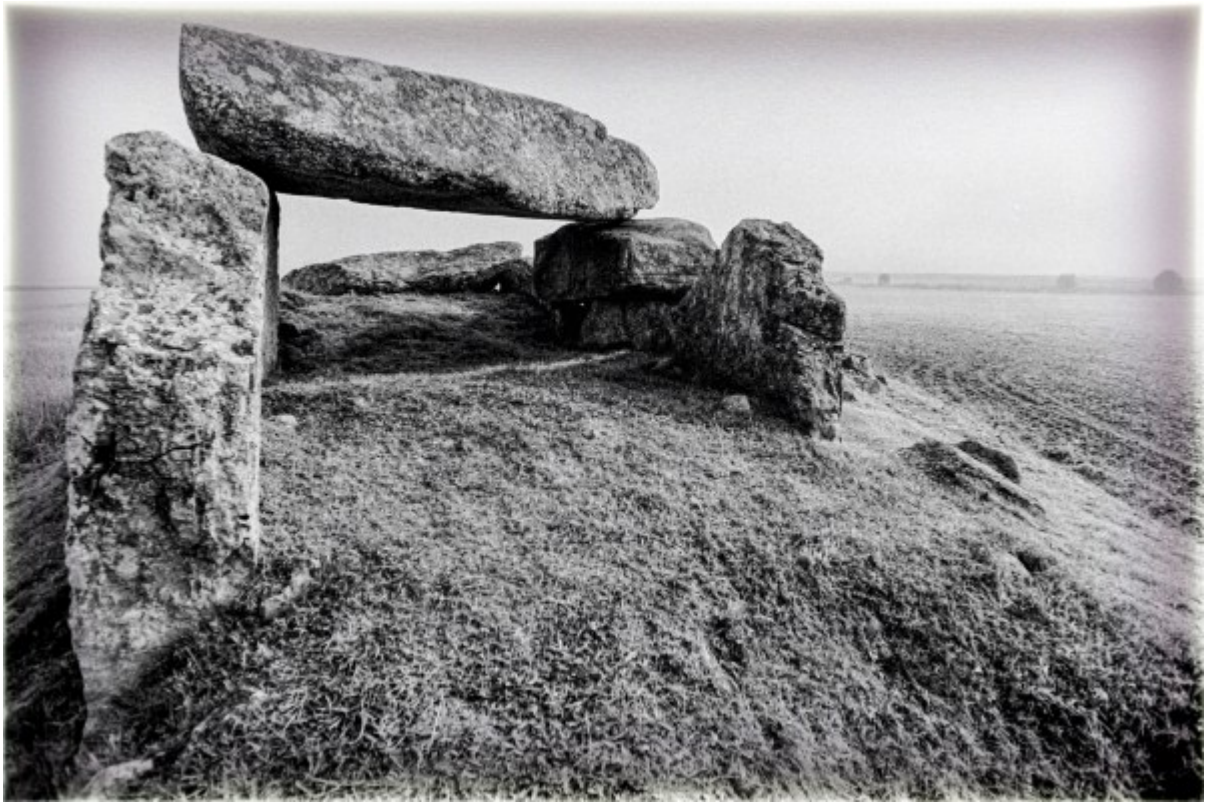
IN TILLEY’S GARDEN – A SUMMER LONG AGO



Reflections on the work of Christopher Yates Tilley 1

This is Part 1 of a reflection upon the works of Chris Tilley, prompted by his too-early death in March 2024.

I want to do justice to the range and depth, the significance of his work in anthropology and archaeology. My reflections are based on memories, close collaboration, and deep reading of all his writing. His work, now finished, deserves close attention because it deals with matters of wide concern and in such a sophisticated way, dedicated to careful consideration – relationships with environment; respect and acknowledgement of diverse voices; developing secure foundations of knowledge, in experience, modes of engagement with the world, representation and report.

What follows is not an exposition of his ideas but a reflection upon them, something of an exchange of ideas as I unpack how I react. I do look back with

hindsight and wish that the conversation that ended when we parted ways in 1993 had continued. I disagree with much of what Chris came to stand for. I do not think he has the answers. But he always got me to think more carefully.

Part 1 is about our collaboration at Cambridge, two academics provoked to set things right.
In Tilley's Garden: a Summer Long Ago [this post]

Part 2 presents some allegorical associations in something of a play with the mythmaking that I find quite endearing in Tilley's anthropological archaeology.
Mythographic Triptych (annotated) [Link]

Part 3 is based on reading his work since we parted ways in 1993. I offer sketches of some personae in his scenario of experiencing landscape, and some features of a concept map within which his oeuvre might be situated.
In Tilley's Garden: Figures in a Landscape – [Link]

Part 4 is a celebration of Tilley's humanism – valuing individual experience and autonomy, grounding in empirics and critical thinking, focus on life and presence, environmental secularism. I find his humanism most considered, even profound. I think this is what he left in most of us, certainly those friends, family, colleagues, students whom I have heard react to his death – quite a passion for life and the qualities of things.
In Tilley's Garden: Transcendental Experiences – [Link]

It seems appropriate to call it a passing, the death of Chris Tilley in March 2024. We worked together so closely on archaeological theory from 1979, when we met at Cambridge, until he left University of Wales Lampeter in 1993, where we were both faculty elements in an experiment to create a new kind of academic amalgam.

We spoke little after this, parting ways. Nevertheless our diverging paths retained concerns that we shared from the outset of our collaboration. I have been reading again all of his writings. What follows is the beginning of a reflection on these crossings and convergences, as well as the antipathies that led to the parting of ways.

And amalgam, yes – such close collaboration and then a quiet but nevertheless ongoing, implicit conversation.

The home for the rest of Tilley's career was University College London. He was a key figure there in building up a school, one might describe it, of material culture studies, while pursuing what he called a phenomenology of landscape, and for which he became well-known. His ethnographic scope took in examples of material culture in small-scale non-western communities (he traveled to Vanuatu, for example), but the many case studies, the detailed surveys of prehistoric sites, monuments, and rock art in the British Isles, Ireland, France, and Scandinavia, are the heart of his body of work.

His methodology of intensely-focused visits-in-person, meticulously documented passing-through perambulations of prehistoric remains-in-the land, always led to observations of previously unnoticed affinities, where he might liken an upland linear construction to a pebble beach visible on the coast below. Such metaphorical affinities were the foundations of scenarios with which he summed up such engagements with prehistory – in-the-footsteps ancestral processions through the land, local and secret knowledges regained, initiation rites, shamanic associations, embodied inhabitations then-and-now.

Looking through his many landscapes studies I am taken back to the summer of 1988, most of which I spent with Chris in Sweden. With hindsight and reviewing the copious photowork I pursued in that field trip, it is clear to me now that I saw him there and then in his element, in a milieu that he cultivated for the rest of his life.

Textures and atmospheres of Sweden – with Chris Tilley in 1988.

archaeology in the academy

Our fieldwork in Sweden in 1988 was in the wake of the publication in 1987 of two books we had worked on since 1980 – *ReConstructing Archaeology* (Cambridge University Press) and *Social Theory and Archaeology* (Blackwell Polity).

These have been taken as part of the roll-out of a post-processual archaeology, a

package of theory and methodology that challenged the precepts of a processual “paradigm”. Such a supposed roll-out is regularly now featured in stories of the history of archaeological thought. Tilley and I never saw our project in those terms.

Both of us had been inspired by David Clarke, Fellow of Peterhouse, the small Cambridge college. He died in 1976 before Tilley and I met there. We both appreciated his open and generous, exploratory and visionary attitude, and his aspirations to improve archaeology as a disciplinary field in a Cambridge of the 1970s that was quite tense and competitive. Well-established interests in an archaeology focused on economy went back to Grahame Clark and Eric Higgs, taking in many younger researchers such as Geoff Bailey, Paul Halstead, John O’Shea, Peter Rowly-Conwy, Marek Zvelebil, Glynis Jones, Jim Lewthwaite – these were just the ones that taught me as an undergraduate. Ian Hodder arrived in 1977 and was supervising the research of, among others, Chris, Mike Parker-Pearson, Henrietta Moore, Danny Miller, Mary Braithwaite. There were many others. Faculty such as Glyn Daniel, John Alexander, John Coles were lost in all the intellectual energy, with nothing to say to us. They seemed small minded, parochial, outmoded, irrelevant in contrast to the vigor of debate over a pint in the Anchor, the Mill, the Little Rose, the Eagle, the Granta, or over dinner in college hall.

Tilley and I benefited from the institutional separation of college and university. This was a critical and dynamic aspect of our experiences of academic community. Socializing and what can be called collegiality came before university department and disciplinary alignment. We both found free space to explore our interests without obligation to curriculum and faculty, or disciplinary norms and expectations. As an undergraduate, I skipped lectures and faculty supervision, actively encouraged by my tutor at Peterhouse. Chris pushed his doctoral research in prehistoric archaeology in new directions.

We were immersed in classic social science debate over theory and methodology, and as applicable to an anthropologically oriented archaeology. Bookstores (Heffers and the radical bookshop on Silver Street), and libraries (Haddon and University) teemed with fresh debate around a turn to theory in the social sciences and humanities. What concepts for explaining and interpreting prehistoric societies? What role for quantification and (hypo)thesis in building reliable, meaningful knowledge? It was an intoxicating atmosphere.

In 1979, as part of the research for my undergraduate dissertation, I coded a principal components analysis in FORTRAN IV for the Cambridge mainframe computer (I recall it well – an IBM model 370-165!) along with a program to plot results (thanks to Tim Dixon), and ran the copious data from some neolithic mortuary deposits through both. Chris was very taken, as I was, with the patterning and correlations that emerged, and so we expanded the analysis to include sites in Sweden, where he had started his own research. We interpreted the clear evidence for selection and manipulation of body parts in a socio-cultural modeling of power and agency derived from structural-marxist theory, applied to pre-capitalist modes of production, and relying heavily on the concept of ideology. This was the beginning of our research collaboration that lasted for a decade.

A long-postponed and acrimonious confrontation with my examiners Stuart Piggott, Glyn Daniel, and John Alexander over my research dissertation in 1980 threw the end of my undergraduate days at Cambridge into deep shadow. I left to join an archaeological field unit in the north of England. Chris moved to Lund in Sweden for his research into prehistory.

I was angry at what I experienced as exclusion from the academy where I believed I might make valuable contribution, and from a distinctive standpoint, one that had been acknowledged by my college. My background, what in the US we now call first generation low income, prompted me to see this as a matter of class culture. Glyn Daniel's only comment on my work, as he sipped from a glass of red wine, was "you have a strange accent – where is it from?" – he knew well-enough that I had a north-eastern working class accent. Stuart Piggott looked imperiously out of the window and said "You seem to have a vague interest in the history of archaeology – my history". To my complaint that the system of examination involving short essays written in response to trite questions was merely a measure of one's skill at writing short responses to trite questions, John Alexander responded "Then, as a student of the Classics, you should learn to write like Tacitus." Glyn Daniel, as head of department, had told Chris bluntly that a doctoral dissertation on theory could not qualify as research at all and would therefore receive neither institutional nor financial support. Chris became increasingly combative in his stand for open research rigor and against unreflective disciplinary orthodoxy and academic cronyism. We committed to adversarial research and publication. We would not be marginalized. We would not suffer archaeological fools.

In celebration of Bill Rathje's and Mark Leone's notion of an "archaeology of us", we pursued for a year a study of modern material culture (beer packaging) and associated this with more prehistoric studies, examinations of social science methodology, and of museum curation and the heritage industry, the actuality of archaeology. Chris was taken with hermeneutics (philosophical phenomenology, with which he is so associated, came later). I was fascinated with the New Left as intellectual activism, and rooted in the very twentieth-century experiences of western Marxism. This was what we presented in *ReConstructing Archaeology*. Another book, *Social Theory and Archaeology*, written in parallel, was based upon seminars and discussions offered at Cambridge, amplified into a critical review of social archaeology, the project to explain and interpret prehistoric societies and cultures. We received great encouragement from sociologist Anthony Giddens, editor and instigator of a new imprint, Polity Press, dedicated to theory in social science.

Our enterprise was not to create some kind of new archaeological paradigm, post-processual, or whatever. It was to pursue what David Clarke had called a critical self-consciousness in our academic *archaeological* practice, thoughtful archaeological *praxis*. The methodology adopted in the case studies of *ReConstructing Archaeology* was regular social scientific, involving empirical exploration through concept and proposition/thesis, quantification, categorization, accounting for data variabilities and regularities in models of socio-cultural process that especially took agency into account, cognitive structures, and people's capacity, or lack of capacity, to effect change in their circumstances.

We embraced the "linguistic turn" taken in the humanities – a disposition, ongoing in the 70s and 80s, to identify and make sense of semiotic structuring in acts of communication, in cultural phenomena such as image making, myth making, narrative and performative storytelling, in everyday life, because this was part of an opening up of disciplinary orthodoxy to fresh angles of approach and understanding. Our study of neolithic mortuary practices, for example, involved a model of corporeal signification – body as metaphor, metonym, synecdoche – an archaeology of the body in which people of the past acted on and through their conceptualization and understanding of their material and immaterial bodies. Manipulating bones – in passage graves and long barrows, in feasts and rituals of excarnation.

In one of the first long reviews of our two books in the journal *Antiquity* Kristian

Kristiansen called them “The Red and the Black”. *ReConstructing Archaeology* had a stark black cover. That of *Social Theory and Archaeology* was deep red with an image of gothic melancholy and ruin. We took Kristian’s naming as an astute and flattering reference to Stendhal’s critique of class culture in modernizing France – the 1830 novel *The Red and the Black*. Kristian’s Marxian perspective held that the key to our work was critique. Critique – this is what touched a raw and supporating nerve in archaeology. This is what so rankled some of our fellow archaeologists – our repeated and substantiated claim that we were not sufficiently and critically self-conscious of what we were doing as archaeologists. We are not neutral detached scientists, but embedded, committed, contemporary, even if we pretend otherwise.

Here again our concept of critique was well-founded and long-standing – critique, after Kant, if one wants a genealogy, is reflection upon the conditions under which one might construct sound knowledge. My own standpoint was that of the immanent critique associated notoriously with the Frankfurt Institute of Social Research and after, rejecting the search for a fixed outside from which one might offer critique and correction. Donna Haraway describes this as “staying with the trouble” – there’s no escape from the mess. In contrast, it was on that summer itinerary in 1988 through prehistoric Sweden that I realized Tilley’s was a *transcendental* critique of contemporaneity. For Tilley the fixed point, the *prima causa*, was anthropic and thereby shared corporeality, the embodied *experience* of landscape, of things.

Moreover, with hindsight, Chris increasingly had less and less to say in the way of critique. While there were gestures of broad criticism of the contemporary world in his later writing, and his method stood as implicit critique of much that was claimed to be knowledge building in archaeology and anthropology, it was the transcendentalism that, I suggest, stands out most markedly in the many case studies of being-present-in-the-land. I will have more to say of this in a later reflection on the personae and archetypes in Tilley’s phenomenology.

Our two books drew on the sociology of knowledge after the likes of Kuhn and Foucault to argue that knowledge is a verb, that science is something people do. To reiterate, our enterprise was to further critical self consciousness in social science and the humanities. We wanted better building of knowledge, more secure, edifying, rewarding, enchanting, apposite, pertinent to matters of common and

pressing concern. Acknowledgement that archaeology is not the discovery of the past, but the temporal *percolation* of past, present and future, to use the phrasing of science studies philosopher Michel Serres.

Bruce Trigger, among many others, accused us of corrupting science with politics, claiming that ours was an irresponsible hyper-relativism, whereby everything that can be said of the past was relative to present context, to standpoint, to politics, and thereby groundless.

Far from this, we were actually seeking more firm foundations for knowledge, accepting that knowledge of the archaeological past is not something revealed to us, discovered, observed in neutral and abstracted detachment, but worked for. This is the all-too-present experience of the academy – seeking funding, dealing with policy and debate, managing projects, navigating career paths, forging networks. This premise that knowledge building is an active process is now well accepted and affirmed through decades of research in the field of science and technology studies. It is commonplace now that science must account for its place and role in society, must deal with proponents and detractors, and not hide behind an argument that the value of knowledge is simply self-evident.

Trigger promoted an essentialist great man account of the progress of archaeological thought in his magnum opus *A History of Archaeological Thought*, first published in 1989. I suggest that it is his account that is irresponsible, and literally, in his own terms. At best Trigger affirmed that archaeology is affected by ideologies such as nationalism and colonialism. In this regard, in Trigger's reading, Tilley and I were simply foolish apologists for an ideology of "postmodern relativism". But actually it is his kind of story of archaeological thought and ideology that absolves archaeologists of their responsibility to account for what they do. This is Trigger's irresponsibility – to seek and justify a gated community of scientists cut off from the contemporary, absorbed in their fantasies of a past-in-itself.

a summer long ago

1988. We were taking in reactions to the two books. I was planning a return to Cambridge, shifting from prehistory to take up a critique of classical antiquity. I had been traditionally schooled in this bastion of cultural elitism, and had taught classical languages in high school; I needed to work through this legacy.

Our affirmation that archaeology is what archaeologists do nudged us to undertake a field project. I had spent two years in urban excavation in the north east of England. Unit director Barbara Harbottle, such a professional and thoughtful mentor, had encouraged me to build up skills in site and finds photography and drawing, in site and architectural surveying. I was eager to tie these competencies to our theoretical precepts. Tilley was at home in Sweden. We decided I should join Chris there for the summer.

Our itinerary was ambitious – to visit as many as possible of the megalithic dolmens and passage graves in the south and then head up north to the rock carvings of Nämforsen, Näsåker, Västernorrland County, on the Ångerman River. We would explore future possibilities in an immersion in prehistoric landscapes. We would document, debate, discuss in an empirical dialogue with sites and monuments. We had a magnificent meal of crayfish poached in dill with home-grown potatoes from Tilley's garden. And then we set out.

Before the outing to the stones

Chris was completely at home, and literally, with "Allemansrätten", everyone's

right in Sweden to camp anywhere for a few nights. And we did. Copious quantities of his exceptional home-brewed ale came with us on this heady exploration. His local knowledge was extraordinary. He knew where to camp, from previous visits. He was an expert in mycology, the mushrooms of the northern forest. He brought rakes for harvesting berries from the forest floor. Chris was at home, in his milieu. This was what he loved doing. This was obvious and it was infectious.

We talked of archaeologies of the body, of consumption and expression as we walked the land. We revisited our readings of our favorite theorists over campfires and smoked fish. We lit candles in cup-marked megalithic slabs in twilight. We clambered over carvings on rocks in dry rapids, examining and documenting every detail.

Tilley was an epicurean of landscape, a foraging connoisseur intent on achieving an intimacy with the land and its prehistory. I recalled afternoon trips we had taken together, driving out in his Hillman Imp to Coe Fen near Cambridge – inspiring escapes to calming vistas of east-Anglian skies. His undergraduate research had been published in 1979 with the title *Post-glacial Communities in the Cambridge Region*. It was subtitled *Some Theoretical Approaches to Settlement and Subsistence*. What is striking about the book is less the exploration of predictive economic modeling, mainstream in the Cambridge of Tilley's undergraduate years, but rather the depth of familiarity with the archaeological sites and finds, and the desire to offer an ecological setting for the foraging and farming communities. He admits that the evidence is so meager that it can sustain no inferences or conclusions at all. The theory and methodology of his study are completely divorced from the fieldwork data. Yet he offers over a hundred pages of description of plants, animals, topographies, geologies, subsistence practices, maps and charts, as well as an introduction to palaeoecology. A labor of love.

For Tilley the concept of *landscape* was a fulcrum of such an engagement – life-on-the-land and environmental communion. Tilley's was the ultimate contextual archaeology – situated, connected – *being-there*. There was a sense of comfort, of being at ease, at one in a milieu. I suggest that this is the *ataraxia* of the Epicurean. The philosophical Epricurean is not a hedonist, a devotee of pleasure. The garden of the Epicurean is a microcosm where one might realize a balance in the inexorable and conflicting flows of life energy. Not a resolution of (dialectical) flux, but a cultivated third-space of calm acceptance – *ataraxia*. Cultivation of

the garden involves active intervention in the life of things – this was Tilley’s fieldwork, his gardening. This was Tilley’s humanism.

Lost in the lichen – somewhere in Sweden on the road heading north, 1988.

Chris and I shared a fascination for the qualities of things (megaliths, mushrooms, carved rock surfaces, berries, lichens, lakeshores, plowed fields) as we moved through vast landscapes (800 miles of forest), simultaneously intimate (a two-person tent pitched in a forest clearing by a 5000 year old dolmen). But I did not feel any sense of ease in that summer of fieldwork. Chris knew where to find the best mushrooms for supper. He had maps and plans of the dolmens, passage graves, rock carvings. I struggled with finding a documentary aesthetic adequate to our purpose, of which I was not at all sure (how were we following up on our years of research, where was this fieldwork leading?). I was more concerned with media and modes of engagement, by whom, for whom – viewpoints, framing, camera lenses, photographic film, and yes, those maps and plans.

I look again now at the photowork from the survey – an archive in my studio/lab of maybe a thousand black and white negatives, some color transparencies. I was experimenting with the genre of landscape photography in relation to landscape art, from seventeenth century to contemporary – matters of gestalt, of texture and resolution, of perspective and vanishing point, and yes, of how to convey, mediate, re-present the qualities of things and of experiences. For me the concept of landscape has always held an awkward and compromised relationship to ownership and inhabitation. I could not associate the concept of landscape with presence, with being-there. And certainly not with authentic insight.

Such a trope of the authentic witness came to dominate Tilley's later landscape studies – an insistence that one could only know a set of prehistoric rock carvings by being-there, being co-present. He thought that inhabiting, living in a landscape was a key to understanding. Land, in my upbringing in the north-east of England, was always owned by a petty aristocracy who lived in grand houses that overlooked, in the distance, workers' housing, colliery pit-heads every few hundred yards, and the ubiquitous slag heaps that came with extractive industry – a different kind of alienated engagement with land, mediated through property ownership and somewhat in tension with Tilley's immediacy.

Chris never discussed mediation such as photowork with me. He wasn't at all interested in the *craft* of image making, of documentation – as part of experience, in the wake of experience, or indeed as its precursor. We never discussed the

history, the genealogy of engagement contained in the concept of landscape. This topic bugged me more than the evening mosquitos of the Swedish forest.

Anxieties of influence – Arcadia 1637

Nicolas Poussin's 1637-8 painting *Les bergers d'Arcadie* depicts four figures inspecting a stone structure in a rural landscape. A finger traces an inscription – ET IN ARCADIA EGO. It's a puzzle, a riddle-figure. We need to supply a verb and suggest a subject – "Even I am in Arcadia"? Is this a ruin, a tomb, a pedestal missing its statue? Is this scene even in Arcadia – the archetypal rural idyll, garden of Eden? Are these the words of the interred, or of the absent statue? Is this death speaking – a reminder that even in Eden life ends? Who are these figures-in-a-landscape? Are they really the shepherds of the title?Two of them wear the wreaths of victors in the games. Who is the female figure, to whom another seems to be looking for comment or insight? She is not dressed as a shepherd. Who witnessed this scene to paint it, or is it fabulation, invention, speculation, allegory? In which case whose work, and for whom? Who actually was Nicolas Poussin?

UT PICTURA POIESIS – this aphorism, from Horace's *Ars Poetica*, takes us to the heart of these matters of mediation. "As in a picture, so too is poetics." The question is of the character and relations of image, text, and, by extension, referent, that to which imagery and text refer, to experiences. *Poiesis* is not merely poetry; it is making, doing, acting, creating – a broader concept of *poetics*. Horace is maintaining that text and imagery are connected through acts of making, constructing, composing, building. Horace saw himself as an inspired poet, VATES, reading the signs of life around him in ways that encompass futurity, possibility, revealing hidden meanings, building futures.

Was Chris taking the role of a reader of signs, immersed in presence-to-hand, unmediated connection through attention to local detail? What of the words and images, maps and diagrams that were integral to this experience, this *media* ecology?

These matters were on my mind as I looked through the camera viewfinder, as I took up pen, paint, and notebook in a Swedish landscape.

The noise of prehistory – Nämforsen

In the wake of odyssey – what came after?

We took a final trip on the ferry to Denmark across the Øresund between Helsingør and Helsingborg, with a wonderful picnic of Danish cheese and beer on the beach beneath Hamlet’s castle.

Tilley went on to organize a handbook of theory – *Reading Material Culture: Structuralism, Hermeneutics and Post-Structuralism*. He wanted me to write a chapter on Adorno to accompany the other introductions to philosophers and theorists. I had had enough of abstract -isms and great thinkers. Much more interesting to me was his extraordinary multi-voiced bait-and-switch account of the carvings we had visited and studied at Nämforsen (*Material Culture and Text: The Art of Ambiguity,* 1991) – river rapids and rock art as allegory of the swirling waters of past-presents.

I returned to Cambridge to take up doctoral research in classical antiquity with Ian Hodder and Anthony Snodgrass, before moving to the *Maison des sciences de l’homme* in Paris, under the sponsorship of Alain Schnapp and the *Centre d’archólogie classique*, Paris 1. This brought such invigorating exposure to science studies in the intellectual circles around Bruno Latour as well as quite different currents in French archaeology.

Much later (not published until 1999) Chris compiled a guide to the dolmens and passage graves of Sweden that we had visited in 1988. This book is an extraordinary curiosity in Tilley’s body of work. It is the most conventional of treatments, a gazetteer with a short descriptive introduction, and makes no reference to any debate about explanation and interpretation, least of all his own work. What it does show is the deep knowledge of the antiquarian connoisseur, immersed in material remains and detached from contemporary concern, other than that afforded by visit; in this regard he had been so impressed, on our own visit to Nämforsen, by the meticulous documentary work of Gustav Hallström and its capacity to help us see the rock carvings.

What we continued to share, albeit in very different ways, was focus on the concept of experience. Tilley pursued the quest for an immediate experience of the past that I witnessed in our Swedish odyssey and tied it to Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology. His case studies of monumental landscapes in Wales and on the chalkland downs of southern England appeared in the book *Phenomenology of Landscape* (1994) and were followed by many others. Tilley was very insistent that this great project, suitably titled phenomenology of landscape and ongoing upon his death in 2024, was rooted in traits that all humans share, irrespective of cultural

difference. Such transcendental corporeality, he claimed, involves embodied experience (of what he continued to call landscape), and connects all humans, past and present, because we share the same experiential apparatuses of cognition, sensory engagement, and emotional evaluation that precede local cultural or temporal difference or variation. This universal basis of experience was the heart of his humanism. You can walk in the footsteps of prehistoric inhabitants and, with appropriate phenomenological attunement and sensitivity, connect with what they too had experienced, bridging time through local spatial immersion, losing cultural and psychological selfhood in corporeality. This was not empathy for Tilley, but rather arose out of close attention to one's own corporeal engagement with the landscape – not a bridge present-past created by an act of empathic imagination, but empirical observation of one's present experience.

Tilley was drawn to experiences in the land. I was drawn through science studies to examine the experiences of doing archaeology. In 1990 I finished *Experiencing the Past* – an exploration of all things archaeological, a first venture in exploring what I came to call the archaeological imagination, with archaeology taken only partially and even incidentally as a disciplinary field. Instead, adverbial or adjectival – archaeological things and experiences, things done archaeologically in an archaeological sensibility. We were both dealing with remains. While Tilley centripetally found ever more intimate communion with traces of the past, ethnographic immersion as he called it, I was conveyed centrifugally into all manner of archaeological associations with detective and horror fiction, with cultural archetypes, modernist metaphors, and archaeological tropes in contemporary art.

Much of the book was written in unspoken conversation with Chris. In contrast to his focus on immediate experience, following those awkward concerns with photographic genre that had troubled me in Sweden, I offered more experiments in experience-always-mediated and politically-motivated, mediating past and present with text and image, including eidetics (action-oriented, performative mediation against mimetics), simulation, narrative, instrumentalities, graphics, concept-maps, montage and collage.

Looking back now it was our dispositions towards temporality and mediation that took us in different directions. Tilley bridged past and present with consistent empirical rigor and method over decades, while never claiming that what he said of

the past was anything other than of his own making. He didn’t need to take into account the genealogies of our concepts and practices that are taken to build the bridges; he didn’t need to question concepts of landscape and ownership, or of mediation and representation, the way he wrote the past, rather than experienced it. I was finding inspiration in Deleuze and Guattari, Nietzsche, in Adorno’s negative dialectics and immanent critique, in Benjamin’s dialectical images. And much more in modern and contemporary art – Klee, Nash, Anselm Kiefer, Goldsworthy, in conceptual and performance art – all of which led me, from 1992, to my long collaboration with theater company Brith Gof (Welsh for *dappled memories*). I have only ever found temporary passages in messy and turbulent waters that involve no essential separation of past and present, and therefore no ground for building secure bridges. In what are like memory practices, workings with remains, archaeologists are prompted by things now, in the flow of experience, to recollect, to make fresh connections with indeterminate remains. And then the waters shift and we navigate anew.

I lodged for a couple of months with Chris, Karin and border collie Moa in his farmhouse over the hill outside Lampeter in 1992. We sat out in the evening to drink and talk amongst vegetable beds punctuated by megalithic miniatures. His newly diagnosed type one diabetes concerned him. I recall the way he expressed it – “this body will be the death of me”. He was unsettled by the institutional structures of hierarchy and decision making in the college. This was a deeply personal matter to him. He told me how he found collaboration to be a challenge and that he only tended towards leadership or apprenticeship. He became convinced that I was implicated in his antipathy to institutional authority. By the end of the year he had found a new academic home at University College London. He never mentioned again our decade of collaboration. He even denied that we had spent that wonderful summer of 1988 together in pursuit of prehistory.

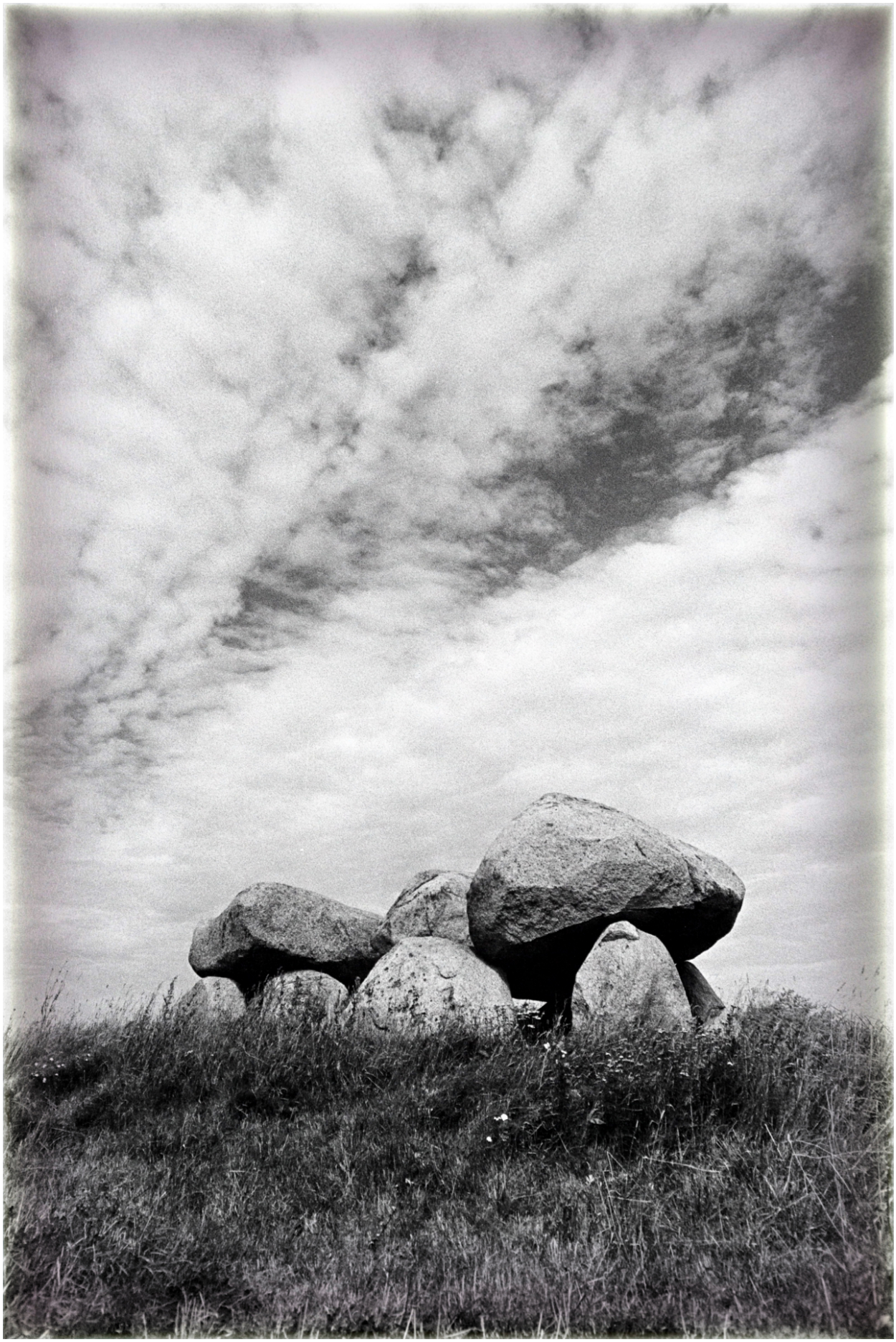
Photographic quiddities Sweden 1988 – click an image to view gallery

Haga 1

Haväng Dösen

Lackalänga

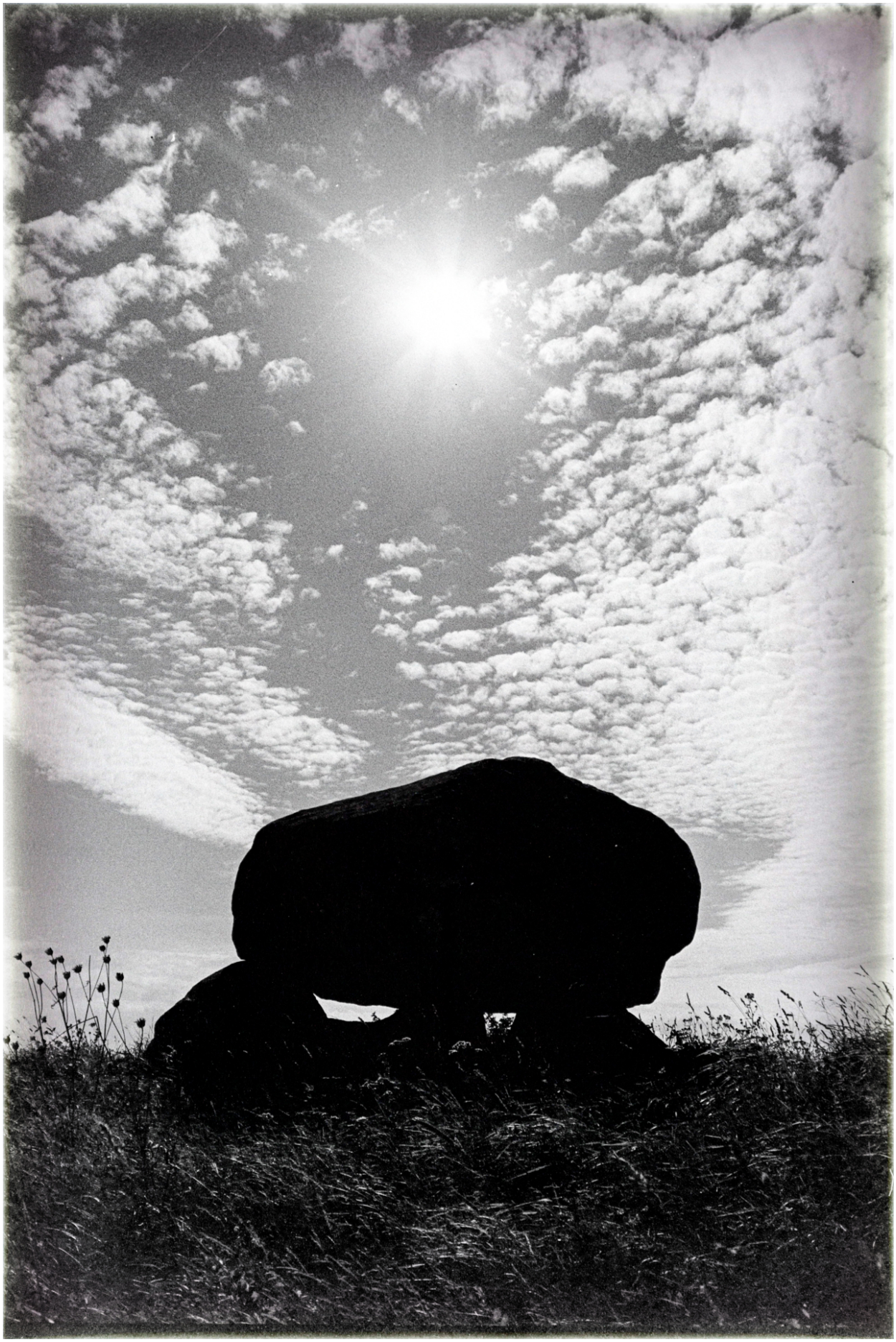
Västra Värlinge



Snarringe

Orenäs

Carlshögen



Klockaredösen

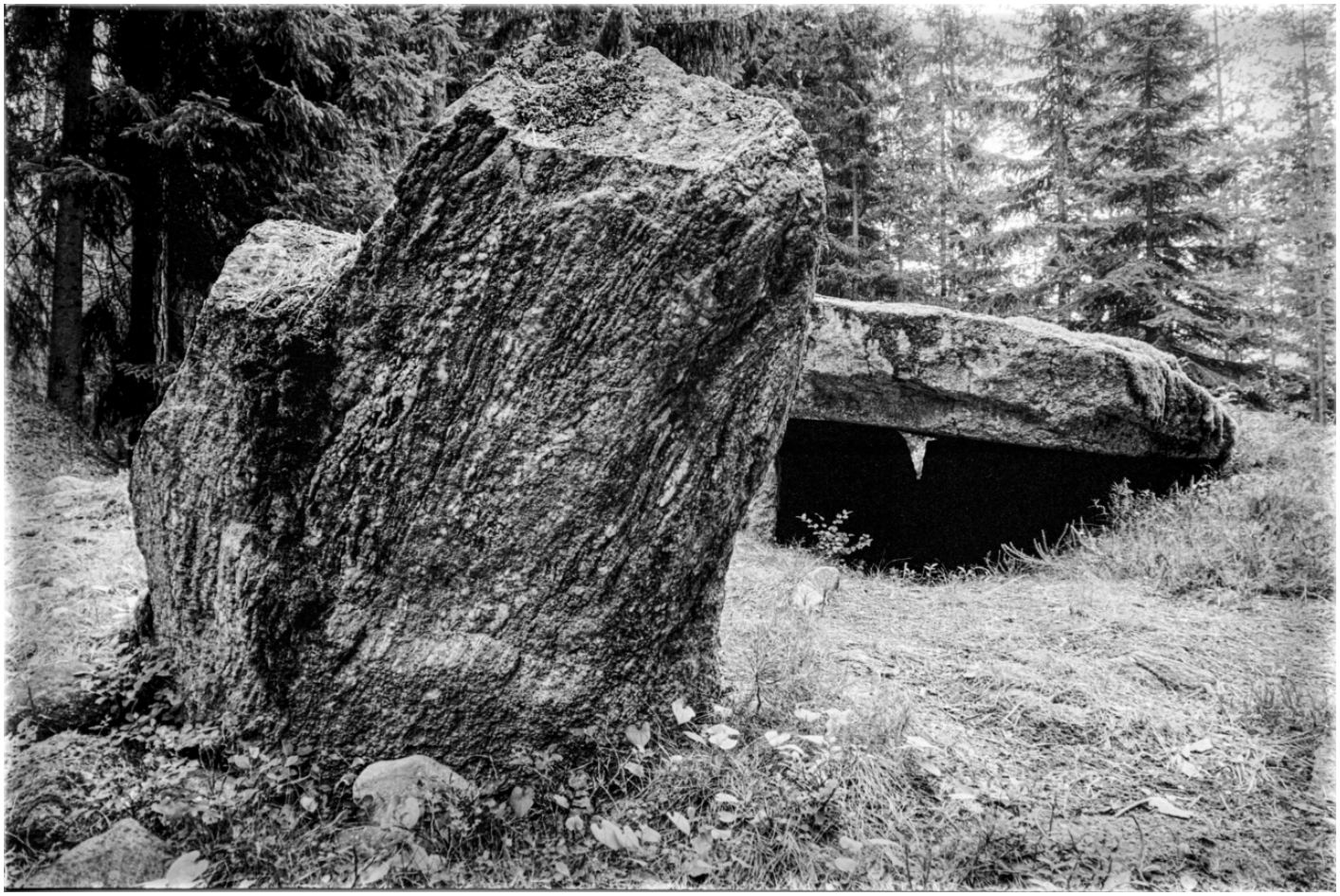
Luttra west

Girommen

Ekornavallen 3

Luttra west

Ludesten



Girommen

Vrångstad

Vrångstad

Vrångstad

Haga 1

Vrångstad

Haga 1

Haga 2