTURE AT LIMA PULUH KOTO, WEST SUMATERA¹

TRADISI BERLANJUT BUDAYA AUSTRONESIA DI LIMA PULUH KOTO, SUMATERA BARAT

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ABSTRAK

Diaspora Austronesia menunjukkan kurang lebih 60% penutur tinggal di Indonesia. Salah satu lokasi jejak Austronesia adalah di Kabupaten Lima Puluh Koto, Sumatera Barat, yaitu sebaran menhir yang mencapai ratusan jumlahnya. Bentuk budaya Austronesia dikenal sebagai budaya yang meneruskan tradisi-tradisi masa prasejarah dan berlanjut pada masa sejarah, seperti tradisi megalitik. Permasalahannya adalah, apabila budaya megalitik dibawa oleh para migran, pada periode Austronesia protosejarah ataukah Austronesia masa kini menhir-menhir tersebut berada?, bagaimana pola sebaran menhir-menhir tersebut? dan siapa pendukungnya?. Penelitian ini berusaha mengungkapkan bentuk dan persebaran budaya megalitik dan migrasi Austronesia di Kawasan Lima Puluh Koto. Maksud dan tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengungkapkan sejarah kebudayaan dan adaptasi kaum migran dalam persekitif diaspora Austronesia, sehingga memperkaya informasi tentang diaspora Austronesia dan asal-usul etnogenesis bangsa Indoensia. Hasil penelitian yang dilakukan dengan metode kualitatif ini menunjukkan bahwa tradisi megalitik di kawasan Lima Puluh Koto adalah sebaran menhir yang membentuk kelompok-kelompok berdasarkan nagari pada area tertentu. Sebaran menhir ini selain mempunyai fungsi sakral juga mempunyai fungsi profan antara lain sebagai batas kampung, batas halaman, maupun batas jalan raya desa, atau jalan-jalan di kampung.

Kata Kunci: Diaspora, Austronesia, Megalitik, Menhir, Tradisi.

ABSTRACT

Austronesian diaspora shows that around 60% of Austronesian-speaking people live in Indonesia. Among the locations with traces of Austronesian cultural remains is the information about the diaspora of Research reveals that the continuing megalithic tradition. The problem is: if megalithic culture was brought by migrants in which Austronesian period did the menhirs should be placed, the proto-historic or recent Austronesian; how is the dispersal pattern of the menhirs; and who were the bearers of the culture. Therefore we have to reveal the form and dispersal of the megalithic culture and Austronesian migration in Lima Puluh Koto Area. The aim of this research is revealing cultural history through the migrant's adaptation within the perspective of Austronesian diaspora. Thus information about the diaspora of the Austronesians and the ethnogenesis of Indonesian nation can be recognized. Research reveals that the continuing megalithic tradition which is used the qualitative method and assumed base on archaeological remains at Lima Puluh Koto area is a distribution of menhirs, that forms clusters in accordance with nagari (state) at certain area, and they are dispersed up to the hilly area. Some of these menhirs have sacred function but there are also those with profane functions like marks of village, house yard, or street boundaries, as well as the marker of village or hamlet roads.

Keywords: Diaspora, Austronesia, Megalithic, Menhir, Tradition.

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INTRODUCTION

Talking about the national identity of Indonesia as a nation is talking about our origin, who we are, and who were our ancestors. And talking about the ancestors of the Indonesian people is talking about the diaspora of the Austronesian² speakers who, due to a variety of reasons, migrated from their land of origin in mainland Southeast Asia or Africa (still arguable among scholars). Like what were discussed during the Seminar Internasional Austronesia (International Seminar on Austronesia) held by the Indonesian Institute of Science (Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia or LIPI) in 2004. In the seminar also stated that it understood the Austronesian people means also to understand the diversity of tribes now, where these tribes thrive in an environment of a specific geographic thus forming the character of the language, dialect and distinctive culture that is influenced by the environment, innovation and also influences from outside (migrant cultures) (LIPI, 2005: 122).

The big discussion on Austronesia is related to the problems about the origin and ethnogenesis of the Indonesian nation. These problems can be pored over with archaeological approaches, particularly the ones concerning the processes of adaptation and cultural change. Results of the symposium in 2004, which were published in 2006, also state that various approaches

from other disciplines of science can be used to bridge and solve the problems regarding the Austronesians. Archaeological studies about

According to Harry Truman Simanjuntak, a prehistoric archaeologist, based on the period and material culture the study on Austronesian diaspora can be divided into three categories: 1) Prehistoric Austronesia Prasejarah (around 2000 BP) with its Neolithic culture; 2) Proto-historic Austronesia (around 2000 BP to the 4th – 5th centuries AD, which is characterized by burial culture, jar burial, burial with grave goods, metal culture (Dongson), and Megalithic culture; and 3) Recent Austronesia, since the Indonesian independence until now, and is characterized by national culture that show that Indonesia has been free from foreign culture (Simanjuntak, 2010: 42).

There are a number of theories proposed by scholars regarding the diaspora, including *Out of Taiwan* and *Out of Africa*. The *Out of Taiwan* theory believes that the Austronesian speakers came from Taiwan, while the *Out of Africa* theory states that they came from Africa. Both assert that in reality, the Austronesian-speaking people have existed and lived in Indonesia for a long time.

The theory that the Austronesian speakers were originated from Taiwan and migrated to Indonesia was proposed by Robert Blust and Peter Bellwood. Robert Blust is a linguist who studied the Austronesia Language Family based on the distribution of the languages and concludes that Taiwan is the place of origin of the Austronesian speakers (Blust 1984, 1985: 45-68).

² Austronesia belongs to a language classification made by linguistic experts based on comparison of languages that are still used by groups of people that live in a vast area from Madagascar to the to the Pacific as well as the northern and southern parts, and Indonesia is part of it (E.K.M.Masinambow, 2005:1).



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On the other hand, Peter Bellwood, a prehistoric archaeologist specialized in Southeast Asia, states that the Austronesian speakers came from Taiwan and the coastal area of Southern China (Bellwood, 1995:97-98). This statement is based on researches on artifacts and their environment, and the distribution of adzes and pottery. The migration of the Austronesian speakers did not happen at once but in several stages (Bellwood, 2000).

in Nusa Tenggara and the North coast of West Papua. The language used is the language of Proto-Malayo-Polynesian (PCMP); Stage V, occurred in 2500 BC with migration from Northern Papua to the west, which developed South Halmahera-West Nugini languages (SHWNG). There was also migration eastwards to Oceania up to Bismarck Islands in around 1500 BC. Some of the Austronesian speakers who reached Java and

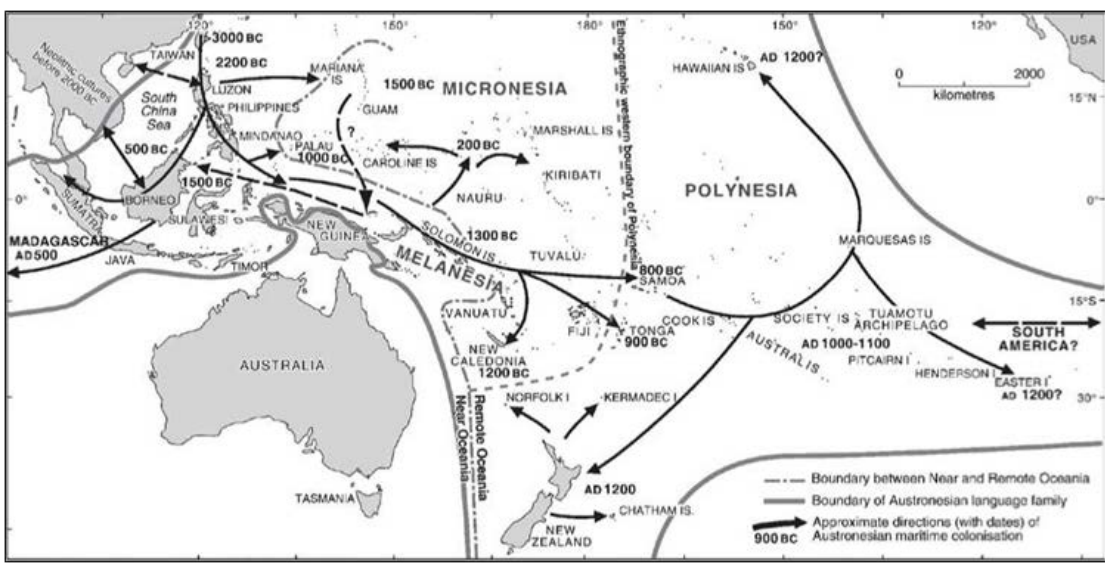


Figure 1. Distribution of Austronesia Language Family. Source: Bellwood, 2012: S363-S378

There are five stages of the journey, among others: Stage I (5000 – 4000 BC), which was the migration of a group of farmers from South China to Taiwan, where they had not spoken Austronesian languages; Stage II (around 4500 - 3000 BC) from Taiwan to the Philippines, where they developed Proto-Malayo-Polynesian language; Stage III (3500 BC - before 2000 BC), where they developed West Proto Malayo-Polynesia (PWMP) and Central-Eastern Proto Malayo-Polynesia PCEMP); Stage IV (3000 BC or 2000 BC), migration from North Maluku to the south and east

Sumatera then migrated to the Malaysian Peninsula and Vietnam around 500 BC. Some of the Austronesian speakers in Kalimantan sailed up to Madagascar in the same period (Tanudirdjo & Bagyo Prasetyo, 2005: 77-96).

The two opinions have similarities and are often quoted by scholars although there is still a probability of new opinions regarding this Out of Taiwan mode, due to new data. In this case, Sumatera Island clearly belongs to Austronesian language family and was an integral part of the destinations of Austronesian speakers.



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Some traces of Austronesian on the island of Sumatera have been previously investigated, they are Megalithic Site of Pasemah (Bagyo Prasetyo *et al.*, 2009; Kristantina Indriastuti, 2001); the Megalithic Statues of Pasemah (Triwurjani, 2015); Megalithic site of Kerinci (Bonatz, 2009; Fadhila A. A, 2010); Primary burial at Harimau Cave, Padang Bindu (Truman Simanjuntak, 2004), North coast of Central Java (Gunadi Kasnowiharjo, 2013); and Anak Dalam ethnic group in Jambi (Retno Handini, 2005). There is an assumption that Lima Puluh Koto area also traces Austronesian culture, as shown menhirs distributed in every district within the regency. Hundreds of menhirs were found in groups or as individual object, both on plains and hills. If the Megalithic culture was brought by the migrants, there is a question in the Austronesian studies about whether they were originated from proto-historic Austronesia period or recent Austronesian period like the phasing of Austronesian inhabitation in the Indonesian Archipelago³ (Simanjuntak, 2010: 41-62).

These menhirs have certain patterns in terms of arrangement, shapes, and decorations. In the scope of Austronesian Diaspora study, the megalithic culture was introduced by the migrants, problem discussed is what is the period the menhirs proto-historic or recent Austronesian period; how is the

² Based on *big event model*, it is believed that big events that brought big changes in various fields will become the bases of the initial cultural development period (Simanjuntak and Harry Widianto, 2012). That is the basis of Simanjuntak's division of Austronesia into Prehistoric Austronesia (early 2000 BP), Proto-historic Austronesia (2000 BP – early 4th-5th centuries AD), and Recent Austronesia (Independence period until now), which was focused on indigenous cultures (Simanjuntak, 2015: 38).

dispersal pattern of the menhirs, and who were the bearers of the culture. This study will show the distribution of the menhirs in Lima Puluh Koto area and who were the bearers of this tradition.

The aim of this article is to know the form and dispersal of megalithic culture as well as the Austronesian migration Lima Puluh Koto Area. Furthermore, this research also attempts to reveal the way of life of the bearers of megalithic culture in Lima Puluh Koto Area, which are thought to be the Asutronesian-speaking migrants. The practical benefit of this research is that it can be used as an development plan of the local government as a Cultural Tourism Destination.

METHODS

Certain methods and techniques are required in research implementation and analysis/data processing. During observation, data collecting was carried out through bibliographical study, survey, and excavation. Description writing, measuring, photograph-making, and drawing were also carried out. In description phase these were laboratory and non laboratory analyses, particularly dating analyses. Furthermore, during explanation, data collecting phase there were interpretation based on synthesa on data that have been analyzed in the previous phase. Then they were intergrated with data obtained from historic analogy and ethnographic studies. Therefore this research is qualitative in nature, in which empirical facts from the field were noted and inferenced as preliminary conclusion from observable data. This method is focused on interactive relations



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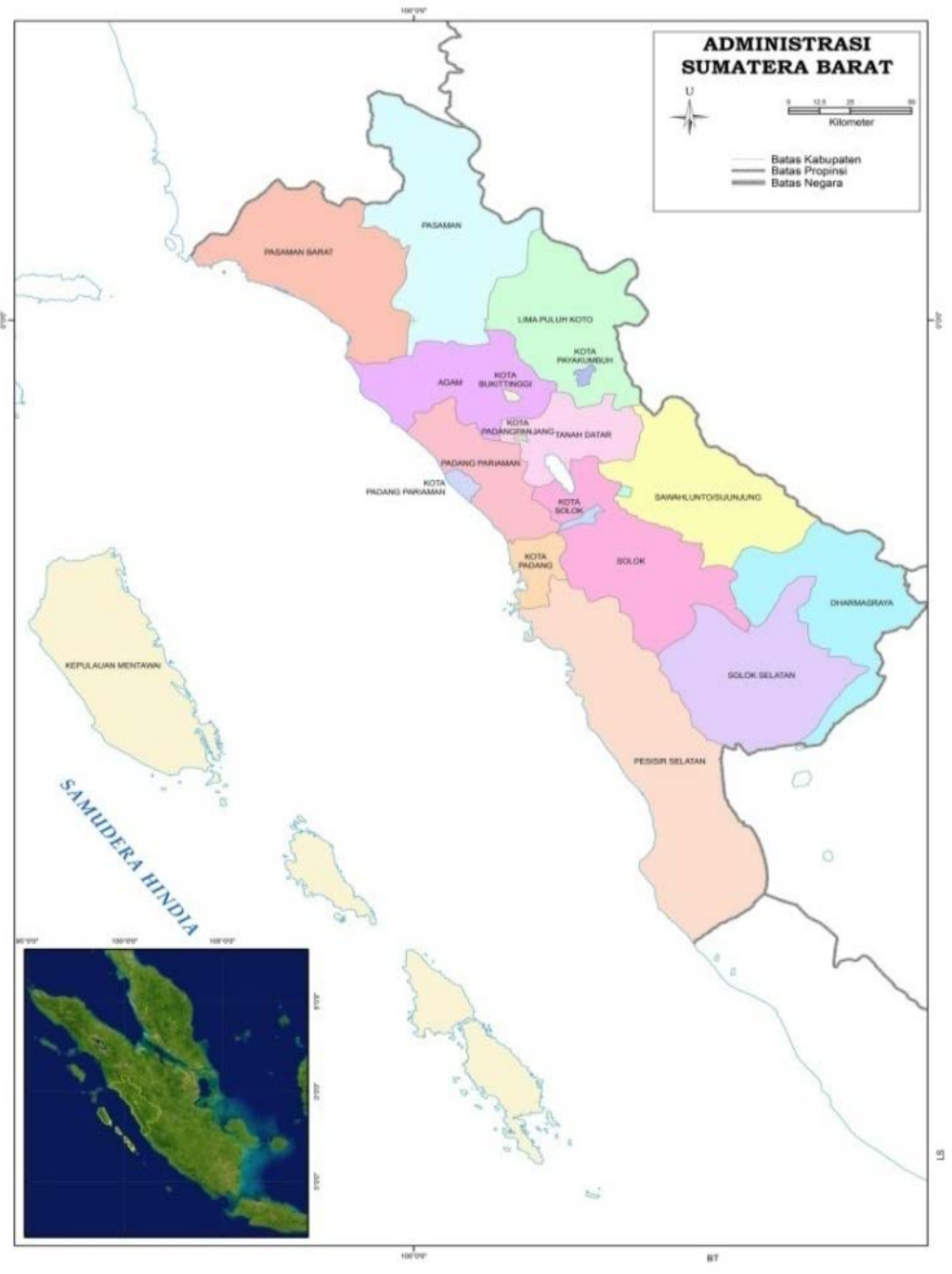


Figure 2. Map of Lima Puluh Koto, West Sumatera, (Source: Report on Field Research, 2009)



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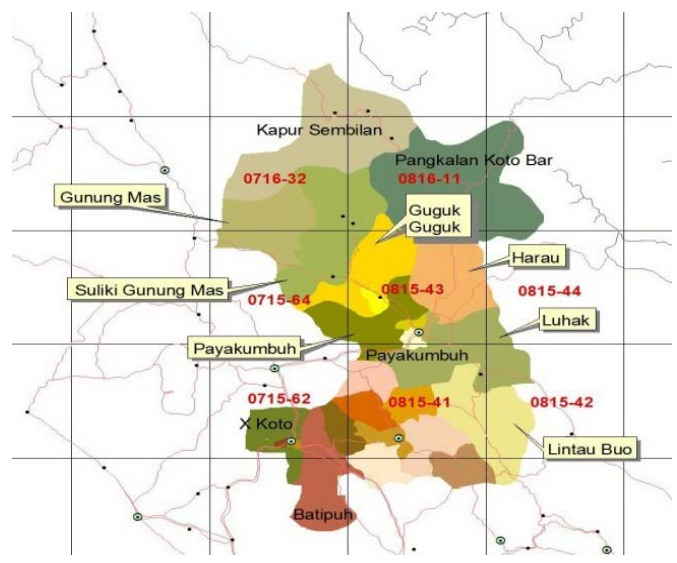


Figure 3. Lima Puluh Koto Regency. Source: Report on Field Research, 2009)

The highest mountain in Lima Puluh Koto is Mount Sago (2261 m). However, the upright menhirs with curvature on the upper parts are not always oriented towards the highest mountain, but towards the nearest mountain or hill. They are distributed in eight out of the thirteen districts in the regency, namely Gunung Omeh, Suliki, Bukit Barisan, Harau, Pangkalan Koto Baru, Akabiliru, and Guguk. Researches reveal that the district with the most Megalithic (menhir) sites is Guguk Regency and Mungka, with 13 sites that contain ± 131 menhirs, while the site with the most menhirs is Koto Tinggi Mahat in Bukit Barisan District, where ± 350 menhirs are found. The district of Bukit Barisan has six menhir sites with cluster arrangements. Some clusters have menhirs with linear layout with other menhirs around them; sometimes there are also dolmens or stone mortars and monoliths with one or more pits (pit-marked stones), some of them have decorations at the edges. The total number of menhirs is

± 878 , which may increase with new discoveries when people clean their fields, open new agricultural fields, or dig on their rice fields.

If we pass through the streets of those districts, we can easily find menhirs at junctions, people's front or back yards, schoolyards, in front or back of mosques, at the border of agricultural fields within a village or between villages, in the rice fields, in the forest, as well as at the feet or on the ridge of hills. Some of the menhirs have fallen down, but some are still in upright position. Their sizes varied. The height of big ones are nearly 3 m, while the short ones have a length/height of 50-100 cm. One of the characteristics of Lima puluh Koto menhirs is a type of decoration shaped like vines known as 'keluak paku'⁴. There are also

⁴ Keluak paku is the tip of (bud) of 'paku' plant (fern) commonly found on mountain orlereng pegunungan dan perbukitan. Lihat: Triwurjani, 2012. "Ragam Hias 'Keluak Paku' pada Menhir-menhir di Kabupaten Lima Puluh Koto, Sumatera Barat. *Arkeologi Untuk Publik* Jakarta: Ikatan Ahli Arkeologi Indonesia (IAAI), Wedatama Widya Satra, hlm. 808-824.



some that are plain and the upper parts curved and pointed to one side like a sword's handle (Haris Sukendar, 1984). Other decorations include triangles, geometric, weapon, and human parts like arm and finger. The menhirs are placed on plains at the bottom of hills or on hill ridge as seen in photograph 1-8.

The vastness dispersal the menhirs, which are found at almost every district in Lima Puluh Koto Regency, can be seen in the following table, which is the Table of Megalithic Site Dispersal in Lima Puluh Koto Area, West Sumatera Province.

Table 1. Distribution of Megalithic Sites in Lima Puluh Koto Area. West Sumatera Province (Source: BP3 Batu Sangkar, Laporan Penelitian, 2010; Triwurjani, 2012).

No	District/ Kanagarian	Name of Site	Amount of Objects	Type of Object				Coordinate	
				Flat Stone	Menhir	Pit- marked Stone	Stone Mortar	Eastern Hemisphere	Southern Latitude
1. Gunung Omeh District									
1	Koto Tinggi	Batu Talempong	47	-	47	-	-	100° 23' 30"	0° 4' 75"
2	Koto Tinggi	Koto Tinggi	24	-	24	-	-	100° 21' 28.4"	0° 3' 3.1"
3	Pandam Gadang	Bukit Apar	81	-	81	-	-	100° 25' 56"	0° 05' 45"
2. Suliki District									
4	Anding	Anding I	17	-	17	-	-	100° 30' 29"	0° 5' 12"
5	Anding	Anding II	15	-	15	-	-	100° 30' 37"	0° 5' 11"
6	Suliki	Limbanang I	16	-	16	-	-	100° 30' 11"	0° 6' 19"
7	Suliki	Limbanang II	8	-	8	-	-	100° 30' 16"	0° 6' 20"
3. Bukit Barisan District									
8	Mahat	Koto Tinggi	350	-	350	-	-	100° 29' 41"	0° 01' 40"
9	Mahat	Ronah	15	-	15	-	-	100° 30' 13"	0° 01' 36"
10	Padang Ilalang	Padang Ilalang	29	-	29	-	-	100° 30' 22"	0° 01' 56"
11	Mahat	Sopan Tanah	13	-	13	-	-	100° 30' 45"	0° 01' 51"
12	Mahat	Koto Gadang	30	-	30	-	-	100° 30' 34"	0° 00' 58"
13	Mahat	Domo	31	-	31	-	-	100° 30' 23"	0° 01' 49"
4. K Harau District									
14	Labua Batingko	Lubuk Batingkok	3	1	1	-	1	100° 37' 19"	0° 10' 07"
15	Gurun	Gurun I	8	-	3	-	5	100° 37' 30"	0° 09' 38"
16	Gurun	Gurun II	5	-	5	-	-	100° 37' 34"	0° 09' 26"
17	Gurun	Gurun III	9	-	9	-	-	100° 37' 38"	0° 09' 16"
18	Taram	Gua Taram I	1	-	-	1	-	100° 41' 02"	0° 12' 59"
19	Andaleh	Gua Taram II	2	-	-	2	-	100° 41' 46"	0° 13' 29"

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5. Pangkalan Koto Baru District									
20	Pangkalan Koto	Pangkalan Koto Baru	13	-	13	-	-	100° 43' 20"	0° 05' 16"
6. Akabiliru District									
21	Pauh	Pauh Sangik	16	-	16	-	-	100° 28' 43"	0° 09' 44"
22	Pauh	Batu Bajari	9	-	9	-	4	100° 29' 01"	0° 09' 57"
23	Suri Laweh	Batu Giriang	2	-	2	-	-	100° 32' 15"	0° 12' 49"
7. Guguk District									
24	Kuranji	Kuranji	1	-	1	-	-	100° 33' 55"	0° 09' 59"
25	Caniago	Balubus	15	-	15	-	-	100° 33' 32"	0° 10' 55"
26	Sungai Taram	Subarang	1	-	1	-	-	100° 33' 24"	0° 10' 57"
27	Sungai Talang	Sungai Talang I	6	-	6	-	-	100° 31' 15"	0° 06' 07"
28	Sungai Talang	Sungai Talang II	30	-	30	-	-	100° 32' 13"	0° 09' 50"
29	Sungai Talang	Tanah Sirah	6	-	6	-	-	100° 32' 18"	0° 10' 07"
30	Kubang	Kubang	5	-	5	-	-	100° 29' 45"	0° 08' 39"
31	Tujuh Koto	Balai Mansiro	4	-	4	-	-	100° 32' 21"	0° 07' 50"
32	Guguk Nunang	Guguk Nunang	22	-	22	-	-	100° 33' 33"	0° 10' 30"
33	Guguk	Sati	10	-	8	-	2	100° 33' 16,7"	0° 10' 31,6"
34	Guguk	Guguk	8	-	8	-	-	100° 33' 43,7"	0° 08' 52,2"
35	Ampang Gadang	Ampang Gadang	8	-	8	-	-	100° 29' 19"	0° 00' 35"
36	Koto Kaciak	Koto Kaciak	7	-	7	-	-	100° 31' 16"	0° 06' 07"
8. Mungka District									
37	Padang Jopang	Padang Jopang						100° 33' 03"	0° 06' 40"
24 Kanagarian			878	1	862	3	12		



Figure 4. Fallen down straight-shaped menhirs from Sei Talang I Site (Doc. the Author)



Figure 5. Straight-shaped menhirs in upright position at the site of Ampang Gadang (left) and a type of menhirs with curved top that inclined to certain direction, found at Tanah Sirah. Site (right). (Doc.the Author)



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Figure 6. Menhirs along village roads which shapes are curving like sword’s handles at Guguk Site (Doc. the Author)



Figure 7. Menhirs that shaped like sword’s handles (curving) in a field within the site of Subarang (Doc. the Author)



Figure 8. Upright menhir on a Hilltop at Bukit Apar Site. The top parts are shaped like sword’s handles (Doc. the Author)



Figure 9. Upright menhirs on the foot of a hill at Sati Site, which top parts are inclined to a certain direction (Doc.the Author)



Figure 10. Menhir at the Courtyard of a Mosque, Sei Talang Site II. (Doc.the Author)



Figure 11. A complex of straight- and curving-shaped menhirs at the edge of a forest at Bawah Parit Site (Doc.the Author)



Figure 12. Ornament Motifs of Menhir Lima Puluh Kuto. (Doc. Author)



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The layout of the menhirs, although some are single and the others are in groups, can be categorized into big groups within the area. Each group consists of one

Anding 2, Koto Kaciak, Limbanang, Baruah, Ampang Gadang, Simpang Masiro, and Padang Jopang. Group IV is a valley with secondary forest and consists of the sites of Taratak

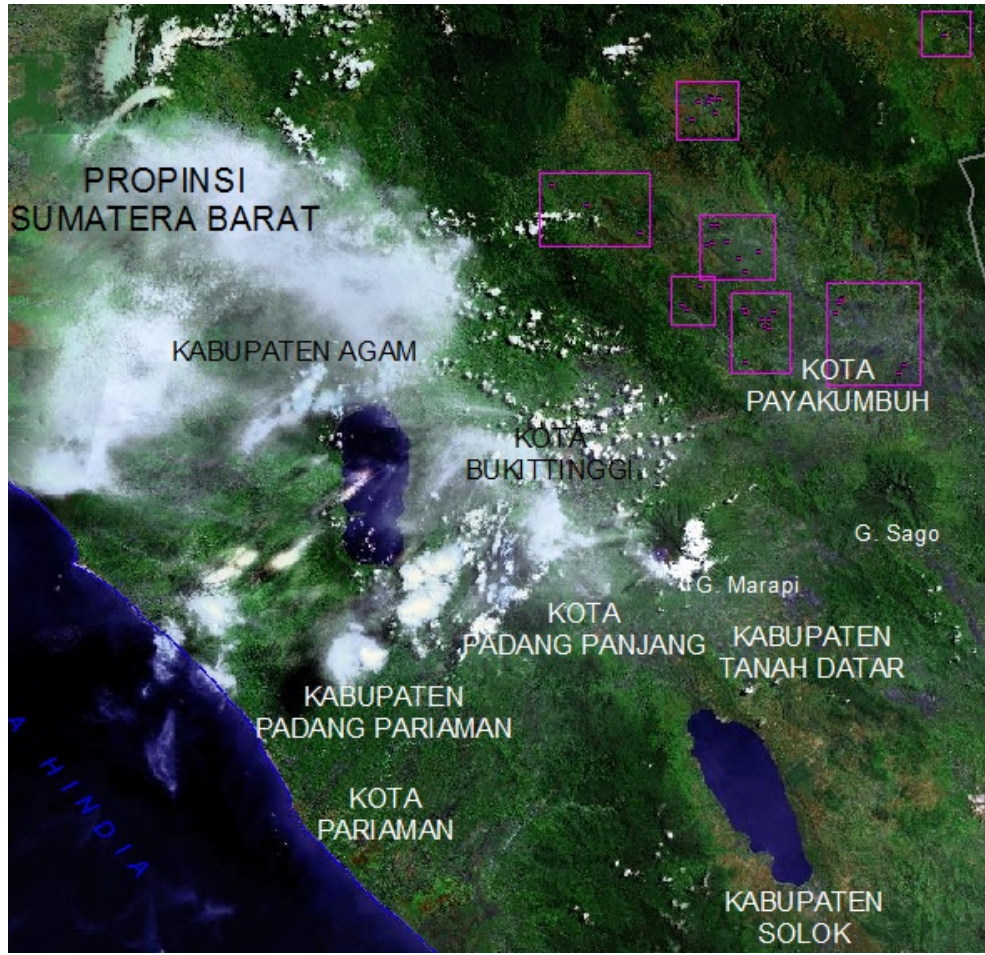


Figure 13. Groups of menhirs in Lima Puluh Koto area, Based on the Physical character of the area and similarity of raw material.

or several sites. There are seven groups based on similarities of physical morphology, type of rock, and location. Group I is a hilly highland and consists of Gunung Omeh, Batu Talempong, and Bukit Apar. Group II has valley morphology consists of the site of Koto Tinggi, Padang Ilalang, Sopan Tanah, Domo, Koto Gadang, Ronah, and Ampang Gadang Sungai. Group III has lowland morphology and consists of the sites of situs Anding1,

Kubang, Pauh Sangik, and Bajari. Group V is a valley at the foot of hills and consists of the sites of Talang 1, Talang 2, Sati, Subarang, Kuranji, Guguk Nunang, and Belubus. Group VI is a valley morphology consists of Gurun 1, Gurun 2, Gurun 3, Lubuk Batingkok, Taram, and Andaleh. Group VII is at the foot of a hill is located farthest to the northeast consists of one site namely Pangkalan Koto Baru.



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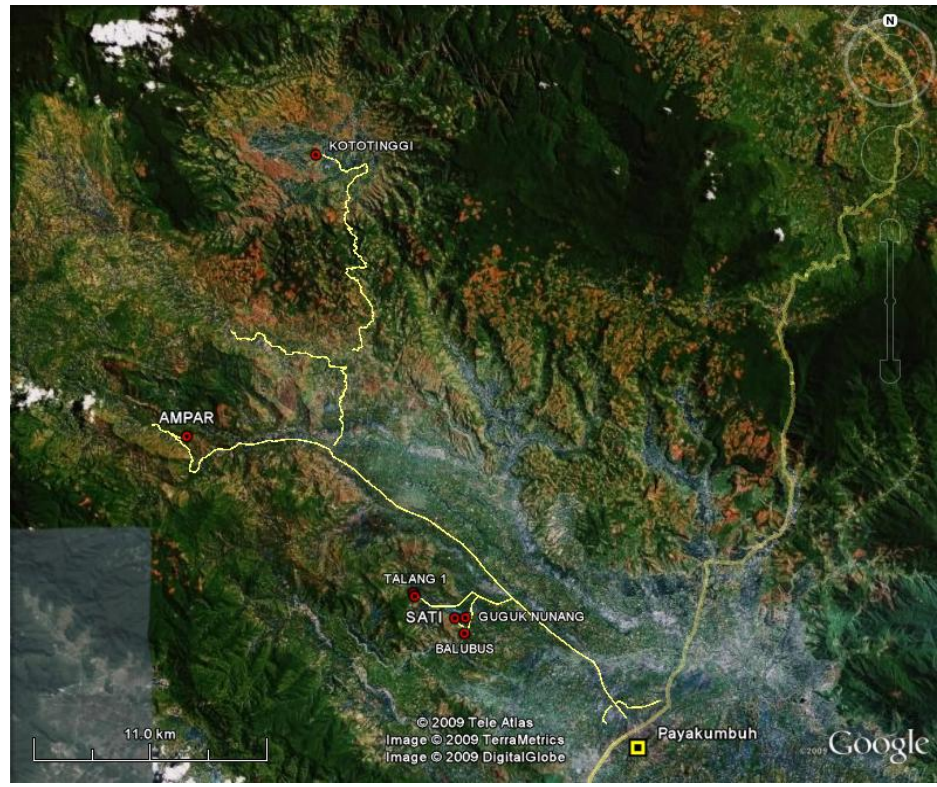


Figure 14. The Road Network Connecting Menhirs, which disperse in Lima Puluh Koto Area

The highest group of menhirs, which is located on top of the ridge of a hill, is Group I, while the farthest is Group VII, Pangkalankoto Baru. The other groups are located on valleys. In order to know the functions of menhirs at every site, as well as the characteristic of each menhir site, excavations were carried out randomly at a site on highland area and on a valley, which are Sati and Bukit Apar. Both sites have different distribution characteristics, one clustered together (Sati) and the other dispersed (Bukit Apar).

Based on their shapes, functions, and locations, in general the menhirs of Lima Puluh Koto are straight with the top or the upper one third parts curved and inclined to certain direction (*chtonis*). However, there is also an upright stone menhir with a wide body. A slim-shaped menhir is usually 2-2.5 m high with a

tapered end. The functions of menhirs are varied according to the observations on the distributions and positions of menhirs in certain locations. One function is as a tombstone for one particular group of menhirs and it has context with other findings. Another function of menhirs is as a village boundary monument, and even as an area marker monument. There are still a lot of discussions about the specific functions of menhirs at each site depending on the context of the surrounding of the findings. However, only general functions that can be put forward in this discussion.

THE SITE OF SATI

Sati is a megalithic site on the feet of hills of Guguk Village, Guguk District, Lima Puluh Koto Regency. Astronomically this site is located in between 100°33'16,7" Eastern



Hemisphere and 0°10'31,6" Southern Latitude. Standing and lay down down menhirs, pit-marked stones, and stone troughs located this site. A number of menhirs are

clustered at the feet of Batu Perisai (Perisai Hill), which stands ± 800 m above the sea level, in northwest direction, is Merapi mount (± 2891 m high) that is the highest mountain in

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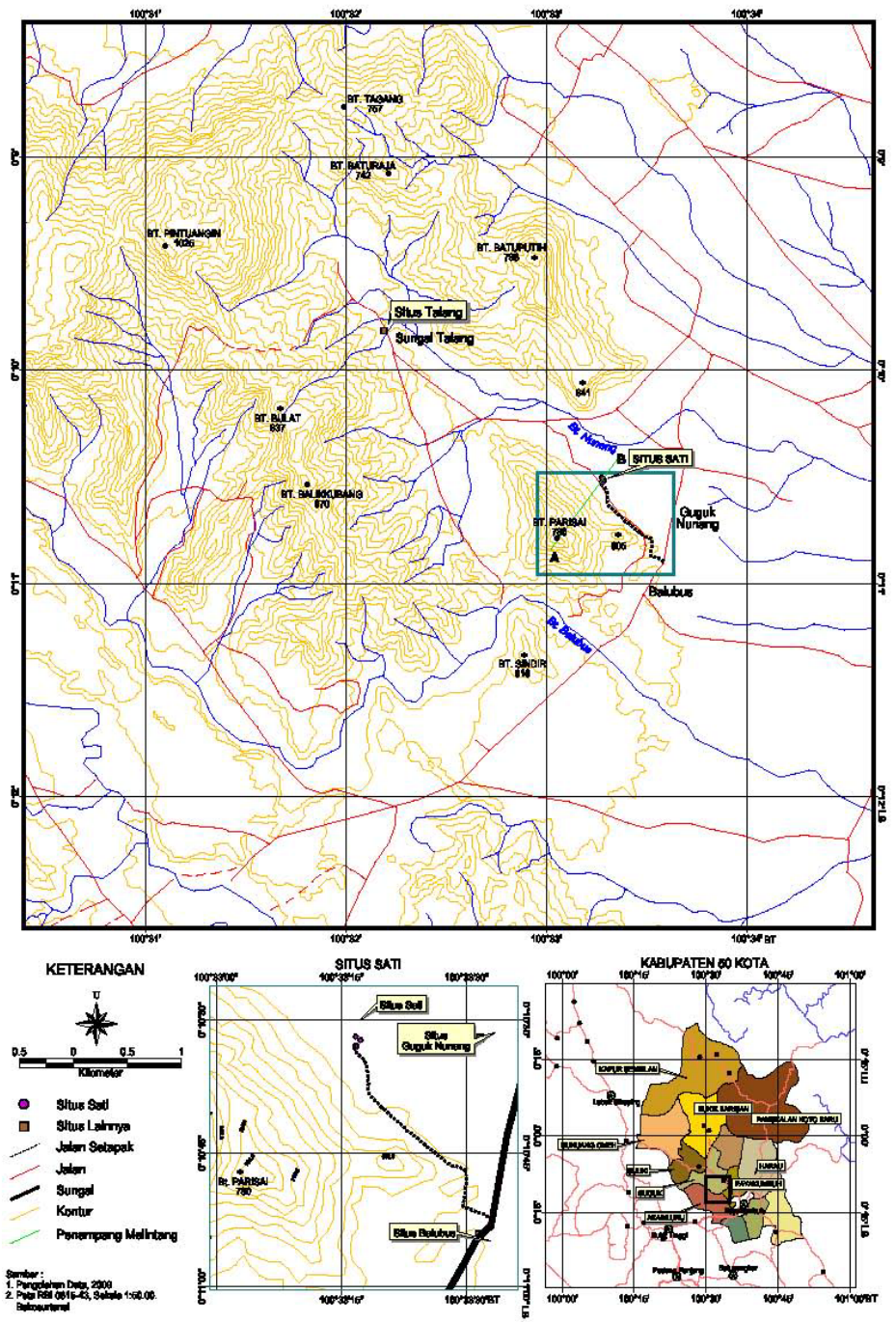


Figure 15. Sati Site Location, Lima Puluh Koto Region, Source: Research Report, 2009, Triwurnani, et. al, 2012:13)



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West Sumatera. Besides Mount Merapi, to the south is Perisai Hill is Mount Sago, which is ± 1863 m high. In other words Perisai Hill is surrounded by mountains and hills. It is to its east that there are standing menhirs amongst the lay down ones.

Mount Merapi. There were also menhirs decorated vine/scroll shape or "keluak paku" (fern).

Two excavation pits were opened, namely U1T1 and U2T2, to investigate the function and role of menhirs found there. The results are



Skeleton1

Skeleton2

Figure 16. Excavation of Sati Site, Guguk District, Lima Puluh Koto Regency. (Doc. The Author.)

The top parts were shaped in curving forms and look as if they face certain direction (chthonic): to the west facing Perisai Hill or facing

the discovery of human pottery fragments and 19 th- 20 th century AD porcelains are still found. Skeleton 1 (R1) is found in U1T1 pit.



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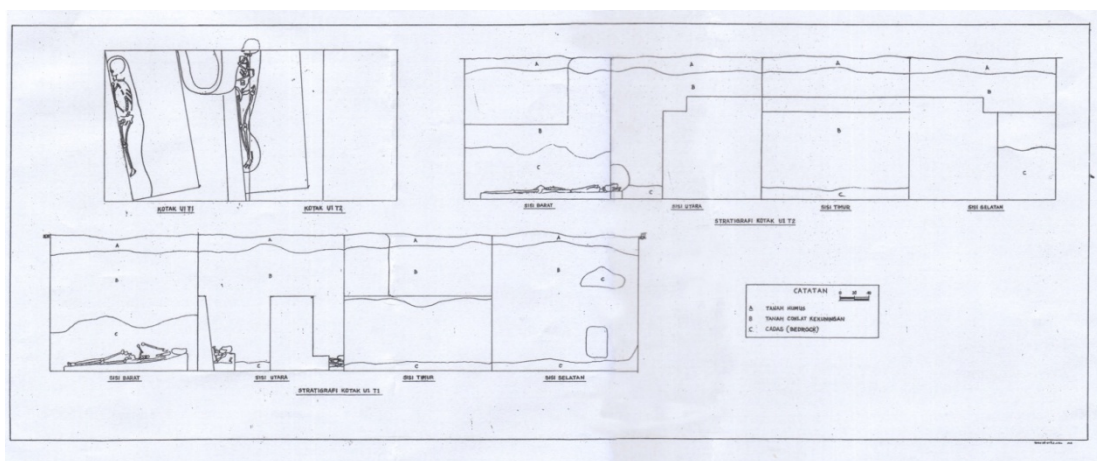


Figure 17. Stratigraphy of Sati site, Guguk District, Lima Puluh Koto Regency. Source: Research Report, 2009, Triwujani, et. al, 2012:13)

R1 was found at the depth of ± 180 cm in sideways position, attached to feature wall with its head in northwest and its feet in southeast

is seen on it. Its jaws are closed with intact teeth.

R2 is found from head to feet in extended position, with its head in

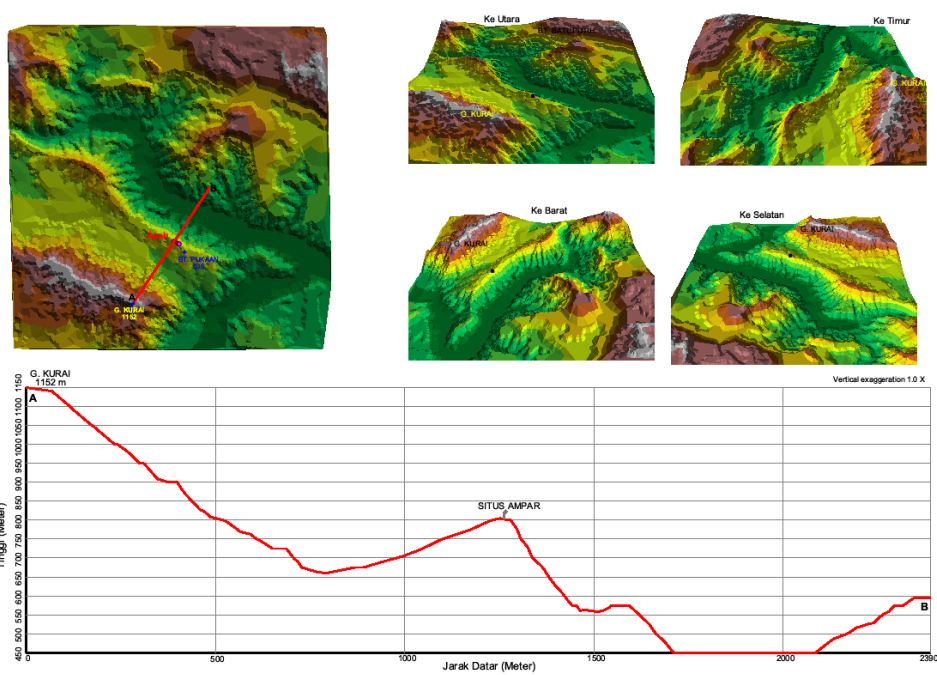


Figure 18. Section of Batu Putih Hill, Bukit Apar Hill, and Mount kurai, Source: Source: Research Report, 2010, Triwujani, et. al, 2012:13)

directions. Its head to feet are observable, with very fragile and almost broken chest; a folded hand

northwest and feet in southeast directions. Its face is oriented towards the southwest, and its chest



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to upper femure are broken. its jaws are opened with protruded shovel-shaped teeth. No funeral gift like pottery fragment or stone or metal tool with both skeletons.

THE SITE OF BUKIT APAR

Bukit Apar Site is located at Pandam Gadang village, Gunung Omeh District Lima Puluh Koto Regency. This site is located in between 100°25'56" Eastern Hemisphere and 0°05'45" Southern Latitude. Bukit Apar is also called Bukit Ampar or

and to its south is Mount Kurai ± 1152 m above sea level. If we draw a straight line from north to south, Batu Putih, Batu Apar Hill, and Mount Kurai are located on one line.

It is quite difficult to reach this site, as we have to climb quite high and vast hill, which cannot be passed by motor bike or car. Menhir in rows both upright and fallen-down position can be found in this site. These menhirs are bigger and taller than those at other sites. The height of the menhirs are up to 200 cm with a thickness of ± 1,5 cm decor. The



Figure 19. Excavation of Bukit Apar Site, Lima Puluh Koto Area, Source: Research Report, 2010, Triwurjani, et.al, 2012: 21)

Bukit Apah by local people. For practical reason, in this article we use the Bukit Apar. It is a highland site on the ridge of Pukaan Hill at an elevation of ± 636 m above sea level. To its north is Batu Putih Hill

biggest one is on top of the Pukaan Hill, and its body is decorated with sword holder (weapon) motif. Other decoration is vine/scrolls. The rest of the menhirs are undecorated. There are two excavation pits were opened



to the depth of $\pm 1,60$ m. Only a group of small sized, blackish teeth in fragile condition are found, and no human skeleton are found in both excavation pits.

Data from excavation show menhir sites on highland areas were not used as primary burial but worship area, while the ones on lower areas were used as primary burial place with no burial container. The menhirs serve as burial markers (tombstones). All the menhirs show that the one buried there was considered as an ancestor figure of respected leader. Among the megalithic communities there was a term '*primus inter pares*', which is a chosen leader who is the greatest among the other leaders.

DATING

The excavations yielded two human skeletons at Sati Site, while at Bukit Apar Site only fragment of a fragile jaw was found mixed with soil under a menhir. Skeleton 1 was found in sideway position with northwest – southeast orientation at the depth of 1.8 m below the surface at Sati Site. The bones are fragile and part of torso is shattered; only the head and lower limbs/feet remain. No burial gift is found. Its jaws are also fragile, with small and level teeth. The second skeleton was found at the depth of 1.6 m with shattered torso and the skull was under a menhir (± 40 cm from the base of menhir) and is located outside the excavation box. The femur and tibia, and the sole of the feet seem to be in good condition. Those skeletons show archaic characteristics: protruded foreheads, flat occipital, protruded maxilla and teeth, shovel-shaped incisors, and *brachycephalic* (wide and short skull

shape), which are all the characteristics of Mongolid race (Soejono, 1984; Harry Widiyanto's explanation as an expert in palaeontology and source, 2009).

Results of Radiocarbon (C14) dating on a rib bone show that Skeleton-1 has a chronology of 4th – 5th centuries CE (1.370 ± 170 BP) while Skeleton-2 has a chronology of 1st – 4th centuries CE (1.730 ± 140 BP); there is a difference of ± 350 years.

A number of dating analyses were also carried out by Yacob (1992:156) using samples of some human bones from Bawah Parit Site in Koto Tinggi District, at Megalithic area in Lima Puluh Koto, among others by Teuku Yacob (1992: 156), who stated that the people who lived there 2000 – 3000 years ago were Australomelanesids. The dates of Bawah Parit Site are 3500 ± 100 BP; 3000 ± 1500 BP; 2070 ± 2130 BP (Fadhila A. A, 1977). The date of Guguk Nunang Site, using charcoal as its sample, is 980 ± 120 BP (Vita, 2005). The existence of the Austromelanesids indicates that prior the arrival of the migrants the area had been inhabited by another group. They were, then, lived harmoniously with the Mongolid migrants.

This information shows that the human buried under the menhir at Sati is a Mongolid, while modern human of later period. Furthermore, there is a 200 – 350 year gap between them. If menhirs were used as grave markers in early century, this tradition still continue during later period as seen by the use of menhirs as tombstones. Thus some menhirs remain as sacred objects for centuries, while the others found at other locations might be used as milestones that mark the borders of villages.



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The above assumption has yet to be proven because both individual menhirs and those that were placed in pairs might function as grave markers or tombstones. Results of the excavation on the hill ridge at Bukit Apar Site, Gunung Omeh District also show burial activities without funeral gifts. Therefore menhirs at Bawah Parit Site, Mahat, Bukit Barisan District might part of cemeteries of certain ethnic groups. If that is the case, then some questions arise: Did plain and decorated menhirs, as well as their heights/lengths have any relation to the social status of the deceased? Is there any difference in the shape and location between menhirs that serve as tombstones or grave markers and those used as village markers? Therefore this area has to be further investigated.

CONCLUSION

The dating analysis and human skeleton reveal the culture and people lived in Lima Puluh Koto Megalithic area. There is a possibility that people who lived in the area for the first time were Austramelenisids. Later, Mongolids, came and mixed with modern humans who arrived in more recent period. They practiced Megalithic tradition. Based on that fact, it can be said that Lima Puluh Koto Megalithic was a tradition.

In relation to the diaspora of the Austronesian speakers, it is evidenced that they reached Sumatera Island, and settled there for a long period. They buried their deceased without burial container and used tombstones to mark the graves. The tombstones are decorated with floral vines resembling fern plants which is commonly found in the hills or shaped like sword's handle with the

top part curved to one side. The menhirs are spread in groups. If put within the timeline of Austronesia in Indonesian Archipelago, the Megalithic tradition of Lima Puluh Koto belongs to Proto-historic Austronesia.

SUGGESTIONS

There are many other sites that have menhirs as their finds, which have not been investigated. Furthermore, more menhirs found when people working in the fields or forest, not to mention the ones used as foundations of traditional buildings. Therefore, reconstruction of distribution pattern is needed to know the modes of adaptation, with suitable natural environment and abundant raw material. Aside from menhirs, there are also stone mortars/troughs with the same vine-shaped decorations like the ones found on the menhirs. The fact is supposed to answer why in Lima Puluh Koto area (West Sumatera) menhirs are the dominant finds while in South Sumatera (for instance in Pasemah) the most commonly finds are statues and dolmens, and in Lampung there are plenty of terraced structure and earth fortresses. In other places in Sumatera, particularly in highland areas like Kerinci Mountains, the finds include cylindrical stones and jar burials. Based on those facts, studying Austronesian culture in modern day context bring more data and information about the history of the ethnic groups in the Indonesian Archipelago.

Note:

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