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Identification, Discovering and Classification.
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CONTENT

List of authors		7
Juris Urtāns	Introduction	9
Address by Anna Jurkāne, Director of Turaida Museum Reserve, to the conference participants		12
Tiina Äikäs (Finland)	What makes a stone *sieidi,* or how to recognize a holy place?	14
Laimute Balode (Latvia/Finland)	The roots 'God' and 'Holy' in Latvian Toponymy	25
Jānis Cepītis, Lilija Jakubenoka (Latvia)	The connection of mythological stones to deities of the earth and lower world, and their place in the sacred landscape	34
Jānis Cepītis, Lilija Jakubenoka, Juris Urtāns (Latvia)	The history of research on Latvian cup-marked stones	56
Tõnno Jonuks (Estonia)	An archaeology of holy places: can we find 'forgotten' sacred sites?	78
Andrzej Kuczkowski (Poland)	Space, time and function. Góra Chełmska near Koszalin in the Middle Ages	89
Juha Ruohonen (Finland)	Giant, devil or death? The Finnish Koljo in mythology, toponyms, folklore and archaeology	101

Leszek P. Słupecki (Poland)	Holy groves in Germanic and Slavic beliefs	116
Elena Tianina (Russia)	Inhabitants of the Holy River of Novgorod: the Volkhov in the Historic, Cultural and Mythological Tradition of Medieval Novgorod	122
Vykintas Vaitkevičius (Lithuania)	Mythological, holy or cult places?	132
Christer Westerdahl (Norway)	Microcosms and borders – on centrality and linearity in connection with holy or sacred places	142
Edvard Zaikouski (Belarus)	How many Radogoščes were there, or the most popular types of Slavonic sanctuarles	168

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INTRODUCTION

In May 2007 the international conference 'Holy Groves around the Baltic Sea' took place in Tartu, Estonia, followed a year later, in May 2008, by the conference 'Natural Holy Places in Archaeology and Folklore in the Baltic Sea Region', in Kernavė, Lithuania. Turning this interdisciplinary academic discussion on ancient sacred sites in the Baltic Sea region and neighbouring countries into a traditional event, on 7–9 May 2009 the conference 'Natural Holy Places or Holy Places in Nature. Identification, Discovering and Classification' was held at Turaida Museum Reserve, organised jointly by the Scientific Research Centre of the Latvian Academy of Culture and Turaida Museum Reserve. Participating in the conference itself were specialists from nine countries (Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Finland, Russia, Belarus, Poland, Norway and the United Kingdom), presenting a total of 16 papers. The abstracts of the papers have been prepared and published (*International conference Natural Holy Places or Holy Places in Nature. Identification, Discovering and Classification. May, 7–9, 2009 Turaida, Latvia. Abstracts*. Compiled by J. Urtāns. Latvian Academy of Culture, 2009).

The Turaida conference was devoted to ancient sacred sites – both natural and artificially created – which constitute a widespread phenomenon in the sacred landscape across the whole of the Baltic Sea area. The number and density of sacred sites is higher here than in other parts of Europe, which can be explained in terms of the special course of development of this region. In recent years, particular attention has been given to ancient sacred sites, recognising that such sites can only be studied using a comprehensive approach, applying evidence from archaeology, folkloristics, history, landscape architecture and other disciplines.

The conference was devoted to the problems of identification, discovery and classification of ancient holy places. The following aspects were discussed in detail:

WHAT are we looking for? The terminology used in research on ancient holy places (ancient cult places, natural cult places, sanctuaries, mythological

Participants of the conference in Turaida.

places, sacrificial places, holy places, etc.); the development of the understanding of these terms from the early studies up to the present day.

HOW are we looking for holy places? Identification, available sources (written sources, archaeological evidence, folklore and place-names); critical evaluation of these sources; methods and techniques for discovering holy places.

HOW is classification done? Ancient holy places and various academic disciplines – differences in point of view; classification according to function, date, territory, hierarchy, etc.

The papers presented at the conference encompass a wide spectrum of issues and questions relating to the identification, characterisation and classification of ancient cult sites in the Baltic region and beyond.

In order to acquaint a wider audience with the ideas discussed at the conference, the majority of the papers at the Turaida conference have been prepared in written form and published as a book. This publication, Volume V of the *Kultūras krustpunkti* ('Crosspoints of Culture') series of collections of academic papers, presents the proceedings of the Turaida conference.

Juris Urtāns

ADDRESS BY ANNA JURKĀNE, DIRECTOR OF TURAIDA MUSEUM RESERVE, TO THE CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS

Dear participants of the conference!
Dear organizers of the conference!

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you in the historical centre of Turaida, which tells a story covering a whole millennium of Latvia's history and cultural environment.

Nature, cultural environment, monuments and collections are the basis for the 'Specially Protected Cultural Monument – Turaida Museum Reserve'.

We are working and living in an environment that, in the view of our staff and visitors, is also a holy place, created by nature and people. It includes Dainu (Folk-Song) Hill and the commencement of the Singing Revolution in the 1980s, Turaida Church Hill and the tomb of the Rose of Turaida, along with more than 80 springs, stones and planted trees.

There are so many stories, legends and myths about this place and events in former times and at the present day.

The Livs, who built their wooden stronghold in this area, also honoured Turaida and the ancient Gauja Valley as the 'Garden of God' – which is how we translate this name nowadays.

A long time ago I was inspired by the work of the outstanding researcher Marija Gimbutienė about the Balts in the 13th century. She writes: "Trees, forests, groves, stones, hillocks and hills were filled with the miraculous force of the earth and water."

These forces hallowed, healed, protected from disasters and provided fertility. Written sources of the 11th–13th century repeatedly speak of respect towards forests, trees and springs.

Nobody was allowed to cut trees in the holy groves or to fish in the holy rivers or lakes. These were primeval natural reserves, sacrosanct and protected places.

What characterizes this wonderful attitude and respect towards animate and inanimate nature? Certainly, these are feelings, imagination, hopes, fears, longing for security and a desire to make the world understandable and explicable.

May this conference on 'Natural Holy Places or Holy Places in Nature' succeed not only in identification and classification, but also in finding answers to the question: why did people in the past need holy places in nature, and still need them today?

I wish all the participants of the conference a fruitful and enjoyable event. May the spirit of Turaida provide you with new ideas and broaden the circle of researchers, helping to explain our history, our identity and the surrounding world.

TIINA ÄIKÄS (Finland)

WHAT MAKES A STONE A *SIEIDI*, OR HOW TO RECOGNIZE A HOLY PLACE?

Introduction

Landscape is filled with meanings we cannot see. Places have been meaningful to people, depending on their life history, memories and personal experiences. Other places are important for groups of people as loci of shared experiences and cultural affiliation. The places regarded as holy can have meanings that are important both on personal and cultural levels. But these meanings might not leave any tangible traces. Not all holy places are marked by temples and altars. Some are acculturated via stories, memories and action. If the meanings and intangible traces have been lost, then how can we as modern viewers recognize a holy place?

The Sámi people in Northern Fennoscandia and the Kola Peninsula experienced the landscape as intertwined with memories and stories (*Magga*, 2007, 15; *Näkkäläjärvi*, 2007, 36–37). The landscape was also a web of holy places. There were holy mountains that could be seen from a long distance and places of offering close to home. Other offering places were connected to the means of livelihood. Here I concentrate on a group of holy places called *sieidi* (North Sámi).

A *sieidi* is a wooden object or a stone on which offerings were made. Surviving wooden objects are, however, rare. The stones were typically unshaped by humans. *Sieidi* offerings were connected to the livelihood of the Sámi. Fish was given as an offering when fishing success was hoped for, and reindeer given for success in reindeer herding (*Collinder*, 1953, 173). But one could also petition intervention to cure an illness or for good health during pregnancy. The ways of offering varied. The offering could consist of a living reindeer, other meat, bones, or smearing the stone with blood or fish oil. Other gifts such as coins, metal objects, cheese and alcohol could also be left as offerings. The relationship between a *sieidi* and a human was a reciprocal one. If the *sieidi* didn't give what was asked for, the *sieidi* could be broken. On the other

hand, the *sieidi* could seek revenge if it was not treated well or honoured (*Paulaharju*, 1932, passim; *Itkonen*, 1948, passim).

A short review of the research history

Our information about the *sieidi* sites is mainly based on written sources collected in and after the 17th century. In 1671 Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie supported the collection of information about Lapland. This was due to the accusation that the Swedes had used sorcery to help them attain victories during the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648). This led to a book by Schefferus called *Lapponia*, where he used religious information from old written sources and from the priests who had a post in Lapland. There are later works as well, written by the priests, who describe their stay in Lapland (*Rydving*, 1995, 19).

At times, especially during the Age of Enlightenment, there were priests who learned the Sámi language and were sympathetic to Sámi culture. But there were others whose work was biased by prejudices against pagan religion (*Fossum*, 2006, 12–14). In some cases the same priests who collected information about the old religion also destroyed the old holy places. It is therefore probable that some information was lost as a result. Not all holy places were revealed to the priests, however, and in some cases they were directed to the wrong places.

The time period when the data was collected is also relatively late when compared to the long use of *sieidi* sites. The first dated finds from *sieidi* sites refer to their use in the late Iron Age. On the other hand, there are written sources telling about the use of *sieidi* sites even in the 20th century (*Fossum*, 2006, 108; *Kjellström*, 1987). During this long period of use the places of offering might have changed. Some sites may have been destroyed or no longer used, while new sites for offerings were created. There were also different kinds of sites. Some of them were known to a big group of people who travelled a great distance to sacrifice, while others were only used by a family or a single individual (*Rydving*, 1993). Not all of these sites were actively in use when the data was collected.

For these reasons the data we have does not include all the *sieidi* sites that were used by the Sámi. There are sites that are not known to the researchers and there might be sites of which we are inaccurately informed. In this paper I will present ways to help to determine which of the stones in woods or on lakeshores is a *sieidi*.

How to recognize a *sieidi*?

Sieidi stones are described as stones with a peculiar shape or size (*Paulaharju*, 1932, passim; *Itkonen*, 1948, passim). They have also been described as landscape dominants, i.e. features that stand out from the surrounding landscape (*Mebius*, 2003, 24; *Pentikäinen, Miettinen*, 2003, 46). Anthropomorphism or zoomorphism has been seen as a typical factor in identifying *sieidi* stones (*Manker*, 1957, 34; *Mulk*, 1996, 52). There have even been attempts to recognize *sieidi* stones in southern Finland based on the anthropomorphism of stones (*Pentikäinen, Miettinen*, 2003, 56–59; *Koivisto*, 2008). It is nevertheless hard to prove anthropomorphism objectively. If we look at the places where anthropomorphism is mentioned in written records, it doesn't seem to be a definite criterion (a personal observation). Zoomorphism might not be easily distinguishable either (Fig. 1). Neither are the *sieidi* stones always the only stones in the landscape. In the case of a lakeshore, where there are several adjacent stones, one cannot distinguish by eye which of the stones is holy (Fig. 2).

Fig. 1. A *sieidi* stone at Säytsjärvi, Inari is said to resemble the snout of a fish (photo: T. Äikäs).

Fig. 2. At Seitavuopio, Enontekiö the shore of the lake is covered with stones (photo: T. Äikäs).

There have been different approaches to the problem of identifying an offering place. Ø. Vorren and H. K. Eriksen have emphasized the role of written sources for recognizing an offering place (*Vorren, Eriksen*, 1993, 203).

H. Rydving and R. Kristoffersson have also used old written sources as evidence of the meaning of a stone, but they also emphasize place-names and bone finds as indicators of offerings. They are of the opinion that only unbroken bones can indicate a holy place. The idea is based on evidence in written sources emphasizing that the offered bones were not to be broken (*Rydving, Kristoffersson*, 1993, 197–198). B. Wennstedt Edvinger and N. D. Broadbent (*Wennstedt Edvinger, Broadbent*, 2006, 46) include historical land use and archaeological finds on the checklist of features for recognizing an offering place.

E. R. Myrvoll (*Myrvoll*, 2008) adds archaeological finds (other than bones) and oral tradition to the list of indicators. Archaeological finds include offerings

and constructions, such as stone rings. Constructions connected to *sieidi* stones are rare. Written sources mention wooden platforms that were built close to the *sieidi*. To the best of my knowledge, however, there are no archaeological traces of these. In Northern Norway there is historical evidence of circular offering places, where a *sieidi* may have stood in the middle of a circular stone construction. In recent years similar constructions have also been found elsewhere (*Vorren*, 1985; *Wennstedt Edvinger, Broadbent*, 2006). However, in most cases a *sieidi* is unmodified by human hand. The stone itself is a natural feature that is acculturated by the ritual actions performed around it and by the stories, memories and beliefs attached to it. We may find traces of meaning even when a particular stone looks just like any other stone around it.

The use of written sources and place-names

There are crucial questions to consider when it comes to using written sources to identify *sieidi* sites. In addition to the temporal limitation arising from the relatively short time span they describe in comparison to the long use of *sieidi* sites, there are also spatial limitations. Written sources do not cover the whole Sámi area evenly (*Rydving*, 1995, 63). For example, North-Western Finland has not received much attention. In the wide area inhabited by the Sámi there have also been areal differences. Just as there are differences between the Sámi languages today, so there have been differences in ritual practices. This is why the written sources from the South Sámi area, for example, cannot directly be applied to other areas. *Sieidi* sites have been called by different names in different areas. In the South Sámi area, the term *storjunkare* is used to refer to phenomena resembling the *sieidi* (*Rydving*, 1993, 20–21). Also, the ritual practices may have varied. This is easiest to observe in relation to different subsistence strategies in different places. Reindeer herders used different *sieidi* sites than fishermen, or sometimes they used the same *sieidi*, but gave different offerings.

The use of *sieidi* sites has also varied over time. Some of the information about their use was already lost by the time of the written sources. For example, the Finnish teacher Samuli Paulaharju (1875–1944) who travelled through Lapland with his wife collecting folklore, has described some places with uncertainty. For example, his description of Seitalompola (*seita* is the Finnish word for a *sieidi*) is based on the place-name. He supposed there had been a *sieidi* here because of the name of the lake – *Seitalompolo* (*Paulaharju*, 1932, 43).

The oral tradition collected as late as the 20th century raises the question: How old must an oral tradition be for it to be considered evidence for the existence of a *sieidi*? There are *sieidi* sites that are mentioned in the local oral tradition, but are not known from any older written sources. On the other hand, as noted before, not all *sieidi* sites were revealed to the authors by the informants. Because some of the places were still being used in the 20th century, one cannot rule out the possibility of living oral tradition.

As we can see from the example of Paulaharju, place-names have been used as indicators of *sieidi* sites from the earlier times. There are many place-names that refer to a holy place or a possible *sieidi* site. In some cases the name includes the word *sieidi*, for example *Seitasaari* (Sieidi island) in Inari. Other names, for example, refer to holiness, with the word *bassi* (North Sámi) or *Aailâš* (Inari Sámi, e.g. *Karegasnjarga-Ailigas* in Utsjoki). Sometimes the name of a god or goddess is mentioned. This may be the female *Áhkká/Áhkku* (North Sámi, e.g. *Golle-ahkku* in Inari), or the male *Äijih* (Inari Sámi) or *Dierpmis* (North Sámi, e.g. *Tiermasvaara* in Kuusamo), the god of heaven and thunder. *Sáiva* (North Sámi) refers to a lake that was believed to have two bottoms, providing a way to the Underworld. In some places there are *sieidi* stones connected to a *sáiva* lake. But these place-names do not always refer to a *sieidi* stone. There were holy places without *sieidi* stones, and mountains and headlands where the stone has been lost (*Äikäs*, in print). Also, there are *sieidi* sites without place-names that indicate holiness.

Bones that were broken

The bones that are found in the vicinity of a stone are seen as indicating its use as a *sieidi*. But not all bones are considered to have the same evidence value. H. Rydving and R. Kristoffersson (*Rydving, Kristoffersson*, 1993) are of the opinion that offered bones have to be unbroken.

In the Sámi culture, treatment and condition of the offered bones carried important religious meanings. The written sources from the 17th century and before emphasize that the bones of the sacrificial animal were not to be broken. However, from the beginning of the 18th century there are sources telling how among the South Sámis the meat of the sacrificial animal was eaten together with the marrow from the bones. Split bones have also been found in the excavated material from Sweden dating to the 17th and 18th century (*Zachrisson*, 1985, 87–88; *Iregren*, 1985, 105). Also in the material from Seitala in

Fig. 3. Cut marks on an antler found at Seitala, Utsjoki (photo: T. Äikäs).

Utsjoki there were cut marks on the bones (*Puputti*, 2008) (Fig. 3). I. Zachrisson (*Zachrisson*, 1985, 94) has suggested that the sources may have been describing what people should do, not what they did. The careful handling of the bones was related to the concept that a new animal was to be created from the bones by adding new meat to the skeleton (*Mebius*, 2003, 143).

There were also beliefs concerning the ritual handling of antlers. According to I. Zachrisson (*Zachrisson*, 2009, 134–149), it was important that the antlers come from living animals or at least still be attached to the skull. However, the finds from Seitala indicate that fallen antlers might also have been given to the *sieidi* (*Puputti*, 2008). T. I. Itkonen (*Itkonen*, 1948, 318) states that fallen antlers were offered, as well as whole heads with antlers still attached. These might be examples of variation in ritual practices in time and space.

Moreover, in Sámi society it was believed that all bones should be consecrated (*Zachrisson*, 1985, 84). Hence bones might be buried even when no sacrifice took place. After a meal, bones could be laid in bone catches, for example, and placed under stones. Thus, bones alone are not a reliable indicator of a

sieidi. On the other hand, in contrast to H. Rydving and R. Kristoffersson (*Rydving, Kristoffersson*, 1993), I am of the opinion that the presence of broken bones does not indicate that a stone is not a *sieidi*. There are broken bones from well-known *sieidi* sites and also written sources that refer to sacrificial meals during which bones were broken.

Traces of other finds

In addition to bones, other materials were offered to *sieidi* stones. Written sources mention quartz, flint, glass, metal objects, coins, cheese, porridge, tobacco, alcohol and domestic utensils (*Manker*, 1957, 40–52; *Leem*, 1956 [1767], 428; *Äimä*, 1903, 115; *Itkonen*, 1948, 312). The number of offered objects can vary greatly. In Sweden metal objects and coins are common finds at *sieidi* sites. They have been offered since the 8th century AD, but mainly during the period 900–1300 AD (*Mulk*, 1996, 73; *Hedman*, 2003, passim; *Fossum*, 2006, 108). The excavations at three *sieidi* sites in Finland during the summer of 2008 revealed only a few artefacts. There were three coins and pieces of a glass bottle dating to the 19th century, an undated bone ring, and an antler button. Apart from these, all artefact finds were modern. They consisted of coins, an eyeglass lens and an alcohol bottle. The meaning of these finds – whether they represent offerings or tourist behaviour – is a question to be considered in another article. Whatever the intentions of the people who left these objects, they prove continuing use of the site.

In cases when the offering ritual included smearing the stone with blood or fish oil, no visible marks are to be found today. Ancient blood has been detected on stone tools and even identified to species level (*Downs*, 1995; *Fiedel*, 1996; *Field, Privat*, 2008). However, there have been no attempts to find ancient blood traces on big stone surfaces.

Phosphate analyses are one way to reveal human action where no visual marks are left. Phosphate analyses around *sieidi* sites have shown higher concentrations in the vicinity of the *sieidi* stone (*Halinen*, 2006; *Wennstedt Edvinger, Broadbent*, 2006, 38). It would be interesting to test whether questionable *sieidi* places could be verified in this way.

Concluding remarks

In some cases the cultural context of the site can be seen as an indicator of a *sieidi*. Closeness to a Sámi dwelling place, or a place of importance for Sámi

subsistence, might, together with other evidence, support the idea that a stone is a *sieidi* site. But one cannot state that all stones close to a Sámi dwelling had a special meaning.

In most cases one aspect is not enough to make a stone a *sieidi*. When there are two sources of information, one is on safer ground with the interpretation. A place-name does not make a *sieidi*, but when there is a place-name and bone finds, the evidence for interpretation is better. In the search for *sieidi* stones, one should remember that not all impressive stones are *sieidi* stones and not all *sieidi* stones are impressive. In addition, there are stones filled with meaning and memories that were not sacred.

Summary

A *sieidi* is an offering site of the Sámi that usually consisted of a wooden object or a stone unmodified by human hand. Because of their natural form they are hard to recognize in the landscape. Usually just one indicator might not be enough to distinguish a *sieidi* from just another stone. Written sources and oral tradition have preserved memories of the use of *sieidi*, but not all *sieidi* sites are still remembered. Sometimes just a place-name has survived. Bones or meat were a common form of offering at a *sieidi*, and there were rules restricting the handling of the bones. Some sources mention that offered bones were not to be broken. Nevertheless, there have been differences in these practices. Also, other finds, including coins, metal objects, and glass, can be recovered at various sites. Phosphate analysis is one way to recognize a *sieidi* when no visual signs of the offerings are left. One or more indicators may survive, telling us about the use of a *sieidi*.

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LAIMUTE BALODE (Latvia/Finland)

THE ROOTS 'GOD' AND 'HOLY' IN LATVIAN TOPONYMY

It is well known from the Bible that in the beginning was the WORD. We, onomasticians, can transform this sentence and say that in the beginning was the NAME. The name, or in this case the place-name, is also one of the possibilities for the identification of holy places.

As a toponymist working for over 30 years on the 'Dictionary of Latvian Place-Names', and mainly interested in Baltic hydronyms – names of the lakes, rivers, springs, ponds etc., I can attest that hydronyms or water-names constitute the most ancient stratum of toponyms, and can preserve the most ancient features and oldest memories.

Two years ago I touched on this aspect in a paper presented at the University of Poznań in Poland about the names of Baltic deities in Latvian place-names: *Dievs* 'God', *Velns / jods / jupis / nelabais / sātans / ļaunais* 'Devil', *Laima, Māra, Dēkla, Pērkons* 'Thunder', *lauma* 'fairy', *ragana* 'witch', *pūķis* 'dragon' etc. (*Balode*, 2008a; *Balode*, 2008b). This article is devoted mainly to two roots – Latv. *Dievs* 'God' and Latv. *svēts* 'sacred' – recorded in the toponymy of the territory of Latvia.

The first scientific study of Latvian place-names (also from the point of view of etymology) was the monograph by August Bielenstein *Die Grenzen des lettischen Volksstammes und der lettischen Sprache in der Gegenwart und im 13. Jahrhundert* (*Bielenstein*, 1892). His collections of Latvian toponyms have remained unpublished. The first extensive collections of the toponyms of Latvia (lists of the place-names without comments or study), which are nowadays included in the 'Dictionary of Latvian Place-Names', were compiled by Jānis Endzelīns (*The Place-Names of Latvia*) in 1922 and 1925 (E I; E II) and Juris Plāķis (*The Place-Names of Latvia and Latvian Surnames*) in 1936 and 1939 (U IV; U V).

Latvians can be proud of the 'Dictionary of Latvian Place-Names' started by J. Endzelīns in the middle of the 20th century (Lvv I; Lvv II), which has been

supplemented and continued by a group of onomasticians at the Latvian Language Institute. The next three volumes include toponyms starting with the letter P (Lvv III; Lvv IV; Lvv V). Compilation, preparation and publication of this dictionary is one the largest projects of the *Letonica* programme (involving four people working at the Latvian Language Institute). Apart from the published sources mentioned, a large place-name collection from 512 civil parishes (the administrative division before the Second World War), starting from the end of the 19th century, is used for this study. This consists of 1 250 000 place-name records in the toponymic card index of the Latvian Language Institute, as well as a card index prepared by Latvian geographers.

The name 'God' (Latv. *Dievs*) occurs quite infrequently in Latvian place-names: altogether, there are about 70 place-names mentioned in the 'Dictionary of Latvian Place-Names', including around 10 hydronyms recorded in the territory of Latvia: *Diêviņezers* – a lake in Dundaga, E II, 147 (and the homestead *Dieviņi* in the same civil parish, E II, 146); *Dieviņezers* – a lake in Lubezere, U IV, 200; *Diêmestezers* < *dieva mests ezers* 'Lake Thrown by God'– a lake in Griķi, U IV, 123; *Dieva mests ezers* – a lake in Abava, U V, 453 k, in Kabile, U IV, 191 k, in Virbi, U IV 188, in Lauciena, U IV, 209, in Zentene, U IV, 246; *Dievakājas ezeriņš* 'Lake of God's Foot' – a lake in Bērzpils, E II, 177; *Dieva atvariņš* – a whirlpool in Skaistkalne, U V, 265; and *Diêva dīķis* – a pond in Nīca, p Lvv I, 221.

If we compare Latvian hydronyms with the water-names in the neighbouring country of Lithuania, we see that there are only four such hydronyms: Lith. *Diẽvytis* – a lake and river in Laukuva (Šilalė District); *Diẽvupis* – a river in Endriejavas (Klaipėda District); and *Diẽrašas* < **Diẽv-rašas* – a lake in Ukmergė (*Vanagas*, 1981, 86). There are some more examples in the card index of the Institute of Lithuanian language: *Dievógala* – a brook in Krapyškis; *Diẽvo upẽlis* – a brook in Panevėžys District; and *Dievókai* – lakes in Alytus District. Maybe the small number of hydronyms can be explained by a taboo in this Catholic country: 'You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain'. (See Fig. 1, indicating the distribution of hydronyms with the root *Diev-* in Latvia and Lithuania.)

Why is this so? There could be several explanations. Of course, we tend to talk much more commonly about negative phenomena. But the name of *Velns* 'Devil' is not mentioned very often either – especially in Latgale, the eastern part of Latvia. It is frequently changed to a euphemism – *Vella strauts* 'Devil's Brook' → *Mellais strauts* (< Latv. *melns*, dial. form *mells* 'black') 'Black Brook' etc.

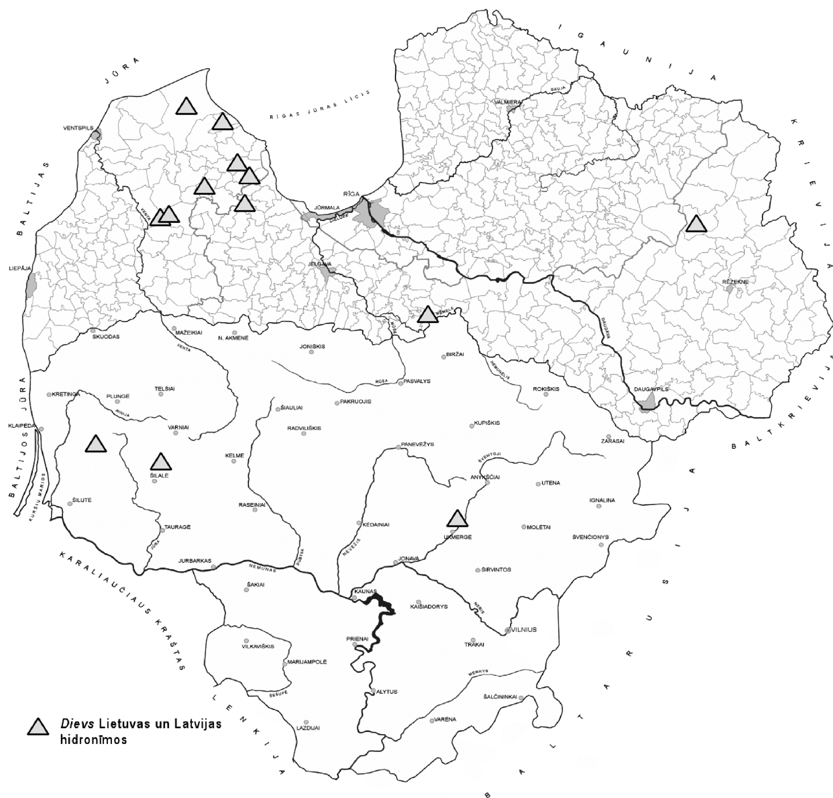

Fig. 1. The distribution of hydronyms with the root *Dievs* in Latvia and Lithuania.

Returning to the root of *Dievs* 'God', we may note that only a few such names of hills (oronyms) are known in Latvia: *Diêva*[2] *kalns* in Strutele, U V, 508; *Dìeva*[2] *kalns* in Prauliena; *Dieva kalns* in Veclaicene; *'Dievu kalns'* in Mežotne E, II, 31; *'Dìevvārdukalns'* 'Hill of the Words of God' in Ranka; *Dìeviņa*[2] *kalns* in Druviena. (A toponym in quotation marks means that this lexeme is taken from published sources and has not been verified by fieldwork.)

Microtoponyms with the root *Dievs* are slightly more common: *Dìeva dārzs* 'Garden of God' – an uninhabited place and meadow in Birži, U V, 318 (p); a meadow in Prauliena; *Diêva dārzs* – a forest in Bārta, U IV, 70; a pasture in

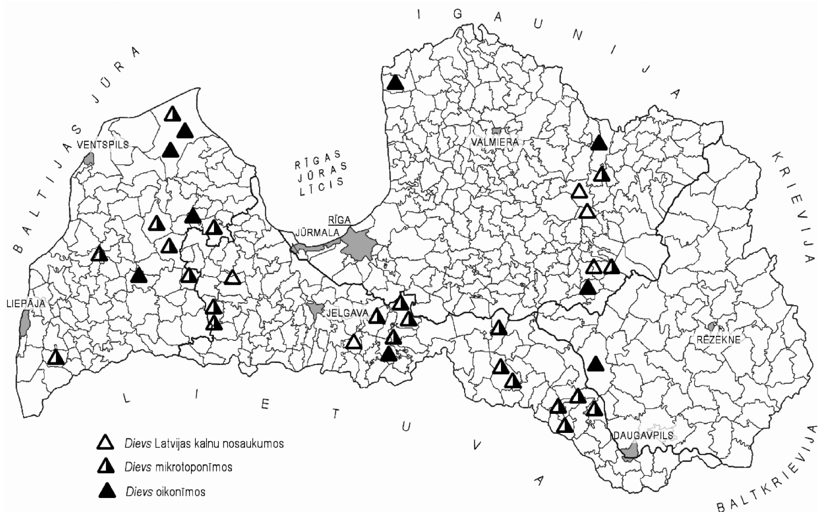

Fig. 2. The distribution of oronyms (empty triangles), microtoponyms (half-filled triangles) and oikonyms (filled triangles) with the root *Dievs* in Latvia.

Sauka, E II, 64; *Diêva dārziņš* – a forest in Kabile, U IV, 192; *Dieva dārziņš* – a field in Vecumnieki, U V, 271; a valley in Sauka, U V, 353; a bog in Rubeņi, U V, 303 (15 such place-names altogether); *Dievapluoks* 'Pasture of God' – a forest in Basi, E II, 9; *Dieva līkums* 'Curve/Elbow of God' – a meadow in Kandava, U IV, 197; *Diêviņkangers* – a forest in Dundaga, U IV, 257; *Diêva purvs* – a boggy place in Stūri, E II, 143; *Dieva purvs* in Blīdiene, U V, 132; *Dìeva ruôza* – a forest in Sinole, E I, 83 k; *Dieviniški* – a forest in Dviete, E II, 50; *Diêvene* – a meadow in Gaiķi, U IV, 119 k; *Dieviņpļava* – a meadow in Renda, U IV, 145 k.

As one can easily notice, some of these toponyms are metaphorical – based on a comparison. Predominantly, they relate to ancient legends and tales. Toponyms with the meaning 'garden of God' and 'field of God' are thought to be influenced by German poetical *Totenacker* or *Gottesacker* 'cemetery, graveyard'. (See Fig. 2, showing the distribution of oronyms and microtoponyms with the root *Dievs* in Latvia.)

Mention should also be made of several oikonyms (names of inhabited places) with the root *Dievs* in Latvia. There are diminutive forms and *pluralia*

tantum forms in such examples as: *Dìeviņi*[2] – a village in Krustpils, p, a homestead in Ļaudona, E I, 20; *Dieviņi* (now *Urdziņi*) – a homestead in Salaca, E I, 104; *Dieviņi* – a homestead in Dundaga, E II, 146; a homestead in Gaujiena, E I, 72; *Dieviņi* – a homestead in Virbi, E II, 111 (*Diêviņ*[2], U IV, 187); *Sila dìeveņi*[2] 'Pine-Forest Gods' – a homestead in Līvāni, E II, 171; *Dievmalki*, E II, 97 // *Diêmalki*, U IV, 140 'Gulps of God'– a homestead in Raņķi; *Dievrīkstes* 'Rods of God' – a homestead in Dundaga, E II, 146. Also, in 1839 a unique homestead name *Deews-glahbe* 'God the Saviour' was recorded in Stelpe, U V, 262 (Lvv I, 221).

Sometimes these place-names have an indirect, rather than a direct connection to the name of God, for instance the dialectal (Eastern Latvian or Latgallian) form of the toponym *Dīva kolns* – a hill in Nautrēni – has developed from an anthroponym, the nickname *Dīva Petris* (< *Dieva Pēteris*) 'Peter of God'.

In conclusion, there are about 70 toponyms altogether with the root *Diev-* mentioned in the 'Dictionary of Place-Names of Latvia' (Lvv I, 221). Most of these are microtoponyms (about 26), hydronyms (10), oikonyms (10) or oronyms (6). Approximately the same number of toponyms with this root and the same semantics are recorded in Lithuania, with more oronyms (12), and fewer hydronyms (7) or oikonyms (8) (according to the card index of place-names of the Institute of Lithuanian Language).

The Latvian root *svēts* 'holy' is mostly recorded in the names of hills in Latvia (about 30 oronyms – almost all supplemented with comments from the informants), for instance: *Svētais kalns* – a hill in Laucesa; *Svētais kalns* – a hill in Drabeši (*šeit senos laikos upurēja dieviem* / here offerings were made in ancient times); *Svētais kalns* – a hill in Jaunpiebalga (*te atrodas vecas kapa vietas* / an old burial site), 1970; *Svētais kalns* – a hill in Sabile (*hipotētiska sena kulta vieta* / a hypothetical ancient cult site); also a hill in Lubeja, 1959; *Svêtkalns* – a hill in Nogale, 1962; *Svētulis* – a hill in Tērvete, U V, 412; etc. (The year given after the toponym indicates the time of the fieldwork when this place-name was recorded.)

There are also several spring-names (about 20), for springs whose water was thought to be curative (being very clean, pure and cold), for example: *Svētavots* – a spring in Cēsis (*lietots dziedniecībai* / used for healing), 1972; *Svētavots* – a spring in Kandava (*tek pret rītiem; mazgātas acis pret acu kaitēm* / flows eastwards; people washed their eyes against disease); *Svētavots* – a spring in Zentene (*ūdens dziedinošs, mācītāji braukuši pēc kristāmūdens* / curative water, the priests used it for baptism), 1962; *Svētavots* – a spring in Pastende (*te noslīcis*

kāds mācītājs / a priest drowned here); *Svẽtaîs avuôts* – a spring in Sērmūkši (*... briẽsmîgi skaĩdrs un aũksts ûdenc, senâk kungi nesa nuô tâ ...* / very clear and cold water, in ancient times the lords took water from it), 1950.

Also, several river-names (about 20) and lake-names (about 15) are known in Latvia with the primary meaning 'holy river' and 'holy lake'. There are analogical comments given by informants, for instance: *Svētupe* – a river in Taurkalne, U V, 374 (*šeit gāja pēc pūšļojamā ūdens* / water was taken from here for practicing sorcery), 1961; *Svētupe* – a river in Mārciena (*te visi nāca mazgāties* / everybody came to wash here), 1961.

Very often these 'holy rivers' are connected with 'holy lakes': for example, *Svētezers* – a lake in Mārciena, p; the lake *Svētezers* and the river *Svētupe* in Limbaži, p; *Svētezers* and *Svētupe* in Arona.

Rather popular are the names *Svētbirze* 'Holy Grove' (7) and *Svētkoks* 'Holy Tree' (about 30 or possibly much more, but not all recorded in the card index of the toponyms of Latvia), for example: *Svētbirze* – a grove in Vaidava, p; a grove in Valmiera, 1974; *Svētais mežs* – a forest in Lejasciems (*liela ozolu birze ar svētiem upuru ozoliem* / large grove of holy sacrificial oaks).

The largest number of phytonyms known in Latvia are names of oak trees, i.e. 'holy oaks': *Svētuozuols* 'Holy Oak'// *Dievuozuols* 'Oak of God' in Liezēre; *Strēļu svētozols* 'Holy Oak of Strēļi' in Renda; *Vadakstes Svētozols* 'Holy Oak of Vadakste' in Vadakste, with a girth of 7.80 m (*Eniņš*, 2008, 148); *Garozas Svētozols // Zemgales krīvs* 'Priest of Zemgale', a holy grove of which only one tree survives, having a girth of 6.76 m (*Eniņš*, 2008, 164); *Sīmanēnu svētozols* 'Holy Oak of Sīmanēni' in Valmiera (one of three oaks, *pie ozoliem nesuši ziedojumums, starp tiem bijis akmens krāvums – upuraltārs, ko padomju laikā iznīcinājuši* / offerings were brought to the oaks, among which there was a sacrificial altar, destroyed in Soviet times), with a girth of 8.20 m (*Eniņš*, 2008, 212).

There are also quite a number of holy lime trees in all of Latvia, of which only a few examples will be given: *Ikšķiļu svētliepa* – a lime tree in Limbaži (*sena kulta vieta* / ancient cult site); and *Svētā liepa // Svētliepa // Usmas elku liepa* – a lime tree in Usma (*agrākos laikos rudeņos nesuši upurus veļiem* / in ancient times offerings were left in autumn for the souls of the dead). Concerning the latter lime, there is a tale about a young girl who had an ulcer on her leg and went lame after she had broken a twig of the tree (*Eniņš*, 2008, 106–107). Another example is *Allažu svētliepa* – a lime tree in Ēdole (*no tās izgatavots Ēdoles baznīcas altāris un koka skulptūras* / the altar and wooden sculptures of Ēdole Church

were made from it). It is not quite clear whether this lime tree was worshipped before this, or whether the name was given by Christians because it had been used to make sacred relics for the church (*Eniņš*, 2008, 81). *Ances svētliepa* is a lime tree in Ance, the subject of about 50 stories and tales, which broke at the beginning of the 20th century (*Eniņš* 2008, 84).

There are two names of holy pine-trees in the card index of place-names of Latvia: *Svētā priede* in Palsmane (*pie priedes veci cilvēki nesuši ziedus* / elderly people used to bring flowers to this pine-tree); *Svētā priede* // *Dieva priede* in Smiltene (*...vecos laikos nesuši upurus dieviņam* / in ancient times people used to make offerings); there is only one holy spruce tree (*Svētegle*), one holy willow (*Svētais vītols* in Valmiera, near the spring *Veselības avots* – 'Health Spring', 1970) and one holy birch (*Svētais bērzs*), but these are much less connected with sacrifice.

There are very few examples where this root has been recorded in the derivation of microtoponyms: *Svētais grāvis* – a ditch in Vidsmuiža; *Svētais purvs* – a bog in Dzirciems, U IV, 182; *Svētais purvs* – a bog in Ļaudona; *Svētais dārziņš* – an uninhabited place in Bārta, 1960; etc.

The root *svēts* in the names of Latvian inhabited places (or oikonyms) is mostly connected with the former preaching-houses, for instance: Svê*tiņi* – homestead in Gaiķi, 1953 (*tur bijusi draudzes baznīca* / a preaching-house used to be there); *Svētmājas* – homestead in Viļaka, 1962; *Svētã māja* homestead in Aloja, 1981 (*agrāk bijis brāļu draudzes saiešanas nams* / there used to be a congregational house there); *Svētais zvirgzds* 'Holy Gravel'– homestead in Jumprava, p; *Svētciems* – estate (< river *Svētupe*), p; *Svētupes* – homestead (< river *Svētupe*) in Pāle, 1957.

Altogether, Latvian toponyms with the root *svēts* 'holy' constitute approximately 200 items in the card index. The majority of this material is relatively new – from the 20th century, but the most ancient records of place-names with the root 'God' or 'holy' are from the 18th century.

Summary

The article provides a short review of Latvian toponyms deriving from the root *Dievs* 'God' and *svēts* 'holy'. The name 'God' (Latv. *Dievs*) is quite infrequent among Latvian place-names: altogether there are about 70 place-names mentioned in the 'Dictionary of Latvian Place-Names', among them around 10 hydronyms. If we compare this with Latvian hydronyms derived from the

root *Velns* 'Devil', we see that *Veln-* toponyms are much more common – about 2000 Latvian place-names. Most instances of the root *Dievs* are recorded in microtoponyms (about 26), hydronyms (10), oikonyms (10) and oronyms (6). Approximately the same number of place-names with this root have been recorded in Lithuania.

Altogether, Latvian toponyms with the root *svēts* 'holy' constitute about 200 items in the card index, most being names of hills (about 30), springs (about 20), the water of which was thought to be curative, as well as several river-names (about 20), lake-names (about 15) and names of holy trees (about 30 altogether – the largest proportion being oak and lime trees).

Most of this material comes from the card index of the Latvian Language Institute and is relatively new: the most ancient records of place-names with the root 'God' and 'holy' are from the 18th century.

List of abbreviations

dim. – diminutive form
Latv. – Latvian
Lith. – Lithuanian
p – additional material

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JĀNIS CEPĪTIS, LILIJA JAKUBENOKA (Latvia)

THE CONNECTION OF MYTHOLOGICAL STONES TO DEITIES OF THE EARTH AND LOWER WORLD, AND THEIR PLACE IN THE SACRED LANDSCAPE

Introduction

These stones are considered to be mythological stones that formerly had a definite place in Man's mythical world view. In many cases, cult rituals were carried out beside a mythological stone, folk-tales were told about it and the stone may have a name rooted in mythology. In the Latvian scientific and popular science literature the term 'cult stone' is often used for the designation of such stones, while in popular articles the designation 'holy stone' is frequently found. In our view, such terms do not apply to all mythological stones, only those beside which certain cult activities or rituals were carried out. At the same time, there were also stones at which activities of this kind were not carried out, but which nevertheless were significant in Man's mythical world view. They are the subject of folk-tales, or at least the name survives today. Thus, the plots of the folk-tales may indicate only the role of the stone in the mythical model of the world – a stone as entrance to the underworld, or the connection of a stone with primeval nature, in the opposition to the cultural space arranged by Man.

In the world model of ancient people, the stone appears as the world axis, as well as a symbol of its centre, and is connected with the conception of the boundary between the acquired universe and primeval nature, and with vertical links to the lower world, and horizontal links to the World Sea. Therefore the role of a stone in mythological concepts was twofold. It was connected with the fertile as well as the destructive essence of nature. This determined the relationship of a stone to deities of the earth and lower world, which control the cycle of life and death, and provide fertility.

Raw stones, stones with signs true to nature, notably footprint stones and relatively simply modified stones, as well as stones with trough-shaped hol-

lows, are more commonly represented in folk-tales, since a raw stone possesses important symbolic meaning as a natural element.

The beginning of the mythical world view refers to the time when the transition to a production economy took place, when cattle-breeding was the main branch of the economy for many tribes. At this time the common theme of Indo-European myth also developed about the celestial deity and its earthly and lower-world enemy, connected with stone, water, stock, money and the shades (*Mitoloģijas enciklopēdija*, 1994, 47). In the frame of this world vision, folk-tales also developed in connection with stones, reflecting the ancient mythological ideas. At the same time it should be understood that the mythical world vision has never been something completed and constant. Proceeding from the traditional world vision, continual collective creation took place, whereby a particular stone may be mentioned in folk-tales from the not-so-distant past.

The aim of this contribution is to show the link, characteristic of all the Indo-Europeans, between the earth or lower world and stones, based on Latvian folklore material and particular stones in the Latvian mythical landscape. A further aim is to substantiate that the celestial deities are connected with stones in the frame of Indo-European myth, where there is antagonism between celestial deities and those of the earth and lower-world, and to examine syncretic interpretation of myth, where the pagan and mythical Christian layers have mixed.

It should be recognized that in international research circles it has been generally accepted that the material of the Balts, first and foremost the Latvian material, most clearly reveals the relationship between stones and the Devil, and that the heathen layer of folk-tales is best-preserved in Latvia (*Курбатов*, 2000, 174). This is so, in spite of the fact that the material of our neighbours, the Lithuanians and Belarusians, includes a range and variety of folk-tales and beings relating to the earth and lower world. Because of the publications of archaeologist J. Urtāns from Latvia, this is the main motif of the folk-tales that is internationally recognized: the Devil carries stones and leaves marks on stones (*Уртанс*, 1986). However, the Latvians also have a considerable variety of folk-tales devoted to earth and lower world deities and other beings, revealing their various characteristics and functions.

Many researchers in Eastern Europe have attempted to develop classifications of mythological stones (*Urtāns*, 1990; *Дучиц, Винокуров, Карабанов*, 2006) and the associated folk-tales (*Виноградов, Громов,* 2006), and the opinion is also

represented that an unambiguous system is not possible (*Vaitkevičius*, 2003, 70–71). We agree with the opinion that the outward features of stones, as well as the range of folk-tales connected with them are so varied that it is better not to develop an unequivocal classification of mythological stones. We do not claim to build our version of such a classification, but to show the range and variety of folk-tales connected with stones, and with the deities of the earth and lower world.

This article has been prepared on the basis of studies of local history, also using material kept in the Archive of Latvian Folklore of the Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art, University of Latvia (*Latviešu folkloras krātuve* – LFK) and at the Monument Documentation Centre of the State Inspection for Heritage Protection of the Republic of Latvia (*Pieminekļu dokumentācijas centrs* – PDC).

God and the Devil

In the folk-tales which consider the birth of stones, generally both God and the Devil appear. On the other hand, the Devil dominates in those folk-tales that refer to specific stones in nature. Only in certain unusual folk-tales is the origin of a stone related to God's action. For example, a sizable stone lying in the meadows of Slates Rītupe was thrown by God, because he became furious with the people of Slate. He hurled it at the shepherds of Geidāni (LFK, 2011, 8953).

A peculiar folk-tale, probably relating to the mythical aspect of salt, describes how women raking hay left a grain of salt in the meadows of Brizule Estate. God, in the form of an old man, picked it up and left a footprint on the stone (LFK, 1690, 1154). Another folk-tale describes how God, in the form of an old man, asks the rich and poor farmers for lodging. It was the poor farmer who granted his wish, and God rewarded him, and he left two big footprints in the stone at the waterside where he had stood (LFK, 1573, 3232).

There are a few folk-tales with a Christian interpretation, describing how footprints were left by God or a certain angel when they came down from heaven or ascended to heaven, as well as folk-tales telling that the footprints were impressed by the foot or hand of St George or the Saviour.

The motif of the battle between Thunder and the Devil, waters dammed and released

Thunder is the celestial deity most frequently connected with stones. He is the enemy of beings of the earth and lower world. Sometimes a hunter ap-

pears in the folk-tales as the helpmate of Thunder (in the manner of a mythical culture hero). He kills the Devil, shooting him with a silver ball, or using silver money or a wedding-ring, discovered during a thunderstorm on the stone, in the water or on the bank of a watercourse; he may sit, frolic or sometimes even taunt Thunder. Thunder needs the help of a boatman in order to reach the Devil, who is sitting on an island combing his hair. Thunder pursues the Devil and footprint stones come about where the Devil, fleeing, steps on a stone. Stones with hollows also appeared, where Thunder struck, leaving a hollow in the stone. Thunder can split the Devil's stone. Some Devil's stones are particularly targeted by Thunder. In one case he strikes the stone 99 times (LFK, 1667, 707), while in another case he throws down bolts of lightning around the stone (LFK, 891, 5722). The Devil, pursued by Thunder, appears as a snake in a folk-tale from Rencēni Parish (LFK, 891, 4676). An oak and a stone also appear in this folk-tale. This is a typical version of the basic Indo-European myth about Thunder and its enemy from earth and the lower world in the image of a snake associated with a stone and the roots of the World Tree.

A monkey sits on an island in the River Aiviekste, Thunder strikes it and cleaves the stone in two (LFK, 562, 1829). A certain devil living in Mārki Bog cannot meet his brother, because Thunder harries him during the daytime and wolves by night. Once, Thunder watches this devil when he sits on a stone at the margin of the swamp and strikes him so sorely that stinking liquid remains on the stone (LFK, 142, 742). Thunder split the Žākļi Stone in Vireši Parish because people worshipped earth deities on this stone (LFK, 910, 4). Some elongated stones are called 'coffins of the Devil', because devils killed by Thunder lie below (see: *Laime*, 2008).

Thunder prevents the Devil from sleeping. The Devil stole a little boy and kept him captive for years. The Devil once retired at a big stone on the bank of Lake Burtnieki. He ordered to the boy to wake him if Thunder approached. The boy disobeyed and Thunder struck the Devil along with the stone, casting it into the lake (LFK, 585, 481).

A folk-tale about a stone where a certain Ludvigs lent money and collected debts has been recorded in Bērzgale Parish. Once when somebody repaid a debt Ludvigs was killed by Thunder. There is a mark of a horseshoe with six nails on this stone (LFK, 740, 23809).

In certain cases there is a relationship between Thunder and a stone not involving the Devil. Thus, Mellači Stone was situated at the boundary between

the lands of two neighbours, who were arguing over ownership of the stone. Thunder split this stone and the neighbours' argument was resolved.

It must be concluded that Thunder appears at stones mainly in connection with battles, and even if a stone is called Thunder's Stone, we cannot regard it as a holy place dedicated to Thunder.

Let us remember that in myth one of the causes of such a battle is water, the productive potency of which cannot be expressed while it is in the Devil's hands. Only when Thunder strikes rock (a parallel for stones) is it possible to express the fertile nature of water. Perhaps it is in connection with this myth that in the Latvian folk-tales the Devil annoys Thunder precisely during a period of rain or in a thunderstorm, and the stones very often lie in a water body or in its immediate vicinity.

In Belarus there is a widespread theme of folk-tales about a witch or Gipsy bewitching and cursing rivers, which dry up and cease to flow. In some cases there is a stone beside such a bewitched river, which starts to flow again if it is rolled away (*Зайковский*, 2006). It is possible that in the folk-tales an ordinary man devoted with certain supernatural abilities replaces the ancient chthonic being in charge of the waters of the earth. In connection with the mythical landscape, the motif does not appear in clear form, but certain parallels may be observed.

In former days there was a pool in Ruskulova Bog where Laima or Māra lost a key or a comb. This was the reason why the pool was bewitched and began to overgrow. At the place where the key or comb was lost the feminine deity created a sizable stone, which is now in the middle of the bog (LFK, 679, 2165; LFK 1341, 17022).

In Latvia some folk-tales have been written down in different places that could be connected with a stone and the motif of closing and releasing of waters, or the disappearance and reappearance of a water body. Let us mention a folk-tale from Launkalne Parish, where the protagonists are already people instead of mythical figures. The son of a Lithuanian chieftain drowned in a well. The father rolled up a giant stone (LFK, 875, 279). An interesting folk-tale about a stone at the River Aiviekste is connected with a fall in the water level. On the bank of the river there lived a giant who drank the water of the river, causing a vast environmental disaster. God put the giant into a hole and rolled up a stone. Once a man passing by the stone heard somebody calling out of the stone for a drink (LJ 1939).

A boy, in some cases a shepherd, removes a stone and water begins to flow, giving rise to a river or lake. In some cases this occurs if someone conceals money under a stone. This is told about a stone in Cibla Parish, where two boys went digging for money. They dug until water started to flow from the bottom of the stone so quickly and with such force that the boys scarcely escaped from the water and quicksand (PDC, 54526-121).

Folk-tales telling of lakes flying through the air also involve stones. For example, Lake Rustēgs came down in a place where a shepherd sat on a stone (LFK, 1000, 78).

Blue and white stones

The Fenno-Ugrians as well as the Indo-Europeans had very ancient myths relating to the World Sea. In this connection it is necessary to examine the symbolism of the colour blue, as well as such features of the mythical landscape as blue hills and blue stones.

In Latvia, exclusively in the south-eastern part of Latgale, we encounter stones with a designation mainly in Russian: *Sinij kamen* ('Blue Stone'). By analogy with such designations in Russia and Belarus, we can conclude that these are significant mythological objects. One such stone, in Kastuļina Parish, has given its name to a small village that is nowadays abandoned. Almost at the shore of Lake Duboļi is another stone – *Bolshoi sinij kamen* ('Big Blue Stone'). In Grāveri Parish near Lake Iteņka lies a stone with the same designation, which is also a footprint stone. It is said that the hole in the shape of a foot was left in this stone by God (*Kovaļevska*, 1997, 173). *Zilais akmens* ('Blue Stone') is a large stone near the village of Vamžečki in Andzeļi Parish. There is a very contemporary-sounding explanation for the name of such a stone in Černaja Parish. It is said that a drunkard once slept on this stone. Nevertheless, this explanation may be a contemporary interpretation of ancient motif, because the drunkard's connection with the stone derives from mythical logic.

A white stone also appears in connection with cosmic waters in Indo-European myth (*Vaitkevičius*, 2006, 12–13). Presumably, the rare cases where a stone in Latvian folk-tales is connected with the colour white or where it has been given the name 'White Stone' are not fortuitous. One of the biggest stones in Latvia, Skrodera Stone, lay in the River Aiviekste. It is emphasized that the stone was white and raftsmen sacrificed needles there (LFK, 929, 24170). Unfortunately we cannot establish what colour the stone was in reality, because it has already

been split and removed. Examples from the neighbouring countries provide evidence that a stone called 'white' is not always white in reality.

A folk-tale from Kocēni Parish describes a big white stone lying by a curative spring: when you climbed on it your feet would be cold even in a warm weather (LFK, 23, 14470). In one folk-tale recorded in Cīrava Parish a white stone is connected with the motif of obtaining old money. One poor farmer dreamt of how he would get money, and found a money pot in the corner of the garden (LFK, 1008, 6316). In Mežole Forest District, in Launkalne Parish, there is a relatively large stone called *Baltais akmens* ('White Stone'). On the other end of Latvia, in Nīca Parish, there is also a big great stone called *Baltais akmens* ('White stone').

The connection of Devils and female chthonic beings to stones

There is a conspicuous connection between Devils or female chthonic beings and stones: they carry and throw stones, leave footprints on stones, and live under, in or at stones. It is said about many stones that Devil or witch sat, ate and slept on them. In some cases there are hollows in the stone, said to have been worn out by the mythical personages sitting there. Thus, at the bank of the River Mūsa was a stone on which a witch used to sleep. A hollow made by the witch sitting there could be seen on the stone (LFK, 1652, 4075). There is a stone on Kamenci Field in Laucese Parish, beneath which gold was kept by a witch. Every midnight she would make her supper on this stone (LFK, 848, 2821.

An un-emphasized, peculiar theme of folk-tales concerns stones on which the Devil lays down to sleep drunkards or belated travellers. Similar folk-tale themes are found in Belarus and Lithuania. Two stories about such stones have been recorded in Latgale. One such stone, in Nirza Parish, seems to have been of remarkable size, because it was said that shepherds could heal a hundred sheep on it. Someone offered a man who had lost his way a good sleep in his house. The man crawled up on the stove, but in the morning he awoke on the stone. It is additionally said about this stone that sometimes a lighthouse or barn was seen instead of it at night, where the clatter of a flail could be heard, and that drunkards always slept there (LFK, 1576, 5685). The second folk-tale on this theme has been recorded in Malta Parish. An old man lost his way, and somebody called out to him to come and warm himself. The old man took off his shoes and lay down on the stove. When the cock crowed he woke up on

the stone. Another belated walker had a similar experience. In the morning he woke up on the stone as if dazed. The bog in which this stone lay is called *Velna purvs* ('Devil's Bog') (LFK, 935, 38354).

In Beļava Parish a devil lived on the shore of a lake. He used to lure drunkards coming from the inn to stay with him. In the morning they were found dead on the shore of the lake. The stone on the shore of this lake, on which Thunder once stroke down the Devil, also features in this folk-tale (LFK, 142, 742). An interesting folk-tale comes from Jaunpiebalga Parish. It is described how the owner of the Zvejnieki homestead lost his way when coming from the estate. He saw a beautiful palace and went in to ask the way. Inside the palace he saw wedding guests. The bridegroom was the owner of a neighbouring farm. Seeing this, the man invoked God. At once, it all disappeared and the farmer found himself in his pasture sitting on the stone. In the morning it turned out that the neighbour had hanged himself (LFK, 17, 139, 296). The sleeping episode does not appear in this folk-tale, but the Devil's connection with suicides is significant, since the Devil as a being of the earth and a lower world deity is interested in suicides no less than in drunkards.

From Lubezere near the town of Valdemārpils comes a folk-tale about a stone in *Velna kalva* ('Devil's Hill') that may be included among the tales of the Devil's house and the witches' table. Men watching over horses at night had lost their way while looking for a lost horse and saw a beautiful palace. In the morning they found only a stone on which gnawed stones, bast footwear and horse dung lay. They called this stone the Witch's Table (LFK, 848, 2821). Also relating to a certain extent to the plots of the folk-tales mentioned above is a folk-tale about a big stone near the homestead of Svilumi in Renda Parish. If you climb onto the stone at midnight, then a coach will drive up with twelve horses and somebody will offer you to sit down in it. In the morning, you will find yourself in a strange place in the forest, lying naked on conifer branches (LFK, 993, 90).

Chthonic beings are also interested in games of chance. In Belarus and Lithuania a folk-tale theme is found where the Devil himself plays cards on the stone, whereas in Latvia it is people instead who play cards there. Thus, five men play cards at Bogmuiža Stone in Sece Parish, and a rouble falls into a hole that shines at night (LFK, 302, 1363). Russian princes played cards on a big stone in the bog of the former Abrene Parish. In the course of playing cards they began to fight. One suffered an injury to his head, and a red spot of blood appeared on the stone. The stone was called the 'Quarrel Stone' (LFK, 935, 32391).

The Devil as a chthonic being is also interested in music and dances, and particularly in lively, vital, quick music. Devils dance on stones, sometimes leaving their footprints on them. In Lithuania and Belarus the origin of pit-marked stones is sometimes explained in this way. In Latvia it seems that only footprint stones and devil stones can be connected with the Devil's dancing. Thus, near Kazdanga Hill-Fort a stone with footprints lies in the river where a little devil danced (LFK, 1552, 27684). In Dunalka Parish seven red devils were seen dancing on a great stone (LFK, 1707, 1276). The pagan cults, unlike the Christian ones, did not require only penance and seriousness. Dances, pleasure, laughter, and incidentally also intoxicating drinks could be a manifestation of the cult, particularly with respect to deities of the earth and lower world. Therefore it is no coincidence that in Russia as well in Belarus and Lithuania young people gathered and rejoiced at the mythological stones on holidays. Collecting information about stones with cultural-historical significance in Latgale, we found *Danču akmens* ('Dance Stone') at Pakašova in Šķilbēni Parish and a stone near the village of Kaipi in Čornaja Parish. Even after the Second World War young people would gather at the Kaipi Stone for open-air dances and would dance on the stone. Kept at the State Inspectorate for Heritage Protection is a record that at the beginning of the 20th century young people used to dance an ancient Latgallian dance, the *Lancatka*, on this stone. Four couples could dance on it at the same time (PDC, 50094 – 31). It should be added that the Kaipi Stone lay not far from Baltiņi Hill-Fort and Baltiņi ancient burial ground. Probably the stone was a cult site already at the time when the hill-fort was inhabited. It is emphasized in a folk-tale about *Māriņkalna Velna akmens* ('Devils' stone') in Ziemeris Parish that five pairs of dancers could dance on it (LFK, 1769, 15559).

A folk-tale about a footprint stone near the homestead of Budas in Jaunbērze Parish tells the following story. The Devil carried it to fill up a watercourse that flowed out of Lake Gaurata. Finger imprints on the stone provide evidence that the stone was held by the Devil. Later, the stone was carried by floodwaters to the homestead of Budas. Then this stone was used by boys competing in lifting weights (LFK, 880, 3578). Significant is the last remark about the use of this stone in competitions among young people. In the same way, the Devil himself carries, lifts and hurls stones. The spirit of competition is something familiar to him. It is said in one of the folk-tales connected with a stone in Launkalne Parish that the Devil appeared at the stone and offered a man a

wrestling and running contest (LFK, 1640, 655). It is possible that the young people competing in lifting weights were in some way imitating the Devil, and that the origins of this entertainment as well as other youth games and entertainment may be sought in the rituals connected with myths. That the remark about the Budas stone is not fortuitous is indicated by a record that young people did likewise on a stone in Belarus, as well as in Russia (*Виноградов, Громов*, 2006, 238). Competition and the spirit of competition also feature in the next folk-tale, where a devil joins people in a game – beating discs. In Skrunda Parish on Sundays a stranger, a swift-handed beater, joined boys who were beating discs. Some people noticed that he had no nostrils. When a wizard struck him with a stick of rowan, the stranger turned to stone (LFK, 22, 2861).

The Devil himself combs his hair or beard on stones that often lie in water; witches and unnamed mythical beings likewise comb their hair on stones. Their long hair symbolizes their vitality and their connection with fertility cults. In previous publications we have already focused attention on hair and stones connected with chthonic beings (*Jakubenoka*, 2006). Here are some examples that do not appear in the previous publications. The popular Meļķitāri Stone in Aizkraukle Parish, with trough-shaped hollows, is the subject of a folk-tale about a witch who sat on the stone before sunset, combed her hair with a gold comb and dipped it into the water (LFK, 1173, 967). A woman with long fair hair is seen on a stone in the River Salaca (LFK, 1748, 1974). A folk-tale about the Gāja Big Stone in Brunava Parish tells how a girl herding cows beside the stone saw an old woman with very long hair. The woman asked the girl to plait her hair. The girl did not plait her hair and the old woman disappeared, saying “I slept for a hundred years, I shall sleep for a hundred years more” (LFK, 942, 405).

In Rauna Parish there was a big stone called *Velna akmens* (‘Devil’s Stone’). By the stone, the Devil watched a shepherd girl comb her hair, then found an old rake and combed his own (LFK, 711, 66). In the River Iecava opposite the church there is a stone on which the Devil sat and mended his trousers with a sleigh shaft. On another occasion he combed his hair with a harrow. A second devil crawled from the river and called to him to let him comb himself as well (LFK, 929, 26). The devil sat on a stone in the River Svēte and combed his hair with a golden brush (LFK, 17, 23016).

The limits of this article do not allow us to touch on all of the folk-tale motifs connected with the interaction of the Devil with stones. Significantly, in Latvia

and likewise in Belarus and Lithuania we encounter a folk-tale plot involving stones that sew themselves, as well as stones on which the Devil sews or makes footwear (*Jakubenoka*, 2001).

While many themes of the folk-tales connected with devil stones re-occur very frequently, there are also themes connected only with some stones, or even with just one stone in the mythical landscape of Latvia. The fact that such motifs are also encountered in folk-tales involving other natural features or in connection with other stones in the neighbouring countries provides evidence that the motifs are not fortuitous or invented by the tellers, but rooted in the mythical world vision and its logic. Let us consider examples of some unique motifs.

Popular in Latvia and neighbouring countries is the story called the 'Torture of flax'. Flax tells the Devil about all torture which it receives at the hand of Man, then a cock begins to crow and the Devil cannot achieve the aim he had in mind. Quite unique, in our view, is a folk-tale where this motif relates to a stone. The sizable stone was in *Akmeņpurvs* ('Stone Bog'); the Devil took it and brought it to the River Aiviekste in order to encumber raftsmen. He met flax, and while flax was telling him about the torture a cock began to crow. The Devil threw down the stone and ran away (LFK, 2020, 558).

So far only one folk-tale is known to us in Latvia in which the origin of *drīveldriķis* ('Devil's excrement') is connected with a stone. Near Vecsalaca Estate, the Devil left his excrement on a stone so that people would not seek his money under the stone. Apothecaries started to make use of it (LFK, 1735, 1029). There is a similar folk-tale from Žemaitija about a stone and the Devil being persecuted by Thunder, also involving *drīveldriķis*, and in this case, too, apothecaries use it for healing (*Vaitkevičius*, 1998, 431).

On Līksna Estate there were devils living in the cellars. The estate servant Marcins made a bet with the devils as to who would be able to throw a stone further. Marcins won by pushing it into the river with one hand. The stone in the river is accordingly called 'Marcins' (LFK, 1308, 28). Several stones with this or a similar name are known in Lithuania. Likewise there is an analogy in terms of the motif (a competition in stone-throwing) and the name (Marks) of a character in a folk-tale from Belarus. Two young boys – Stepan and Mark – competed for the hand of their love. The girl made Mark, whom she did not love, throw a bigger stone than her beloved Stepan; nevertheless, Mark threw his stone further (*Дучиц, Винокуров, Карабанов*, 2006, 20).

In the village of Dorupe (Otaņķi Parish) there was a Devil's Stone. A young man came up to men who were watching over their horses near the stone. When they offered him tobacco he exclaimed: "I have no nostrils" and disappeared into the stone along with his horse (LFK, 1711, 5677). The lack of nostrils emphasizes the connection of a chthonic being to the realm of the dead.

There is a peculiar folk-tale about a certain stone in Sarkaņi Parish. It tells of a farmer who took a stone lying at the boundary with his neighbour's land and carried it far into the neighbour's land to extend his holding. After he died, his soul could get no further than this stone, until the neighbour's son redeemed it (LFK, 893, 450). This folk-tale has parallels with a plot from Norwegian folklore: farmers who move boundary-marks must carry them back each night after death (*В стране троллей*, 2008, 177).

Change-stones

Folk-tales which tell of how a mythical being, people, animals or even inanimate objects are turned into stones, called 'change-stones', occur in a wide region of Eastern Europe. Looking carefully at the collections of the LFK, we may conclude that in Latvia, too, they were widespread. Unfortunately, however, most of them have been destroyed or are not identifiable in the landscape any more.

Let us consider some folk-tales relating to petrified people, animals, mythical beings and inanimate objects. A folk-tale tells of the *Svētmeitu akmens* ('Holy Maids' Stone') in Mērsrags Parish that resembles a female figure, because God turned to stone a wicked woman who asked God to harm her neighbour (LKF, 924, 1). There was a stone at the boundary of the homestead of Ratnieki in Strazde Parish that resembles a crooked figure of a man. A gentleman (presumably a Devil in the guise of a man) molested a girl who was picking berries in the wood. She ran away, but the gentleman pursued and kicked her in anger, and the girl turned to stone, the place where she was kicked still being visible (LKF, 194, 736). A large stone lies in the River Svēte. It may be a girl turned to stone after she had been left by a bridegroom and had jumped into the river in sorrow (LKF, 17, 25755). A story about *Jostas akmens* ('Belt Stone') has been recorded in the town of Talsi. An old woman used to wash dishes and place them at the gate of the castle. Once she took one cup home. As a punishment she was tied to the stone with a belt. This is how the stone appeared (LFK, 1472, 3099).

A boy who guessed the name of the village of Dundaga was turned into a stone that for a long time was kept on the hill-fort *Puiša kalns* ('Boy's Hill') (LFK, 409, 206). Recorded in Mazirbe near Dundaga is a story about *Kartavu kalns* ('Gallows Hill'), where dwarfs used to hold their meetings, and turned to stone a chieftain who had stolen up to hear their talk (LFK, 955, 116). There is a stone having the appearance of a man in Strazde Parish. A swineherd went underground through an old well and had a meal. On the third day he emerged and was turned to stone (LFK, 981, 3). The Devil deals with a nobleman who crosses the bridge over the River Tērvete and invokes the Devil. The Devil pulls down the nobleman and turns him to stone in the river now called *Muižkungs* (LFK, 1667, 2389). There was a stone on Dignāja Hill-Fort. On the night of the summer solstice, when maids and boys taunted the stone with *Līgo* songs, the heart of the stone shivered and it rolled down to the foot of the hill (LFK, 17, 21589).

A child was born to the sorceress Ģertrūde, and she took it to the boundary of Ance and Pope Parishes and laid it down there. The child started to cry and turned to stone (LFK, 1722, 3428). A landowner ordered an overseer to beat an old man, and because of this his castle sank down into Puļķi Hill in Kalncempji Parish, the landowner turned into a piece of rotten wood, and the overseer turned to stone (LFK, 1552, 7734). There was a holy grove at the mouth of the Bērze stream, which enters the Daugava in Ķekava Parish, inhabited by two priestesses. A war with the Lithuanians broke out and, pursued by the enemy, the priestesses asked for help from Thunder: he turned one priestess into a stone with the appearance of a woman, and the other priestess into a wellspring (LFK, 1400, 15645; 17, 23277).

At the boundary of the estates of Dundaga and Pope there were two stones, one of them upright, the other horizontal. The landowners fought and were turned to stone (LFK, 1493, 6476). A husband and wife were returning from the town of Talsi. In the grove by the homestead of Kulkampji they heard somebody moaning. The husband went to look, and when he came back neither his wife nor the horse were there: he saw only a big stone by the wayside (LFK, 1894, 1095). A certain woman used to tidy rooms in the sunken castle of Tukums Hill-Fort. She was ordered to tell nobody about it, but she told her husband. Both immediately turned to stone (LFK, 1108, 938). There is a tale about the origin of two big stones by the homestead of Viļumi in Gārsene Parish: an old man and his wife were turned to stone, because they ate apples from a bewitched apple-tree (LFK, 1895, 1774).

Lake Durbe travelled to its new location. A white horseman rode in advance of the lake and called people to move aside, but the people were raking hay and did not run away. The lake fell down and the people were turned to stone (LFK, 94, 3976). In ancient times a bewitched town sank into Brukna moorland. If the name of this town is guessed on Easter night, then the town will rise up and the people turned to stone will come to life (LFK, 456, 9).

Jurkāni Stone was in Taurene Parish. A toad went to the homestead of Jurkāni to offer his hand to a girl, but she refused the toad, and this stone appeared on the site where they had stood (LFK, 1600, 27730). In *Akmeņpurvs* ('Stone Swamp') in Ance Parish the Devil asked a cowherd to give him cows, but he refused. The Devil turned the cows and cowherd to stone. The stone that had been a cowherd grew bigger every year (LFK, 1493, 644). Lake Babīte obtained its name from the herder Babīte. A cloud turned into a lake and fell on the site where Babīte was herding cows. A big stone on the shore of this lake is Babīte; the little ones are cows (LFK, 1965, 1482).

In folk-tales about ploughmen the stratum of Christian mythology is evident, whereas the plots of folk-tales about carts are more connected with the ancient mythical stratum. There is an exception – the Devil turning carts to stone. This exception is Lazdiņi Carriage Stone in Mazozoli Parish. In two versions of the folk-tale the Devil in the form of a beggar asked the governor to take him in his carriage, but the governor would not take him. The Devil turned the governor together with the carriage and horses to stone (LFK, 1730, 82318; 1400, 1896). In the third version of this folk-tale it is said that the carriage stone looks like a real carriage on which a coachman sits. A governor was punished by God, who taking on the guise of an old man, asked to be taken along in the carriage, but was refused (LFK, 929, 24371). In the remaining versions of the folk-tale not the man's carriage, but the Devil's carriage was turned to stone. The main reason for this was delay after midnight and the cock's crowing. Near homestead of Dīriķi in Birzgale Parish a stone nowadays submerged was called *Velna pajūgs* ('Devil's Cart') (*Urtāns*, 2007, 26). In the north of Vidzeme is *Ramatas Velna kariete* ('Devil's Carriage'), and nearby is another stone called the 'limber'. A common folk-tale relating to both stones tells about the Devil's unsuccessful journey across the bog (PDC, 578671). A Devil's carriage also lay in Buži Pond in Jaunlutriņi Parish (LFK, 7180, 2131). The Devil was at the inn carousing with drunkards, and tarried until the cock crowed. Then, in a hurry, he went straight through the forest and Buži Pond, where he

sank. The Devil, his coachman and both horses disappeared; the carriage in the pond turned to stone (LFK, 877, 276). In Kroņmuiža Bog in Ārlava near the town of Valdemārpils was a stone that looked like a carriage. The Devil was going about his affairs in the carriage, then for some unknown reason he disappeared, and the carriage turned to stone (LFK, 88, 11–12).

On the shore of Lake Āraiši lay a large stone. Once a man was walking by the lake and a big black swan attacked him and started to strangle him. When the man called for God's help he turned to stone (LFK, 1700, 2154). A similar folk-tale has also been recorded about Ukri *Velna akmens* ('Devil' Stone') in Zemgale (LFK, 553, 990) and a certain stone near a lake in Gārsene Parish (LFK, 17, 25589). In Birzgale Parish, at a place called *Velna lauks* ('Devil's Field'), a white sheep appeared. A man wanted to take this sheep home. While he was carrying the sheep, it became heavier and heavier, and when he threw it down, it turned into a white stone (LFK, 1177, 21537). There are several recorded folk-tales about a cow of Māra or Laima that went from Vidzeme to Latgale along the River Piestiņa, but was turned by a witch into a big stone by the bank of the river. There is a imprint of a cow's hoof on the stone, not far from which there are three smaller stones, called the *Raganas laipas* ('Witch's Footbridges') (LFK, 744, 42; 744, 88–89; 861, 605). The next folk-tale tells of an ordinary horse that turned to stone. The stone horse is connected with a mythical event – the emergence of a lake. Lake Remte arose when a water spout fell on the homestead of Lāči. The horse, which was grazing in the meadows not far away, was thrown onto the shore and turned to stone (LFK, 1594, 1060). It must be emphasized that stones connected with folk-tales about horses are usually situated in water or in the immediate proximity of water.

The Devil once became bored of life. He jumped into the River Salaca to drown himself. The soul of the drowned Devil turned into a stone now called *Velna akmens* ('Devil's Stone') (LFK, 1086, 6). It is told about the famous Ģevrāni *Velnapēdas akmens* ('Devil's Footprint Stone') in Rubene Parish that the Devil, together with a wicked foreign robber, crossed the river to escape from a thunderstorm, but a strong bolt of lightning turned them both into a big stone (LFK, 1800, 1633). Recorded in the area near the rock Staburags is a folk-tale about *Jodakmens* ('Devil's Stone') in the River Daugava. The Devil, pursued by Thunder, turned into a stone in the river (LFK, 1955, 14834). On the hill near the homestead of Spulgas in Jaunpiebalga Parish the harvest was bad, because

the Devil was smoking, and it burned. God sent a thunderstorm at night and in the morning the people found a big stone on this hill, which sometimes shines at night (LFK, 828, 17002). *Skrodera akmens* ('Tailor's Stone') in the River Aiviekste should also be included among change-stones. A tailor walking at night from Saikava Estate saw a black man in the river and heard splashing. In the morning a big stone was seen in the river (LFK, 1400, 32943). The popular *Badakmens* ('Hunger Stone') in Jumurda Parish is essentially a change-stone. In the past the stone itself moved and spoke. It looks like a huge man without a head, which soldiers cut off and which now lies beside it. A red line on the side of the stone is blood from the time when the head was cut off (LFK, 17, 19550–19550a; 910, 2760). *Velna nags* ('Devil's Fingernail') in Zalve Parish appeared when the Devil ran away from God in the guise of an old man (LFK, 861, 70). A story about the Devil's cap has been recorded in Vecpiebalga Parish. The Devil suffered from a head cold, so he put on a stone as a cap and went out, and then he met Jesus Christ and threw the cap. The stone cap lay near the homestead of Mūrnieki (LFK, 1400, 10611). A story connects the origin of the big stone near the homestead of Kuiļi in Lestene Parish with the Devil stealing peas. The peasant pursued the Devil, the peas spilled from one sack and turned into little stones, while the Devil's second pea sack turned into a big stone (LFK, 1400, 11539). The Devil brought a pot of cream stolen on Lonaste Estate to Ance Parish, but he slipped and the cream that poured out became a crumbly stone (LFK, 1722, 3428).

Folk-tales connected with money also indicate a connection with the chthonic world. A Devil's Stone near Asīte in Priekule Parish looks like a box with the lid open. The Devil was fleeing from Thunder, and his money box turned to stone (LFK, 1722, 3428). There is a Money Stone on the way to Jaunjelgava in a pine forest in Sērene Parish. According to a folk-tale, travellers saw a white figure by a fire in the pine forest not far from the road. They asked it for a light for a cigarette, and the figure gave them a coal. When they looked they saw money instead of coal. They went there again, but the white image had disappeared along with the fire. Instead, there was a big stone covered with moss (LFK, 361, 72). The money of the bad-tempered overseer of Mātra Estate turned to stone. The Devil carried it and threw it into the *Dižakmens* ('Great Stone') Meadow in Ēdole Parish (LFK, 1010, 3339). In another version of these folk-tales the stones in *Dižakmens* Meadow originate from jewels that the Devil had stolen from God (LFK, 1010, 2080).

There is a folk-tale recorded in Baltinava Parish about a man lying in the bathhouse who saw a huge soldier of the Russian army coming in, and picked him up with a fork. The soldier turned into horse dung that had been thrown onto coals in the stove. In the morning there was a big stone on the site of the bathhouse (LFK, 1400, 681). There was an Apiņkalts Inn on the shore of Lake Lubāna. Here, devils and witches would dance in the attic at night. Once they burned down the inn, and today there is a big stone on the site (LFK, 878, 29).

From Latgale there is also a folk-tale about the Preijs' Stone. Farmer Preijs' barn burned down. A big black stone appeared in place of this barn. The Devil lives under the stone and burns candles at night (LFK, 1237, 5). Interestingly, when gathering information recently about stones in Stabulnieki Parish in Latgale, we encountered such names for the stone as *Lielais akmens* ('Big Stone') or *Velna kantoris* ('Devil's Office'). Presumably the name 'office' is rather new, but what folk-tales connected with the stone in the past could have given rise to such a name?

In most cases the cause of transformation is interaction with mythical time and space, and with its residents: the appearance of a lake, visiting a sunken castle and exposing its secrets, or appropriating an object. In one case a dish is tasted. It may be an encounter with Devil or the invocation of his name, or sometimes the casting of a spell.

In the folk-tales it is sometimes emphasized that a stone resembles a figure of a man or part of a man's body or features of clothing. Even the Holy Maiden's stone, where no resemblance with a woman's figure can actually be distinguished, is said to resemble the figure of a woman.

The name of a change-stone may derive from the folk-tale about it. In some cases human features appear on the stone – blood appears, a heart beats or the stone grows. At least theoretically the process of change is irreversible. If somebody could guess the name of the town, people turned to stones would come to life, or if a maid were to kiss the stone at the summer solstice then a young man would come to life.

In several folk-tales, there is a striking link between the stone and a hill-fort or holy place. There was a stone on Dignāja Hill-Fort with a heart that began to beat faster at the summer solstice. A woman who had been washing the dishes and tidying rooms in the castle turned to stone. A boy guessed the name of a castle, *Dundaga*, and so raised up the sunken castle, but was himself turned to stone. Later his image was placed on Boys' Hill, a possible cult place.

Dwarfs bewitched a chieftain, turning him to stone on Kartavas ('Gallows') Hill, also a possible holy place. Priestesses lived in a holy grove by the River Daugava. Unfortunately, most of the change-stones cannot be identified on the ground, so it is not possible to determine the precise relationship of the change-stone to the holy place. In two cases the stones had served as boundary markers. There is an observable connection between these stones and waters (rivers, lakes) or wet places (bogs).

Judging by the content of the folk-tales, most of the stones are rough and lie on the site where the glacier deposited them. Concerning a few stones, particularly those occurring as pairs, it is emphasized that one stone is standing, while the other is recumbent, and it could be suggested that these were specially erected by people. Most cases of people being turned to stone are encountered in Kurzeme and Zemgale; the authors are not aware of such stones in Latgale. This can be explained by the less intensive collection of folklore in Latgale than in the rest of Latvia, but also indicates some differences in the plots of the folk-tales connected with mythological stones between the West Balts and East Balts. A connection with water is more typical in stories of petrified animals than in stories about petrified people. Most of these are close to a river or lake, or even in a river or lake. Also, most of the stone carts and carriages are connected with water: a river, bog or pond.

Many of the folk-tales involve domestic animals: a cow, horse or sheep. The connection of stones in folk-tales with the Devil, domestic animals or water could indicate that the origin of the vision of the world on the basis of which the particular folk-tales developed may be sought in the Indo-European community at the time when a food-producing society with cattle breeding as the dominant branch of the economy developed, and when there were chthonic deities that were responsible for cattle-breeding and were connected with water and stone.

In most cases the Devil turns to stone as a result of a conflict with the celestial deity God or Thunder. In essence, this is a survival from Indo-European myth about a fight between Thunder and its chthonic enemy. One of the causes of the conflict are waters in the hands of the chthonic deities, which the celestial deities struggle to release for people. In the folk-tales this plot does not appear directly, although the proximity of water often marks the place of the conflict: Devil and robber were turned to stone by Thunder while crossing a river; Thunder struck down the Devil in the Daugava. A folk-tale

tells of the Devil's Nail in Zalve: as a result of the conflict stones also appear – parts of the Devil's body. Accordingly, it can be considered that those stones about which no folk-tale plots have been found, but which have been given a name such as 'Devil's Heel' or 'Devil's Horn' also had a mythological connection with the theme of a particular conflict. While the story itself has already been forgotten, the name of the stone has survived. Certainly, the possibility also exists that people gave the stone its name simply on the basis of similarity. We might consider that a striking outward similarity of a stone to a heel motivated people to call it the Devil's Heel, and that there has never been a developed folk-tale plot about it. Even so, such associations could only appear for people who lived according to the mythical world view, in which case they should be included among change-stones, and among mythological stones in general.

Sometimes the Devil can also turn to stone after contact with a man, and in one case even with a dog. We see the influence of Christianity in stories where the Devil turns to stone when the person appeals to God. In a story where the owner of a kiln pours lead in the Devil's eyes, the man can be seen as having the role of culture hero, helping the celestial deity in its struggle with the chthonic enemy. It is recorded in one folk-tale that the Devil became bored of life and drowned himself in the River Salaca. Here a similarity is suspected with the theme occurring in the folklore of many nations where a deity or culture hero ends its life by turning into a feature of the mythical landscape, such as a stone.

In the folk-tales, petrified objects are generally connected with activities of the Devil. Significant are the folk-tale themes where the Devil is engaged in stealing. The Devil's interest in peas as well as his inclination towards stealing are generally rooted in mythical logic. The folk-tales also point to a connection with the chthonic world, in which a man's or the Devil's money turns to stone.

There are unusual folk-tale motifs, previously not highlighted in the literature, involving a big stone that appears on the site of a building where events occurred that are beyond ordinary experience. From the whole of Latgale there are only a few folk-tales about change-stones, whereas all the folk-tales on this subject come from Latgale.

On the whole it can be concluded that in Latvia the Christian stratum is considerably less prominent in the folk-tales connected with change-stones than in the neighbouring countries. At the same time, the folk-tales are very fragmentary, their plots to a certain extent even contorted and not fully developed. In some cases we can sense the influence of the trends of romanticism

in the literature of their time on those recording the folk-tales, and there is a certain influence of Western European literature, for example, in those folk-tales involving dwarfs, priestesses, a chieftain and the Devil. This provides evidence that these folk-tales were written down at a time when the connection with the mythical world view had essentially disappeared from man's consciousness. At the same time, the existence of the folk-tales and the emphasized connection with features of the landscape indicate that there were change-stones in Latvia, just as in the neighbouring countries. It is only that in Latvia paganism continued longer than in neighbouring countries, promoting in particular the preservation of the mythical themes in the folk-tales. At the same time, in most of Latvia in recent centuries the dominant religion has been Lutheranism, which did not promote such an extensive development of folk religion where pagan and Christian beliefs merged as was the case with Catholicism or Orthodoxy in the neighbouring countries, where the folk-tales, albeit interpreted in the frame of Christian morality, could be kept alive in longer and more complete form.

The killing of children and other tragic events

Some of the stones mentioned in the folk-tales seem on the surface to be memorial stones rather than mythological stones, because they relate to tragic events. Nevertheless, it must be concluded that the relationship between tragic events and stones frequently has its roots in the mythical world view, rather than in the reality of events, because tragic events relating to the death of children, beggars, and sometimes strangers or shepherds, tend to have a special relationship to the earth, lower world and the Devil. Such a stone is one of the stopping points where their souls can take refuge. In reality, a Jewish pot trader (*Jule*) could indeed have been killed at the stone. Belonging to the mythical realm are the folk-tales describing how a cock is heard or a light is seen at this stone (LFK, 949, 738).

Mythical in character is a folk-tale about an old man who was picking grass by the stone and heard a voice saying: "Why do you tear my long hair at sunset." In another case a sheep with lambs was seen near the stone (LFK, 1975. 377). In the former case the deceased has merged with the Devil, whereas in the latter case the soul appears as a domestic animal.

Murdered children cry at the stones, appeal to be christened, or keep watch over the Devil's money. Near such stones it is possible to meet an evil spirit or

ghost. One folk-tale involving a murdered child relates to a footprint stone in Kocēni Parish. A girl killed a child at this stone, the father found out, carved the child's foot in this stone and drowned himself (LFK, 23, 5435).

Conclusions

Mythological stones served as points of reference for arranging the relationship of ancient Man both with nature and with the sacred world. They were integral elements of the Latvian mythical landscape. It is a pity that nowadays most of the stones mentioned in the article are not to be found in the Latvian cultural landscape. They have been destroyed or cannot be identified on the ground. Nowadays, the stones mentioned in folk-tales that are still preserved in the cultural landscape should be regarded not only as a subject of investigation by archaeologists and researchers of mythology, but also as an essential element of the Latvian cultural landscape. As with folk songs, the stones retain not only a value for scientific research, but also a spiritual value, because they provide an insight into the world view of our ancestors. Being attached to a particular geographic environment, stones bear witness to the inseparability of notions of *Man*, *earth* and *myth* in ancient times.

Summary

The earth and the mythical beings of lower spheres connected with it relate to stones in the Latvian mythical landscape. These stones are connected with basic Indo-European myth, involving conflict between the celestial and chthonic deities, or with a syncretic interpretation of the myth, where pagan and Christian strata have mixed.

The folk-tale motifs connected with all of these are varied. Some motifs, for example, about the Devil making men sleep on the stones, are emphasized for the first time in this study. The connection between stones and the cult of dead is also identified. A stone is considered a boundary between this world and the next, and as one of the points of reference in the natural world where the souls of those who had died an untimely death found shelter. In the mythical landscape it is possible to observe the connection between a stone and other natural objects, particularly mythical waters, as well as features of Man's cultural space, such as hill-forts and burial sites.

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THE HISTORY OF RESEARCH ON LATVIAN CUP-MARKED STONES

Stones with small hollows or pits, known as 'cup-marked stones', stand out among stones with marks of ancient artificial treatment in north-eastern Europe as well as in the rest of the world. Many different views have been expressed with regard to the significance, time of use, and ethnic or cultural attribution of these stones, but a consolidated view on these matters has not yet emerged. It is possible that there is temporal and geographical variation in the significance and role of cup-marked stones.

The first discovery of a cup-marked stone in the territory of Latvia was made in 1925 (*Štāls*, 1926). This was a stone near the homestead of Daviņi in Bērzaine Parish, north-west of the town of Valmiera in the northern part of Latvia close to the border with Estonia. At the time, 17 cup marks were observed on the stone. The stone (Fig. 1) is currently situated near a small watercourse formerly called the Viteke. It must be mentioned that this was a time of intensive discovery of cup-marked stones in Estonia. It is mentioned in an overview article (*Tvauri*, 1997) that in the year 1921 only 20 cup-marked stones were known in Estonia, whereas 95 such certain stones were known already by 1925. This was a favourable time for the development of the system of protection of cultural monuments, including archaeological monuments, in Latvia as well as in Estonia. At that time, as before, the main interests of Baltic German archaeologists related to burials, hill-forts and stone castles, while the Latvian investigators began to turn their attention to objects connected with worship and ancient traditions. So, in this context the cup-marked stone near the homestead of Daviņi, called *Lielais akmens* ('Big Stone'), generated interest as an ancient cult object. For this reason it was placed under state protection and was later often mentioned in various publications. Because of insufficient familiarity with studies on cup-marked stones in the neighbouring areas, it

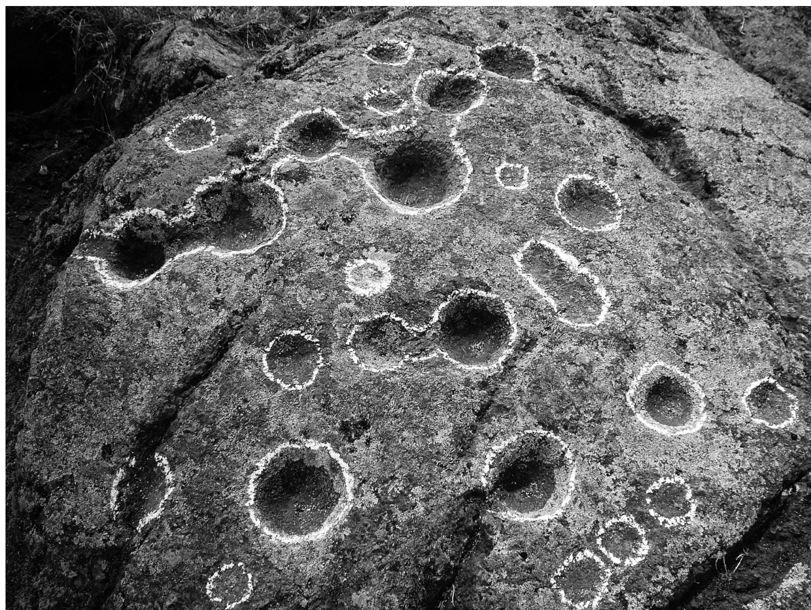

Fig. 1. Cup-marked stone near the homestead Daviņi (photo: A. Grīnbergs).

was not appreciated that this stone is not an isolated, peculiar find, but instead belongs to a class of stones represented in a large territory.

For a long time the cup-marked stone near the homestead of Daviņi remained as a unique stone of its kind in Latvia. In 1963 archaeologist Ē. Mugurēvičs carried out an archaeological excavation at a Couronian cemetery of the 12th–14th century near the homestead of Zviedri ('Swedes') in Pūre Parish, south-east of the town of Talsi in the western part of Latvia. During this excavation a stone with 11 cup marks was discovered at a distance of 200–300 m from this cemetery, on the left-bank slope of the River Abava Lowland. This find was recorded along with other results of the excavation; unfortunately, once again the place of this cup-marked stone within the system of ancient cult monuments was not defined. Without any verification, it was pointed out that such stones relate to the Fenno-Ugrian territories (*Mugurēvičs*, 1987, 63). Sadly, this stone was destroyed during land reclamation work.

In 1972 Estonian archaeologist V. Lõugas published a general article on the Estonian cup-marked stones (*Lõugas*, 1972). The two Latvian cup-marked stones known in the literature were mentioned as well, thus including them in the wider area of distribution of such stones in north-eastern Europe. This made it possible to eliminate the idea of cup-marked stones as a separate group of stones with hollows in Latvia (*Caune*, 1974, 92). A. Caune called them 'stones with conical or triangular prismatic hollows'. He initially emphasized the idea that these stones relate to folklore material, where the hollows are explained as impressions of the feet of the Devil or other mythological beings.

At the end of the 1970s some new, previously unknown cup-marked stones were found in Latvia. Thus, in 1977 a stone with five cup marks on the top was found at the village of Ruskuļi near Lake Cirītis in Aglona Parish (*Уртанс*, 1978). This stone had been mentioned in the literature and archive material earlier as well, but without information about the cup marks. Moreover, this stone, like the stone near the homestead of Daviņi, had the name *Lielais akmens* ('Big Stone'). This stone is located in the south-eastern part of Latvia. It was assumed to be located at the far eastern fringe of the area of distribution of cup-marked stones, because at that time Latvian investigators knew nothing about the cup-marked stones in Belarus. During fieldwork by the district museum in the 1978 a cup-marked stone with approximately 30 cup marks was found near the homestead of Kalnalammikas in Lode Parish very near the Estonian borderline, north of the town of Rūjiena. This cup-marked stone, too, is situated near a river lowland, that of the River Rūja. This stone has the name *Upurakmens* ('Offering Stone'). A year later archaeologist I. Cimermane found the cultural layer of a settlement with wheel-made pottery near this stone. Also in 1978 during land reclamation works in the lowland of the River Ālande, east of the town of Grobiņa, a stone seemingly having some artificial lines was noticed. This stone was carefully investigated by the local historian J. Sudmalis as well as the amateur archaeoastronomer V. Grāvītis. The latter highlighted the hypothesis that in the remote past the lines on the stone may have been used for astronomical observations of the Moon (*Grāvītis*, 1978). At the same time, the cup marks on this stone are mentioned only in passing.

Identification of previously unknown cup-marked stones continued in subsequent years (Sēlpils Ezernieki (*Urtāns*, 1984), Bērzaines Daviņi II). The most striking find was the discovery of about 200 cup marks on a boulder at the homestead of Elekši, west of the town of Priekule, situated in the south-

western part of Latvia (*Urtāns*, 1991). It became evident that cup-marked stones are not particularly exceptional in Latvia.

For the first time in Latvia, an archaeological excavation was conducted at a cup-marked stone in 1978 (*Urtāns*, 1980, 104). In the course of the excavation, covering an area of 14.5 square metres next to the cup-marked stone *Lielais akmens* near the village of Ruskuļi, mentioned above, it was revealed that the foot of the boulder had been greatly disturbed by recent digging. However, at a depth of 0.47 m a hearth with a diameter of 0.22 m and a thickness of 0.03 m was found. The fire had been built on a small flat boulder (0.18 m × 0.16 m), but no archaeological objects were found there.

Extensive collection of folk-tales began in Latvia in the second half of the 19th century and actively continued in the first half of the 20th century. The assembled and published folklore material often refers to the acts of the Devil as well as other mythological characters. Folklore material was also collected about stones that were later established as having cup marks. As a rule, these stones were large and, of course, could attract the attention of ancient people, regardless of whether they had cup marks. In particular, the stones at Aglonas Ruskuļi and Sēlpils Ezernieki are connected with the acts of the Devil. The stone Daviņu *Lielais akmens* is connected with the acts of old maids, but it is only with respect to this stone that the folk-tales refer to the cup marks. For example, each hole corresponds to a different deity (*Urtāns*, 1990, 48–49, 87–88). In general, it must be admitted that the folklore does not indicate any special significance or originality of cup-marked stones in Latvia.

In the late 1980s, developing the above-mentioned idea of A. Caune, an attempt was made to identify in written folk-tales a relationship between boulders with imprints of the Devil's feet and cup-marked stones (*Urtāns*, 1989). These boulders have generally not been preserved up to the present day, or else clear pits have not been identified on them. Summarizing the evidence on cup-marked stones in Latvia, an article (*Уртанс*, 1987) was published with data on the four cup-marked stones known at that time, and also presenting data on five other boulders with hypothetical pits resembling cup marks. Thus, the Latvian cup-marked stones were included within the area of distribution of such objects in Finland, Russia, Estonia and Lithuania. Referring to the results of a study of Estonian cup-marked stones, the Latvian examples were dated to the middle of the 1st millennium BC. However, ideas about the significance of these stones were expressed very cautiously. This article is often

cited by researchers in neighbouring countries, so that cup-marked stones of Latvia have been included in the broader geographical distribution of these objects. At the same time, so far in the literature of neighbouring countries the view has dominated that the number of cup-marked stones in Latvia is small in comparison with adjacent territories. V. Grāvitis's attempts to connect stones that may have had a significance in ancient rituals with research on archaeo-astronomy attracted the interest of astronomer and surveyor J. Klētnieks. He informed a group of enthusiasts of local history studies, led by G. Eniņš, about these ideas. This group began to pay attention to cup-marked stones in Latvia from the early 1990s. First, following up a story once heard about a certain stone called *Mēness akmens* ('Moon Stone') in Vidriži Parish, north-west of the town of Sigulda, the members of this group found 72 cup marks on a boulder near the homestead of Kaķi. There was also apparently a line specially marked on this cup-marked stone (*Cepītis*, 1993). This boulder had already been included in the list of protected monuments of local significance as a possible cult site by the local historian A. Andruss, but the presence of cup marks had not been recorded. It remains an open question whether this stone is indeed *Mēness akmens*. G. Eniņš's group of local historians subsequently checked all the previously known cup-marked stones in Latvia. Among Latvian cup-marked stones, the most cup marks were counted on the above- mentioned stone east of the town of Grobiņa – about 270 cup marks. Re-establishing the old place-name, this stone is now called Padambji Stone. G. Eniņš published his observations in a popular article (*Eniņš*, 1994), suggesting that these stones be called *bedrīšakmeņi* in Latvian, a term subsequently adopted by Latvian researchers. In his turn, J. Cepītis published an article (*Cepītis*, 2003) discussing the interpretation of the archaeoastronomical significance of cup-marked stones. However, in the light of subsequent discoveries, he has acknowledged that this interpretation now seems rather premature.

Since that time, the members of the local history group headed by G. Eniņš – A. Grīnbergs, A. Opmanis and J. Cepītis – have found a number of previously unknown cup-marked stones. Let us examine the more impressive examples. In the south-western part of Latvia they include two boulders near the homestead of Mūrnieki in Cīrava Parish, boulders on the former estate of Lukne in Dunika Parish, a boulder near the homestead of Pērkoni in Rucava Parish and a boulder near the hill *Spicais kalns* ('Peaked Hill') in Medze Parish. In the north-western part of Latvia there are: a boulder at Dižstende in Lībagi Parish,

boulders at the homesteads of Jāņandreji and Ventkalni (Laidze Parish), and boulders at the hill-forts of Buse (Matkule Parish) and Mežīte (Lauciene Parish). There is also a stone on the bank of the River Salaca in the town Mazsalaca in the northern part of Latvia, and a boulder on the shore of Lake Puškrievi in the village Puskundži in Ilzeskalns Parish in the eastern part of Latvia. On some of the previously known cup-marked stones additional cup marks were found. They occur, for example, on the side, the vertical edges (Ruskuļi *Lielais akmens*) and even on the lower face, as revealed in a hole left by treasure hunters (Daviņi *Lielais akmens*). An interesting fact is the discovery of cup marks on the upper, flat face of a vertically positioned boulder often visited by tourists near the homestead Āži in Dundaga Parish. It must be mentioned that this stone has been regarded as a boundary stone between the territories of the Couronians and Livs in the north-western part of Latvia. Previously unnoticed cup marks have also been found on a boulder popular with tourists: *Rudais akmens* ('Red Stone') in Medze Parish.

A small stone with two pits on opposite faces was found on the shore of Lake Sasmaka near the town of Valdemārpils by local historian Ē. Prokopovičs. This stone remained the only known portable stone in Latvia until 2007, when A. Grīnbergs accidentally found some stones of this type in the apple garden near the estate of Stukmaņi in Klintaine Parish (*Grīnbergs*, 2007). Altogether, six cup-marked stones were found here, and were transported to the Museum of History and Art at the town of Aizkraukle, the centre of the district. Some of these stones had two cup marks on opposite faces; others had only one cup mark. After this publication, new information was received from Bebrene Parish. Local historian Ā. Grūberte had in her private collection of antiquities what seemed to be a small cup-marked stone found in the lowland of the River Dviete, at a place called *Putnusala* ('Bird Island'), a widely known ancient settlement site near the River Daugava. In the autumn of 2007 we visited the site together with A. Grīnbergs to check this information and were surprised to find that one more definite cup-marked stone had been found nearby during the potato harvest.

There was an idea that these cup-marked stones belong to an entirely different class of historic stones, perhaps even having a technical significance. But after a while J. Zira, the owner of the land where the above-mentioned cup-marked stone on the shore of the Lake Puškrievi is located, showed two small cup-marked stones that had turned up near this stationary cup-marked

Fig. 2. Small cup-marked stones found at Puskundži
(photo: L. Jakubenoka).

stone (Fig. 2). Among the recently found small cup-marked stones the most peculiar example was found near the homestead of Ezerlīči in Tilža Parish (in the north-eastern part of Latvia). This stone had the shape of a regular tetrahedron, with one cup mark on each of its four sides.

Recently a review of Latvian cup-marked stones has been published (*Cepītis, Jakubenoka*, 2009). Latvian cup-marked stones have occasionally also been included in general works by scholars from neighbouring countries, where there has also been a rapid increase in the number of known cup-marked stones (see, e.g.: *Biezais*, 1985, 6, 29). It has become clear and generally accepted that there are a lot of cup-marked stones in Latvia. The number could be considerably less than in Estonia, but no smaller than in Lithuania. Moreover, there is an accelerating trend of increase in the number of known cup-marked stones in Latvia. In addition to finds of cup-marked stones with many

cup marks, stones with one possible artificially formed cup mark have been found. It has to be said that without intensive scrutiny because of the cup-marked stones already detected, such stones could remain unnoticed. It is likely that in the future stones with hardly noticeable pits will be found, which can be determined as cup marks only by knowledgeable researchers. Indeed, since cup-marked stones are usually not associated with folk traditions, the possibility of discovering them is purely random, requiring sophisticated skill and relevant experience. Frequently, when checking incoming messages about stones alleged to have cup marks, the reliability of the received information should be assessed, even when it comes from experienced professionals and local historians. On the other hand, people with a heightened sense of perception of non-traditional situations in nature often help to find cup-marked stones. For example, information about a stone near the homestead of Elekši was given by a young man who had been grazing cattle near the stone for a long time. It is worth mentioning that this boulder has become an example of how closely the condition of cup-marked stones must be monitored. Despite the fact that this stone has been listed as a state-protected monument, on one occasion, just by chance, two of the authors of this article managed to save this stone from destruction (*Jakubenoka*, 2004).

Cup-marked stones have now been found throughout Latvia and the opinion once expressed that Latvia constitutes a peripheral territory with respect to the distribution of cup-marked stones can now be regarded only as a fact of historiography. In the light of the latest discoveries it is possible to identify areas in Latvia where cup-marked stones are present: the territory of the former Liepāja District; the area in the vicinity of the town of Talsi; northern Latvia (Vidzeme); eastern Latvia (mainly the Latgale Uplands), and one problematic area – the lowland along the lower reaches of the River Daugava. These areas of Latvian cup-marked stones differ in principle with respect to the characteristic properties of the objects found there. The lowland along the lower reaches of the River Daugava is a problematic area due to the fact that only one large cup-marked stone is known there, and the available information about small cup-marked stones does not permit identification of the characteristics of cup-marked stones of this area. Let us briefly examine the cup-marked stones currently known in Latvia, listed in the following tables. The tables include only those cup-marked stones of the appropriate areas that have been surveyed by at least by two authors of this article.

The cup-marked stones of Liepāja District (Table 1), taken to include only those stones that definitely belong to this class of stones, represent the largest number. This area is adjacent to the areas of Lithuania where cup-marked stones occur. Some Lithuanian researchers (*Vaitkevičius*, 2003, 98) date these Lithuanian cup-marked stones to a later period than the Estonian cup-marked stones. In comparison with other cup-marked stones in Latvia, cup-marked stones in this area have large numbers of cup marks, as many as a hundred. At the same time, many stones with a small number of cup marks have been found in this area. Some of the stones of this area lie on the slopes of small river valleys: the stone at Lukne – the Lukne stream, Pērkoni – the River Sventāja, Padambji – the River Ālande, Elekši and Joguļi – the Virga stream. At the same time, the cup-marked stones from the homestead of Mūrnieki are not associated with any watercourse or water-body. Moreover, these stones are situated close to an artificially shaped rectangle of stones, which was found by local historians and has been investigated by amateurs in archaeoastronomy (*Klētnieks*, 1989). The discovery of cup-marked stones near the homesteads of Mūrnieki, Luknes and Joguļi suggests that cup-marked stones can form systems, and need not always be regarded as individual objects. Unfortunately, after the accidental discovery of three cup-marked stones near the homestead of Luknes, the next investigators to visit the site could not find the third, relatively small cup-marked stone (0.5 m × 0.4 m × 0.3 m) with one cup mark. It may be noted that the cup marks on the Padambji stone have been rather fancifully interpreted as ancient writing (*Paiders*, 2003, 27). The cup-marked stones Padambji and Mūrnieki I are nowadays used in neo-pagan rituals. A. Opmanis recently found a cup-marked stone at the foot of the ancient shore of the Baltic Sea, near the hill *Spicais kalns* ('Peaked Hill') in Medze Parish north of the town of Grobiņa (Fig. 3). This stone has about 100 cup marks, one of which stands out by its size. In principle, the presence of one particularly large cup mark is a characteristic property of Latvian cup-marked stones, but in this case the largest cup mark is particularly extensive. As regards the cup-marked stones near the homestead of Joguļi, it must be said that one of these stones is very impressive, but the second can be recognized as cup-marked only by analogy, taking into consideration the presence of a pit resembling an enlarged cup mark. The cultural monuments inspector for Liepāja district, I. Vize, has provided information about a cup-marked stone near the Gauri burial site in Rucava Parish. This stone has been shattered, and currently

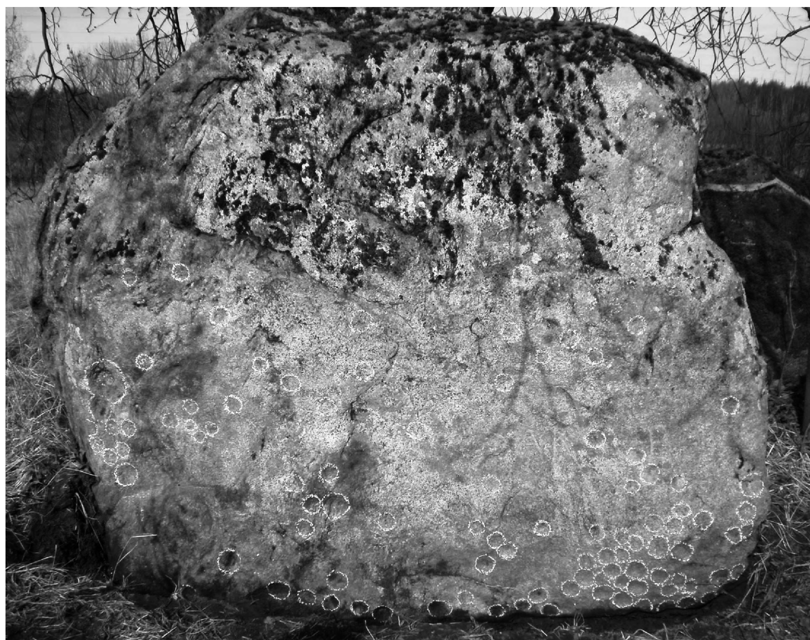

Fig. 3. Cup-marked stone near *Spicais kalns* (photo: L. Jakubenoka).

it is possible to see only one fragment, although it is not impossible that other pieces of this stone will be found. Although I. Vize describes such fragments, we have not found them. The founder of Liepāja museum J. Sudmalis indicated a stone with a diameter of 1 m and 12 cup marks at the hill-fort of Diždāme in Gramzda Parish, but nowadays it has not been possible to find it. The view has been expressed that there are some cup marks on the surface of Klaustiņi Boulder (Rucava Parish), which is protected as an archaeological monument, but this is not readily apparent. Finally, we may note that a stone exhibited at Apriķi School Museum in Laža Parish, west of the town of Aizpute, can most probably be considered a small cup-marked stone.

Table 1. **Stones with cup marks in Liepāja District.**

No	**Place and decade of discovery**	**Size of stone (m)**	**Number of cup marks**	**Size of cup marks (cm)**	**Remarks**
1	Padambji, Grobiņa Parish 1970s	2.9 × 2.1 × 1.6	About 270	Diameter 4–6, depth 0.5–2.5	Stone has been moved
2	Elekši, Priekule Parish 1980s	2.4 × 1.8 × 0.9	About 215	Diameter 4–6, depth 0.5–2.0	Under state protection
3	Mūrnieki I, Cīrava Parish 1990s	2.0 × 1.5 × 0.8	About 110	Diameter 4–6, depth 0.5–1.0	
4	Mūrnieki II, Cīrava Parish 2000s	1.7 × 1.2 × 0.7	4	Diameter 4–6, depth 0.5–1.5	
5	Luknes I, Dunika Parish 2000s	4.4 × 2.9 × 0.9	10	Diameter 4–6, depth 0.5–2.0	
6	Luknes II, Dunika Parish 2000s	2.1 × 1.1 × 0.7	7	Diameter 4–6, depth 0.5–1.0	
7	*Spicais kalns*, Medze Parish 2000s	2.5 × 1.8 × 0,6	About 100	Diameter 4–5, depth 0.5–1.0	Stone has been moved; partially excavated by researchers; one of the cup marks has a diameter 10 cm, depth 3 cm
8	Kapsēde, Medze Parish 2000s	3.9 × 2.8 × 2.0	5–10	Diameter 4–5, depth 0.5–1.0	Name: *Rudais akmens*
9	Odziņas, Medze Parish 2000s	3.4 × 2.3 × 1.6	6–9	Diameter 5, depth 1.0	

10	Joguļi I, Priekule Parish 2000s	2.0 × 1.1 × 0.5	7	Diameter 4–6, depth 0.5–2.0	
11	Joguļi II, Priekule Parish 2000s	1.6 × 1.0 × 0.4	6	Diameter 4–6, depth 0.5–2.0	
12	Pērkoni, Rucava Parish 2000s	2.1 × 1.9 × 0.8	10	Diameter 4–6, depth 0.5–2.0	
13	Gauri, Rucava Parish 2000s	Fragment of stone	5	Diameter 5 depth 1.0–2.0	

The cup-marked stones in the vicinity of the town of Talsi (Table 2) are more homogeneous in comparison with those of Liepāja District. There are original discoveries of relatively small cup-marked stones at hill-forts (Buse, Mežīte) and at the place of worship Ilbatu *Zelta kalns* ('Golden Mountain'). There is a hypothesis that two cup-marked stones at the foot of Buse Hill-Fort once constituted a single stone, although doubts have also been expressed on this matter. The process of discovery of these two stones was rather curious (*Jakubenoka*, 2007). We received a message that during a field school for geology students from the University of Latvia near the River Imula they had found a stone resembling a cup-marked stone. When the stone referred to by the geologists was checked, it was concluded that in this case it was only an unusual natural form. But that same day genuine cup-marked stones were found at the foot of the hill-fort. A. Opmanis has provided information about a cup-marked stone (1.9 m × 1.0 m × 0.7 m) with one cup mark on the opposite side of the hill-fort, but the authors of this article have never been able to find it. A cup-marked stone located on the slope of Ilbatu *Zelta kalns* drew the attention of local historian of Talsi District L. Landmane. This cup-marked stone, in the park of Dižstende Manor, was located close to a frequently-used path which leads from the administrative building of Stende Plant Breeding Station to the bus stop, but was first noticed by J. Cepītis (*Kalmanis*, 2004, 10). It should also be noted that the cup-marked stone at the homestead of Jāņandreji is the second of the known Latvian cup-marked stones after Daviņu *Lielais akmens*

Fig. 4. Cup-marked stone near the homestead Ventkalni (photo: L. Jakubenoka).

which has grooves connecting the cup marks. A few months after receiving the report of this cup-marked stone, another cup-marked stone was discovered on the land of the neighbouring homestead of Ventkalni (Fig. 4). The distinction of these two separate areas of cup-marked stones in the west of Latvia is also justified by the fact that no discoveries of cup-marked stones have been made in the lowland of the River Venta, which separates the two areas. The cup-marked stones in the vicinity of the town of Talsi are less closely connected with the river valleys. The stones at Buse Hill-Fort seem to be essentially connected with the hill-fort, not with the River Imula that flows close by. At the same time, it should be noted that the small cup-marked stone from Valdemārpils was found on the shore of Lake Sasmaka. Also relating to this area of distribution of cup-marked stones is the above mentioned stone, now destroyed, near the homestead of Zviedri in Pūre Parish.

Table 2. **Stones with cup marks in the vicinity of town of Talsi.**

No	Place and decade of discovery	Size of stone (m)	Number of cup marks	Size of cup marks (cm)	Remarks
1	Buse I, Matkule Parish 1990	1.2 × 1.1 × 0.5	18	Diameter 4–6, depth 0.5–2.0	Stone has been moved
2	Buse II, Matkule Parish 1990	1.3 × 0.8 × 0.3	1	Diameter 6 depth 2.0	Stone has been moved
3	Āži, Dundaga Parish 2000	1.6 × 1.6 × 0.9	6	Diameter 4–6, depth 0.5–1.0	
4	Jāņandreji, Laidze Parish 2000	1.0 × 1.0 × 0.2	36	Diameter 4–6, depth 0.5–1.0	Used as the threshold of a barn
5	Ventkalni, Laidze Parish 2000	3.4 × 2.2 × 1.5	16	Diameter 4–6, depth 0.5–1.0	
6	Mežītes, Lauciena Parish 2000	1,0 × 0.8 × 0.3	12	Diameter 4–6, depth 0.5–1.0	
7	Dižstende, Lībagi Parish 2000	1.7 × 1.3 × 0,6	32	Diameter 4–6, depth 0.5–2.0	Stone has been moved
8	Ilbati, Strazde Parish 2000	1.0 × 0.9 × 0.3	8	Diameter 4–5, depth 1.0–1.5	
9	Valdemārpils, Dzirnavu iela 11 2000	0.3 × 0.3 × 0.2	2	Diameter 5, depth 2.5	Small cup-marked stone

Some of the cup-marked stones, namely those in the vicinity of the towns of Mazsalaca and Rūjiena, in the north of Latvia (Vidzeme) (Table 3) are adjacent to an area of cup-marked stones in the south of Estonia. There is Daviņu *Lielais akmens*, whose significance is highlighted by the impressive cup marks on it. In the frame of the Latvian-Estonian project "Unknown cultural heritage values in common natural and cultural space" (2009–2011) two definite cup-marked stones were found near Lake Sārums (Limbaži Parish) and near a well-known boulder called *Velnakmens* ('Devil's Stone') at Jaunutēni in the River Salaca (Skaņkalne Parish). It is debatable whether one can include in this area a cup-marked stone near the homestead of Kaķi, which has a large number cup marks and apparently also an artificially formed line. A major discussion arose regarding the inclusion in the class of cup-marked stones of a stone found near the homestead of Pankas in Kocēni Parish near the town of Valmiera. This stone is now exhibited in a nature park created by geologist D. Ozols at the homestead of Jēči in Naukšēni Parish. Most researchers consider the notches on this stone as naturally formed. Nowadays nobody has been able to find the cup-marked stone Daviņi II, which was apparently discovered in the 1980s. Most likely, this stone is in a heap of boulders formed during land reclamation work, which does not exclude the possibility that the original assessment of this stone was incorrect. The last case concerns a report of a stone near the homestead of Rudiņi in the rural area of the town of Mazsalaca. There is only one known small cup-marked stone in this area, found by L. Gercāne at the homestead of Līvi in Kocēni Parish. This stone has two cup marks symmetrically arranged on opposite sides, and seems artificially worked as a whole. Finally, perhaps within this area of cup mark stones there is a distinct class of worship stones, represented by stones with a relatively large artificially shaped hollow. Such stones have been found near the homesteads of Purteteri in Vaive Parish and Kalna Cikuži in the countryside east of the town of Ape. These stones have been compared in a separate article (*Jakubenoka*, 2005) and most likely relate to a later period. When a report about a stone with one artificial hollow located near a lime tree used as an offering site near the homestead of Virsaiši in Beļava Parish was followed up, it was recognized to be erroneous – the cavity in the boulder was natural.

Table 3. **Stones with cup marks in the north of Latvia (Vidzeme).**

No	Place and decade of discovery	Size of stone (m)	Number of cup marks	Size of cup marks (cm)	Remarks
1	Daviņi I, Bērzaine Parish 1920	4.0 × 2.8 × 1.7	19	Diameter 3–14, depth 1.0–7.0	*Lielais akmens,* under state protection
2	Kalnalammikas, Lode Parish 1970	5.4 × 2.8 × 1.0	C. 30	Diameter 4–6, depth 2.0–3.0	*Upurakmens,* under state protection
3	Kaķi, Vidriži Parish 1990	3.3 × 3.0 × 1.2	C. 70	Diameter 4–6, depth 0.5–2.5	Under protection by the munici-pality
4	Mazsalaca I, Mazsalaca town 1990	1.5 × 1.0 × 0.3	12	Diameter 4–5, depth 0.5–1.0	
5	Mazsalaca II, Mazsalaca town 1990	1.3 × 1.1 × 0.3	10	Diameter 4–5, depth 0.5–1.0	
6	Rīga, Codes iela 45a, 1990	3,1 × 1,9 × 1.3	C. 15	Diameter 4–6, depth 0.5–1.5	In the possession of sculptor O. Feld-bergs. Probable original location (according to the sculptor): Blome Parish
7	Līvi, Kocēni Parish 2000	Small cup-marked stone	2		In the possession of L. Gercāne, resident of the homestead Līvi
8	Jaunutēni, Skaņkalne Parish 2010	2.4 × 1.2	2	The biggest is 10 cm in dia-meter, 5.5 cm deep	Near the well-known boulder of Jaunutēni in the River Salaca
9	Unkšas, Limbaži Parish 2010	1.9 × 1.8 × 0.9	C. 7	Diameter 4–6, depth 0.5–1.5	Near Lake Sārums

Despite the small number of cup-marked stones so far discovered in eastern Latvia (Table 4), this territory represents a significant area of distribution of cup-marked stones in Latvia. All of the known stationary cup-marked stones are similar in size, and in the size and number of holes, and two of them are located on the shores of lakes. It seems that the possibility of finding previously unknown cup-marked stones is very high. In recent years some small cup-marked stones have also been found. Among these are the two stones mentioned above in the village of Puskundži, and a peculiar stone found at the homestead Ezerlīči. According to a publication (*Вінакурау, Дучыц, Зайкоускі, Карабанау*, 2003), all 33 identified cup-marked stones in Belarus are located in the north-western part of the country. It is possible that this area is related to the area of distribution of cup-marked stones in Belarus, in spite of the fact that in Belarus no small cup-marked stones have so far been found.

Table 4. **Stones with cup marks in the eastern Latvia.**

No	**Place and decade of discovery**	**Size of stone (m)**	**Number of cup marks**	**Size of cup marks (cm)**	**Remarks**
1	Ruskuļi, Aglona Parish 1970	3.8 × 2.2 × 2.1	7	Diameter 4–6, depth 0.5–1.5	*Lielais akmens,* under state protection
2	Puskundži, Ilzeskalns Parish 1990	3.3 × 2.9 × 1.9	6	Diameter 4–6, depth 0.5–1.5	
3–4	Puskundži, Ilzeskalns Parish 2000	Small cup-marked stones	1–2		In the possession of J. Zira, owner of the homestead of Aizezere
5	Mazie Žurili Nirza Parish 2000	2.6 × 2.0 × 1.4	4	Diameter 4–6, depth 0.5–1.0	
6	Ezerlīči, Tilža Parish 2000	Small cup-marked stone	4		In the private collection of Ē. Kašs on the homestead of Ezerlīči

Among the cup-marked stones in the lowland of the lower course of the River Daugava (Table 5) Ezernieku *Velna akmens* ('Devil's Stone'), stands out in particular. This cup-marked stone, which lies in wet bushland, is the only one in Latvia related to the tradition of footprint stones. According to the recorded folk-tales, other, deeper recesses on the stone were formed by the Devil, who climbed, sat and slept on this stone. These take the form of a rounded rectangular recess with a diameter of 0.35 × 0.40 m and a depth up to 8 cm, along with two hard-to-see, small, but artificially formed recesses. It should be noted that astronomic significance has also been attached to a line visible on this stone (*Grāvītis*, 1995). Significantly, Sēlpils Parish is very rich in preserved cult stones. A survey of these sites, including Ezernieku *Velna akmens*, is described in a separate article (*Cepītis*, 1997). Stones found at Skrīveri and during the excavation of the settlement of Laukskola near Salaspils have not been re-examined so far and there is no clear conviction that they are actually cup-marked stones. There is a peculiar stone from the homestead Radzes in Koknese Parish, in which 14 holes can clearly be seen. Nevertheless, most researchers doubt whether this stone can be included in the class of cup-marked stones. The reason for this is the fact that these holes do not have smooth bases. However, the presence on this stone of one larger hole and the fact that, before the stone was used as a boundary-mark, it lay in the valley of the River Daugava, can be regarded as serious counter-arguments. Unfortunately, during a recent visit to the homestead Radzes it was found that this stone had already been taken away somewhere, so it has become impossible to establish the truth. Writer A. Goba (*Goba*, 1995, 222), discussing cup-marked stones, mentions that even in the relatively recent past in the environs of the town Lubāna, on the bank of the Aiviekste, a tributary of the River Daugava, the birth of a child was marked by making a pit in some stone. Indisputable evidence of such tradition has still not been found. Moreover, in the vicinity of the town of Lubāna no cup-marked stones have been found, not even examples with roughly formed holes. It must be noted that this area experienced extensive land reclamation work in the second half of the 20th century. On the other hand, since it is relatively easy to make a roughly formed pit in a stone, the idea is entirely plausible, and perhaps the stone near the homestead Radzes confirms it. There are finds in this area of other possible cup-marked stones that are still being evaluated. For example, there are two such stones near the hill-fort of Avotiņkalns in Klintaine Parish. Concluding the review of cup-marked stones in the

lowland of the lower course of the River Daugava, we should note two boulders already referred to by A. Caune in connection with his suggestion that stones about which there is folklore material indicating traces left by the Devil's feet could also belong to the class of cup-marked stones. Pastamuižas *Velna akmens* ('Devil's Stone') in Koknese Parish is nowadays a popular tourist spot, but no depressions have been observed on this stone (*Urtāns*, 2005). The other stone, on the bank of the River Arona near the homestead Trušļi in Mārciena Parish, nowadays cannot be located. The article mentions other stones in Latvia with similar folklore material (*Caune*, 1974). Most of these stones have not been preserved up to the present day, while those that can be investigated are typical footprint stones. At the same time, with rare exceptions, these stones are located in areas of distribution of cup-marked stones.

Table 5. **Stones with cup marks in the lowland of the lower course of the River Daugava.**

No	Place and decade of discovery	Size of stone (m)	Number of cup marks	Size of cup marks (cm)	Remarks
1	Ezernieki, Sēlpils Parish 1980	6.0 × 4.0 × 1.5	2	Diameter 8, depth 2.0–4.0	*Velna akmens,* under state protection
2–7	Stukmaņi, Klintaine Parish 2000	Small cup-marked stones	1–2		In the Museum of history and art in Aizkraukle
8–9	Putnusala, Bebrene Parish 2000	Small cup-marked stones	1		In a private collection of Ā. Grūberte on the homestead Atāli, Bebrene Parish

Cup-marked stones should nowadays be seen not only as objects of scientific study, but as a significant part of the cultural and historical landscape (*Jakubenoka*, 2006a). As such, they have not only scientific but also spiritual value (*Jakubenoka*, 2006b). The spiritual value of cup-marked stones remains, in contrast to their research value. In our opinion no less important is the protection and promotion of cup-marked stones, in order to ensure their preserva-

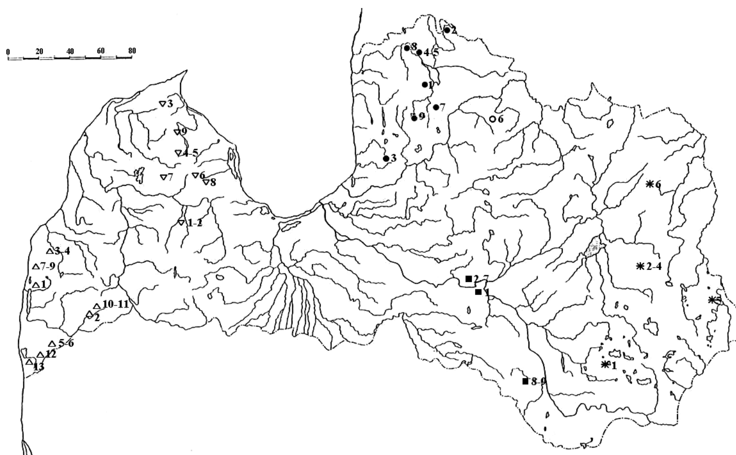

Fig. 5. Distribution of known cup-marked stones in Latvia: Δ – cup-marked stones in Liepāja District; ∇– cup-marked stones in the vicinity of the town of Talsi; ● – cup-marked stones in the north of Latvia (Vidzeme); ⁎ – cup-marked stones in eastern Latvia; ■ – cup-marked stones in the lowland of the lower course of the River Daugava.

tion. Previously unknown cup-marked stones are currently being discovered frequently. Unfortunately, only some are under state or municipal protection.

Figure 5 shows the location of the cup-marked stones mentioned in Tables 1–5. The stone now in the possession of sculptor O. Feldbergs is shown at its possible previous location.

Summary

The stones known as cup-marked stones stand out among stones with marks of ancient artificial treatment in north-eastern Europe, as well as in the rest of the world. So far in the literature the view has predominated that the number of cup-marked stones in Latvia is small in comparison with neighbouring countries. The history of research on Latvian cup-marked stones is considered and it is shown that in Latvia there are a large number of cup-marked stones. In the light of the latest discoveries, four reliably identified areas of cup-marked stones are plotted in Latvia, eliminating one problematic area.

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TÕNNO JONUKS (Estonia)

AN ARCHAEOLOGY OF HOLY PLACES: CAN WE FIND 'FORGOTTEN' SACRED SITES?

Everywhere in the Baltic countries the opinion dominates that archaeology with its methods cannot answer questions concerning sacred places. Such an attitude is easily formed, since finds are rarely gathered and other features, such as cultural layers, post-holes etc. are even less common. This approach is even more understandable as the majority of sources and also the concept of holy places originate from the oral tradition of the recent past, while archaeology and its methods have been confined to a localising and descriptive role. Thus, the concept of holy places, derived from 19th and 20th century oral tradition, has been used in the context of all periods of the past. In recent years more interpretative studies have also been published concerning the hinterlands of holy places, different possible functions and dates (*Vaitkevičius*, 2004; *Jonuks*, 2007).

Here I will discuss the role of archaeology in the study of holy places, with special emphasis on finding forgotten holy places in Estonia. I will first focus on archaeological finds from holy places that are known from folklore, and discuss a certain landscape type that is considered sacred. In connection with these two aspects I will try to speculate on some putative holy places which have lost their folklore.

In Estonia, but also in many other areas, the main source about holy places has been folklore, which has been recorded relatively recently – in the late 19th and throughout the 20th century. Beside this, written descriptions from the Modern Era have also been used, but as latter are based on a formerly existing oral tradition, we may summarise by saying that all we know about sacred places comes from the context of living folk religion of the Modern Era. It is generally accepted that folklore is relatively conservative and retains memories about places whose meaning was originally assigned centuries or even millennia ago. As folk religion has been regarded in a similar light, the dating of different religious motives and sites has not been an important topic

and the historical religious context has often been ignored. Folk religion and sites associated with it have been approached phenomenologically, focussing only on folklore related to holiness, but not considering its wider historical and religious context. I believe that Estonian folklore related to *hiis*-places (*hiis* is generally understood and translated as 'holy grove', but concerning the etymology and different meanings of *hiis*, see *Jonuks,* 2009b). However, the customs and rituals conducted there should be studied in the context of the folk religion of the Modern Era and *vice versa*, since it is the religion of the Modern Era in particular which is reflected by the oral tradition. But this statement obviously does not mean that holy places have their beginning only in past couple of hundred years. Although folk religion primarily reflects the religion of the Modern Era, it was formed on the basis of earlier religion(s). It is obvious that holy places have also been used during earlier periods, and some of them have also been preserved in modern religion and folklore. At the same time many holy places have lost or changed their meaning over time and thus, as folklore is absent, we do not know of them. I believe that by using various holy places known from modern folklore as analogies, it is possible on the basis of archaeological material to find also those which were once important but are no longer known because they have lost their folklore for various reasons.

Archaeological finds

The Estonian holy places known from oral tradition have not been archaeologically investigated, and in most cases we do not have a methodology for studying them. The most numerous finds are coins from *hiis* or offering sites. Unfortunately such records are accidental and mostly come from amateur archaeologists, who are not too keen to share their knowledge with professionals. Only occasionally do such coins reach museums, as most of them end up in private collections and are not available for academic studies. The coin finds from offering sites that have reached museum collections so far date from the Early Modern Age (e.g. AI 2536:7, found beside the offering stone of Tõrva in Saarde parish, South-West Estonia) to the 18th–19th century (e.g. AI 4933, coins from the offering spring of Lümandu in Märjamaa Parish, Central Estonia). In some cases coins dating to the entire 20th century can be traced (e.g. *Silmaallikas* or 'Eye Spring' in Helme, South Estonia, TÜ 596).

The main problem with these single finds from sacred places is their documentation. The majority of finds have been discovered accidentally during

digging, or quarrying of sand or gravel, and thus no find context is available. It is also uncertain whether these items are 'offerings' or grave goods, as many earlier burial sites later obtained the significance of a holy site where sacrifices were brought. It is also difficult to say what kind of material remains we should expect from a sacrificial site, and therefore it is necessary to turn to contemporary folk customs for analogies. There are many stereotypic motifs, known already since the 18th century, that depict the offering of coins, bread etc. at holy places, which include not only groves and stones, but also church and chapel sites. The first photos and drawings of offering stones from the early 20th century depict shards of glass, old horse-shoes, pieces of cloth etc. that have been given as offerings and that combine well with the folklore recorded throughout the 20th century (see *Viidalepp*, 1940, 27; *Lõugas*, 1996, 80–81). A frequent characteristic is that the offerings are purely symbolic: they are economically worthless, often in secondary use, and the form or material is not connected with the purpose of the offering. A good example of this is the custom of tying ribbons on trees, the purpose of which is purely symbolic, in order to indicate a prayer for health and relief from disease. In a way, such an approach to offerings contradicts the traditional treatment of offerings in archaeological discourse, where offerings of valuable materials (*Hårdh*, 1996; *Hedeager*, 1992) or special items produced for the purpose of giving them as offerings (*Lekberg*, 2002) is often stressed. In some cases there has also been speculation on the basis of the form of amulets, for example, magical healing of foot pain (*Koktvedgaard Zeiten*, 1997, 11). Study of contemporary customs of making offerings suggests that purely symbolic and economically valueless items may have played a much bigger role. Their connection with the purpose of the offering only had significance in relation to the particular person making the offering. Therefore it is hardly possible to speculate on the purpose of the offering merely on the basis of the character of the offerings. This topic has only been studied on the basis of the oral tradition, and so it is difficult to find ethnographic descriptions that correspond to archaeological material. In order to offer a few examples of archaeological finds from holy places known from folklore, we should mention the nails and corroded iron (AI 2679) found under the sacrificial tree of Ülendi on the island of Hiiumaa (Fig. 1). The collections of potsherds found beside Raasiku sacred stone in North Estonia (AI 3506) and in Põltsamaa sacred grove in Central Estonia (AI 6520) represent similar sets of worthless items.

Fig. 1. Finds collected during archaeological excavation at the offering tree Ülendi Ebajumal (Idol) in Hiiumaa (AI 2679). Iron nails and pieces of corroded iron were found beneath the tree.

Fig. 2. Finds recovered beside the split boulder at Kumna (AI 5999).

It is known that all of the above-described objects have been found at holy places. By considering the characteristics of these collections and also the behavioural norms of folk religion, it is possible to speculate that certain other finds are also offerings. These include coins from the Modern Era, parts of a belt, half of a bronze vessel etc., collected beside a big boulder in the village of Kumna, North Estonia (AI 5999) (Fig. 2). In view of the choice of items in the collection, and considering also the splitted boulder, we might be dealing with a holy stone from the 17th–18th century, to which offerings have been brought, but which holiness has become lost in time and oral tradition as the usual source has not preserved either.

Another reason why we know only a small set of sites of this kind is the character of the possible offerings. As these are usually valueless items – and according to oral tradition pieces of glass, nails or old horse-shoes were offered as well – these could easily be considered as 'rubbish' by casual finders or even during an archaeological excavation. Thus, these finds do not receive the necessary attention. The lack of attention is partly justified, of course, since it is difficult to determine whether pieces of a glass bottle found beside a boulder are offerings or just the remains of some incidental party. But so far discussion of 'the archaeology of rubbish' is largely absent in this context, although it might be fruitful in future studies.

As such finds seem to be typical of modern folk religion and its sacrificial practice, it is important to note that so far we do not have evidence of analogical collections from prehistoric periods. Usually there are no older finds at the holy places known from folklore, and no prehistoric sets of artefacts (e.g. a collection of potsherds not relating to a known archaeological monument) have been connected with such a concept of symbolic offering (cf. *Stjernquist*, 1997). Still, there are a few examples of single finds of jewellery from holy places known from folklore, which belong to the last centuries of prehistory (11th–13th century). These single penannular brooches from the Late Iron Age can hardly be explained as offerings. Rather, they can be interpreted as items lost during some rituals or festivities. The penannular brooches from Utria *hiis* (AI 3644), Kunda *Hiis* Hill (AI 3831) or beside the Nõmme offering stone (AI 4228) should be mentioned as examples in this connection. Finds older than the Late Iron Age gathered at holy places known through folklore are associated only with stone graves from the Late Bronze or Early Iron Age.

A similar picture appears when we analyse finds made at offering springs known from folklore. During dredging work a breast pin was found at the

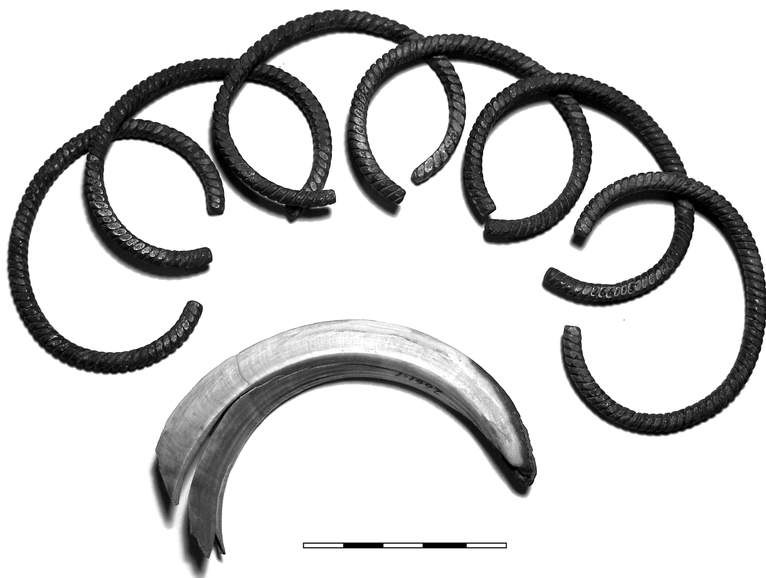

Fig. 3. Finds from Tõrma offering spring (AI 2661).

spring of Kunda (AI 4002: 1), and a tooth of wild boar and six bronze rings were collected from Tõrma Spring (AI 2661: 1–8) (Fig. 3). In addition there are finds from several springs, including silver jewellery (see *Tamla*, 1985). In addition to springs, the River Jägala has been considered holy. Here, offerings may have been thrown into the water from the high riverbank (*Vedru*, 2004, 190). Also, two bracelets and potsherds from the swampy bank of the River Olju (AI 4151) could have been given as offerings to the river or buried on the meadow. All of these artefacts are from the Late Iron Age, the 9th–11th century, and correspond well with finds from Latvian springs in terms of their dates and the character of the collections (*Уртанс*, 1988, 11). Artefacts were deposited in springs during earlier periods as well, since the 1st century AD, but at that time weapons predominated, for example, spearheads and an axe from Koorküla (*Tamla*, 1985) or the famous weapon collection from the bog of Alulinna (*Tamla*, 1995; see more *Oras*, 2010). The character of deposits clearly changed in the Viking Age and, in contrast to the weapons collections of

earlier periods, only jewellery was deposited in the water bodies during the Late Iron Age.

Offerings have probably been made at springs situated in the centre of former villages, which most likely were also places where water was taken for daily needs. A breast pin from Kunda and a set of items from Tõrma, both in the middle of Iron Age settlements, should be mentioned as examples. A similar connection has been stressed with regard to Swedish offering springs (see *Stjernquist*, 1997, 59). In addition, animal bones and potsherds have often been found at springs in Sweden and Finland, thus also indicating the offering of organic material, which does not preserve easily. Unfortunately we do not yet know such material from Estonia, but offerings of organic material (food in particular) should definitely receive more attention in interpretations of springs and offering practices connected to these. The purpose of these offerings remains speculative. Juris Urtāns has suggested for Latvian offering springs, which date to the same period as the ones in Estonia, that the reason for bringing offerings to springs was originally fertility, and later healing (*Urtāns*, 2008, 80).

Characteristic of all archaeological finds from holy places is the lack of medieval material: the Late Iron Age jewellery is followed by late medieval and the early modern coins and symbolic offerings, associated with behavioural norms we also know from oral tradition. Such a difference can partly be accounted for in terms of our different level of knowledge about the material, and currently we are not able to identify the kinds of symbolic offerings that could be compared with the above-described pieces of iron, shards of glass, horse-shoes etc. from a period earlier than the Early Modern Era. On the other hand, the change from Late Iron Age jewellery to potsherds and pieces of iron from the Modern Era and the contemporary period most likely indicate changes in religion, customs and rituals concerning holy places. We can probably also suggest differences between various kinds of holy places and rituals conducted there. As all of the Late Iron Age jewellery associated with those *hiis* sites where wider communal festivities would have been possible are used and in some cases deformed, we could suggest that these have been lost during celebrations of some kind. Thus, we do not necessarily have to interpret finds from holy places solely as 'offerings'. The finds from the Modern Era and contemporary finds as symbolic offerings concentrate almost entirely around more local offering stones and trees, where 'offering' could be the most plausible interpretation.

Holy landscapes

Of the range of themes concerning sacred sites, the geographic features indicating holy places have probably been treated the most. Although no certain and final motive has been proposed as to why some places have been considered holy, there has been speculation on various possible reasons, from special places in the landscape to biological or energetic anomalies (see *Koski*, 1967; *Jonuks*, 2007; *Valk*, 2007; see references therein). Probably it has never been the case that only one aspect was considered important when choosing a holy place, and certain criteria may have been favoured in different periods or different regions. Still, it can be observed that holiness has been ascribed to sites that differ within this particular landscape: a conspicuous hill, a special tree etc. At the same time there are also numerous sites that are not visually eye-catching and where other criteria may have been used in choosing them.

I have suggested previously (*Jonuks*, 2007; *Jonuks*, 2009a) that ancestors and their connection with living societies had a crucial role in religion during the 1st millennium BC and the first centuries AD. As landmarks of this religion, above-ground stone graves were built, which in North Estonia were erected on the *klint* or on a hill, and which are oriented towards the villages, which were situated on lower ground. As it was not only the graves themselves that were important, but also the larger areas where they stood, we may suggest that such places have been considered holy and their meaning has in a few cases been preserved until the present day. A good example is Kunda *Hiis* Hill, North Estonia, where a row of four stone graves was built on the top of a moraine hill in the Late Bronze Age – Pre-Roman Iron Age. All these graves were oriented towards the former village on the other side of a lake, now dried up. Testifying to human activity in later periods is a Late Iron Age brooch, found during gravel quarrying, and there is also a rich body of folklore about the hill. A similar site with a long history is Purtse *Hiis* Hill, at the foot of which six stone graves were built at around the change of era and which has attracted numerous folk-tales. Such examples could be seen as holy places which have been important throughout different periods and where one and the same site has preserved its holiness in the context of different past religions. In addition, more sites with a similar landscape and archaeological remains are known, including sites without folklore.

One example can be seen in Karula village in North Estonia, where a grave field with numerous stone-graves is situated at the top of a *klint* headland.

Although these graves have not been studied yet, it can be suggested, in view of the character of the superstructures, that they date from the 1st millennium BC. The whole set strongly resembles the complexes of Kunda and Purtse, with the only difference that there is no *hiis* lore known about it. Still, there is a *hiis* known from folklore a few kilometres away on a flat coastal plain, where there is a small hillock only a meter high. It is probable that here we are dealing with a former holy place on top of the *klint* headland, where a burial site was created, but whose importance and meaning have changed. Thus a new holy place was chosen, this time in a different landscape and with no connection to graves.

An even better example comes from Tõugu village, North Estonia, situated on a *klint* headland, where there is also a burial site, one of the graves being dated to the Late Bronze Age (*Lang*, 2000, 123). In addition to landscape similarities, there is also a settlement site known from the Early Iron Age at the foot of the *klint* (*Lang*, 2000, fig. 25). So, in this case too we may apply the interpretation of graves built on a higher location than the village, so that the dead ancestors were looking down towards the living society (cf. *Sjögren*, 2004, 173). There is hardly any known folklore relating to the holiness of this site, but instead there is a flat field together with an offering stone a few kilometres away that is referred to in folklore, called *Hiievälja* (*Hiis* Field). Similarly here we can interpret it as a former holy place on a *klint* cape, where stone graves were built and whose meaning was closely associated with dead generations. Later on the meaning of holiness was lost for some reason, which is also confirmed by the fact that the area of the burial site was turned into an agricultural field in the Viking Age (*Lang*, 2000, 226). The disappearance or relocation of some holy places was probably brought about by changes in religion during the middle of the 1st millennium AD (see *Jonuks*, 2009a), and in the course of these processes a new holy place with a new landscape type appeared, where the graves are not directly connected with the culture of death.

Certainly, the putative relocation of some holy places from hills to flat fields, which we can observe since the middle of the 1st millennium AD, does not mean that the concept of a visually impressive landscape had lost its importance. Also in case of 'new' holy places we can observe something, such as an elevation, a special collection of plants and trees, a natural stony area etc., that makes this place somewhat different in this particular landscape. But the most important difference between 'old' and 'new' sites is that later holy sites are not

directly associated with graves, and since the second half of the 1st millennium holy places have probably not been used for burial (see *Valk*, 1995, 461).

In conclusion

By using archaeological material and comparing it with analogies from oral tradition we can putatively identify some holy places which have been important in past religions, but which have lost their holiness over the course of time and due to changes in past religions. In doing this, it would be important to distinguish two categories of holy sites. First, there are classic holy places, the knowledge of which predominantly derives from the living religion and living folk tradition, and which relate primarily to the folk religion of the recent past. But in addition there are also sites that may have had significance as holy places in different periods of the past, but which have lost this meaning and together with it also the folklore as the main source material. Thus it is important to consider other sources, such as archaeological sites, finds etc., in order to recognize places which may have had an importance in the context of some past religion. It is clear that we cannot see the whole of the holy landscape of the past, but such an approach still permits us to observe holy places in a more dynamic way, where the meaning of places has changed together with the rest of religion, society and the settlement pattern, and where holy places may have been abandoned or new places brought into use.

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ANDRZEJ KUCZKOWSKI (Poland)

SPACE, TIME AND FUNCTION. GÓRA CHEŁMSKA NEAR KOSZALIN IN THE MIDDLE AGES

Introduction

Without any doubt, the identification of sites of traditional religious worship solely on an archaeological basis is a controversial question. In the case of the West Slavonic peoples of the early Middle Ages we encounter few written accounts, and these only serve to support our speculations, rather than providing unambiguous answers. Instead, more questions and doubts arise (*Moszyński*, 1998).

In the Polish literature there is considerable arbitrariness in the use of terms usually employed by scholars of religion, so that intuitive connections are formed with the discovered archaeological evidence. And although intuition is a substantial factor for the humanities, free manipulation of terms taken from religious studies is not justified any more. This paper concentrates on several aspects of one case, which has been of exceptional importance to me – the mountain *Góra Chełmska* on the outskirts of the city of Koszalin. It is important to specify the exact focus of our interest. Customarily, two terms – seen as synonymous – are used: beliefs and religion. At first glance, such treatment of the two terms is fully justified. After a thorough consideration, however, doubts arise: to my mind, religion and beliefs should be defined separately. Religion, in my view, is the sum of all factors characteristic of the society or social group in question in the historical period under study that this society as a whole relates to an intangible view of the universe. Beliefs, on the other hand, are verbalized and individualized attitudes of the individual towards the sphere of the supernatural, characteristic of a society in a specified period of time.

A clear difference can be seen here: the aforementioned verbalization, i.e. accounts by the believers themselves. In the case of the tribal Slavonic societies we do not posses a single record written by a pagan author. This places

us in the position of external observers of Slavonic religion – several centuries after it ceased to exist as a functionally coherent belief system. Stemming from this fact are numerous difficulties encountered in describing and interpreting the facts under study.

Scholars of religion dealing with ancient religions have been fond of inventing typologies: let us consider the examples of belief systems described as ancestor cults, animistic or totemic cults, shamanism, etc. Qualifying a belief system as one of these often results in a very one-sided interpretation of facts recorded within the framework of that system. This is particularly the case with past societies – whose supernatural worlds are known through the perspective of residual, more or less objective written accounts or archaeological evidence. All this may create a one-sided view of ancient religions. It has been my opinion that within a traditional religious system, elements of manism, totemism or shamanism exist side by side with elements of a different nature. Their occurrence is not mutually exclusive and they all constitute complementary elements within one ideological complex.

Góra Chełmska is part of the Wzgórza Koszalińskie range of hills, which extend for 13.5 km east of the city of Koszalin. The hills were formed by glaciation in the early Cenozoic Era. This is the highest point along the whole south coast of the Baltic Sea. The Chełmski massif consists of three hills: Krzyżanki, Łeśnica and Krzywogóra (*Siedlak*, 1965) (Fig. 1). The authors of post-1945 broad-spectrum archaeological research have unanimously qualified this as a pre-Christian site of worship (*Janocha, Lachowicz*, 1991, 11ff). At this point a second important idea automatically arises. A common term for sites with features thought to be connected with the religious is 'place of worship'. This is connected with a specific perception of these sites: a secluded area where sacrifices were made and prayers said. It absolutely does not include all religious behaviour that could have taken place within that space. My interpretation will be a broader one: a place of worship is an area that is defined anthropogenically and geographically in the process of site or area symbolization, constituting a temporary or permanent place of religious practice by a given social group and representing an important cultural correlate (pattern).

The history of excavations at Góra Chełmska starts before 1629, when the book by Johannes Mkirälius *Sechs Bücher vom alten Pommerlande* was published. It mentions the finding of a brass horn, a sword and bones of a 'giant' on the massif. Broad-spectrum archaeological excavations were performed in 1905–1938

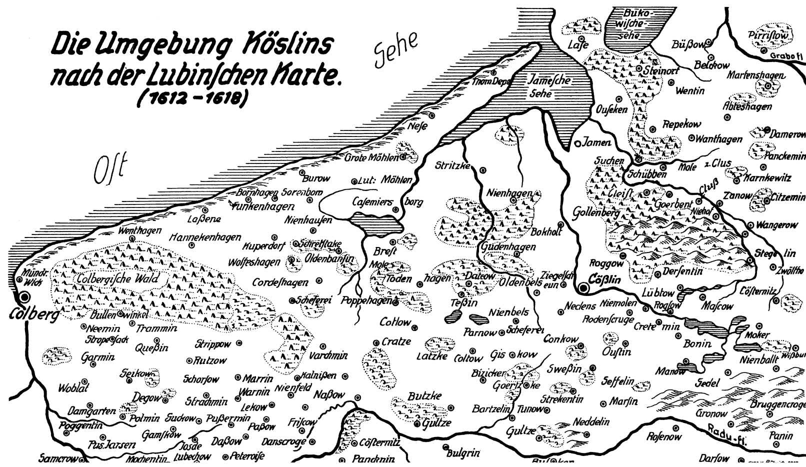

Fig. 1. The Koszalin area according to the 18th century map of Lubinus (after *Schulz*, 1931, 419).

and 1958–1962, during which numerous medieval artefacts were found, as well as several hundred inhumation burials and remains of Christian stone architecture (a chapel, a chapel house and an unfinished red brick church) together with some wooden architecture. The authors of these studies connected some of the recorded remains with the religion of the pre-Christian Slavs (see bibliography in: *Kuczkowski*, 2004). These remains are the main focus of this paper.

Space

All human activity takes place in a specific space, which is the sum of points in an area that serves as a reference for human actions. The author's detailed settlement proxemics studies have enabled accurate reconstruction of the cultural and geographical landscape in the immediate vicinity of Góra Chełmska in the Middle Ages.

In order to be able to assess the position of the Chełmska massif in the medieval cultural landscape it is first necessary to locate it in the natural landscape. It can be deduced from sources of various kinds that the footslopes of Góra Chełmska were covered in forest. There are data from the Modern Era on logging in the village of Kłos, at the foot of Krzyżanka. The settlement also

had a hermitage, which would usually be located in a forest, and in this case belonged to the Chełmska Chapel. The forests presumably also covered the northern approaches to the mountain. The discovery of an ancient burial mound site between the villages of Skwierzynka and Kędzierzyn in 1876 supports this claim. Had the site been located in a deforested area, it would have been destroyed within 25 to 40 years. It is also noteworthy that the village of Osieki, about 8 km north of Chełmska, has preserved a legend about a wild hunt, which took place in a forest (*Bojar-Fijałkowski*, 1986).

Some hydrographic information on the area should be provided. The massif of Góra Chełmska used to be surrounded by a dense ring of bogs extending to the coast of the Baltic Sea in the north. This constituted a 20-km-long and 5- to 7-km-wide barrier passable with difficulty, which in addition was dissected by the valleys of the river Unieść and Wkrzanka, each up to 4 km wide. In 1725 a treasure was found near the sources of the Unieść, consisting of 'medallions, old coins and silver' (*Wendland*, 2006, Chapter I, §VI, Note 13), which could cautiously be interpreted as an early medieval hoard, possibly containing coins, jewellery and scrap metal. The treasure itself was unfortunately dispersed and lost entirely soon after its discovery. Bearing in mind that at least some of the deposits of this kind were hidden along trade routes, it may be assumed that a considerable stretch of the Unieść was navigable.

Another very intriguing find may be proof that the river was used as a waterway: a little sculpted head of walrus tusk, probably a Scandinavian import dating from the 10th–13th century, found at the swampy mouth of the river, where it enters Lake Jamno (*Filipowiak*, 1974, 251). Adjoining Góra Chełmska on the western side was the valley of the River Dzierżęcinka, narrower than the two previously mentioned rivers, but possessing numerous tributaries (*Sprutta*, 2001). As late as the 18th century it was noted that the sources of these tributaries, springing from the Chełmska massif, never froze in winter, even in the bitterest frost (*Wendland*, 2006, 447).

Next we should discuss the role of the mountain in the cultural landscape. We do possess one basic source of information on the topic: the analysis of the settlement network recorded during archaeological excavations on the hills.

The distribution of settlement traces around Góra Chełmska dating from Phase IV of the Early Middle Ages (i.e. the end of the 10th to the mid-12th century), corresponding to the archaeologically proven period of navigation on the main run of the River Krzyżanka, reflects the profound changes happening at

that time in Pomeranian social structure: the fall of most of the small burgs that flourished in the so-called 'tribal period' and the transfer of their functions to a few larger decision-making centres (e.g. Kołobrzeg). These changes were bound to influence the character of traditional religious life. In the wake of the collapse of the old social structures this was becoming the main element legitimizing the *new world order*. An elaborate ritual system became an important force in the process of integrating a new society (*Rosik*, 2000).

The clear separation of Góra Chełmska from the settlement network of that time points to its special character. The nearest settlement is Site 19 in Dzierżęcin, 5 km in a straight line from the summit of Chełmska. The individual settlements of Early Medieval Phase IV were located only about 2–2.5 km apart. The rule of British archaeology referred to as the 'principle of least effort' states that the size of a territory utilized by a settlement should provide the best proportion of benefits stemming from its utilization and the costs thereof (e.g. the effort put into transportation of goods to the settlement). The size of a model area of utilisation from a settlement was estimated as 5 km, with the most intensive use of the area within a radius of 2 km from the settlement (*Kobyliński*, 1986, 8–9). It can be said of Góra Chełmska that arable land was no nearer than 3–5 km from the summit. Additionally, the undulating slopes of the hill and the strip of bog encircling the foot of Chełmska would have been further obstacles for communication and transport. If we accept the idea that there were permanent settlements of an unknown society at the summit of Krzyżanka in the early medieval period, it seems that the effort put into agricultural exploitation of the nearest arable land would have exceeded the benefits of using it.

Also, analysis of the plant remains from the excavations suggests that the Chełmska massif was used for purposes other than farming. As much as 92% of the identified seeds were pine and oak: pine constituted 51% and oak 41%. The remaining seeds came from another tree species (hornbeam) and two annual meadow plants (*Sinapsis arvensis* and wild buckwheat). No domesticated plants were identified (*Janocha*, 1974, 127).

All of this makes the space of the Chełmska massif, in my opinion, a special place for the neighbouring medieval societies, connected with the sphere of the religious and the magical. This is stressed in the definition of a place of worship as a defined area (defined anthropogenically or by the forces of nature). During the excavations no structures which could have constituted man-made

borders were found. It follows, therefore, that in this case, too, we are dealing with natural boundaries. How, then, were the boundaries of the sacred area on the massif of Góra Chełmska defined? An indirect answer comes from the geographical structure of the area itself.

In the Middle Ages the massif was surrounded by a thick ring of bog and forest (see above). Let us refer to sources that are reluctantly used by Polish archaeologists: legends. Scepticism towards these sources stems, it seems to me, predominantly from the single fact that archaeologists, as representatives of historical studies, tend to start their analysis of a problem with two questions: *When?* and *Who?* However, folk tradition is neither datable (except for the date of the oldest account we know of), nor do we know the author (only the anthropologist's informant). To me, oral tradition is not a historical document, though, but a reflection of the common social sensitivity to the surrounding world of nature and culture (*Kuczkowski*, 2008; *Kuczkowski*, in print).

The analysis of well-known folk-tales relating to the Chełmska massif has clearly shown that, apart from the stories concerning the sanctuary as a pilgrimage destination and the local highwaymen stories – which presumably date from the Christian period – the remaining tales are set exclusively *on the hillsides* and *at the foot of the mountain* (*Kuczkowski*, 2009). This does not seem to be coincidental. The stories, mostly connected with the imagery of demonology, constitute a document of common sensitivity. It seems that we are dealing with a reflection of ancient views concerning this space, preserved in the local verbal folklore. Demons, i.e. beings both from this world and from outside it, fully correspond to the nature of a border area – one that belongs to nobody, and at the same time brings together two neighbouring spheres (in this case that of the sacred and that of the profane) (*Buchowski*, 1993, 88). It is an area where it is possible to perform rituals of passage required before one enters the sphere of the sacred and after one leaves it.

Time

Traces of human activity in the Middle Ages at the top of Chełmska, connected with the sphere of the sacred, date from between the mid-11th and the mid-13th century (the period of pagan religious practices) and from the mid-13th century to the 1520s (i.e. the period of the Christian sanctuary) (*Kuczkowski*, 2005).

Both periods can be divided into three phases of development.

Phase I, up to the mid-11th century. Due to the low chronological sensitivity of the archaeological evidence collected at the site (*Kuczkowski*, 2005), this phase was identified on the basis of its character. I have presented above my arguments that Góra Chełmska had a special role in the medieval cultural landscape. The assumptions behind these arguments can be extended chronologically back in time to the period of arrival of the Slavonic communities in Pomerania.

Apart from their internal social differentiation, during the whole medieval period the Slavonic peoples represented the traditional model of an agrarian civilization. Thence the general conclusion that similar input from the outside world may have caused similar reactions in them, regardless of the time period. Continuing this trail of thought, it seems that the mountain in question may have played a significant role in the common religious and magical imagination before the second half of the 11th century, i.e. before the time when human activity at the top of the Chełmska is proven to have started according to the archaeological evidence.

The second phase, which includes most of the early medieval artefacts registered during the excavations (Fig. 2), may be considered as spanning the period from the mid-11th to the mid-13th century. Along with social change in the region of Pomerania around the turn of the 11th century, reflected by the rapid collapse of the network of small burgs and the rise of a few large administrative centres (*Olczak*, 1991, 150 ff), at least some elements of the local religious system must have changed. It is possible that, along with the centralization of administration, centralization or institutionalization of religious life also took place. Could some kind of wooden edifice of a religious nature have been constructed there at that time? It is possible that during the same period a significant person was buried there in a boat, and the burial perhaps covered with a mound. It is noteworthy that inhumation burial in mounds was practiced in Pomerania between the turn of the 11th and the early or mid-12th century (*Rębkowski*, 2007, 108) and perfectly matches the cycle of social change registered in the region at that time. It is possible that the grave was a continuation of a funeral tradition connected with the location. However, perhaps it was this specific memorial that constituted the character of the space where it was located. A find of a pot with dog remains, deposited in one of the hearths (recorded as Hearth 1), is probably connected with the funerary nature of the space. It can be interpreted as evidence of an act of sacrifice. In

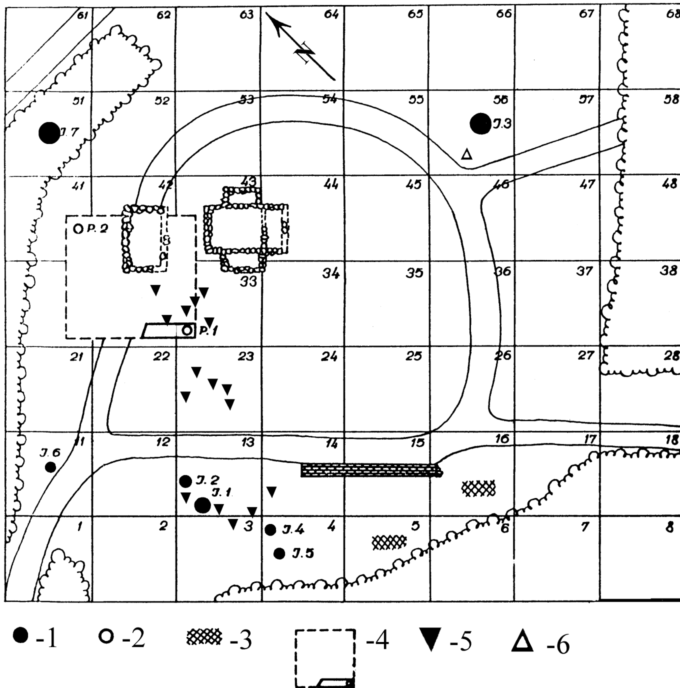

Fig. 2. Koszalin – Góra Chełmska (Stage 1). Early medieval structures (according to *Janocha*, 1974, 134, Fig. 7): 1 – hearth hollow; 2 – hearth; 3 – traces of burning; 4 – part of a house ('temple'), showing the hypothetical shape; 5 – burials, presumed early medieval; 6 – boat burial.

folk culture, dogs act as harbingers of death, which they announce by howling (*Bonowska*, 2003). We are most probably not dealing with a dog burial here, since they are an extreme rarity in this part of Europe (*Gräslund*, 2004, 169). It is certain, though, that the find is connected with the funeral context. In the face of this, the dog may be interpreted as the guardian of the world beyond the grave, or a symbolic manifestation of such a guardian, something that is well-proven for Scandinavian beliefs in the early Middle Ages, for example (*Gräslund*, 2004, 170). Dogs belong both to the world of nature and to that of culture, and may reflect both positive and negative characteristics, hence their

predisposition to act in the two antagonistic worlds – the earthly world and the afterlife.

Phase III (mid-13th century – 1520s), based on the collected evidence, marks the period of operation of the Christian sanctuary with a large burial ground next to the church. Christianity triggered very significant changes in man's relationship with nature, through the process of replacing sacred groves and springs with worship taking place inside buildings. By raising a House of God, a symbolic hierarchy was introduced into the neighbouring settlement network (*Bylina*, 2002, 26, 149).The church used to stand on the hill, although this location made it less accessible to the worshippers. However, by towering above the vicinity, it did sanctify what in Christian understanding was a greater and less tame space (*Bylina*, 2002, 151).

I am well aware that the above text is essentially a hypothesis that is very difficult to verify.

The site was also found to contain marks of religious and magical behaviour dating to the time after the Christianization of the area. It is usually considered that the contradictory magical and religious behavioural phenomena recorded in the course of anthropological and archaeological studies, or those phenomena which do not reflect the official teachings of the church, are relics of the pre-Christian religion. It seems that is a rather gross oversimplification. Magical thinking is not typical for non-monotheistic cultures, nor is it a degenerative form of traditional beliefs, a disease or 'primitive science'. It is an age-old structure, deeply rooted within the human being, persisting equally in past epochs and in our time (*Leeuv van der*, 1978, 580). It must be remembered, then, that the traces of magical actions taking place both before and after introduction of Christianity do not imply any continuity of this kind of practice.

It is probably to the sphere of the magical that we may attribute a find of nine coins in Area 9, dated to the late medieval period. The fact that only a boat burial has been found at the site suggests that the coins could not have belonged to the grave. The presence of numerous coins in close proximity to the boat burial, initially probably covered by a mound (*Zoll-Adamikowa*, 1988, 200, footnote 23), can be considered the result of an unknown magical activity. This formula is also found in the case of the *Kopiec Krakusa* (King Krak's Barrow) in Krakow, where numerous coins have been found on the surface of a hillock, dating mainly from the 16th–20th century (*Kotlarczyk*, 1979, 58), this

being the material evidence for the ritual of tossing them from the top, called *Rękawka* (*Jamka*, 1965, 223–224).

Function

It can be concluded from the sources discussed above that in the early medieval period Góra Chełmska constituted a sacred area. I purposely abstain from employing the term 'place of worship', since there is no evidence of any worship of the supernatural, and no artefact that could be connected with the religious sphere has been found. It is commonly held by scholars that, should any object of this nature be found on a site, it qualifies as a sacred site (*Szafrański*, 1983). This is, however, a rather one-sided view. It is the context that provides an object with meaning, and not the other way round. Religious and magical actions were absolutely acceptable in profane places (e.g. agrarian rites performed on fields) and did not make the place in question any more sacred. In the case of the sacred, each *utilitarian* action detracted from the religious significance. In many cases such an action was irreversible. Not every space where material evidence of religious activity has been recorded was a place of worship in the common understanding. Therefore, the term 'place of worship' does not properly describe the character of the Slavonic culture of old. More justified is the use of the terms 'sacred space', 'sacred area', etc.

Conclusion

It is not an object connected with the sacred, but above all the context (natural and cultural) in which it is found that proves the existence of a space of religious practice. An object deemed a regular, everyday item may once have been an element of sacred imagery. Features revealed by archaeological excavation may be approached in the same manner. Each of these studied separately can be regarded as, say, a storage pit, the remains of a house, etc. At the same time, when related to the general surroundings, a single find may turn out to be part of a greater whole with a clear meaning. Its sacredness is not limited to its form, but corresponds to the sum of all meanings included in it (i.e. its content).

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Introduction

Without any doubt, the identification of sites of traditional religious worship solely on an archaeological basis is a controversial question. In the case of the West Slavonic peoples of the early Middle Ages we encounter few written accounts, and these only serve to support our speculations, rather than providing unambiguous answers. Instead, more questions and doubts arise (*Moszyński*, 1998).

In the Polish literature there is considerable arbitrariness in the use of terms usually employed by scholars of religion, so that intuitive connections are formed with the discovered archaeological evidence. And although intuition is a substantial factor for the humanities, free manipulation of terms taken from religious studies is not justified any more. This paper concentrates on several aspects of one case, which has been of exceptional importance to me – the mountain *Góra Chełmska* on the outskirts of the city of Koszalin. It is important to specify the exact focus of our interest. Customarily, two terms – seen as synonymous – are used: beliefs and religion. At first glance, such treatment of the two terms is fully justified. After a thorough consideration, however, doubts arise: to my mind, religion and beliefs should be defined separately. Religion, in my view, is the sum of all factors characteristic of the society or social group in question in the historical period under study that this society as a whole relates to an intangible view of the universe. Beliefs, on the other hand, are verbalized and individualized attitudes of the individual towards the sphere of the supernatural, characteristic of a society in a specified period of time.

A clear difference can be seen here: the aforementioned verbalization, i.e. accounts by the believers themselves. In the case of the tribal Slavonic societies we do not posses a single record written by a pagan author. This places

us in the position of external observers of Slavonic religion – several centuries after it ceased to exist as a functionally coherent belief system. Stemming from this fact are numerous difficulties encountered in describing and interpreting the facts under study.

Scholars of religion dealing with ancient religions have been fond of inventing typologies: let us consider the examples of belief systems described as ancestor cults, animistic or totemic cults, shamanism, etc. Qualifying a belief system as one of these often results in a very one-sided interpretation of facts recorded within the framework of that system. This is particularly the case with past societies – whose supernatural worlds are known through the perspective of residual, more or less objective written accounts or archaeological evidence. All this may create a one-sided view of ancient religions. It has been my opinion that within a traditional religious system, elements of manism, totemism or shamanism exist side by side with elements of a different nature. Their occurrence is not mutually exclusive and they all constitute complementary elements within one ideological complex.

Góra Chełmska is part of the Wzgórza Koszalińskie range of hills, which extend for 13.5 km east of the city of Koszalin. The hills were formed by glaciation in the early Cenozoic Era. This is the highest point along the whole south coast of the Baltic Sea. The Chełmski massif consists of three hills: Krzyżanki, Łeśnica and Krzywogóra (*Siedlak*, 1965) (Fig. 1). The authors of post-1945 broad-spectrum archaeological research have unanimously qualified this as a pre-Christian site of worship (*Janocha, Lachowicz*, 1991, 11ff). At this point a second important idea automatically arises. A common term for sites with features thought to be connected with the religious is 'place of worship'. This is connected with a specific perception of these sites: a secluded area where sacrifices were made and prayers said. It absolutely does not include all religious behaviour that could have taken place within that space. My interpretation will be a broader one: a place of worship is an area that is defined anthropogenically and geographically in the process of site or area symbolization, constituting a temporary or permanent place of religious practice by a given social group and representing an important cultural correlate (pattern).

The history of excavations at Góra Chełmska starts before 1629, when the book by Johannes Mkirälius *Sechs Bücher vom alten Pommerlande* was published. It mentions the finding of a brass horn, a sword and bones of a 'giant' on the massif. Broad-spectrum archaeological excavations were performed in 1905–1938

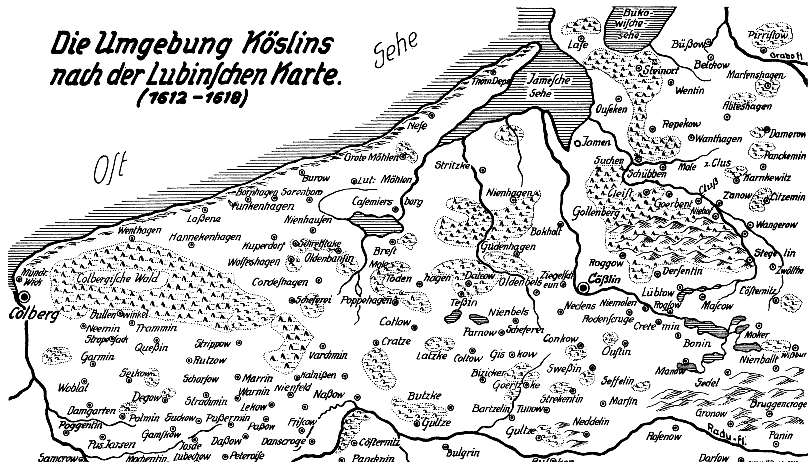

Fig. 1. The Koszalin area according to the 18th century map of Lubinus (after *Schulz*, 1931, 419).

and 1958–1962, during which numerous medieval artefacts were found, as well as several hundred inhumation burials and remains of Christian stone architecture (a chapel, a chapel house and an unfinished red brick church) together with some wooden architecture. The authors of these studies connected some of the recorded remains with the religion of the pre-Christian Slavs (see bibliography in: *Kuczkowski*, 2004). These remains are the main focus of this paper.

Space

All human activity takes place in a specific space, which is the sum of points in an area that serves as a reference for human actions. The author's detailed settlement proxemics studies have enabled accurate reconstruction of the cultural and geographical landscape in the immediate vicinity of Góra Chełmska in the Middle Ages.

In order to be able to assess the position of the Chełmska massif in the medieval cultural landscape it is first necessary to locate it in the natural landscape. It can be deduced from sources of various kinds that the footslopes of Góra Chełmska were covered in forest. There are data from the Modern Era on logging in the village of Kłos, at the foot of Krzyżanka. The settlement also

had a hermitage, which would usually be located in a forest, and in this case belonged to the Chełmska Chapel. The forests presumably also covered the northern approaches to the mountain. The discovery of an ancient burial mound site between the villages of Skwierzynka and Kędzierzyn in 1876 supports this claim. Had the site been located in a deforested area, it would have been destroyed within 25 to 40 years. It is also noteworthy that the village of Osieki, about 8 km north of Chełmska, has preserved a legend about a wild hunt, which took place in a forest (*Bojar-Fijałkowski*, 1986).

Some hydrographic information on the area should be provided. The massif of Góra Chełmska used to be surrounded by a dense ring of bogs extending to the coast of the Baltic Sea in the north. This constituted a 20-km-long and 5- to 7-km-wide barrier passable with difficulty, which in addition was dissected by the valleys of the river Unieść and Wkrzanka, each up to 4 km wide. In 1725 a treasure was found near the sources of the Unieść, consisting of 'medallions, old coins and silver' (*Wendland*, 2006, Chapter I, §VI, Note 13), which could cautiously be interpreted as an early medieval hoard, possibly containing coins, jewellery and scrap metal. The treasure itself was unfortunately dispersed and lost entirely soon after its discovery. Bearing in mind that at least some of the deposits of this kind were hidden along trade routes, it may be assumed that a considerable stretch of the Unieść was navigable.

Another very intriguing find may be proof that the river was used as a waterway: a little sculpted head of walrus tusk, probably a Scandinavian import dating from the 10th–13th century, found at the swampy mouth of the river, where it enters Lake Jamno (*Filipowiak*, 1974, 251). Adjoining Góra Chełmska on the western side was the valley of the River Dzierżęcinka, narrower than the two previously mentioned rivers, but possessing numerous tributaries (*Sprutta*, 2001). As late as the 18th century it was noted that the sources of these tributaries, springing from the Chełmska massif, never froze in winter, even in the bitterest frost (*Wendland*, 2006, 447).

Next we should discuss the role of the mountain in the cultural landscape. We do possess one basic source of information on the topic: the analysis of the settlement network recorded during archaeological excavations on the hills.

The distribution of settlement traces around Góra Chełmska dating from Phase IV of the Early Middle Ages (i.e. the end of the 10th to the mid-12th century), corresponding to the archaeologically proven period of navigation on the main run of the River Krzyżanka, reflects the profound changes happening at

that time in Pomeranian social structure: the fall of most of the small burgs that flourished in the so-called 'tribal period' and the transfer of their functions to a few larger decision-making centres (e.g. Kołobrzeg). These changes were bound to influence the character of traditional religious life. In the wake of the collapse of the old social structures this was becoming the main element legitimizing the *new world order*. An elaborate ritual system became an important force in the process of integrating a new society (*Rosik*, 2000).

The clear separation of Góra Chełmska from the settlement network of that time points to its special character. The nearest settlement is Site 19 in Dzierżęcin, 5 km in a straight line from the summit of Chełmska. The individual settlements of Early Medieval Phase IV were located only about 2–2.5 km apart. The rule of British archaeology referred to as the 'principle of least effort' states that the size of a territory utilized by a settlement should provide the best proportion of benefits stemming from its utilization and the costs thereof (e.g. the effort put into transportation of goods to the settlement). The size of a model area of utilisation from a settlement was estimated as 5 km, with the most intensive use of the area within a radius of 2 km from the settlement (*Kobyliński*, 1986, 8–9). It can be said of Góra Chełmska that arable land was no nearer than 3–5 km from the summit. Additionally, the undulating slopes of the hill and the strip of bog encircling the foot of Chełmska would have been further obstacles for communication and transport. If we accept the idea that there were permanent settlements of an unknown society at the summit of Krzyżanka in the early medieval period, it seems that the effort put into agricultural exploitation of the nearest arable land would have exceeded the benefits of using it.

Also, analysis of the plant remains from the excavations suggests that the Chełmska massif was used for purposes other than farming. As much as 92% of the identified seeds were pine and oak: pine constituted 51% and oak 41%. The remaining seeds came from another tree species (hornbeam) and two annual meadow plants (*Sinapsis arvensis* and wild buckwheat). No domesticated plants were identified (*Janocha*, 1974, 127).

All of this makes the space of the Chełmska massif, in my opinion, a special place for the neighbouring medieval societies, connected with the sphere of the religious and the magical. This is stressed in the definition of a place of worship as a defined area (defined anthropogenically or by the forces of nature). During the excavations no structures which could have constituted man-made

borders were found. It follows, therefore, that in this case, too, we are dealing with natural boundaries. How, then, were the boundaries of the sacred area on the massif of Góra Chełmska defined? An indirect answer comes from the geographical structure of the area itself.

In the Middle Ages the massif was surrounded by a thick ring of bog and forest (see above). Let us refer to sources that are reluctantly used by Polish archaeologists: legends. Scepticism towards these sources stems, it seems to me, predominantly from the single fact that archaeologists, as representatives of historical studies, tend to start their analysis of a problem with two questions: *When?* and *Who?* However, folk tradition is neither datable (except for the date of the oldest account we know of), nor do we know the author (only the anthropologist's informant). To me, oral tradition is not a historical document, though, but a reflection of the common social sensitivity to the surrounding world of nature and culture (*Kuczkowski*, 2008; *Kuczkowski*, in print).

The analysis of well-known folk-tales relating to the Chełmska massif has clearly shown that, apart from the stories concerning the sanctuary as a pilgrimage destination and the local highwaymen stories – which presumably date from the Christian period – the remaining tales are set exclusively *on the hillsides* and *at the foot of the mountain* (*Kuczkowski*, 2009). This does not seem to be coincidental. The stories, mostly connected with the imagery of demonology, constitute a document of common sensitivity. It seems that we are dealing with a reflection of ancient views concerning this space, preserved in the local verbal folklore. Demons, i.e. beings both from this world and from outside it, fully correspond to the nature of a border area – one that belongs to nobody, and at the same time brings together two neighbouring spheres (in this case that of the sacred and that of the profane) (*Buchowski*, 1993, 88). It is an area where it is possible to perform rituals of passage required before one enters the sphere of the sacred and after one leaves it.

Time

Traces of human activity in the Middle Ages at the top of Chełmska, connected with the sphere of the sacred, date from between the mid-11th and the mid-13th century (the period of pagan religious practices) and from the mid-13th century to the 1520s (i.e. the period of the Christian sanctuary) (*Kuczkowski*, 2005).

Both periods can be divided into three phases of development.

Phase I, up to the mid-11th century. Due to the low chronological sensitivity of the archaeological evidence collected at the site (*Kuczkowski*, 2005), this phase was identified on the basis of its character. I have presented above my arguments that Góra Chełmska had a special role in the medieval cultural landscape. The assumptions behind these arguments can be extended chronologically back in time to the period of arrival of the Slavonic communities in Pomerania.

Apart from their internal social differentiation, during the whole medieval period the Slavonic peoples represented the traditional model of an agrarian civilization. Thence the general conclusion that similar input from the outside world may have caused similar reactions in them, regardless of the time period. Continuing this trail of thought, it seems that the mountain in question may have played a significant role in the common religious and magical imagination before the second half of the 11th century, i.e. before the time when human activity at the top of the Chełmska is proven to have started according to the archaeological evidence.

The second phase, which includes most of the early medieval artefacts registered during the excavations (Fig. 2), may be considered as spanning the period from the mid-11th to the mid-13th century. Along with social change in the region of Pomerania around the turn of the 11th century, reflected by the rapid collapse of the network of small burgs and the rise of a few large administrative centres (*Olczak*, 1991, 150 ff), at least some elements of the local religious system must have changed. It is possible that, along with the centralization of administration, centralization or institutionalization of religious life also took place. Could some kind of wooden edifice of a religious nature have been constructed there at that time? It is possible that during the same period a significant person was buried there in a boat, and the burial perhaps covered with a mound. It is noteworthy that inhumation burial in mounds was practiced in Pomerania between the turn of the 11th and the early or mid-12th century (*Rębkowski*, 2007, 108) and perfectly matches the cycle of social change registered in the region at that time. It is possible that the grave was a continuation of a funeral tradition connected with the location. However, perhaps it was this specific memorial that constituted the character of the space where it was located. A find of a pot with dog remains, deposited in one of the hearths (recorded as Hearth 1), is probably connected with the funerary nature of the space. It can be interpreted as evidence of an act of sacrifice. In

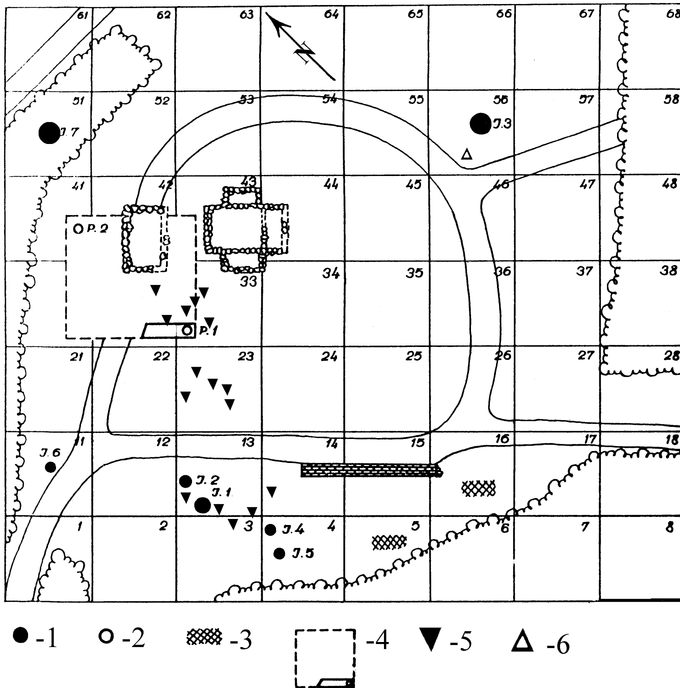

Fig. 2. Koszalin – Góra Chełmska (Stage 1). Early medieval structures (according to *Janocha*, 1974, 134, Fig. 7): 1 – hearth hollow; 2 – hearth; 3 – traces of burning; 4 – part of a house ('temple'), showing the hypothetical shape; 5 – burials, presumed early medieval; 6 – boat burial.

folk culture, dogs act as harbingers of death, which they announce by howling (*Bonowska*, 2003). We are most probably not dealing with a dog burial here, since they are an extreme rarity in this part of Europe (*Gräslund*, 2004, 169). It is certain, though, that the find is connected with the funeral context. In the face of this, the dog may be interpreted as the guardian of the world beyond the grave, or a symbolic manifestation of such a guardian, something that is well-proven for Scandinavian beliefs in the early Middle Ages, for example (*Gräslund*, 2004, 170). Dogs belong both to the world of nature and to that of culture, and may reflect both positive and negative characteristics, hence their

predisposition to act in the two antagonistic worlds – the earthly world and the afterlife.

Phase III (mid-13th century – 1520s), based on the collected evidence, marks the period of operation of the Christian sanctuary with a large burial ground next to the church. Christianity triggered very significant changes in man's relationship with nature, through the process of replacing sacred groves and springs with worship taking place inside buildings. By raising a House of God, a symbolic hierarchy was introduced into the neighbouring settlement network (*Bylina*, 2002, 26, 149).The church used to stand on the hill, although this location made it less accessible to the worshippers. However, by towering above the vicinity, it did sanctify what in Christian understanding was a greater and less tame space (*Bylina*, 2002, 151).

I am well aware that the above text is essentially a hypothesis that is very difficult to verify.

The site was also found to contain marks of religious and magical behaviour dating to the time after the Christianization of the area. It is usually considered that the contradictory magical and religious behavioural phenomena recorded in the course of anthropological and archaeological studies, or those phenomena which do not reflect the official teachings of the church, are relics of the pre-Christian religion. It seems that is a rather gross oversimplification. Magical thinking is not typical for non-monotheistic cultures, nor is it a degenerative form of traditional beliefs, a disease or 'primitive science'. It is an age-old structure, deeply rooted within the human being, persisting equally in past epochs and in our time (*Leeuv van der*, 1978, 580). It must be remembered, then, that the traces of magical actions taking place both before and after introduction of Christianity do not imply any continuity of this kind of practice.

It is probably to the sphere of the magical that we may attribute a find of nine coins in Area 9, dated to the late medieval period. The fact that only a boat burial has been found at the site suggests that the coins could not have belonged to the grave. The presence of numerous coins in close proximity to the boat burial, initially probably covered by a mound (*Zoll-Adamikowa*, 1988, 200, footnote 23), can be considered the result of an unknown magical activity. This formula is also found in the case of the *Kopiec Krakusa* (King Krak's Barrow) in Krakow, where numerous coins have been found on the surface of a hillock, dating mainly from the 16th–20th century (*Kotlarczyk*, 1979, 58), this

being the material evidence for the ritual of tossing them from the top, called *Rękawka* (*Jamka*, 1965, 223–224).

Function

It can be concluded from the sources discussed above that in the early medieval period Góra Chełmska constituted a sacred area. I purposely abstain from employing the term 'place of worship', since there is no evidence of any worship of the supernatural, and no artefact that could be connected with the religious sphere has been found. It is commonly held by scholars that, should any object of this nature be found on a site, it qualifies as a sacred site (*Szafrański*, 1983). This is, however, a rather one-sided view. It is the context that provides an object with meaning, and not the other way round. Religious and magical actions were absolutely acceptable in profane places (e.g. agrarian rites performed on fields) and did not make the place in question any more sacred. In the case of the sacred, each *utilitarian* action detracted from the religious significance. In many cases such an action was irreversible. Not every space where material evidence of religious activity has been recorded was a place of worship in the common understanding. Therefore, the term 'place of worship' does not properly describe the character of the Slavonic culture of old. More justified is the use of the terms 'sacred space', 'sacred area', etc.

Conclusion

It is not an object connected with the sacred, but above all the context (natural and cultural) in which it is found that proves the existence of a space of religious practice. An object deemed a regular, everyday item may once have been an element of sacred imagery. Features revealed by archaeological excavation may be approached in the same manner. Each of these studied separately can be regarded as, say, a storage pit, the remains of a house, etc. At the same time, when related to the general surroundings, a single find may turn out to be part of a greater whole with a clear meaning. Its sacredness is not limited to its form, but corresponds to the sum of all meanings included in it (i.e. its content).

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JUHA RUOHONEN (Finland)

GIANT, DEVIL OR DEATH? THE FINNISH KOLJO IN MYTHOLOGY, TOPONYMS, FOLKLORE AND ARCHAEOLOGY

The giant

In the classic work *Mythologia Fennica*, published in 1789, the author Christfrid Ganander (1742–1790) tells a story based on oral tradition about two giants called *Koljo* and *Kiljo*, living in Rantsila in Osthrobothnia (Fig. 1). When engaged in fighting, they hurled large stones at each other, and now the stones are found in the River Siikajoki, half a kilometre away, known later as *Koljonkivi* (gen. + *kivi* 'stone') and *Kiljonkivi*. The still waters between the rocks have been called *Koljonsuvanto*, and in the vicinity there are also other places named after the same tradition (*Ganander*, 1789, 42). Even today, on the west bank of the River Siikajoki there stands a farmhouse called *Koljo*, while Kiljo's farm stands on the east bank.

The fundamental features of these stone-throwing stories are universal and they can be found as early as in Ancient Greek folklore; along with adoption of Christianity the legends and supernatural beings obtained a new meaning (*Jauhiainen*, 1994, 177). Stories of huge rock-throwing giants are commonplace in Finland, and the above-mentioned story is similar to other giant-related stories. In particular, legends of giants threatening

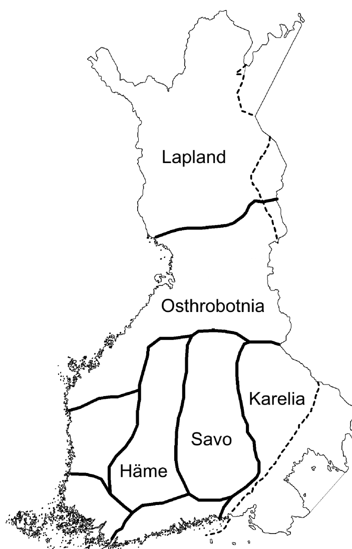

Fig. 1. Historical provinces of Finland mentioned in text.

the church are usual and widespread (*Jauhiainen*, 1994). Sometimes the giants are involved in building a shrine rather than destroying one, but certainly the ulterior motive is to steal the church silver and other valuables or do something else morally dubious. In South-West Finnish folklore, where the first written record is as early as 1656, the giants called *Killi* and *Nalli*, building the Raisio stone church, escape after their deceit comes to light, and in retaliation they try to destroy the church by throwing a large chunk of rock at it (*Haavio*, 1935, 290–291).

Particularly in the Baltic Sea region there are unusual terrain features and huge boulders moved by the ice sheet, which have been explained as results of giants' activities. In addition to the above-mentioned churches, some prehistoric monuments such as cairns (Fi. *hiidenkiuas* 'hiisi's stove'), giants' churches (Fi. *jätinkirkko*), stone labyrinths (Fi. *jatulintarha* 'giant's fence'), and some other large stone monuments are also considered the work of giants.

In the myths, the giants are usually seen as creatures resembling humans, but much larger and stronger. It is also common to interpret giants as stupid and violent creatures with a particular hatred of the various embodiments of Christianity, such as churches and belfries. These mythical giants have been called by various names. In addition to the names mentioned, the giants have being called *hiisi*, *jatuli*, nuns, monks and *metelinväki* ('*meteli* folk'), for example. Except for *hiisi*, many of these names appear in quite restricted geographical areas. For example, the proper name for a giant *Kalevanpoika* ('Kaleva's Son') has been found mostly in South-West Finland and Estonia (Fig. 2). However, many of the names have blurred in time, losing touch with the original meaning.

Koljo **in personal names and toponyms**

The name for the giant mentioned at the beginning of the article, *Koljo* and its numerous variations, has received little attention, because the word is ambiguous and in part also blurred. According to Gustav Renvall's dictionary, published in the 1820s, the word denoted a large person, gigantic as an adjective, *stature grandis, longurio, giganticus*, or a creature in the form of a mythical giant – *riesenhaft*. The derived proper name for Koljo is *Koljumi*, represented as a large beast, *gigas malus*, and mythic giant, *Riese* (*Renvall*, 1826, 208). *Koljumi* could also mean *Koljatti*, which is a folk version of the biblical *Goliath* (*Ganander*, 1789, 41). Also, according to an interpretation proffered already in the 18th

Fig. 2. In South-West Finland and Estonia, a stone-throwing giant is often called *Kalevanpoika* (Est. *Kalevipoeg* 'Kaleva's/Kalev's Son'). In the foreground is 'Kaleva's Son's whetstone for his scythe', over 2.5 m tall, in Untamala churchyard in Laitila, which has turned out to be a medieval tombstone (*Kivikoski*, 1955, 65).

century by C. Ganander, there is also a giant resembling Koljo called *Kole*, found in Swedish folklore.

In addition to the giant legends, the word *koljo* has remained in microtoponyms, where it and its variants are quite numerous. Based on contemporary topographical maps, there are over 150 place-names, usually binomial

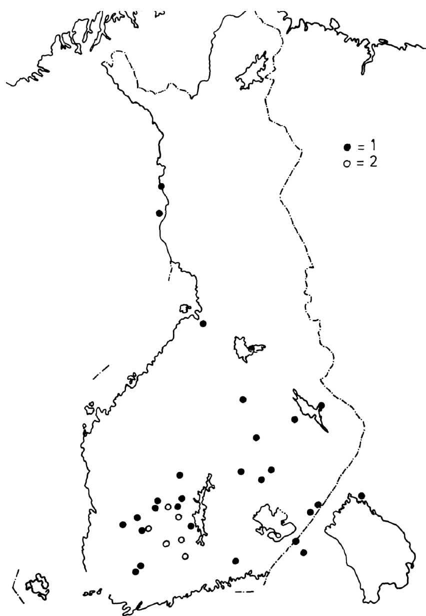

Fig. 3. The distribution of *koljo* names in Finland (after *Vahtola*, 1980, 149): 1– the *koljo* cluster; 2 – the appellative *koljo*.

compounds, with the beginning *Koljo* (basic form), *Koljon* (+ gen.) or its variants. A large proportion of the toponyms containing *Koljo* seem to be quite late and defined by personal or settlement names, because the name is still in use, for example, as the common surname *Koljonen* and *Koljo*. The oldest known occurrence of a related name in written documents dates from as long ago as 30 January 1486, when a person called Nicki Koljolainen appears as a defendant in the court sessions of Kangasala District (FMU, V 4068). In addition to settlement names, the word occurs in toponyms as a definition for various terrain locations, especially as an attribute for topographically distinguishable places, such as hills, rocks, promontories, islands and bays. Such places are often located by the shore of a lake.

According to Jouko Vahtola, who has studied the subject, the distribution of the name types is quite clear. In his research, toponyms associated with this group occur especially in the old Häme region (Fig. 3). The names are abundant in Eastern Finland, and according to Vahtola (1980, 149–150) many of these names were given based on the Häme tradition and would hark back to the settlers with Häme origins arriving at the waters of Savo, which were rich in fish. One should not consider the name as entirely Häme-based, as names connected with similar places occur in both the western and eastern cultural areas: near the coast in South-West Finland and at the shores of Lake Ladoga in the east.

The origin of the proper name *Koljo* has also been regarded as Karelian, and considered to have spread from Karelia to Savo and other parts of Eastern Finland (*Mikkonen, Paikkala*, 2000, 238). In the case of East Finnish names, the age

of the locations is not in question, since *koljo* occurs abundantly in both place-names and proper names as early as the 16th century. Due to the lack of an established orthography, there is considerable variation in the spelling of the names, but the word can still be easily recognized. For example, there are various forms in the surnames, such as *Kolionen*, *Koliainen*, *Kåliå*, *Kolio(n)*, *Kolia(n)*, *Kolioin* and *Kålio*, during the 16th and 17th century (*Nissilä*, 1975, 130; *Mikkonen, Paikkala*, 2000, 238). One of the earliest place-name occurrences is *Kolionmäki* (present-day *Koljonmäki*; *mäki* 'hill') in Pieksämäki, which is mentioned in the first land register of Savo in the 1560s. *Hien-* i.e. *Hiidenmäki* (1561 *Hijden mäkj*), which is of mythological interest (*hiisi* 'holy grove, cult place'), is situated on the southern side of Kolionmäki (NA asiakirjanimet Savo; *Koski*, 1967, 153). The 1560s place-names *kolian nemi* and *kolion nemi* in Särkilahti, Sääminki possibly mean the same piece of land, a craggy promontory now known as *Koljon-* i.e. *Koljunniemi* (*niemi* 'spit, promontory'), reaching to the southernmost inlet of Lake Pihlajavesi, *Koljonlahti* (*lahti* 'bay, inlet') in Punkaharju (NA Punkaharju Koljonniemi 1988).

Many of the previously mentioned forms, especially the basic elements of the word, *kolja* and *koljo*, and the dialectal *kolju*, are similar, although there are also some diverging and uncommon connotations. That the change of the suffix *-ia* to *-io* is commonplace was perceived already by A. V. Forsman (*Forsman*, 1894, 178–179): "Therefore in old sources one can find the name written sometimes one way and sometimes another, such as Toivia for Toivio, Tornia for Tornio etc." The various examples given by A. V. Forsman also include the root *Koljo* (**Kolio*) for *Kolja*. In other words, in the old written documents it is common to find a change of name suffix from *-o* to *-a*.

It is also considered possible that some toponyms are based on the Eastern personal name *Kolja* or *Koljo*, developed from the aphesis variations of the Russian name *Nikolai* and the Greek name *Nikolaos* (*Nissilä*, 1975, 130; *Vahtola*, 1980, 150, note 236; *Mikkonen, Paikkala*, 2000, 238). Nevertheless, the places named after these personal names would be quite late and would relate clearly to the settlements.

Koljo as a mythological and topographical attribute

Traditionally, the place names of significant terrain features, such as hills or water bodies, have been considered old. There is no reason to doubt the age of many strategically located natural sites visible from afar, known as

Fig. 4. Koljonvirta ('Koljo's Stream') in Iisalmi is a wide and fast-flowing stream connecting the Pikku-Ii and Porovesi lakes.

Koljonmäki (*mäki* 'hill'), *Koljonvuori* (*vuori* 'high hill, mountain') and *Koljonvirta* (*virta* 'stream'). In these toponyms the meaning of the root *koljo* most probably reflects the vast, even giant-like size of the site. These places also resemble each other across a wide geographical area. For example, the steep and rocky hill of *Koljonvuori* in Pusula, Uusimaa Province exhibits the same topographical elements as *Koljonmäki* hill, situated in Rautjärvi, Karelia, close to the present eastern border. Further examples include a high hill in Swedish Ylitornio, called *Koljo* or *Koljovaara*, and a large boulder in the River Tornio, Lapland, called *Koljonen*. *Koljonvirta* (*virta* 'stream') in Iisalmi, Northern Savo is a wide and fast-flowing river connecting together Pikku-Ii and Porovesi lakes (Fig. 4).

There are some archaeological sites at or near places having names with the word *Koljo*. Based on the toponyms, it is possible to link these ancient sites to the naming system that reflects the great size of the place or giant mythology. Of these places we shall mention an undated Lapp cairn (Fi. *lapinraunio*) at *Koljonsaari* (*saari* 'island') in Lake Näsijärvi at Tampere and the base of a possible Bronze Age cairn found between *Koljolankallio* (*kallio* 'rock, crag') and *Koljolanjärvi* (*järvi* 'lake') in the eastern part of Laitila Parish. The great cairn on

the cape Juminda in Kuusalu, Estonia, has been called *koljuvare* ('Kolju's Cairn') (*Eisen*, 1919, 159). Despite its name, *Koljonlinna* (*linna* 'castle') in Antrea, Karelian Isthmus, is not a fortified castle, but a ridge with a long cave inside, consisting of great blocks of rock. It is a natural formation, which, according to stories, has been used as a hiding place during an unspecified time of unrest (*Appelgren*, 1891, xxxviii, 106).

Lapp cairns, giants' stoves and other large stone structures made by man or nature have commonly been considered as graves built by the unknown previous population, which in many cases obtained a mythical status. Thus, in the above-mentioned cases the basis for naming the places could have been the giants, *Koljolaiset* (the *Koljo* People), regarded as the mythological builders and equated to other supranormal beings, such as *hiisi*'s, Lapps and devils. For example, it is said that there once was the home of a *Hiisi* giant in *Koljola* (the village of *Koljo*) in the parish of Antrea (*Setälä*, 1912, 172).

In relation to giant mythology, glacial potholes are called giants' kettles (Fi. *hiidenkirnu*, literally '*hiisi*'s churn') in modern language as well. They are natural formations in bedrock formed by water movement in tunnels beneath the ice masses. As an interesting example connected to a *koljo*-giant, it may be mentioned that there is a giant's pothole on *Koljon*- or *Koljankallio* (*kallio* 'rock') at Pankakoski, Lieksa in Karelia (*Setälä*, 1912, 172; NA Pielisjärvi Koljankallio 1965).

In modern usage the word *koljo* has lost its meaning as a term for a mythical giant, and the context of the word has become almost entirely blurred in other ways as well (SKES II 210-211). However, in the topographical attributes of the *koljo*-named places it is possible to distinguish a specific stratum meaning either huge, gigantic or a giant. The toponyms definitely based on personal or settlement names are left out of this category.

Unlike the above-mentioned words, *koljatti*, a derivative of *koljo*, has stayed in use. In all likelihood this has happened because the word resembles the biblical *Goliath*. In comparison to the word *koljo*, the meaning of the word *koljatti* is more limited: it denotes a huge human being, a hulk or a mythical giant (*Ganander*, 1789, 41; *Lönnrot*, 1880, 710). In the topographical attributes of these places, too, great size is emphasized. *Koljatti* sites are mainly rocky cliffs or high hills, sometimes also large bodies of water, distinguishable from the surrounding environment by their size. Vast rock formations and other great natural formations have also been explained as works of the mythical Koljatti. For example, there is a large natural rock formation *Koljatinrinne* (*rinne*

'hillside') in Puolanka, while Sysmä's *Koljatti* in Linkola is a flat-topped ridge steep on one side (NA Sysmä Koljaatti 1962). On the slope of the hill *Koljatti* in Finnish, or *Goljatberget* in Swedish, situated at the border of Teuva and Närpiö in Osthrobothnia, is large area of rocky ground. According to the legend, this 'field of stones' arose hundreds of years ago, when there lived ancient people oblivious to God, who buried their dead at this place and placed an enormous heap of similar-sized stones on top of the graves (SKS KRA. Teuva. Harjula, A. KRK 176. 21; NA Närpiö Goljatti 1978).

Places called *Koljatti* (Goliath) sometimes have nearby places called *Taavetti* or *Daavid/David* as a contrast. For example, in Posio, Southern Lapland, there is *Daavidinlampi* ('David's Pond'), a smaller body of water than the vast lake *Koljatti* (*Goliath*), beside which it is situated. Biblical connection is quite clear with these toponyms.

Etymological layers 'devil' and 'death'

Even though in the background there has been a model based on gigantic size or a personal name behind the naming process of many places, there is another possibility that is likely to apply to many *koljo*-type names. Ganander (1789, 41) already stated that in local folk-tales *Koljumi* has been associated with the Devil as well. Actually, many of the parallels to *Koljo* in folklore, such as *Koljumi*, *Kuljus* and *Koljolainen*, have been connected to the appellations of the Devil or a demon (*Setälä*, 1912, 172; *Krohn*, 1914, 249). *Koljakko*, too, might be included in this group of names, as according to legend, a devil once lived on the rocky *Koljakonmäki* (*mäki* 'hill') situated in the ceded area of Ladoga Karelia. The place has also been described as haunted (NA Lumivaara Koljakonmäki 1967).

The parallels mentioned are understandable, since in Finnish mythology giant figures have also been perceived as supernatural beings, such as devils. In folklore and oral tradition, too, it is usual for giant beings and devils to be intermingled, as is the case with *hiisi* and other mythical inhabitants. In addition, when naming similar kinds of rocky places, the parallel proper names *Jätti*- (Giant-) and *Piru*- (Devil-) have been used, for example (*Koskenheimo*, 2001, 32).

As with supernatural devils and giants, the semantic content of the word *koljo* has been connected with death and worship of the dead. The roots of the word have been associated early on with, among others, the old Germanic

words *halja* (**kolio)* and *hel* 'Hell, the underworld, the goddess of death' (*Setälä*, 1912, 182–183; *Krohn*, 1914, 41; *Güntert*, 1919, 52–53; also *Kemppinen*, 1960, 284).

According to Setälä (1912, 172), the Estonian equivalent for the word *koljo* is *koll*, which, along with its variants, is an old term for the dead. However, the word is ambiguous, and has also been used to refer to ghosts, trolls, fairies, devils and giants. In addition, in the old times it was also used to scare children *(Eisen*, 1919, 157–160; *Tommola*, 1955, 11, 26–27). In more remote Finno-Ugric languages, such as in Udmurt and Kom, and in the Khanty and Mansi languages, close equivalents have been found to the word *koljo*, meaning a serious disease, plague, devil and god of the underworld. According to studies by Setälä (1912, 173–177; see also SKES II 210–211), the word is considered one of the oldest common components of the ancient Finno-Ugric religions.

In the Finnish word *koljo*, the stratum of worship of dead is not recognizable any more. However, some places named on this basis, in addition to the examples already mentioned, might retain some memory and a faded reminiscence of death. According to stories, in the old times children born out of wedlock were drowned in *Koljonlampi* (*lampi* 'pond') situated in Liminka, for example (NA Liminka Koljonlampi 1976). *Koljonniemi* (*niemi* 'spit, promontory') on the west side of the vast Kalmakangas (*kalma* 'death'; *kangas* 'forest') in the former parish of Kangaslampi might refer to an ancient burial site (*Ruohonen*, 2009).

Koljonsaari – Island of the Dead

However, clear connections between the mythical Koljo and concrete death are also known in many places. For example, in the mid-18th century parish maps of Ala-Kintaus, Petäjävesi, Central Finland there is an island called *Koliansaari*, also known as *Koljonsaari* (*Oja*, 1954, 267; KA MHA 41; Fig. 5). The island is fairly small, approximately 250 m north to south and 100 m east to west. The basis for the name is unclear, as there are no characteristics that might be linked to large size or giant mythology in the nature or the topography of the place. Also, in the settlement history of the nearby historical village of Kintaus, there is no indication of the family name *Koljo* or *Koljonen*.

The explanation for *Koljonsaari* island is to be found in the late 18th century map (MMLA Petäjävesi 1:1), in which the name of this place is written as *Cuolleten saari* (*cuolleten* > *kuolleitten* 'dead people'). Since the late 19th century the island has been called *Kuoliosaari* ('Island of the Dead'). A large cemetery

Fig. 5. Koljonsaari (*Koliansari*) Island in Lake Ala-Kintaus, parish of Petäjävesi on the 1750s map (MHA 41, KA).

dating from the turn of the 18th century has been discovered in research (*Ruohonen*, 2007, 15–20; see also *Tigerstedt* 1877, 40).

Were this a single case, the parallel between the modern names *Koljo* and *Kuolio* could be a mere coincidence, but closer study reveals more locations of a similar nature. Thus, in the comment part of the 1640s land register of Haukiniemi village in Sääminki, present day Savonlinna, the location *Kolia saarj* is mentioned, normalized or corrected as *Koljasaari* when the names were brought up to date in the modern catalogue (MHA c1 28, KA; *Alanen*, 2008, 39, 367). In the land register written as early as the 1560s, the same place-name appears in the written form as *kolija sari* (*Alanen*, 2006, 46). In its present form, the name can be interpreted as *Kuolo-, Kuolija-* or *Kuoliosaari* ('Island of the Dead').

Antero Pelkonen refers specifically to this place, using the name *Kuoliosaari*, based on the 1664 land register (*Pelkonen*, 1902, 183, 317). In the talk of the locals, this place, unnamed on contemporary maps, has been known as *Kuoliitsaari* (*kuoliit* > *kuolio* 'dead or dying person') in the 1960s, and Russian soldiers

fallen in a battle during the Russo-Swedish war in 1789 are believed to be buried there (NA Sääminki Kuoliitsaari 1967).

In the light of the mentioned case studies, several old toponyms including variants of the word *koljo* can be regarded as referring to death. Many of these names have been normalized to the present form *Kuolio*. The word is not to be connected with its present-day Finnish meaning, necrosis, gangrene or blockage of blood flow, but instead, as with the absolute majority of the examples with the Finnish word *kuolija*, originally meant dead and dying person – *mortuus, exanimus* (SKES II 239; *Renvall*, 1826, 233).

Toponyms belonging to this group are not very numerous: presently there are about 85 place-names with the beginning *Kuoli-*. When categorized by their topographical attributes, the majority of these names refer to islands or islets, but there are also some rocky cliffs and high hills among them. Geographically these places occur mainly in the area of the Eastern dialects in Finland. The islands are found particularly in provinces of modern Central Finland and Savo, but also at the east coast of the Gulf of Finland and in East Karelia (NA YK, Itä-Karjala). On the grounds of oral tradition, bone finds and archaeological research, we can say that the clear majority of the islands, especially in the lake area, have been used as local burial grounds in historic times.

There have been stories explaining the character of many forgotten burial sites. In most cases, Russian soldiers and Lapps are mentioned as having been buried there, but giants are a popular motif as well. As with the *Koljo*-named sites, so too in some places the name *Kuolio* and giant lore meet. For example, it is told of the *Kuoliosaari* island in Lake Tallus, in the parish of Tervo, that a giant died there (SKS KRA Pielavesi. Tiitinen, Martti P K 50: 9038. 1938). However, islands related to stories of buried supernatural beings more often have names with a different basis than *Koljo* or *Kuolio*. For example, it is told that giants were buried in Lehtosensaari in Lestijärvi, and that a giant called Simo, the first inhabitant of the region, was buried on Simosaari, Tervo (SKS KRA Perho. Samuli Paulaharju 29975. 1936; SKS KRA Tervo. A. Pekonen 98. 1938). It is also said that giants have been buried (among other places) on Isosaari in Lake Vahvanen in the parish of Karstula (*Snellman*, 1897, 43) and that giant bones have been found in Kalmasaari (*kalma* 'death') in Lake Kuttajärvi, Karttula (MV KTKA K27:78 Karttula). In addition to giants, devils and Lapps are mentioned as having been buried there, the latter turned more or less into mythic beings in the legends. Sometimes they are also reflected in the parallel

names of the places. For example, Manalaissaari (*manala*, underworld) Island, situated in Lake Enijärvi, parish of Kemijärvi in Lapland is also known by its alternative name of *Pirunsaari* (*piru*, devil) (NA Kemijärvi Manalaissaari 1962; *Räisänen*, 2003:269).

The above-mentioned burial sites were not official cemeteries, but rather, based on current information from sites that have been researched, can be regarded as local burial grounds used by nearby villagers in historical times. When the use of the places ceased as a result of activities by the Lutheran Church during the latter part of 17th century or in the 1720s at the latest, their character slowly became blurred and later in some cases entirely forgotten. As a result, many burial sites and also those buried in them were turned into folklore, becoming mythical. Also, many new stories based on well-known folk-tale motifs could have developed because of bone finds at these forgotten burial sites. In a similar way, although on a wider time scale, cairns dating back to Bronze and Iron Ages have been regarded as constructed by a mythical population of the same kind.

The parallels between *koljo* and *kuolio* are hardly based on the unstable orthographies of historical documents and other sources. Especially in their dialectal form, the words and their variants are close to each other, which might have caused confusion. For example, one of the dialectal forms of the name *Koljo* is *Kolijo* (SKS KRA Rantsila, Kirkonkylä. Elsa Punkeri TK 77:88. 1961) and the latter in particular closely resembles the words *kuolija* and *kuolio* 'death, dying person'. In any case, the meaning of both words, *koljo* and *kuolio*, includes an element relating to death, as explained. It is also likely that the synonymous or closely related content of meaning in the words has contributed to the emergence of possible folk etymologies.

Attempts have also been made to explain the word *kuolio* as a loan from the Saami word *guolli* 'fish' (*Halonen*, 2004; *Korpela*, 2008, 222; Aikio 2002; see also *Räisänen*, 2005, 352), but considering the above-mentioned archaeological finds and other observations pointing to burial grounds, this seems impossible.

Conclusions

As described above, *koljo* and its variants have several different layers of meaning that have remained partly parallel and have partly changed. According to the traditional view, the meanings of many terms relating to the ancient world of belief changed with the adoption of Christianity to accom-

modate the needs of the new religion (*Koski*, 1967, 226). The Finnish *koljo*, a word originally meaning death and significant terrain features, changed to become predominantly a name for a mythical giant, with negative connotations attached. In many cases, words signifying the spirit of deceased have later acquired a negatively loaded content, now meaning an animal, evil spirit or devil (*Mikkola*, 1905, 9; see also *Krohn*, 1914, 249; *Tommola*, 1955, 27). In the case of the word *koljo* and its variants, the strong association to the biblical *Goliath* might have contributed to the strength of the negative component of meaning.

From the etymological and mythological point of view, places called *Koljo* are not unusual in their nature. Finnish *hiisi*-places and Estonian *hiis*-places are similar in their connection to giant mythology as well as sacrificial sites and burials (*Koski*, 1967, 225–226). *Koljo* and *hiisi* toponyms also have a close similarity in terms of their reference to topographical features associated with supranormal beings, and in terms of the stories and other elements. *Koljo* must also be attached, at least partially, to the rich tradition and group of names containing mythological elements. Names, in particular, have contributed to the spread of the *hiisi* tradition. The archaeological finds made on the basis of a *koljo* name and its possible derivatives make this word especially interesting. Through these names, the interpretation of places of the *hiisi* type and other sites with similar characteristics and topographical attributes awaits re-evaluation in the near future.

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NA – Names Archive (*Nimiarkisto*). Research Institute for the Languages of Finland, Helsinki.

MHA – *Maanmittaushallituksen historiallinen kartta-arkisto*. National Archives, Helsinki.

MMLA – Archive Centre (*Maanmittausarkisto*). National Land Survey of Finland, Jyväskylä.

MV KTKA – Ethnological Archives (*Kansatieteen keruuarkisto*). National Board of Antiquities, Helsinki.

SKS KRA – The Folklore Archives (*Kansanrunousarkisto*). Finnish Literature Society, Helsinki.

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HOLY GROVES IN GERMANIC AND SLAVIC BELIEFS

Holy groves, like holy waters, hills, stones etc., belong to the category of so-called *natural* sanctuaries or *sanctuaries in the world of nature*. This seems to mean that the focal point of the rituals held there was an object belonging to the world of nature, and in the case of a holy grove this object was a tree (*Słupecki*, 2009, 27; cf. *Słupecki*, 2000).

The relationship between cult, culture and nature is, however, not so simple, and it is not so easy to divide sanctuaries simply into *natural* (e.g. holy groves) and *artificial* (e.g. temples). We can imagine a temple standing in the middle of the wild forest (and the Lutitian temple in Riedegost was most probably such a case: *Słupecki*, 2008, 241–256), or a *natural* sanctuary located in the very centre of a highly cultivated area, where the cult focussed on an object from the world of nature (some Catholic holy springs serving as quite good examples).

In a short paper it is impossible to analyse all aspects of holy groves, so I would like to focus on some selected important questions only. These will be the following:

1. The status of our sources.
2. What existed in holy groves according to our sources?
3. What did not exist there?
4. And what might this mean?

Let me start with the first point.

Sources

Written sources describing Germanic, Scandinavian and Slavic holy groves are rather scanty. Long descriptions are given by Tacitus in *Germania* in the case of Germans, and by Helmold in the case of the Slavs. Short texts are, of course, more frequent. Apart from texts, we have at our disposal place-names (e.g. numerous Scandinavian place-names including the substantive *lundr*, frequently connected to the name of one of the gods, e.g. Thorslunda in Sweden), ethno-

graphic material and archaeological finds. But in the case of archaeology it would be worth defining first, using written sources, what archaeologists may expect as the remains of a holy grove.

The *locus classicus* in the discussion about holy groves is, of course, Chapter 9 of *Germania* by Tacitus, who, after mentioning Mercury, Hercules and Mars as the most important gods, goes on to write about the Germans in general: *Ceterum nec cohibere parietibus deos neque in ullam humani oris speciem assimulare ac magnitudine celestium arbitrantur: lucos ac nemora consecrant deorumque nominibus appellant secretum illud, quod sola reverentia vident* (*Tacitus*, 1937, 120).

Following this information, Tacitus adds that in such groves white, sacred horses were bred and used for divination. In the second part of his *Germania*, describing particular Germanic tribes, Tacitus mentions the holy grove of Semnons, the grove (and lake) of the goddess Nerthus, and the grove of the Alci Twins worshipped by the Nahanarvali tribe.

Research on and around the holy groves described in Tacitus' *Germania* has a long history. Here it will suffice to say that the descriptions of holy groves by Tacitus are not always clear, and as already observed by Thede Palm many years ago, he *uttalat sig i dunkla vandningar, och flera ganger ligger det narmest till hands att forklara saken sa, att hann sjalv endast haft en dunkel forstellning om vad han beskrivit* (*Palm*, 1948, 25). Tacitus describes three particular groves, and in the case of two of these he knows and records the names of the deities worshipped there (the goddess Nerthus and the Alci Twins), whereas in the case of *Semnonenhein* he obviously has no idea of the name of the god worshipped there. Nevertheless, his description sounds in general quite reliable. (Of course, possible borrowings from his ancient predecessors, describing the holy groves of the Celts, Greeks etc., constitute a separate problem.) Some of the motifs he mentions (also those which sound strange) find some confirmation in independent Scandinavian and Slavic sources.

What was not present in the holy grove?

Tacitus says that the ancient Germans did not erect temples and effigies for gods, and instead consecrated to them only *lucos ac nemora*. This is not entirely correct. (Since Tacitus himself writes about the temple of Tamphana, the problem is: what does the substantive *templum* mean to him in that context.) Nevertheless, he seems to be describing the reality of that period quite reliably. Rudolf Simek (*Simek*, 1995, 169) observes that many Germanic names for temple

originally denote a grove or forest, such as AHG *alh*, or Old Anglo-Saxon *baero* (*Simek*, 1995, 169). Jacob Grimm was already arguing that in Teutonic religion groves come before temples (*Grimm*, 1878, 181).

Temples and idols should also not exist in groves. On idols Tacitus's description in Chapter 9 is not entirely clear. But beyond any doubt he mentions the lack of idols when describing the grove of Alcis (Germania, 43), saying clearly and briefly: *nulla simulacra* (*Tacitus*, 1937, 373).

Very similar is the description of Slavic (Polabian, to be precise) groves given by Helmold in his *Chronica Slavorum* (Helmold, Chronica Slavorum, I, 84), written about one thousand years later. It is almost certain that Helmold did not know Tacitus's work, as it did not circulate in the Middle Ages (*Modzelewski*, 2004, xxx). But his text seems to be more balanced than that of Tacitus. The chronicler underlines the variety of Slavic ritual, saying: *est autem Slavis multiplex ydolatriae modus*. He first mentions the cult of idols in temples: *hii enim simulachrorum ymaginarias formas pretendunt de templis*, but adds: *alii* (Helmold speaks of gods imagined as idols) *silvas et lucos inhabitant*. But similarly to Tacitus, he stresses that also in the case of Slavic groves there were no idols of gods: *quibus nullae sunt effigies expressae* (Helmold, Chronica Slavorum, I, 84 (*Helmold*, 1963, 288)).

Everything seems to be clear. Unfortunately, Tacitus (Germania, 40) also describes a grove (*nemus*) where the goddess Nerthus was worshipped. The main ritual was in this case the procession of the goddess, sitting in a carriage, around the country populated by seven Germanic tribes. The best interpretation of the word 'goddess', as used here by Tacitus, is, of course, as an idol. (Another possible explanation might be a priestess playing the role of the goddess.) The ritual journey starts and ends in the holy grove. The end was very special. The carriage was washed in the holy lake, together with the goddess itself (and here Tacitus marks his distance from the story). The slaves who serve in this work vanish immediately afterwards into the lake: *quos statim idem lacus haurit*. This story also alludes to an idol and suggests that the sanctuary had buildings to house the holy carriage (and we may assume that the sacred horses used for divination, mentioned above, must have had stables). Such buildings are part of a sanctuary, but are not necessarily the same as a temple. However, at the end of the story Tacitus also mentions the temple: the goddess, having had enough contact with humans, the priest drives her back to the temple and *templum reddeat* (*Tacitus*, 1937, 344). The question is whether

templum means in this case a temple (*aes*) or a sacrosanct area (*temenos*). The first explanation is more probable.

The area of the sanctuary was obviously sacrosanct: Tacitus concludes his account by saying: *arcanus hinc terror sanctanque ignorantia quid sit illud, quod tantum perituri vident*. I will return to this key motif in the conclusion.

What did exist in a holy grove?

If there were no temple buildings or idols in the grove, what was there?

a) As a holy or even sacrosanct place guarded by taboos, the grove should have had well-defined, fenced boundaries. The etymologies of both German the *Hein* and the Slavic *gaj* derive from the notion of a fenced place (*Trier*, 1981, xxx; *Brűckner*, 1985, 132). The etymology of the Scandinavian *lundr* is unclear, but according to Jan de Vries (after Trier) the most likely possibility also involves the idea of a fenced place (*de Vries*, 1962, 345, 368). Tacitus's description of the grove of Semnons shows beyond any doubt that the holy place had a clear boundary (Germania, 39: *Tacitus*, 1937, 337). As for the Slavs, Helmold (Helmold, Chronica Slavorum, I, 84) mentions a fence with two gates around the grove of the Wagrian god Prove. The mention of two gates and an atrium as part of the sanctuary suggests that the holy place was divided into two parts: the grove of oak trees itself and a yard (*atrium*) where the people gathered in front of the holy trees (*Helmold*, 1963, 288). Helmold also mentions that the Prove grove was situated on a hill, which he seems to repeat in the case of other sanctuaries, and possibly the Polish so-called *holy mounts* (such as Sleza) could equally well qualify as holy groves (*Słupecki, Valor*, 2007, 266–297).

b) The grove was usually a sacrificial place. In the grove of Semnons they *cesoque publice homine celebrant barbari ritus horrenda primordia* (*Tacitus*, 1937, 337). The slaves serving the goddess Nerthus by washing her were most probably drowned in the sacred lake. Both forms of sacrifice appear in Adam of Bremen's (Adam of Bremen, IV, 27, schol. 138) description of Uppsala, where the men, horses and dogs sacrificed in the grove were hung after decapitation: *corpora autem suspenduntur in lucum, qui proximus est templo (...), ibi (...) canes et equii pendent cum hominibus* (Adam of Bremen, IV, 27, schol. 138: *Adami Bremensis*, 1961, 472). This means that the grove must have included a sacrificial place. The question is whether such a sacrificial place (including altars) was a part of the sacrosanct grove or rather part of the sanctuary's infrastructure built around the holy grove.

c) The grove was a place for tribal assemblies and for oracles to perform divination. (On the assemblies in the Prove grove, as described in Helmold I, 84, see: *Modzelewski*, 1996, 83–88.) All such activities also need their own infrastructure.

d) Quite frequently holy groves appear as important parts of major ritual centres. In the case of Uppsala and Riedegost, holy groves and waters supplemented the temples.

Conclusions

But what seems to be characteristic of the groves is fear: such places strike terror into the hearts of native worshippers (and even foreigners), a kind of *misterium tremendum*, as described by Rudolf Otto. According to Tacitus (Germania, 39), the grove of Semnons was *silva (...) prisca formidine sacra*. In the grove of Nerthus there was *arcanus hinc terror sanctanque ignorantia quid sit illud, quod tantum perituri vident* (Germania, 40). Adam of Bremen (Adam of Bremen, IV, 27) describes the grove in Uppsala in the following way*: Is enim lucus tam sacer est gentilibus, ut singule arbores eius ex morte vel tabo immolatorum divine credantur.*

The holy grove appears frequently in written sources as existing since time immemorial and never touched by human hands. The Nerthus grove was *castum nemus* (Germania, 40). The temple in Riedegost *undique silva ab incolis intacta et venerabilis circumdat magna* (Thietmar, VI, 23: *Kronika Thietmara*, 1953, 245). The holy grove Zutibure, which at the end of the 10th century was cut down by Wigbert, predecessor of Thietmar of Merseburg on the episcopal seat, is described in his Chronicle as *ab accolis ut Deum in omnibus honoratum et ab evo antique nunquam violatum* (Thietmar, VI, 38: *Kronika Thietmara*, 1953, 369).

Thus, Zutibure had existed *ab evo antiquo*, Semnonenhein was so holy because of *augura patrum* and *prisca formido*, and the grove of Alcis was a place of *antiquae religionis*.

A grove is also a place of ritual lasting from time immemorial and giving rise to great fear. The gods are, of course, present in groves. However, they appear there in a terrifying form, different from the domesticated anthropomorphic form as supernatural companions of humans that they have in temples located in the middle of human settlements. In groves they really are supernatural.

As Tacitus says, the Germans *deorum nominibus appellant secretum illud quo sola reverentia videt.*

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INHABITANTS OF THE HOLY RIVER OF NOVGOROD: THE VOLKHOV IN THE HISTORIC, CULTURAL AND MYTHOLOGICAL TRADITION OF MEDIEVAL NOVGOROD

The River Volkhov, connecting Lake Ilmen and Lake Ladoga, used to be a transportation line of utmost importance in northern Russia (Fig. 1). As early as the 8th–9th century AD, the water route along the Volkhov was mastered by the Slavs – migrants from the southern shores of the Baltic Sea. During the Viking epoch, two major townships of northern Russia appeared at the head and the outfall of the Volkhov: they were Ladoga and the predecessor of Novgorod, Rurik's Township. And in the second quarter of the 10th century Novgorod the Great was founded. For the city's population, the River Volkhov was not only the basis of their economic life, but also a sacred natural feature.

The hydronym *Volkhov*, in the language of the autochthonous population of the region, means 'drumly' – the river water is cloudy due to the silt load. However, for the Slavs taking residence there it was also associated with the notion of a *magus – volkhv* in Russian. In medieval Russia this was the name for the pagan votaries, wizards and diviners. Evidence has been preserved up to the present day that the Volkhov was not only worshipped by the people of Novgorod as a sacred river, but also represented an independent deity.

The personified image of the deity of the River Volkhov has been preserved in the Novgorod legend about Volkhov, the shapeshifter prince. The legend was included in the later Novgorod chronicles telling the story of the appearance of Novgorod and the Novgorod princes of the times before Rurik was called in – the 'Tale of the beginning of the Russian land, the creation of Novgorod, and the origin of the family of the Slovene princes' (*Гиляров*, 1878, 15–17). This tale is included in the 'Flower Garden' (1665) and a few other analistic memorials of the 17th century. In the preceding period, it had for a long time been part of the oral folk tradition. We will provide the text in full, as it is included in the written sources:

Fig. 1. The River Volkhov at Novgorod.

The eldest son of that Prince Sloven – Volkhov – was a demon worshipper and a fierce sorcerer among the people, and worked marvels by the devices of the Devil, and by changing into the form of a ferocious crocodile beast, he blocked the waterway along the River Volkhov. And among those who did not worship him, he devoured some, and drowned others by casting them out (of their ships). Therefore, the people, ignorant at the time, presumed that cursed man to be the true god, and called him Perun ('Thunder'). So, that cursed sorcerer built a town in a place called Perynya, where Perun's idol stood, for night rites and demon assemblies. And the ignorant spoke about Volkhov: he sits as a god. And our true Christian work against that cursed sorcerer and magus – he was killed and strangled by demons in the River Volkhov, and by the devices of demons his body was taken up the Volkhov and thrown onto the bank, across from that wizard-town Perynya. And the ignorant people wept a lot when burying the cursed one with a pagan funeral feast. And a high grave mound was made for him, as is usual among the pagans. Three days after the burial, the earth gave way and devoured the vile body of the crocodile. And the grave mound above him fell straight to the bottom of Hell. And up to the present day, they say that pit remains there and does not fill (Гиляров, 1878, 15–17).

In the text of the source, the story of Volkhov is one of a series of eponymic legends connected with other geographical features in the environs of

Novgorod – Lake Ilmen, the Rivers Shelon, Volkhovets and Zhilotug, the trading district of Novgorod called Sloven Hill, as well as the town of Staraya Russa. All of these characters were in some way or other connected with the name of the legendary progenitor of the Ilmen Slovenes – Prince Sloven. But only the eldest son of the ancestor is described as possessing the abilities of a sorcerer and shapeshifter and being worshipped by people as a god. This indicates the special sacred role of this particular natural feature for the medieval people of Novgorod.

The written text of the legend about Volkhov bears significant traces of having been reprocessed by a Christian scribe, aiming to relegate the pagan deity to the level of a sorcerer prince, as well as show him in a negative light. The text is given the character of an edification against paganism: in such texts, similar techniques are often used to destroy a pagan deity. By opposing the worship of Volkhov as a god, the author tries to prove to the ignorant ones that the background of their ancient cults is the worship of a sorcerer killed by the water demons and dragged to Hell. But at the same time he uses the ancient myth about Volkhov known to the Ilmen Slovenes. The image of the shapeshifter prince, the nature of his cult and his connection with the natural landmark Peryn – the major sacred place of the medieval Novgorod people – indicates an archaic tradition reaching back to pre-Christian times. And the denunciatory style of the Christian author testifies to the durability of this tradition and the fact that in the period when the written version of the legend was created not only was the myth intact, but also the worship of Volkhov was widespread in Novgorod. The river was still considered sacred, and sacrifices were offered to it.

But even if we do not take into account the later anti-pagan reprocessing of the myth, the deity of Volkhov does not appear to be benevolent to people. The mythological shapeshifter blocks the waterway and mercilessly destroys those who do not worship him. The rituals in his honour are performed at night-time. His chthonic origin is also indicated by the nature of the zoomorphic image of Volkhov the Sorcerer – a 'ferocious crocodile beast'. The appearance of an animal so exotic for Russia in the legend should without doubt be considered a literary adaptation. The medieval inhabitants of the European North had no idea of crocodiles; rather, the Russian scribe, familiar with the Christian literature of Byzantine or Middle Eastern origin, drew the image from there. Initially a dragon snake, more characteristic for Slavonic mythology, should have been present in the myth (*Иванов*, 1980, 468–470). This is also in-

Fig. 2. The fairytale snake on craft items of the medieval period from Novgorod.

dicated by the popularity of portraying a fairytale snake in the Novgorod arts and crafts of the medieval period (Fig. 2), which was probably directly connected with the cult of Volkhov, if the personified deity had a snake-like image. The indication of shapeshifting of the sorcerer prince Volkhov witnesses that the river deity could have been represented by an anthropomorphic image as well.

Representatives of both the high and low mythology of the Slavs connected with the water element were as a rule regarded as chthonic, borderline forces, not always benevolent to humans (*Криничная*, 2004, 324–371). The water element could, on the one hand, be the source of life and prosperity, and on the other hand, it often took the lives of fishermen, merchants and seamen. The image of the raging waters and the human sacrifice to rein them in is also present in the Novgorod tradition, in the famous folk cycle about Sadko (*Новгородские былины*, 1978, 148–151). In connection with Volkhov, the harsh side of the element also came to life. Sailing along this river in the Middle Ages was associated with a number of dangers, connected with the system of rapids on the Volkhov. The most difficult of them – the Ladoga Rapids – were 11 km

long, while the Pchev Rapids had the form of seven boulder bars. A German diplomat Adam Oleariy, visiting Novgorod in the 1630s–40s, wrote: “There the river dashes like an arrow from large boulders and between them” (*Ильина, Грахов*, 1980, 30–31). Only a very experienced pilot could lead a vessel through the rapids. Normally, merchants used to disembark from their ships and passed the rapids by land, and their ships with the cargo were dragged over the boulders with ropes. In any case, these rapids often caused people’s deaths and wrecked vessels. Probably, it is the rapids which led to the appearance of the notion that the god of Volkhov in the image of a snake blocked the way of ships and drowned those who had not honoured him with a sacrifice prior to the journey. The formidable god could take the traveller as a sacrifice instead. This fully corresponds to the Slavs’ traditional idea about drowned people being a sacrifice to the water spirit.

The text of the legend about Volkhov was studied for the first time by B. A. Rybakov, who connected the shapeshifter prince mentioned there with the deity of the River Volkhov, the cult of which, in his opinion, preceded the military and princely cult of the Slavonic god of thunderstorms, Perun (*Рыбаков*, 2001, 239–244). This assertion was based on the fact that in the legend the images of Perun and Volkhov are merged, and that the temple of both gods was located in the area of Peryn, at the head of the Volkhov (about 8 km from the town), on the left bank of the river. Its name is truly related to the name of Perun, the supreme god of the East Slavonic pantheon. According to the chronicles, in 980 the Novgorod voivode Dobrynya erected a statue of Perun there, which was thrown into the Volkhov nine years later by Dobrynya himself during the forced Christianization of Novgorod (ПСРЛ, I, 79). There are also a number of legends about this pagan idol, which are partly connected, based on their content, with the legend of Volkhov. However, it is unlikely that in 980 the cult of Volkhov was being replaced by the cult of Perun. The former god was worshipped locally, the latter was the common Slavonic one; the former was a chthonic deity, the latter belonged to the heavenly pantheon. It is more probable that Peryn used to be the major sanctuary of Novgorod and its area, and various rituals were performed in honour of different deities there. Later, the Christian author writing down the legend of Volkhov supplemented it with data on Perun, who was worshipped at the same place.

Excavations at Peryn in the 1950s disclosed the remains of the sacred complex in the form of several circular pits, remnants of fire pits in them and

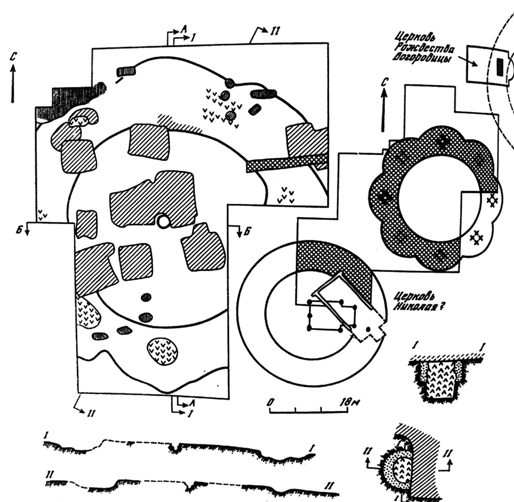

Fig. 3. The sacred complex in Peryn in the form of several circular pits, remnants of fire pits in them and stone pavings (after *Седов*, 1953).

stone pavings (Fig. 3). Pits with pillars were also discovered, which could have served for erecting idols. The discoverer of the Peryn complex, V. V. Sedov, reconstructed it as an open-plan sanctuary with nine idols, one of which (Perun?) was located at the centre (Fig. 4) (*Седов*, 1953, 92–103). However,

Fig. 4. Reconstruction of the Peryn sanctuary (after *Седов*, 1953).

Fig. 5. A *sopka* – a typical burial and sacred monument in north-western Russia in the 9th–10th century AD.

archaeologists from St Petersburg, V. A. Bulkin and N. Ya. Konetskiy, confirmed that the discovered complex represents the remainder of a group of *sopka*'s – a typical burial and sacred monument of north-western Russia in the 9th–10th century AD (Fig. 5) (*Конецкий*, 1995, 80–85; *Клейн*, 2004, 152–157). This in no way contradicts the assertion that a pagan sanctuary was located at the site of Peryn, because *sopka*'s were a traditional place for performing cult activities for the people of the Novgorod land. This reconstruction of the sanctuary also corresponds to the mention of a huge burial mound in the legend of Volkhov, under which the sorcerer was buried. Probably, it was this *sopka*, the largest ever discovered, where the night rituals relating to the cult of Volkhov were performed. The *sopka*'s of Peryn were destroyed already in the medieval period, hence the motif of the 'sunken grave' in the legend of Volkhov.

The image of the shapeshifter prince as a personification of the River Volkhov relates to a unique natural event that took place from time to time in the river system – the low water season of Lake Ilmen. In the period of the spring floods the level of water entering the Volkhov from its tributaries sometimes exceeded the level of Lake Ilmen. Then the river reversed its course and flowed backwards. The last time this event took place was in 1960 (*Ильина,*

Грахов, 1980, 33). The medieval dwellers of Novgorod could not explain the event, and the Volkhov itself seemed to be a shapeshifter, a sorcerer behaving against the laws of nature. The reversal of flow in the Volkhov was a token foreboding wars and changes; it was often treated as the work of a god. This pagan attitude also became entwined with the Christian notions of the people of Novgorod. The reversal of flow in the Volkhov is also mentioned in the Novgorod chronicles: "The same year [1063], in Novgorod, the Volkhov went backwards. This token spoke of evil, because in the fourth year Vseslav burned the city" (ПСРЛ, I, 163). However, the best-known is the chapter of 'The Life' of a locally worshipped saint, the Archbishop Elijah-John. The people of Novgorod decided to banish the archbishop, wrongly condemned for adultery, from the city. They put him on a raft and sent him down the Volkhov. But at the same moment the river reversed its flow, and the raft with Elijah-John swirled on the spot, and later floated upstream to the Yurievsky Monastery, located at the head of the Volkhov. The Novgorod people understood their mistake and asked for the archbishop's forgiveness, returning him to his post (*Повесть* 1981, 454–463). This chapter of 'The Life' of Elijah-John is connected with the legend about Volkhov, where the body of the dead prince also floats upstream, though not to the monastery, but to the pagan sanctuary at Peryn.

The motif of the archbishop's trial is closely connected not only with the natural event of the reversal of the river's flow, but also with one of the most important sacred functions of the Volkhov in the social and political life of the Novgorod Feudal Republic. In the course of the entire medieval history of Novgorod, the Volkhov was worshipped as a river passing the god's judgment. On the verdict of the city assembly (*veche*), those accused of major economic and often political crimes, among whom could be the nobility occupying senior posts in the republic, were thrown into the Volkhov from the bridge. If the river took the accused, their fate was sealed. A person who reached the bank was pardoned. This, for example, was the fate of a political activist of the Novgorod Republic, the *posadnik* (mayor) Yakun Miroslavich. His first term in 1141 led to a conflict between the city assembly and the prince, whose side Yakun had taken. The *posadnik* tried to escape, but he was captured and condemned to death. Yakun, stripped to the skin, was thrown from the bridge by the people of Novgorod, but he managed to reach the bank. **Therefore, he wasn't killed**, the chronicler lets us know. The death penalty

was replaced by a monetary fine and conviction (ПСРЛ, III, 26, 211–212). However, Yakun was soon released altogether and in 1156 he was chosen as *posadnik* again (ПСРЛ, III, 29, 216). The description of the *veche*'s verdict and execution by throwing into the Volkhov from a bridge is mentioned in the Novgorod chronicles time and again. One *posadnik* greatly offending the Novgorod people at the beginning of the 13th century was even intended to be executed in this manner after his death (ПСРЛ, III, 51, 248). This motif is also present in the famous cycle of Novgorod epics about the hero Vasiliy Buslaev (*Новгородские былины*, 1978, 76). The parents of the children who were constantly being hurt during childhood games with the young athlete threatened to throw him into the Volkhov, unless he managed to find a more rational application of his strength. The archaic nature of the tradition of execution by the *veche* suggests that it appeared during the pagan period, when the sacrifice of criminals to the chthonic deity could have been practiced. In the system of the Russian pre-Christian beliefs, the stable notion is also stipulated that the 'unclean' dead should be thrown into the water, so that they cannot turn into vampires and harm the living (*Зеленин*, 1995, 88–123). Here, the Volkhov is seen not as a plainly hostile force, but as a just force which does not allow the innocent to be to be belied and punished.

For medieval Novgorod the River Volkhov acted as a sanctified natural feature. The mythological basis of the Volkhov cult and its basic features were shaped in the pre-Christian period. Conversion to Christianity did not uproot the ancient cult; it was included in the new system of notions, and during the entire medieval epoch as well as in later times it continued to play a significant role in the spiritual and public life of Novgorod.

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VYKINTAS VAITKEVIČIUS (Lithuania)

MYTHOLOGICAL, HOLY OR CULT PLACES?

Prof. Juris Urtāns raised a substantial question regarding the naturalness of natural holy places during the conference devoted to the archaeology and folklore of natural holy places in Kernavė in 2008. This point attracted the attention of researchers and was repeated as a key subject for discussion at the conference in Turaida in 2009. The conference theme, natural holy places or holy places in nature, directly connected with this issue, soon became part of the international discussion on natural holy places in the Baltic Sea region and elsewhere.

Here I will contribute to the above-mentioned discussion while adding some Lithuanian data: I begin with a brief summary of my studies on natural holy places, followed by a brief account of the results of the River Neris expedition in the second part of the article. This survey, carried out in western Belarus and eastern Lithuania in the summer of 2007, revealed a number of sites similar to those usually called *natural holy places*. This point I found relevant enough to the discussion on natural holy places in the Baltic Sea region.

Natural holy place: term and concept

There is no serious reason to doubt that native terms defining sites of religious significance originated in the pre-Christian past of the Baltic and Finno-Ugrian tribes. There are several terms known in Lithuanian (*alka* or *alkas*), in Latvian (*elks*), in Estonian and Finnish (*hiis*) as well as in the Saami language (*sieidi*). But the English term natural holy place, provisionally accepted by the participants of the first conference devoted to sacred groves in Tartu in 2008, should itself be thoroughly investigated! There is the question of the choice of a term appropriate for common international use, as well as the question of what the concept natural holy place really means.

Today there are several variations of natural holy place known in the historiography of the Baltic countries, like sacred natural site of non-Christian character (Valk, 2003, 572), holy natural place (Valk, 2004, 300), sacred place

(Vaitkevičius, 2004), ancient cult site (Urtāns, 2008), and some others. But in my view, linguistic questions and problems related to the translation of native terms into English as well as into German or French* should be resolved on a local level, taking into account the situation and traditions in each particular country. However, the definition of natural holy place – a term translated into English and once proposed as universal – should be discussed.

In the discourse of Baltic researchers natural holy place means a place directly connected with the pre-Christian cult traditions (cf. Valk, 2003, 300) or related to the pre-Christian religion and mythology in general (cf. Vaitkevičius, 2004). This proposition does not contradict the linguistic explanation, which in general terms I found very similar to the supposed concept. Thus, natural holy place has a kind of double meaning: there is nature appearing as the space (i.e. surroundings of particular holy place) and at the same time as the natural character of the holy place itself.

From the Lithuanian perspective, the natural space seems to be the most important issue. The holy objects themselves rarely possess man-made features. Stones represent something of an exception, but this is not an established rule. Moreover, Christianity – the other main stream of faith in Lithuanian history alongside Baltic religion – has never focused on natural surroundings for its holy places. Urban areas are the most common and normally accepted by Christians; the holy places usually include buildings or some other artificial structures (e.g. crosses).

Even when established in nature, a Christian holy place will never use natural objects instead of artificial ones. While integrating natural objects into the frame of the holy place, Christianity will always modify them or add some man-made elements (Fig. 1). This is a significant conclusion based on observation of typologically diverse natural holy places in different parts of the Eastern Baltic region.

	Baltic religion	**Semi-Christian forms (syncretism)**	**Christianity**
Space for holy places	Nature	Nature (usually)	Urban area
Character of holy places	Natural	Combined	Artificial

* In recent years the term sacred natural site has spread worldwide and has become internationally accepted (cf. *Verschuuren*, 2010).

Fig. 1. The Eršketynė natural holy place in the vicinity of Darbėnai (Kretinga District). The holy stone has already been transformed into a base for a granite plaque with Christian symbols carved in it. Moreover, all the Christian elements (buildings, figurines and structures) contradict the concept of the naturalness of natural holy places (photo: V. Vaitkevičius (2009)).

In conclusion, it should be stressed that nature and natural are absolutely normal characteristics of the Balts' holy places, both with regard to the surrounding space and character of the place itself. The term natural holy place is relevant when dealing with the Balts' holy places and discussing them in English.

Since I have mentioned only the visual appearance (i.e. form) of the holy place, the question concerning other features remains open. Besides this, I myself have faced the problem of further division of natural holy places, based on the character of evidence recorded in relation to the site.

Archaeological data (single finds, features or structures) is, dare I say it, the feature that usually forms the dividing line between two categories of sites

among natural holy places. Archaeological finds do occasionally appear in the case of sites that are just *mythological sites*, but they constitute the main kind of evidence when talking about *prehistoric cult sites* (the latter usually being in nature, too). As can be seen in the table below, place-names, folkloric evidence and public customs reflecting sacred matters are particularly characteristic of *mythological sites*, but not of *prehistoric cult places*. The result obtained when combining features of a different kind and with different origins might perhaps even be described as the ideal concept of a *natural holy place*:

	Archaeological find in a particular context	**Place-names of sacred character**	**Folklore texts: place legends, tales, etc.**	**Religious treatment and ethnographic traditions**
1) Natural holy place as mythological site	1. – (Very rarely)	2. + (Often)	3. + (Often)	4. + (Often)
2) Natural holy place as prehistoric cult place	+ (Always)	– (Rarely)	– (Rarely)	5. – (Rarely)
3) Natural holy place (combining different categories)	6. + (Often)	+ (Often)	+ (Often)	+ (Often)

Natural holy places in the River Neris

As mentioned at the very beginning, I will present some data on the naturalness of natural holy places collected during the River Neris expedition in 2007. The following account will contribute to the general discussion and provide researchers with an illustration of the different categories of *natural holy places* that can exist (and actually do) in the aquatic space.

The River Neris (*Вялья* in Belarusian, *Wilia* – in Polish) has a total length of 510 km. It was thoroughly investigated in the course of fieldwork conducted under my direction in June 2007. This was an international – Lithuanian and Belarusian – affair, one part of which was organised in accordance with academic standards and yielded a huge amount of archaeological, historical, linguistic, ethnographical and folkloric data (for more details see *Vaitkevičius*, 2010). But the main point I focus on is the river and *natural holy places* located directly in flowing water.

Features discovered in the river during the expedition and examined as objects of our interest include certain parts of the river, such as pools, shoals, rapids (groups of stones), and single stones. Before dividing these features into categories, an important aspect of the background should be noted.

A river itself is not an ordinary, or at least usual, space for holy places. But water and features surrounded by it perfectly match the criteria of natural holy places. Beyond any doubt, the mythology of water shapes holy places to a great degree. The character of holy places surrounded by water is to a certain degree a reflection of water mythology itself (which consists of closely connected although separate concepts, namely concepts of life and death). However, I will stress not the general approaches to water as a substance or water in cosmology. We will deal with one particular river – the River Neris – which must be carefully considered as a unique phenomenon, having its own very individual pattern.

Every river is diverse in character. The River Neris is famous for of its dynamism and the character of its annual circle. Two main states of the river in the course of the year and two points of transition between them should be emphasized. There are several contrasts shaping the river: water and ice, warmth and cold, light and darkness, and life and death, as already mentioned above. The water level changes rapidly during the year as well, i.e. it rises highest when winter ends, while its lowest position is in August or September – when summer ends.

As regards the cultural aspect of the river, or in other words the river's impact on culture, we can say that May is the best time for travelling by boat or raft.* The suitable time for fishing is sometimes a complicated issue. Definitely, this depends on the appearance of particular fishes; it also has to do with different fishing techniques, such as catching pike in early spring after the ice has broken and spearing salmon at night in October or November using special lights on the boat.

The last important point to mention is the role of the river in religion. There are, of course, various reasons for performing rituals in the river itself, for example, passing dangerous rapids in the course of a trip or being in need of rain; trying to avoid fear of the river or needing to heal a horse in flowing

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* Moreover, a trip by raft is a metaphor of the soul's journey to the Otherworld. Thus the Lithuanian word *sielis* means *raft*, at the same time *siela* denotes *the soul*.

Fig. 2. The Rooster's Stone (Gaidelis) near Krėslynai village (Jonava District) – the largest boulder in the River Neris. Place legends indicate the sacred significance of the site (photo: F. Žemulis (2007)).

water. Annual festivals connected with the River Neris used to cover almost the whole annual cycle.

But what exactly do we know concerning *natural holy places* in the River Neris? Here I will focus on the numerous rapids (groups of stones) and single stones. Sometimes a stone's appearance and its extraordinary shape, but most often the proper names, the origins of which are explained by story-tellers, indicate that we are dealing with *natural holy places*.

There are a large number of stones possessing animal names: the Rooster's Stone, the Sheep's Stone, the Ox's Stone, the Pig's Stone, the Cow's Stone, the Dog's Stone, the Mare's Stone, the Ram's Stone (also a rapid). Sometimes these have a shepherd in their company, too (cf. Herder's Stone near Papiškės village in Elektrėnai District). Numerous names indicate a direct connection between stones and religion, for example, Holy Stone, Priest's Stone, Mary's Stone,

Paul's Stone and Devil's Stone as well as the Wedding Stones, the Girl's Stone, and some others boulders on the riverbed.

The rest of the stones have rather diverse names. There is a Salt Stone (also two rapids in the River Neris possessing the same name), the White and Red Stones, the Golden and Silver Stones, a Nut Stone, a Cannon Stone, a Coffin Stone, a Greeting Rapid and some others.

It is the case that the very first, formal, and usual division of objects into groups according to their names is the prevalent practice among researchers of *natural holy places* in the Eastern Baltic countries as well as in Belarus and Russia. However, the variety of interpretations of the names and data relating to them suggests that categories based on names are of provisory character and should be verified. For instance, the biggest stone in the River Neris near Krėslynai village (Jonava District) is known as the Rooster's Stone, but it is related to religion – once the rooster prevented the Devil from carrying stones for a bridge (Fig. 2). The Cow's Stone near Apskrita farmstead (Elektrėnai District) is famous because of the perfect conditions for fishing. The stone's name indicates that the boulder yields food to every fisherman just as a real cow provides them with milk. Moreover, in Baltic mythology the cow has a particularly close connection with the concept of good fortune. The Greeting Rapid near Pilci village (Astravec District) (Fig. 3) is the third example of how different names could be explained and perceived. The name 'Greeting' is itself a reflection of the ritual performed here by raftsmen while travelling down the river. Bread and salt used to be offered to the river while saying special words: "I'm greeting you with bread and salt; take it, please let me go further" (*Tyszkiewicz*, 1871, 104).

The point is that all the stones and groups of stones possessing proper names have a certain meaning in the culture. The place-names do originate in the distant or recent past and always have something to do with either archaic or modern mythology. The same conclusion might be drawn from the investigation of stones located in the River Daugava. To define them, the general term 'stones of culture-historical significance' was introduced in recent years (for more details see *Urtāns,* 2007).

To sum up, the expedition along the River Neris discovered a large number of places significant for history and culture. Some stones in the riverbed are just elements of the cultural landscape. There are also *natural holy places* connected with Baltic mythology and religion as well as with Christianity. But

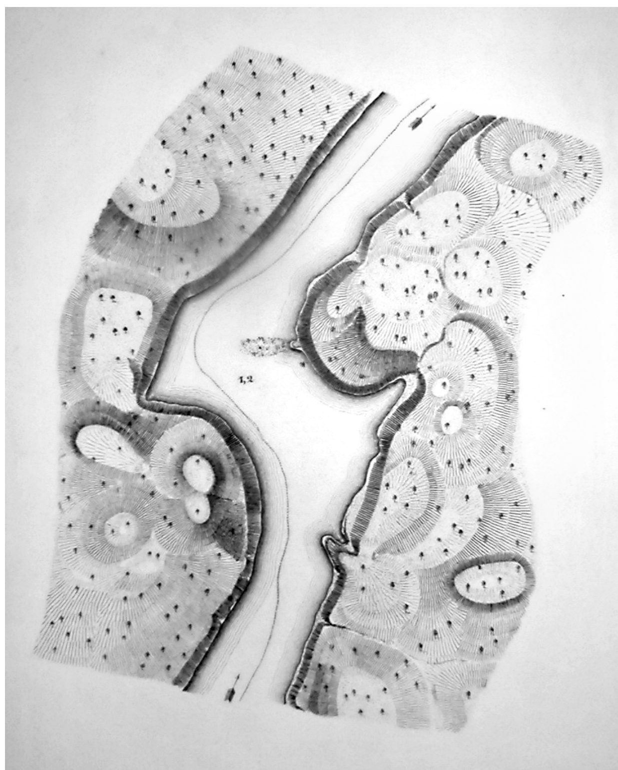

Fig. 3. The Greeting Rapid (Privital'naja) near Pilci village (Astravec District) is the very first obstacle of this kind in the River Neris. It marks the beginning of a fast and dangerous stretch of the river. A ritual observed while passing this site by raft or a boat is described by K. Tyszkiewicz in 1857. Drawing by J. Szantyr (1857/1859) stored at Vilnius University Library.

this is hardly enough to provide an exact definition of the subject. Due to lack of relevant information, the question of which kind of place we are dealing with, *mythological*, *holy* or *cult*, remains open. This shows that the question of the concept of the English term *natural holy places* in the Eastern Baltic is not yet resolved. Sites of religious significance are different here from those in the

region where Christianity was introduced some two, three or even more centuries earlier than in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, where this took place in the 13th to early 15th century. While the native terms for *natural holy place* (such as Lithuanian *alka* or Estonian *hiis*) are clear enough, some conceptual questions arise during translation into English. Appropriately enough, they have attracted the attention of researchers and in the future should be raised in a broader international context as well.

Summary

The question of the naturalness of *natural holy places* raised by Prof. J. Urtāns has attracted the attention of researchers and has recently become part of international discussion. There are at least two aspects to discuss. The first relates to language (namely to the translation of native terms into English for common use); the second touches on the concept of the *natural holy place*. Since nature is the usual setting for holy places of pre-Christian origin and the shape of these objects is mainly natural, the English term *natural holy place* seems to be relevant and appropriate for international use.

The second section of the article provides an example of how complicated the understanding of *natural holy places* can be. Single stones and groups of stones discovered during an expedition along the River Neris in 2007 are briefly presented. The author is aware that all the stones possessing proper names have a certain meaning and play a particular role in the culture. There are definitely *natural holy places* among them, but an exact definition of the subject is hard to produce. It is clear that the matter of the concept of the English term *natural holy places* as applied to the Eastern Baltic is not resolved and should be raised in the broader international context.

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CHRISTER WESTERDAHL (Norway)

MICROCOSMS AND BORDERS – ON CENTRALITY AND LINEARITY IN CONNECTION WITH HOLY OR SACRED PLACES

Abstract

Two principles are discerned in open-air holy places: centrality in the sense of a particular point or ring, and linearity in the sense of borders which have to be passed to reach the site, or linearity in the sense of a liminal zone, such as the seaboard. There is no obvious way of separating entirely natural sites, seemingly uninfluenced by humans, and those which have some modest artificial structures. Holy places are in both cases a product of society. Some are more or less for common use, while others are highly restricted to segments of that society. A reasonable supposition would be that, due to the power contained in them, some were kept as secret as possible. Most of the author's experience relates to sites in Sweden, but the examples have an international scope. The aspects considered are those of archaeology and the history of religions.

Introduction

This text is about holy places as *central* in a cosmological and micro-spatial sense. Their centrality is conditional and only perceived in the context where they are understood. They could be *microcosms* in the sense that they form diminutive copies of a cosmology. It is surmised that they were at least used several times or that people perhaps visited them regularly, rather than going there only once to deposit an offering. To get there would then require passing one or more *borders* – natural, artificial or supernatural – which are pointed out, marked or understood in some way. Religious activity often consisted of passing these borders, going beyond the lines, and temporarily visiting the transcendent or supernatural on the other side. Borders are *linear* in a certain sense, but of course not linear as a straight line, and often occupy some wider space that is *in-between*, *in transition* or in the modal sense *ambiguous.* They may

be vertical as well as horizontal in human cognition. For these we may use the concept *liminal*, from the Latin *limen*, *liminis* 'threshold'.

The way the concept of centrality is used here is different from that of Fabech (*Fabech*, 2006), for example, who discerns 'a shift of sacred sites to arranged places' – in this case mostly referring to wetland sacrificial sites with offerings discernible by archaeology – during the Iron Age of Norse societies. The arranged places are attached closely to the farms of chieftains, who control them. Here, centrality thus means purposely arranged central places of power in society, not primarily the perceived microcosm of the world, although such elements of a large mythical landscape may appear at the arranged centres as well (cf. *Stylegar*, 1998). Ritual offerings henceforth seem to reflect the need in times of crisis to leave deposits of holy artefacts having a particular biography – *temple hoards*. The sites may be liminal and special in some way or other, but they remain quite close to settlement areas, rather than far out in the woods.

The basic approach in this text relates not only to natural places: it also includes some general considerations applying to these and artificially built-up structures alike. Artificial constructions at a pagan holy place outdoors in nature are probably indicated by the common concept *hörg* or *harg* in Nordic references from the Middle Ages. What a *hörg* or *harg* looked like is rather unclear, but the word means 'rock', ('skerry' in maritime place-names) or 'stone heap'. These sites seem always to be in the vicinity of the farm.

But the aspect of possible monumentality is deliberately played down in this text, as is any private world of religious awe and feelings for the sacred (*Otto*, 1917), since both aspects appear to be largely subjective. This does not mean, however, that either of them is unimportant.

Generally speaking, constructed monumentality in holy places is something that appears with sedentary agrarian societies, and may include standing stones, barrows, cairns, megaliths etc. Hunting and gathering societies are rather inclined to the kind of natural holy places that we treat here (*Bradley*, 1991). Even they do set up something, often rather inconspicuous, at their sites. But there are indeed always dynamic transitions and amalgamations, both in terms of economic life and spiritual conceptions. It is thus no coincidence that some of the material in the North most relevant to our purpose is offered by the Saamis, although the economy that they are mostly identified with is a kind of nomadic herding. Their cultures have simply kept a closer relationship with

nature than the surrounding societies. Not to appear too generalizing, it must also be said that none of the known cultures of the North can be labelled homogeneous: there are always elements of hunting and fishing even in the most agrarian way of life. No determinism is possible on such grounds.

What are holy places in nature?

Since we are dealing with a largely *prehistoric* situation, i.e. without reliable historical sources, it is interesting to apply an extensive source on holy places during a period when they were still revered and received offerings. I am aware that we approach such a situation also in the area of the Balts. But such sacred places of nature were described already c. 200 BC by Pausanias in his *Periegesis,* 10 books on his journeys covering all the Greek world, i.e. present-day Greece, the west coast of Asia Minor and parts of Italy. Maybe they are a good measure of universal relevance. It seems that the *spring* was altogether the commonest kind of site, but generally speaking, other features, such as mountains, caves and trees, many of them in groves, were just as important. Some other categories include gorges, rocks, rivers, lakes and waterfalls. At the coast there were promontories, capes and small islands, and in fact offerings could be made to the sea itself (*Bradley*, 2000, 18ff). The sites may be grouped in a sequence starting in the mountains and ending at the seashore: *rocky places* (caves, rocks and gorges), *trees and groves, inland waters* (springs and rivers, waterfalls and lakes), and sites *at the sea or in the sea*. The correspondence to what we believe we have in the North is rather striking. But what is really missing is that which is possibly the most common of all in the North: *wetlands.* This is only natural in an essentially dry climate, such as that of the Mediterranean. Another important category not mentioned is that of *large stones and erratic boulders,* in our world the conspicuous products of the last Ice Age, which did not reach that southern world at all.

Place-names of the Nordic area can be used to pin-point areas of ritual significance in the past, but they hardly ever give the precise location of a holy place in nature. However, a work of Per Vikstrand (*Vikstrand*, 2004) on Swedish theophorous or generally pagan place-names identifies approximately the same types of pagan natural places as Bradley does in ancient Greece, but concentrating on mountains or hills, groves/copses and fields (Swed. *åker*). Vikstrand cooperates directly with archaeologists in active research.

As to caves, I once made a small but still unique survey on Swedish occurrences, but in the general framework of the place of caves in cultural history

and archaeology, including offerings or deposits, Saami cult and burial, and historical or legendary material, some of the last being migratory (*Westerdahl*, 1982). The most interesting ritual finds in a Swedish cave were presumably those of Pukeberget, Enköping, Uppland, where a Bronze Age spearhead and a horse tooth were found on a ledge in the dark.

As I see it, little can be inferred on the actual location of natural holy places by referring to the important contributions on ritual in social anthropology. Their relevance lies in their emphasis on the social aspects. But they have to be borne in mind all the same (e.g. *Turner*, 1967; *Turner*, 1969; *Turner*, 1974; *Turner, Turner*, 1978).

Archaeology certainly provides new material all the time. Some important new archaeological thinking and other material has been brought forward by a fairly recent cross-disciplinary project 'Norse Paganism in Long-Term Perspective', initiated in Lund, Sweden, which will be referred to here and there in the text, and is entitled *Vägar till Midgård* or 'Roads to Midgård', the term denoting the home of humans in cosmology. Most of the results are, however, are only published in the Nordic languages. An international conference has been published in English (*Andrén, Jennbert, Raudvere*, 2006), but with new material, not that which had been published earlier in the Nordic languages, most notably the anthologies, including some papers of special relevance here: *Jennbert, Andrén, Raudvere*, 2002 and *Andrén, Jennbert, Raudvere*, 2004. Only fragments of these are mentioned here, in those cases where they can further elucidate the subjects chosen by me. My own field experience, which is the basis for this text, focuses on aspects of the shores of the Nordic countries and the Saami area of the very north.

What is the social meaning of 'holy', 'sacred'?

The English words 'holy' and 'sacred' (consecrated) can be translated into a number of languages with a social meaning that comes very close to the anthropological concept of taboo. The simplest way to define it is 'forbidden'. The holy is also dangerous, full of *mana,* transcendent power, if we may use this anthropological term loosely. But like the sacred and divine, even *mana* is ambiguous: it can be very bad, but also very good. Since the term 'taboo' can also mean ritually 'clean', its opposite would be ritually dirty, 'unclean'. Remarkably, however, taboo can mean that as well (cf. *Douglas*, 1996; *Douglas*, 2002). In a way, the term therefore seems to be wrought with partly contradictory

meanings (*Hultkrantz*, 1992; *Steiner*, 1967). It is difficult to grasp without actually defining its reverse. Maybe it is not even possible without this. In this case we could use the term *noa,* the 'normal' or 'permitted'.

These meanings of taboo are also found in the Arabic *(al) haram,* of which the plural *(al) ahram* is used in Egypt for the pyramids, i.e. for graves. The permitted is *halal.* In Hebrew, taboo would be *qadosh,* in Greek *haghios,* in Norse *heilagr* (in Modern Scandinvian *hel(l)ig,* the same as German *heilig*). On the last two, a pan-Germanic work has been written by Bætke (*Bætke*, 1942). Latin *sacer* and *sanctus* derive from the verb *sancio,* infin. *sancire*, 'to consecrate, make inviolable, forbid'.

In Saami we find *bissjie* or *passe,* while *ailes* is a Nordic loan-word (from *heilagr).*

The indigenous Finnish equivalent is *pyhä.* In this case we have been provided with two important treatments on the concept, by A. Vilkuna in German (*Vilkuna*, 1956) and by V. Anttonen in Finnish (cf: *Anttonen*, 1996; *Anttonen* 1999; *Anttonen*, 2000a; *Anttonen*, 2000b).

All of these concepts are found in place-names, which have naturally been interpreted mostly in terms of their ritual or religious meaning. In a context where we discuss holy places in nature these place-names are of utmost importance, perhaps even obtaining a somewhat exaggerated role. Thus, the significance of other possible aspects may often be underplayed. For this reason I find the fairly recent analysis of V. Anttonen of the location of *Pyhä-* place-names in Finland particularly interesting. While A. Vilkuna emphasized the taboos for women in passing certain such localities on water, especially in connection with a boat, Anttonen provides a social idea of the whole register of topographical denotations. In the preserved place-name flora the *Pyhä-* names designate a lake or a tarn (a small lake), a bay in such waters, a river, a hill or a mountain, an isthmus or a neck of land. The concept appears to refer to a territorial border as well as the confluence of waters, and sometimes also a crossroads on land.

V. Anttonen also mentions the meaning 'demarcated, limited, forbidden, something that should be avoided, something dangerous', and at the same time something that is 'unclean', in accordance with what we said above on taboo and also its relatives in other languages. This concerns several spatial levels and also several temporal aspects. For example, the 7-numbers – 7, 14, 21, 28, etc. – are *pyhä* in the calendar of Finnish tradition. A certain enlargement of denotation is noticeable in the place-name element *hiisi,* which denotes an

area located between the living and the dead. The concept *eräpyhä* means the zone that is situated between two settlements or settlement areas and belongs to one of these, but only for extensive uses (hunting and fishing). The first element *erä* is represented in the well-known concept *erämaa,* the lands of *erä,* which has become a classical byword for the ancient Finnish inland agrarian economy with large forest lands attached. In Finnish tradition, often chosen to delimit these areas was a natural mark that was unusual and at the same time obvious and characteristic, like a large erratic boulder, a hill or mountain. Accordingly, these borders are marked out by *something that appears anomalous* in a relatively homogeneous space. In certain inland areas artificial cairns, *lappinrauniot* 'Lappish cairns' may have delimited space (*Taavitsainen*, 2003). Thus the current analysis appears to illuminate the social aspect of *pyhä* ('holy, sacred'). Our first example relates more to the liminal borders of society, and less to centrality in it. Similar social meanings could presumably be detected in other cultures as well. At least the significance of the Finnish spatial denotation would not appear strange in the subarctic area of Europe (cf. also *Brereton*, 1987 on other non-religious aspects of holy places). There are similarities apparent in the Saami areas of today, even though they differ in economic terms: some similar features are still to be found in the forested zones, and they also occur in the mountainous regions of the North.

The social significance of holy sites as 'forbidden' is important in this text. It means that not only shrines, or what is conventionally called holy, will be referred to in this text, but also those places which are forbidden in some other sense and, like shrines, are conceptually set apart from social life in general.

Furthermore, the study of centrality and liminality should never be limited to separate scrutiny of each concept. Rather, they should also be examined as *two components in the same spatial/mental structure* (*Harrison*, 1998, 47).

Linearity

By linearity is meant a border expressed as a line, a delimitation. We will also see the implications of the Nordic word *heilagr* ('holy, sacred') used in place-names for delimiting areas as extraterritorial space, trading areas, areas under special jurisdiction etc. It could denote market sites, possibly under the king's direct protection, as well as the area where particular laws were valid. In the high medieval North the law of trading places was known in Norse as *bjarkeyjarréttr,* Modern Swedish *bjärköarätt*. The complex of the derived names

of the islands *Helgö* and *Björkö* and their connection with this or other (levy) laws will be pursued no further here (*Calissendorff*, 1965; cf. *Westerdahl*, 2003).

Rituals of trade or seafaring were conspicuous in Classical Antiquity. It may be that their holy sites are easier to discern there than those in the North at the transition to medieval times, where little existed in the way of constructions marking them. The temples found in the Mediterranean would often serve this purpose. Where different peoples and cultures met to trade with each other they presumably invoked their respective gods and divinities to guarantee market peace. An obvious reference must be made to the Etruscan harbour Pyrgi, the port town of the city-state Caere/Cerveteri. In 1964 two gold plaquettes were excavated between the foundations of two large stone temples where the principal goddesses of two different societies were invoked, the Etruscan *Uni* (Latin *Juno*) and the Phoenician *Astarte* (*Finley*, 1977). Similar procedures and religious acts appear to have been universal in the Mediterranean, in particular among groups with different languages:

...between unequal or colonial societies, the only security offered lies in the recognized sovereignty of a god in his temple or sacred precinct. A supernatural or divine presence automatically converted any act of fraud or violence into sacrilege... The Greeks called this guarantee asyle. The first condition of any market or trading colony set up on a frontier or in a distant land was to ensure that its visitors were not molested or robbed. And, as a general rule, that security was offered by a god, under whose auspices and protection deals were verified. The name of the god was invoked in oaths sanctioning contracts (Aubet, 1993, 234ff).

It is tempting to see the development of similar sites as a universal phenomenon in human cognition. The special protection accorded markets as places for trade and exchange on diverse levels is well attested in ethnographic sources on preliterate, preindustrial societies (*Numelin*, undated, 56ff; *Numelin*, 1939, 15ff). Through their protection by a local chieftain or king, sites are considered as neutralized, delimited space. Another stage would be their more or less formal recognition as 'holy' or 'taboo' – where the terms imply tangible, forbidden acts. A concomitant feature was logically a divine or transcendent guarantee. Breaking the code meant sacrilege as well. Those who committed offences against the order thus not only had to count with social sanction, but could also expect a divine punishment. The borders of the validity of neutral space were delimited carefully. Most often it was surrounded with an enclosure.

Fig. 1. The runic inscription of a *Vi* in Oklunda, Östra Husby, Östergötland, Sweden (photo: Ch. Westerdahl).

There is another important Northern term for holy or sacred that has not yet been mentioned. This is *vé,* present in the place-names *vi* or *vä,* which apparently carries a more directed or specific meaning of an area that has been *consecrated*, i.e. made holy by an intentional act.

The foremost illustration of a former prehistoric *vi* is found in the environment of a runic inscription on a rock at Oklunda, a farm in the parish of Östra Husby in Östergötland, east Sweden (Fig. 1). The inscription says: *Gunnarr faði*

runaR þessaR. En sa flok sakR. Sótti vi þetta... "(Gunnar carved (made) these runes. And he fled guilty (of a crime). Sought (protection) in this vi..."

The runic carving at Oklunda displays an ancient type of runes, the *kortkvist* type, similar to that on the stone of Rök in the same province. Most scholars have dated the carving to the first half of the 9th century. The farm name *Oklunda* implies precisely this *vi.* Another settlement in the neighbourhood is called *Lundby* (*Nordén*, 1931; *Salberger*, 1980; *Strid*, 1993, 100). Both evidently denote *lund*, a (sacred) grove.

Even if the remainder of the text is still the subject of discussion, it implies some kind of settlement. It is in fact impossible not to be reminded of another Gunnar, called Helming, who had been falsely accused of murder in Norway and fled to East Sweden, where he travelled with a priestess in procession to holy sites, personifying the god Freyr. According to this story, found in the Saga of Olaf Tryggvasson in *Flateyjarbok*, this is supposed to have happened c. 990 AD.

This means that the right of a *sanctuarium,* asylum or sanctuary, was also recognized in pagan times in the North. The medieval churches were in principle all *sanctuaria*. But in practice this worked only with some of the most important ones. In Gotland only three of about 100 medieval churches were official asylum churches according to the Guta Law of the late 13th century, one in each third of the island: Atlingbo, Fardhem and Tingstäde (the name of the last of these indicating the site of a *thing*, a local assize, cf. *Nilsson*, 1991).

In the Mediterranean area neutrality and peace regulations are characteristics of crossroads, harbours/havens and other centres or nodes of mobile life in Classical Antiquity. These places were divinely sanctioned ('the religion of economic neutrality', *Horden & Purcell*, 2000, 452ff). Their borders were delimited by cairns or statues identified as gods, Latin *terminus,* plural *termini,* Greek *hermos,* plural *hermoi.* The principal roads were lined with *hermolophoi,* votive cairns (cf. *Rudebeck*, 2002 on the road as a ritual arena). We know the same feature as *offerkast*, or just *kast* in Scandinavia, which means heaps either of stones or of twigs and branches. As to Northern Europe, there is, however, little mention of such aspects in medieval times (cf. *Ellmers*, 1972). But the denotation of imperial protection for merchants in the form of a cross on the ship's mast (e.g. found on coins) is inferred by H. Horstmann (*Horstmann*, 1971).

But the sacred appears in innumerable forms. Among the Saami the border stones or natural border markers (stones, rocks) of family lands were *saivo(k),* i.e. *holy*, despite of the fact that these border markers could not only be inherited,

they could also be sold (*Bergsland*, 1985). I have guessed that the so-called 'lying hens' (*liggande hönor*), larger stones on three or more stones, mark borders of *lappskatteland,* Saami land use and taxation areas, and so could take on a more or less sacred aspect (cf. *Westerdahl*, 1986, 83ff; *Westerdahl*, 2008, 82ff; *Johansson*, 1999). One of the implied meanings of *saivo* would appear to be 'liminal' (*Bäckman*, 1975). Some lakes were *saivo(k),* and these were all considered bottomless and as gateways to the underworld. Apart from this the words *basse*, *bissjie* or *ailes* were, as mentioned above, used in Saami languages for sacred natural places.

As a general reflection one might say that the concept 'holy' in its diverse manifestations expresses the need for humans to make order in their existential dimensions and to classify its components. Another suitable word for it would be 'taxonomy', classification in words. Making up borders, both cognitive/denotational and tangible ones, is a basic factor in this process.

Centrality as a ring

Holy places can be found almost everywhere in everyday life (*Eliade*, 1957, introduction). The *axis mundi,* the axis of the world, runs through them. The hearth was normally the mark of the sanctity of the social unit, the *familia.* In Classical Antiquity, especially Ancient Rome and Greece – and even in Brahmin India – everything social was centred on the domestic hearth. The more distant from it, the less holy. Important transition lines to greater or lesser holiness were the threshold (Latin *limen,* gen. *liminis;* thus 'liminal') of the house. This is why a newly-wed bride still has to be carried across the threshold to her new, patrilocal residence. She is entering sacred space and must not touch, i.e. violate, the space in between and the borders with the termini of the family lands. This was duplicated in macroscale by the Roman Republic, which also had its communal hearth (*Fustel de Coulanges*, 1864). But we cannot discuss spatial centres without taking into account the border zone (*Harrison*, 1998, 47).

The border of the city, which was sacred like the termini of the family lands, was called *pomerium.* In Rome the centrality of the state was marked by *lapis niger,* the black stone below the Palatine hill. There was also the pit called *mundus* ('the earth', 'the world'). From this centre the *urbs Romae* was theoretically thought of as a huge square with four gates and four roads meeting at the centre. This was the main model of Roman gromatics, land measuring, applied in the founding of new cities in conquered territory, as well as in military camps. In a similar way, the Navel of the World, *omphalos,* in Delphi of Greece

described absolute centrality (*Müller*, 1961). A similar scheme was applied in India, with the symbol of the world mountain, *Meru*, in the middle. In the medieval cities of Europe, and in fact in most villages in the countryside, centrality was marked by a stone, a statue (often called Roland, the character of the medieval epic or song of Roland), a market cross or similar monument (*Müller*, 1961). It seems to be a universal idea that this centre had a particular power and was sanctified, both in the social and in the religious sense.

In Germanic cosmology the world tree was placed in the middle of the world and carried its different levels. It was normally called *Yggdrasill* ('The Horse of Odinn'), but had other names as well. In the *Edda* it is described as having three roots piercing into the underworld. It seems to have been recreated as part of a microcosm at cemeteries of the Iron Age in the whole of the North, particularly in Sweden and Norway. In prominent positions in these cemeteries a triangular curbstone structure was built, often with inward-curving sides, and with a fill of smaller stones. There are one or just a few at these cemeteries, and they seldom contain burials, but have possible indications of a formerly existing marker, for example, a post-hole where a wooden pole may have stood (*Andrén*, 2004).

As to the very North, the everyday hearth of the Saami hut expressed the same notion of social and sacred centrality. Offerings of drink and food were made at it and into it. Behind it was the *possjo*, the holy place. It was thought that in this space the shaman, *noaite*, started his journey to the realm of the spirits.

Rising up to the sky through the smoke hole of every hut (*goatte*, *gamme*) was the World Tree or the World Pillar, *mailman stytty*. Thus the macrocosm of the world was represented by the microcosm of the Saami hut. But it could be extended to the constituent parts of the hut as well. In many cases the interior of the Arctic huts of the circumpolar North can be described as a mid-passage, with the hearth in the middle (cf. *Westerdahl*, 2002). This was a metaphoric passageway in the world, sometimes thought of as a river, the clan-river, in connection with the shaman. The circumpolar traditions are strikingly similar to records of the field of action of the shamans among the Evenks at the River Yenisei in Siberia (*Anisimov*, 1968a; *Anisimov*, 1968b) (Fig. 2).

A striking variety of places are called holy, sacred, sanctified or consecrated, where the social meaning is most apparent. It is just a narrow, delicate jump to religious awe of them.

Fig. 2. Domestic cosmology: an ancient Saami hearth marked on the ground (photo: Ch. Westerdahl).

The place-name *Helgestad* in Västergötland, Sweden denotes a small hill in a predominantly agrarian countryside. It is not very conspicuous in any way. The name could mean 'holy place' as well as 'holy city'. Looking at the map, we see that the borders of no less than four parishes converge here. Moreover, these are the borders between the four quarters of the administrative county (*härad*) of Vartofta. There may be prehistoric cemeteries in this area, but this is not quite clear so far. In any case, the hill is known as a (primarily open air) market site, a *thing* and execution site. Evidently there has also been a church

or a chapel here. Interestingly, the association with a city may have been influenced by the lintel *tympanon* of the nearby Romanesque church of Valstad, which seems to depict the holy city of Jerusalem (cf. *Müller*, 1961 on the celestial Jerusalem). I do not believe that this combination of functions is unusual.

A *thing* (assembly) site is normally connected with the form of a ring, as attested by the ancient expressions in some Swedish medieval provincial laws, *a thing oc a ring* (the Västmanna Law, and possibly its derivate, the non-extant Dala Law, cf. *Schlyter*, 1841). In the pre-Christian setting the part where the judges were sitting was delimited by holy bands, *vébond.* The fence and the poles that seem to have surrounded the holy *vi* may be mentioned in the runic text of the Forsa iron ring, probably dating from the ninth century (*Ruthström*, 1990). A part of it is in this case called *staf* ('pole'). Metaphorically and factually the ring form seems to be implied in many social and sacral contexts. There is the ring of oaths. The ring oath was called *baugeið,* and the central compound where they were made was the *stallahring(r).* Danish Vikings swore an oath in 876 AD to King Alfred of Wessex, *on þaem hálgan béage* ('on the sacred ring') (cf. *Garmonsway*, 1972; cf. the mysterious expression in the Guta Saga: *alt ir baugum bundit* ('all is bound in rings'), *Peel*, 1999). The Forsa iron ring of Hälsingland, indicated by its runic inscription as dating from the 9th century AD, may have been such a ring of oaths (*Liestøl*, 1979; *Brink*, 1997).

The so-called 'hill-forts with a ring-shaped enclosure' around a cairn may duplicate the miniature rings or their meaning (*Olausson*, 1995; cf. *Andrén*, 2006 on centrality marked in the Öland fort of Ismantorp), and the same goes for round burial cairns, and possibly also for a ring of 7–9 standing stones, popularly known as *domarring/ar* ('ring(s) of judges'), normally also used as burial sites. Perhaps this is the meaning of the enigmatic *Stavgard* place-names in Gotland (but see *Måhl*, 1990; and cf. 'the doors to other worlds' as a border metaphor for the picture stones in cemeteries: *Andrén*, 1993). The *thing* site is thus saturated with sacred aspects and is a place out in nature.

A similar attitude appears to have existed among people in historical times in relation to places of execution, and places taboo for the distasteful activities carried out there, such as the place where horses were killed and skinned. The aversion to killing horses is of old standing in the agrarian culture of Scandinavia (*Egardt*, 1962). This was performed by sociocultural outsiders in society, such as hangmen and some Saamis (in the North), of which the latter lacked the aversion anyway. In a certain sense this abhorrence could be likened to

the denotation of 'socially and ritually dirty' that we find with the common words for taboo (sacred), etc. (cf. *Douglas*, 1966, 2002). Such places were often intentionally placed at the borders of parishes and other regional units, and often in forested, out-of-the-way areas.

In pagan times it appears that a mythological landscape was created around the farm of an important chieftain. If he was supposed to descend from a god, then the place-names known from the myths of this god (and others) were affixed to these localities. This may even imply a more elaborate cosmology. One of these centres is Tune in Østfold, east Norway (*Stylegar*, 1998). The theophorous pagan place-names, often those of present-day parishes or churches, of the administrative county of Vadsbo in Västergötland are particularly striking (*Brink*, 1999, 427). It is hard to ignore the social meaning of such points in space, marked as holy. But in no way are they to be understood as natural holy places in our sense.

It is possible that roads and paths should – at least sometimes – be considered as common or extraterritorial space, and thereby acquire some kind of sanctified status. They are certainly often ritual arenas (*Rudebeck*, 2002). Their border function may belong to the establishment of private proprietary rights only during the last part of the Iron Age or the Viking Age, but pagan communal cemeteries are often dotted along the courses of roads.

Churches and farms in the Middle Ages

Churches are not natural holy places. But their social function as holy is obvious. Their principal significance here lies rather in the documentation in legal texts of the *graded sanctity* of the building and the churchyard in the ecclesiastical peace (Swed. *kyrkofrid*) regulations. The large area around a principal pagan holy site, such as that of *Gudme,* formerly *Goðheimr* ('Home of the Gods'), on Funen in Denmark, may have had similar graded zones around its centre (cf. *Thrane*, 1998). The same goes for domestic peace (Swed. *hemfrid*) on the farm and the farmland. It should be remembered that the church and the churchyard present a picture of society in very plain language, starting with the consecrated ground of the church building. The chieftains and the wealthy farmer aristocracy were buried inside the church or quite close to the exterior, the ordinary peasants were buried in accordance with social and geographical groupings, followed by the liberated former slaves (thralls), and finally the slaves at the periphery. Criminals of any socially recognized kind (including

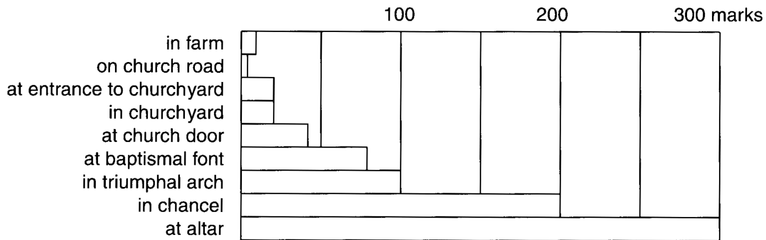

Fig. 3. The gradation of fines for crimes committed in or at the church, according to the Hälsinge provincial law, c. 1300 AD (after *Andrén*, 1999).

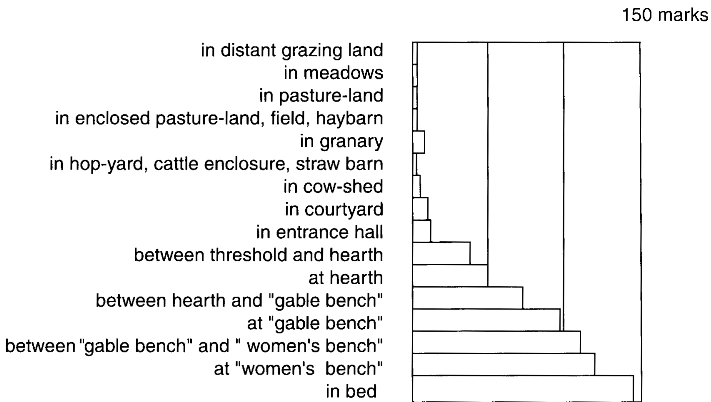

Fig. 4. The gradation of fines in domestic space, in or at the homes, also according to the Hälsinge provincial law, c. 1300 AD (after *Andrén*, 1999).

suicides) were even placed (if at all) outside of the churchyard. Some people were evidently holier than others (Fig. 3).

The details of extra fines for assault if it is connected with a visit to the church (Fig. 3) are found in the provincial code of Hälsingland, c. 1320 AD: they grow steadily, starting with the fine for assault committed on the farm, 10 marks, to assault at the high altar, with a fine of 300 marks. As can be seen in Fig. 3, there is a cognitive aggravation in the crimes from the farm, to the

wayside of the road to the church, to the entrance of the churchyard, in the churchyard, at the church door, at the baptismal font inside the chancel arch (100 marks), in the chancel where there is a conspicuous increase to 200 marks, and at the most sacred place, the altar, where the maximum sum is attained – 300 marks.

The rules for breaches of the domestic peace (*hemfrid*) in the same provincial code are just as detailed (Fig. 4). Extra fines (*bot* or *böter*) are stipulated for the place where an assault was committed. These were paid mostly in money, namely in marks. It is to be noted, however, that assaults inside the house, where the value of the fine rises abruptly, are to be paid in rings (*bogar* or *baugar*). This seems to indicate the antiquity of the rules for this part. As can be seen in Fig. 4, the variation in fines starts from the distant grazing lands, the meadows, proceeding to the pasture-land or enclosed pasture-land fields with the haysheds, the granary, the hopyard, the cattle enclosure or straw barn, then via the cowshed to the courtyard and into the entrance hall of the house without significant rise. But at the space between the threshold and the hearth there is an abrupt rise, continuing to the area at the hearth, between the hearth and the gable bench, at the gable bench, between the gable bench and the women's bench, at the women's bench and finally in bed, with 150 marks (Fig. 4).

There is indeed no great difference to the victim between being murdered in one's own bed or at the high altar of the church, but the perpetrator would certainly be able to feel a difference.

The murder of the archbishop Thomas of Canterbury in 1170 AD at one of the side altars of the cathedral brought enormous attention in the Catholic world. The fact that it had taken place at the central location, the holiest of holies, within the holy site itself, contributed significantly to the indignation and outrage. Perhaps the indignation was due to a unique combination of circumstances. A priest, turbulent for sure ('turbulent' being the very word supposedly used by King Henry, cf. *Barlow*, 1986), but non-violent, a prominent figure in the fight for ecclesiastical freedom from worldly authority, was murdered by armed knights acting (or thinking that they were) in the name of the king. This was immediately followed by the excommunication of both, including an interdict against the lands of the king, and Thomas was canonized as a saint of the first degree. But in England class and identity feeling ran high as well: Thomas was of indigenous Anglo-Saxon descent, while the aristocracy were French-speaking Normans. The traces of this dramatic event were

reflected in Sweden, for example, by numerous popular migratory stories of the murder of priests at the altar, possibly fed by depictions, especially on baptismal fonts (*Hellman*, 1974; *Palmenfelt*, 1975; *Palmenfelt*, 1985).

The only reason why churches, farms and other such inhabited spaces are considered here is that they may reveal aspects which are common to them and genuine natural holy places. I think that graded space is one of these aspects.

The cosmological liminality of the shore

The analysis of this *cosmology* is partly applied ethnoarchaeology. Its main meaning in this context is that of the pure linearity of a border or liminal zone. It is interesting that in a fundamentally maritime civilization such as the Greek the Latin word *limen, liminis* ('*threshold*) corresponds to ό λιμήυ ('harbour') or ή λιμνή ('lake, mere or marsh'). I suggest that the last word encompasses the original meaning. Thus, the water table seems to have determined the significance. Possibly this is an indication of *hydroliminality* (see below). As an analogy to prehistoric beliefs I have used the so-called 'superstition' of fishermen and sailors. In my view this 'superstition' is more than anything else a coherent system of beliefs. I met it first at Lake Vänern in the 1960s, when I was very young (and naïve) and during my inventories of oral tradition along the Norrland coast of Sweden in 1975–1982 (*Westerdahl*, 1989). But the discovery of structure and its concomitant analysis belongs to a much later stage. According to my belief, the hunting, fishing and gathering life in maritime environments was originally a primary prerequisite for it (*Westerdahl*, 2005; *Westerdahl*, 2007).

There appears to be a fundamental opposition between sea and land. This dichotomy is expressed by taboos and a great wealth of ritual rules and initiation ceremonies. At sea another terminology and other place-names had to be used than on land (*Solheim*, 1940; *Hovda*, 1941a; *Hovda*, 1941b). These others are *noa* words and names, and they amount in fact to a particular 'sea language'. All the senses are implied: there are not only taboos on naming, but also on seeing, hearing and feeling, perhaps even smelling or tasting (!). In seeing, colours were implied. Black is the colour of the land and could not be used on a boat, white being that of the sea, and gray, the colour thought to be in between, was *noa,* but still in a way transcendent – liminal, if you like. And of course, the phenomena which the senses are forbidden to absorb or name are forbidden onboard. The boat thus appears as a liminal, dangerous space. On the other hand, the passage down from the dwelling to the boat-house

and the boat is transitory, in-between, ambiguous. Anything could happen there, and if this was thought unfavourable by traditional criteria, then the fisherman might as well go home for that day.

But it is important to note that some, or most, of the forbidden things may be used for really strong magic. The things of the land may be used intentionally, but only by way of some ritual, initiation or passage rites for novices in fishing, or baptism at sea for young sailors. Passage rites were of course the theme of the classical work by A. van Gennep (*van Gennep*, 1960). Although it comes close to the idea of a kind of structuralism, this analysis was made without any preconception. The analysis of the sea-land relationship is based on independent observations.

Thus the taboo was supposed to be broken but made good. The most prominent symbols of land, its very incarnations, were the most tabooed of all. These entities I have called *liminal agents*, in the sense that they belong to one of these two natural elements. But they are mobile. They could be transferred to the other element with great advantage, either metaphorically, by way of place-names, or concretely, for example by *pars pro toto*, a part of them (a horn, horse-hair, etc.). They are strong at sea. This goes for *all females.* The Mermaid is the Mistress of the Sea. They include *land animals,* especially the horse, but also other domesticates, like the ox and the boar, and wild animals, like the bear and the wolf.

The liminal space is thus the boat *and* the shore. The passage of the liminal agents will take place across it. Thereby, they acquire this new power.

I have suggested that this idea worked even in prehistory. It appears to me to be the reasonable ultimate explanation for the location of profoundly ritual monuments at the shores: *rock carvings* during the Stone and Bronze Ages, *burial cairns* during the Bronze and Iron Ages. These are all major phenomena in Nordic prehistory. The same goes for *stone mazes* during medieval and early modern times. Among the dominant figurative motives of rock carvings from the Stone Age and Bronze Age we find the great land animals, elks and horses, and sea-related phenomena, such as ships and also the great sea mammals, namely dolphins, other whales and, much more in later times – seals. The elk heads on the ship carvings are an important sign. The fundamental function of these would be the reinforcement of magic. Land could have been thought of as working strong magic at sea, the sea as working strong magic on land. When these figures metaphorically pass the border, if only by naming or depiction

on rocks at the liminal zone of the shore, they were thus transformed into *liminal agents.* I suppose that they were considered extremely dangerous as such *a priori*, but, as in recent times, they could be rendered helpful and advantageous by way of an intentional act, a ritual.

It appears to me that after the transition from hunting and fishing societies to agrarian societies, the magic was reserved mainly for maritime culture. Thus, the ritual significance of the sea animals on land was made less obvious, but I believe it still worked, at times subconsciously. Ships continued to be liminal agents, however, as testified by ship settings and boats for burial. Since the ship may already have been thought of as liminal space, this space could be re-created by erecting stones or poles in the form of a vessel or by dragging an actual boat to land. This means that the resulting new site on land was sanctified.

The *cosmology* in question was not immobile or unchanging. But the duality of the basic categories remained. Gender was made an ambiguous criterion of either element: it could be female as well as male. The former elk or stag was replaced by the horse, not only on the stems of ships. I do not think that necessarily only maritime cultures were aware of these transcendent aspects of the dualism of land and sea. On the contrary, it appears to have been a vibrant factor in replacing several other structural categories appearing as dual opposites in cognition, such as life and death. The realm of death is often imagined in the sea in the west, for example, the *Tír na nÓg* of Gaelic myths. Land would be life in this case. But the same mechanism works, as we can see, in gender and in colours, black and white. This may in fact involve a whole range of structural opposites. I have suggested that the opposition between any water and the land (rock, stone) has influenced the ritual significance of wetlands, not only in prehistoric offerings and sacrifices, and this I have accordingly called *hydroliminality.*

This would make the shore, and the coast in general, as a liminal space, and in particular its most prominent and dangerous manifestations, one of the natural zones where to expect sanctity, holiness. However, even if it could be called linear in a certain sense, that of a border line, it appears rather as a very dynamic sphere. There is no way of knowing why this *line* or zone was punctuated at a particular site by burials or other manifestations of holiness. This goes for the shore of the sea as well as that of a lake. But the borders of the implied area are illustrated by oral tradition, often in unexpected kinds of source material. A Faroese woman who had recently borne a child was in a

transitional, liminal stage. In the late 19th century, before being received into the bosom of the church, she was forbidden to leave her home, *except when she could see either the sea or the church.* The burial cairns of the Finnish and Scandinavian archipelagoes were themselves certainly supposed to look inward or outward from land, but still always be visible in some way from the sea. This is often overlooked at coasts that have now been elevated and left far inland by the rise of the land (*Westerdahl*, 2005; *Westerdahl*, 2007).

The transition of borders

The mere feeling of awe at a passage across a border to the holy could be enough. It was an important step to take. But it is not possible to look into the cognition of individual people of the past, let alone those of the present. On the other hand, there are 'more (medieval) stories about people who experience something curious in connection with entering a church or a town than in connection with standing at the altar or in the square' (*Harrison*, 1998, 46 (translation by the author)). It is important to note generally that it is 'above all at the borders of the past that we meet superstition, taboos and ideas of invisible walls with enraged saints' (*Harrison*, 1998, 47 (translation by the author)). On the other hand, it seems to be a reasonable supposition that some of the borders to be passed may be marked by human hands, not least as a warning. In the case of the church and the farm mentioned above, the borders are marked by fences, buildings or parts of buildings.

However, in this case I am referring particularly to figures or pictures out in nature, to rock paintings and carvings, and not only those of prehistory. A very interesting site in Saami lands is the recently discovered rock carving of Padjelanta, Saami *Badjelánnda*, in Norrbotten, Sweden, probably of Viking Age or medieval date (an excellent discussion in *Mulk, Bayliss-Smith*, 2006). This also includes incised crosses and other marks on boulders, which, of course, are only those that have survived. In the past most of these markings could have been made in less durable materials, for example, on trees (and some do exist today). Remains of any ritual, such as burial cairns, barrows, stone rings etc., could serve the same purpose. Insofar as the holy or the holy of holies is a very small place, any kind of fencing at the border or around the area may work like a marker. I believe very strongly that this aspect has to be emphasized in the search for natural holy places. *Thus, a holy place itself may not be marked in any way, only its borders.* Maybe this is one of several characteristics

of such sites. The site itself was supposed to be secret, either to most people or to certain groups in society. It was a place of power not to be misused by irrelevant people. The sacred sites may thus even be an illustration of conflicts, repression, quiet resistance and anti-structure within society (for the concept *anti-structure* cf. *Turner*, 1969).

Summary

Thus, place-names are excellent sources on natural holy places of the past. At least they are guides to the location, but can never be used indiscriminately. There are many problems of denotation and language (e.g. *Strid*, 1993). Besides, the very spot itself was not supposed to be known in detail, only the *area* is pointed out by names.

The social and the sacred are parallel meanings for holy places in nature. They cannot be separated. This view could also be formulated as saying that natural holy places express sanctity in both aspects. Neither can natural and other, more artificial sites easily be separated. They are both *taboo,* protected. They may serve as borders in themselves, but the borders between the profane and sacred seem to spread in more or less *concentric* rings around the centre. In fact the ring could be used as a metaphor and a symbol for them. The holiness of these spheres is often graded. Nature itself provides the simplest means of making borders to secluded space. Islands, or rather islets, are ideal in this sense. There is a certainly a cosmological quality in the meeting of land and sea on all sides. Another perfect border is provided by the coastline. But here the holy spots have to punctuate space at certain points along the line. If we had no burials or rock carvings, then these spots would be *a priori* unidentifiable. But we will never understand why precisely these spots were chosen. This is a secret, and was presumably a secret even in the past.

Another observation, which may or may not be premature, is that the holy place itself may not be marked by a place-name or a sign, for example, a rock or tree carving or painting. It might be that these marks sometimes *only point to the approach to a holy place.* Any spatial centre must be discussed as just one component in a structure, the border zone being of utmost cognitive significance. Marking out the border to the surrounding area of the holy of holies, the centre of the denotation is a suitable alternative, comparable to the wider denotation of place-names.

The very point of holiness (stone, tree etc.) could be considered as in-between, a transitory place, ambiguous and a border between temporal space and the transcendent. It is reasonable, due to its specific function and its social context, that it was often kept as secret and inconspicuous as possible.

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HOW MANY RADOGOŠČES WERE THERE, OR THE MOST POPULAR TYPES OF SLAVONIC SANCTUARIES

Very few Slavonic pagan sanctuaries are mentioned in early medieval written sources. Radogošč (Rethra), which was situated in the territory of the tribal union of the Lutizens, remains one of the best-researched monuments of worship of the 11th–12th century.

Thietmar von Merseburg writes in his chronicle in about 1018:

In the land of Redars there is a triangular stronghold with three entrance gates, called Riedegost, surrounded with a great forest untrodden by the natives and worshiped as sacred. Two gates are open to all that want to enter, the third one, facing the east, is the smallest and opens onto a path leading to a nearby lake, which looks very frightful. In the stronghold there is nothing but a temple built skilfully of wood on a foundation of wild animals' horns. Its exterior is decorated with effigies of gods and goddesses carved in an amazing way, as can be noticed from a close distance. Inside there are man-made idols, wearing terrifying helmets and cuirasses, and each has a name engraved. The first of them is called Zuarasici (Svarožic) and is especially worshipped by all pagans. In the temple there are also standards, which are never taken out, unless they are needed for a war campaign, and then the infantry carries them. The natives have chosen priests to take care of the temple with due solicitude. When they gather there to make oblations or conciliate the gods, only the priests sit, while others have to stand. Murmuring secretly, they shakily dig in the ground in turns, in order to decide doubtful matters by casting lots. Having finished the divination, they cover the lots with green sod, thrust two spearheads crosswise into the ground and lead a horse over them with great reverence, as this is the supreme animal for them and is sacred. After the lot-casting, which was the first divination, they tell fate again using the divine animal. If both rituals give the same result, they act according to it,

if not, they abandon the enterprise entirely. From ancient times, when many false and erroneous stories were spread, comes a testimony that whenever a calamity of long civil war hangs over them, a big boar with foam on his tusks emerges from the above-mentioned lake and wallows in a puddle with great satisfaction in front of everybody, causing terrible tremors. The country has as many temples as districts and the same number of idols are worshipped by the pagans, but among them the mentioned stronghold has primacy. When they set out to war, they always salute it, and when they come back after a victory, they honour it with due gifts. By casting lots and by the horse, as described above, they eagerly inquire what should be offered to the gods. They appease the silent anger of the gods by sacrificing people and cattle. All of them, collectively called the Lutizens, have no single ruler. A decision on a necessary matter is considered at a general meeting. After that, everyone must give their consent to its execution (Гаврилов, 2006, 57–60; Kronika Thietmara 1953, 344–348).

In about 1066, Adam of Bremen writes about the Lutizens in his book "Deeds of Bishops of the Hamburg Church":

In the middle there are the Redars, who are the most powerful among them. Their town is Rethra, the famous centre of idolatry. A large temple has been built there for demons, among which Redigast is the first. His effigy is made of gold; a purple bed is prepared for him. The stronghold itself has nine gates; it is surrounded by a deep lake, over which one can pass by means of a wooden bridge, but passage is allowed only to those who bring offerings or come for divination. The temple is said to be four days travel from Hamburg (*Labuda,* 1999, 173).

A century later another chronicler, Helmold of Bosau, repeats the abovementioned description of the Radogošč temple in his *Chronica Slavorum*, explaining the causes of an internecine war within the union of the Lutizens in 1057: "For the Redars and the Tollenser wished to have dominion, because they possessed the ancient town and the famous temple, with the idol of Redigast in it, and they considered that this gave them a right to priority, since all the Slavonic nations visited it for receiving answers and yearly sacrifices" (*Гельмольд*, 1963, 73). However, two other Lutizen tribes – the Circipani and the Kissini – refused to obey, and defeated the Redars and the Tollenser in another war. Helmond also mentions that when a pagan uprising broke out in the tribal union of the Obotrites, a Christian prince Gottschalk was killed and

Bishop John, captured by the rebels, was first tortured, then his body was desecrated, and finally he was executed: "... his hands and feet were cut off, the body being thrown onto the road, and then he was beheaded, his head being offered as a sacrifice to their god Redigast as a sign of victory. All this took place in the Slavonic capital of Rethra on the fourth of the Ides of November [i.e. on 10 November]" (*Гельмольд*, 1963, 76–77).

According to *Annales Augustiani*, in the winter in late 1068 "Burchard, the Bishop of Halberstadt, attacked, devastated and burned the territories of the Lutizens. He captured the horse worshipped in Rethra as a god, and returned to Saxony on its back." Although several historians believe that Radogošč was destroyed during the campaign, it should be observed that *Annales Augustiani*, and likewise a number of other sources, do not mention that the sacred horse worshipped in Rethra was captured at the time of such an attack. Instead, it may have been seized on a battlefield. Even if Radogošč was destroyed, the war did not result in the loss of the Lutizens' independence, and the temple must have been reconstructed. The latest plausible reference to Radogošč dates from 1128, when Lothair of Supplinburg took the field against the Lutizens, as reported by Ebbo, and a nameless 'town with a temple' was destroyed. However, it is quite possible that the chronicle refers to a different place (*Słupecki*, 1994, 56–57).

Thus, the primary sources mention as many as three forms of the name of the sacred town of the Lutizens: *Riedegost*, *Rethra* and *Reda*, together with two names of the god: *Redigast* and *Svarožič*. According to Thietmar, the town was situated in a stronghold by the water, while Adam of Bremen says that Rethra was surrounded by water and situated on an island that could be reached only via a wooden bridge. German archaeologist J. Herrmann assumed that the difference could be explained in terms of the events that took place during the internecine war of 1057 or those pertaining to the years 1068 and 1069. After the destruction of the old temple, which was situated on a lakeshore, a new one could have been constructed on an island – a place more suitable in terms of defence. At that time, a time of wars and turmoil, restricting the number of visitors to the temple had both religious and practical objectives. The nine gates mentioned by Adam of Bremen must have been invented by the chronicler as a literary convention. He may have associated them with the nine circles of Styx, as depicted by Virgil in the 'Aeneid', which he does quote in his work. Summarizing all the available data on Rethra-Radogošč, L. P. Slu-

pecki deduces that the temple was located in a stronghold on the western shore of a big lake, and may have been reconstructed on an island at about the mid-11th century. It was built of wood and its exteriors bore a resemblance to the temples of Gross-Raden and Arcona. There were several idols in the temple, the most important of which was called *Svarožič* (*Redigast*), whose main functions (according to Thietmar and Adam of Bremen) related to warfare and divination. Although Svarožič is associated with the cult of fire by other sources, the descriptions of Radogošč do not mention any sacred or oblational fire. The temple formed part of a complex that included the sacred forest (grove) and the sacred lake, the mythical habitat of the boar that foretold internecine wars. The temple of the stronghold was the place where people and cattle were sacrificed before and after military campaigns, as well as to appease the anger of the gods. In the case of human sacrifices, the main focus of the ritual was the human head. The scope of the rites remains vague; the only thing we know is that Bishop John was killed on 10 November, a few months after he was captured. Divinations dealing with war and peace were made with the help of a horse. The authority of Radogošč as a religious centre extended far beyond the four tribes of the Lutizen Union, covering all the territories limited by the Oder in the East and the territories of the Volhynians at its mouth, the Havel in the south, and the Elbe in the west (*Słupecki*, 1994, 64–65).

Many historians have attempted to locate Radogošč, as described by Thietmar of Merseburg and Adam of Bremen, based on various assumptions. Archaeological excavation was not undertaken until the late 19th century. In the 1920s C. Schuchhard carried out an excavation outside Feldberg at the shore of Lake Grosse-Luzin, claiming he had discovered Radogošč. However, before the outbreak of the Second World War his interpretation of the excavated remains was put in doubt. Although an excavation carried out by J. Herrmann on the same location in 1967 resulted in the discovery of a pagan temple, it was dated to the 8th–9th century, i.e. earlier than Radogošč. In the past few decades, archaeologists have focused their attention on the surroundings of Lake Tollensee, since, according to the written sources, the Tollenser, alongside the Redars, were closely connected with Radogošč. In 1969, during an excavation on Fischerinsel in Lake Tollensee, two wooden idols were found; still, there were no signs of a temple. There were other attempts to interpret the monuments discovered here as a temple, but all of them turned out to be

unconvincing. In total, there are over 30 hypothetical locations of Radogošč, most of them situated in the state of Mecklenburg (*Słupecki*, 1994, 59, fig. 16).

Apart from Radogošč, described in a number of written sources of the 11th–12th century, but not identified as yet, there are six *Radegast* toponyms (which is how it should really be spelled in German) within the former territories of the Polabian Slavs. Three of them are situated in the federal state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (the former settlement area of the Lutizens and Obotrites). In the north-western part of the state there is a river called *Radegast* (Stepenitz), 24 km long, flowing into the Baltic Sea, with a settlement of the same name. Settlements or parts of settlements bearing the same name can be found in Saxony, Lower Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt.

There are two similar settlements in Lower Austria: *Raabs*, not far from the Czech border (former Czech *Ratgoz*), and *Tradigist* (Slovenian *Radigost*). In the Czech Republic there are five names, including the mount of *Radhošť* in the Beskids in north-western Moravia and the settlements of *Radigošť*, *Radhošt* and *Redhošt*. There are eight similar toponyms in Poland: *Radogoszcz*, *Radgoszcz* and *Redgoszcz*, including a small river called the *Radgoszcz* in Lesser Poland, in the north-east of the country. There is a village on the river bearing the same name. In Belarus, outside the town of Navahrudak, Hrodna Voblast, there is a village named *Radahoshcha*, with the nearby remains of an ancient settlement of the 8th–10th century. There is also a village called *Rahadoshch* on the River Pina in Ivanava District, Brest Voblast, and a small river, a tributary of the Yaselda, in Brest Voblast, Belarus. In Ukraine, there are three villages (*Radohoshcha*, *Velyka Radohoschch* and *Mala Radohoshch*) in Khmelnytskyi and Zhytomyr Oblasts. In Russia, there are 13 *Radogošč* places, in the forms *Radogoshcha*, *Redogoshcha*, *Radogoshch*, *Radugoshchi*, *Radogach*, *Radugoshch* and *Radogoshcha* – both existing settlements and settlements known from written sources. They are located in Bryansk, Oryol, Tula, Kaluga, Tver, Novgorod and Leningrad Oblasts (*Васильев*, 2005; *Смолицкая*, 2006, 34; *Słownik geograficzny*, 1888, 381, 390–391). Five of them are situated in the basins of the Desna and the Volkhov, as well as in upper reaches of the Oka (Fig. 1).

Thus, it is possible to map 40 toponyms of the type under analysis. Comparing the locations of the names with the annalistic Slavonic tribal unions and the earlier archaeological cultures, the following pattern can be discerned. The *Radogošč* sites of the present East Slavonic territories are partially located in the former area of the Prague Culture and the territories of tribal unions

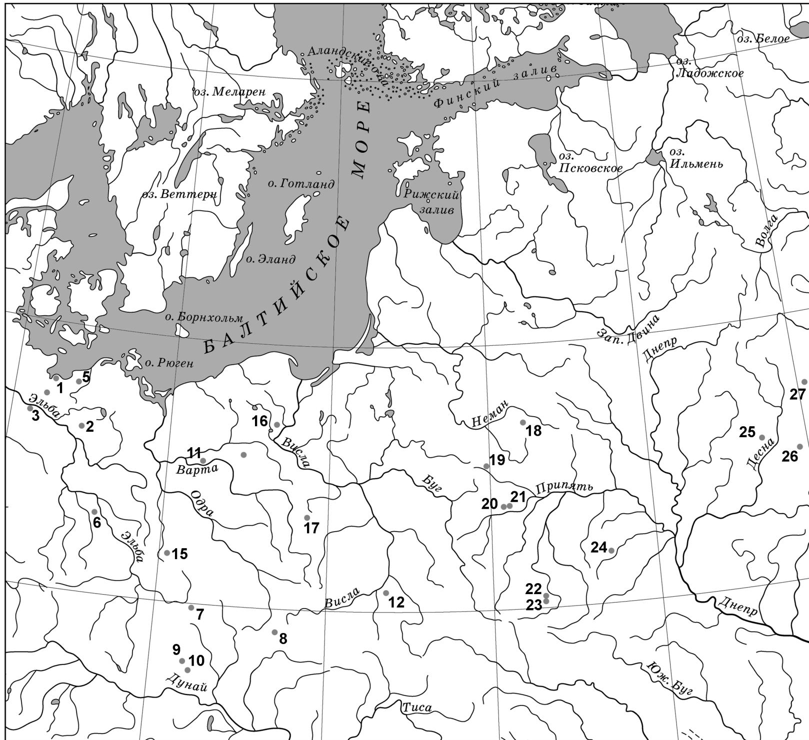

Fig. 1. Map of toponyms related to *Radegast*, *Redhošt*, *Radogoszcz*, *Radogoszcza* etc. (I – settlements, II – rivers, III – mountain).

(e.g. the Dregoviches), who were the descendants of the population of the Prague Culture. The *Radogošč* sites of Bryansk Oblast are situated within the former settlement area of the Severians, whose ethnic origins were to a great degree influenced by a culture deriving from the Prague Culture and similar to the Luka Raikovetskaia Culture (*Седов*, 1982, 136–137). As for the *Radogošč* sites of the upper reaches of the Oka, archaeological data indicate that the Slavs inhabited the region in the 8th–9th century, and, according to a researcher of the period T. Nikolskaya, certain peculiarities of the material culture of the Early Slavs of the upper reaches of the Oka, including pottery

designs, house types and the traits of funeral rites, have much in common with the Prague Culture, which may be the initial territory where these features developed (*Никольская*, 1981, 12; *Русанова*, 1976; *Седов*, 1979). The *Radogošč* sites of north-western Russia lie within the territory of the Ilmen Slavs, whose material culture, legends, customs and language (as can be seen from the birch bark writings of Veliky Novgorod) exhibit numerous general features bearing close resemblance to the population of the Polish Pomorze and the Polabian territories. Judging from anthropological data, the Ilmen Slavs, as well as the Baltic Slavs, are descended from a common initial type of narrow-faced mesosubbrachycephals (*Седов*, 1995, 244–245).

Within the territory of modern-day Poland, the Czech Republic and eastern Germany, the toponyms studied here can be found in the areas occupied by the population of the Prague, Sukovo-Dzedzin and Feldberg Cultures in the Early Middle Ages. At the same time, the names are absolutely uncharacteristic of the Penkovka Culture area (which is identified with the Antes of the Byzantine writers) and the tribal unions that were the descendants of this population (e.g. the White Croats), as well as the Smolensk-Polatsk and Pskov Krivichi. Neither are they typical of the Balkan Slavs.

A number of settlements named Radogošč are mentioned in early medieval written sources. For example, the town of *Radogoshcha* (now Pogar, Bryansk Oblast, Russia) is mentioned for the first time in a chronicle in 1155; the village of *Radogoszcz* (now Redogoszcz) near Wągrowiec, Greater Poland is first mentioned in 1216; *Radogoszcz* (now part of Lodz) is first recorded in 1242. Kostszewski discovered important remains outside the village of Radogoszcz on the right bank of the Warta in Greater Poland, including 10th century potsherds. (The village is mentioned for the first time in 1378). In Bryansk Oblast, excavation outside the village of Radogoshch has produced Romny-style pottery (i.e. 8th–9th century), although a cultural stratum could not be identified. The ancient settlement is surrounded on three sides by a synchronous circular settlement, with signs of the Romny Culture, as well as some material of the 11th–13th century (*Даркевич, Пудовин*, 1960, 88).

Over a period of six field seasons, beginning in 1989, we have carried out excavation at an ancient settlement outside the village of Radahoshcha, Navahrudak District, Hrodna Voblast. A total area of 512 m^2 has been excavated. The monument is situated on a promontory of the main bank of the River Neuda (in the basin of the Niemen), 200 m east of the village, which is

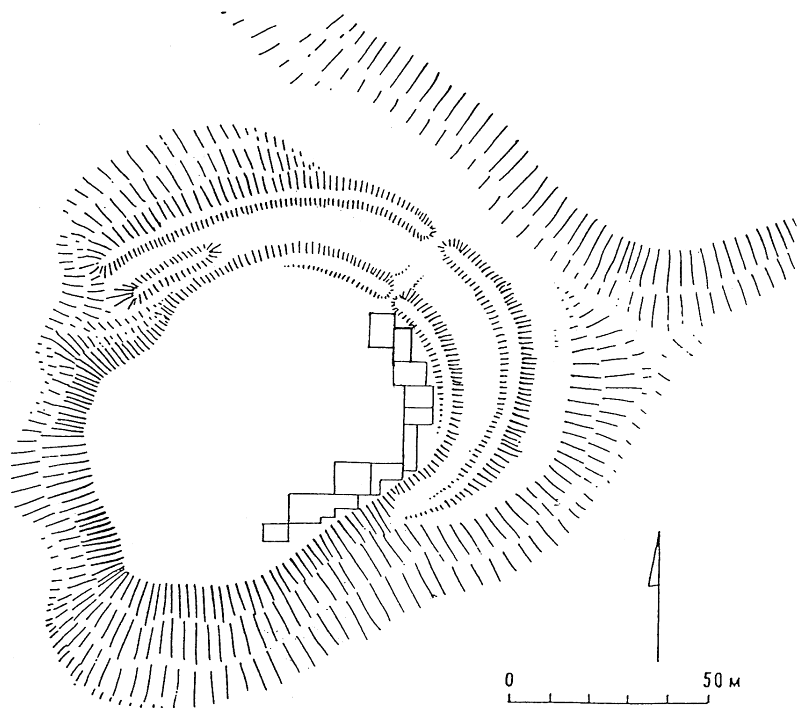

Fig. 2. Plan of the Radahoshcha settlement in Navahrudak District, showing the excavated area.

situated on the opposite bank of the river. The steepest slopes of the settlement are on its southern and western sides, their height reaching 17–18 m. In the east and the north, a 0.5 m high bank can be seen, delimiting the site. Outside the settlement there is a moat and another bank. The entrance to the settlement was situated on its north-eastern side. The oval settlement is 80 m long and 55 m wide (Fig. 2). No cultural stratum could be identified on most of the site, and occurred only along its edges, observed in strips, 8–10 m wide. The thickness of the stratum ranges between 0.60 and 1.00 m. By the eastern edge of the site, beneath the cultural stratum, there is an area of higher ground resembling a bank, 0.45–0.75 m above the subsoil, consisting of sand, albeit

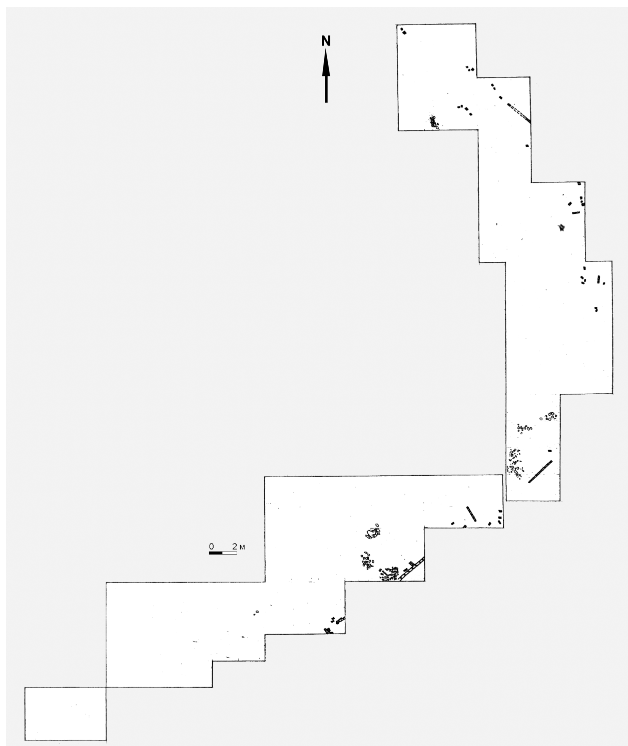

Fig. 3. Plan of the excavation at the Radahoshcha settlement, with the remains of burnt wooden houses and stone hearths.

somewhat compacted and impregnated with clay. The rise looks like a narrow bank, with an almost vertical scarp on its inner, western side, although a little rounded, while its eastern edge merges with the slope of the site. The rise is 7.45 m long. Along the south-eastern and southern sides of the site there are remains of burnt wood logs, forming a line at least 21 m long. However, the other, parallel line of logs could not be found, with only a cross-log in one place (Fig. 3). The line of logs must be the remains of a long-house wall, which had no other wall on the side facing the site, most probably having vertical supports under the roof.

Uninhabitable elongated houses of the same pattern are typical of the settlements of the Tushemlya Culture in Smolensk Oblast. However, many of these settlements are considered to be sanctuaries.

The ceramics of the Radahoshch settlement can be subdivided into three major groups, with the exception of a few pottery fragments dating back to the late Stone Age and the Bronze Age. In the stratum overlying the natural subsoil striated ceramics of the 1st–3rd century AD were found, among them also pottery with several kinds of ribbed patterns. Fragments of plastered pottery are very scarce. The bulk of the material comprises fragments of hand-formed, smooth-walled pottery with sand and gravel temper. The majority of the pieces are undecorated, some fragments being ornamented with three striae that form a wavy or a broken-line pattern. The designs indicate an archaeological culture similar to the Luka Raikovetskaia culture, associated with the Slavs and dated to the 8th–10th century. Other finds include biconical spindle whorls. Early medieval ceramics are greatly outnumbered by pottery of the latter type and therefore cannot represent a separate horizon.

During the first field season, a hoard was found at a depth of 0.60 m. It consisted of seven intact bronze bracelets and fragments of three more. The bracelets are ribbon-like with widened terminals. On the surface, normally at the ends, they have an ornament of cross-notches, as well as patterns of short axial arrows or rhombuses and triangles. There are also bracelets with axial parallel dents on the outer surface. These bracelets are analogous to finds in the East Lithuanian burial mounds of the 8th–10th century, for example Grigiškės (Neravai), Sausiai and Pamusis.

Other metal objects found at the settlement include socketed split arrowheads, an iron adze, an axe with the remains of a burnt handle and several adornments.

Summarizing the results of the excavations at the Radahoshcha settlement, one cannot but stress a number of peculiarities (apart from the name of the neighbouring village) indicative of the religious function of the monument. These are traits specified by B. Timoshchuk (*Тимощук*, 1989, 74–83) and typical of Slavonic sanctuary settlements, including a moat between the inner and outer banks, or between the bank and the site, instead of an outside moat, and long houses with a social function (similar to the famous *kontina*'s of the Polish Pomorze). The bracelets may have had a sacred function, too. It should also be observed that 1 km east of the settlement there is a hill called *Babina Horka* –

'Hill of the Lady' (a name possibly connected with the existence of the sanctuary of a goddess), while the lowland between Babina Horka and the River Neuda is called *Khyshchanitsa* ('baptistery') – a place probably used for christening pagans. Some 4–5 km south-east of these sites is Lake Svitsyaz, honoured as a sacred lake since the late 19th century (*Янчук*, 1889).

Another geographical feature that could be of interest is Mount Radhošť (1129 m high) in the Beskids in north-eastern Moravia. This is a place where people have been celebrating the summer solstice since the 18th century, and where cattle-farmers have come from the highlands of Slovakia and Moravia to conclude marriage contracts (*Грацианская*, 1978, 187; *Токарев*, 1983, 95).

The mapping of such names as *Radegast*, *Radhošť* and *Radogoszcza*, proves that they can be found across a vast territory occupied by certain Slavonic groups in the Early Middle Ages, and must have emerged before the end of the 1st millennium AD. In the dating of these names, linguistic hypotheses are in many cases supported by archaeological data.

Thietmar of Merseburg mentions the sacred town Riedegost. At the same time, there are numerous *Radegast* toponyms in the formerly Germanic territories of the Slavs. Therefore, we should analyze the peculiarities of Slavonic toponymical name-building. As W. Zagorovsky has written, toponyms including the root *-goshch-* are, by their nature, possessive adjectives, derived from Slavonic two-stem personal names, with the stem *-gost-* as the second part (*Загоровский*, 1975, 43). Therefore, toponyms derived from the names *Radegast* and *Radogost*, will have the form *Radogoshcha*.

Despite the seeming transparency of the name *Radegast*, its etymology is not yet firmly established. In the Early Middle Ages, including the 7th–9th century, the Slavs had names with the second stem *-gast-* or *-gost-*: *Ardagast*, *Kelagast*, *Dobrogast* etc. However, it was the ancient Germans who first used personal names with the second stem *-gast-*. Written sources record such names as *Arbagast* (4th century AD); another *Arbagast* lived in the late 5th century; *Hartigast* (8th century); *Kunigast* (6th century); and *Hlevagast*, whose grave was found in the marshes of Schleswig. Some researchers also consider that Slavonic names ending in *-gast-* were directly borrowed from the Germans (*Рассадин*, 2003, 253–254).

Belarusian émigré historian P. Urban explained the name of the god Radogast as 'welcome visitor', and believed that this meaning served to identify him with the Eastern Slavonic god of the sun *Dazhbog* ('Good God') (*Урбан*,

2001, 148). There is another explanation of the name *Radogost*, namely as 'willingly visiting, fond of visits' (i.e. abroad, with a sword), and the name is considered a military one, a reverse form of another famous name, *Gostirad* (*Radogost*, 2008). Another version derives the second part of the name from a stem related to the old Germanic root *-geist-* ('ghost'). Strangely enough, a certain phonetic resemblance to the name of the god can be found in the epithet *-rathetha-* ('standing on two chariots') used to describe the Hindu god Indra; the Lithuanian god Perkunas is believed to ride a two- or four-wheeled chariot – *ratai* (*Иванов, Топоров*, 1974, 82, 84).

Iggeld (D. Gavrilov) believed that the name *Radegast* was made up of the word *-rad-* ('sunny') and *-gast-* ('ghost'). The word *-gast-*, in its turn, was derived from the Sanskrit and probably Old Slavonic stem *-go-shtkha-*, meaning 'place of assemblies and meetings'. The derivation proposed by G. Labuda (from the words *-redny-* 'damp', and *-gozd-* 'forest') does not sound convincing, since in the Early Middle Ages the territory of Europe to the east of the Elbe was densely covered with damp forests, which would surely have made the name *Radogošč* a widespread phenomenon.

The god Svarožic, described by Thietmar of Merseburg, is first mentioned in 1008 in a letter sent by bishop Bruno of Querfurt to Emperor Henry II, where he condemns a temporary military coalition between the Germans and the Lutizens: "Is it acceptable – to be a Christian and live in amity with pagans? What is this alliance of Christ with Belial? How can we equal light with darkness? How can the devil Svarozic agree with the leader, yours and ours, Maurice?" (*Słupecki*, 1994, 54). As the letter states, Svarozic is contrasted to the Christian patron of warriors – Saint Mauritius, which says much for the military function of the god.

Both Adam of Bremen and Thietmar of Merseburg believed that Radegast-Svarozic was the head of the pantheon whose idols were stored in the temple of Radogosc-Rethra, the exceptional position of Radegast being manifested by the fact that his statue was made of gold and his bed was made of purple.

The *Galli Anonymi Chronicae* mention in the entry for the year 808 that the Veleti (the ancestors of the Lutizens) were in a long-lasting feud with the Obotrites. However, according to the description provided by Helmold, who spoke of the 'first and major' gods of various tribes of the Obotrite confederacy, the main god of the Obotrites proper was Riedegast (*Helmold*, 1963, 129). The name of the god is later mentioned in *Chronecken der Sassen* by K. Bothe

(1492): "In Mecklenburg, the Obotrites worshipped a god called *Ridegost*, who had a shield on his chest, the latter having the picture of a black bull's head; he also had an axe in his hand and a bird on his head." Similar information about the image of a bull's head on Riedegast's chest is given in the work *Annales Herulorum ac Vandalorum* by Nikolaus Marschalk (15th century) (*Боги северо-западных славян*, 2008, 15). Although both of the quoted works were not written by witnesses of historic events, but are based on indirect renderings, the mention of the image of a bull's head on Riedegast's chest may be dated back to earlier events, unless it was meant to explain the origin of a bull's head on the coat of arms of Mecklenburg.

Apart from the toponym *Radegast*, the medieval Slavs had an analogous personal name. For example, a *Redigost* lived in 1226 in the Czech lands (*Морошкин*, 1867, 167). We should not be misled by the retention of the names of former gods in anthroponomy. For example, one of the diplomas found in the territory of present-day Ukraine mentions *Danilo Dazhbogovich*, and several Polish documents mention such names as *Dazhbog*.

While trying to identify the functions of Radegast-Svarozic, there arises the problem of the correlation with Svarog. On the one hand, the patronymic suffix *-ic* in Svarozic's name must indicate that Svarozic is a descendant of Svarog. On the other hand, that Svarozic was the son (or a son) of Svarog to a certain degree contradicts his status as head of the pantheon. A. Bruckner believed that Svarozic was actually Svarog himself, a hypocoristic form of the theonym (*Brückner*, 1985, 338–339).

The Hypatian Codex names Dazhbog (the god of the sun) as the son of Svarog. According to S. Rosik, who has analyzed Radegast-Svarozic in the context of the peculiarities of the political system of the Lutizens, since Radogošč (Rethra) was the centre for keeping theocratic and popular assembly standards, this god was being contrasted with the princely and military god Perun. The contrast can easily be seen from the example of the Island of Rügen, where the priestly capital of Arcona was the centre of the cult of Sventovit, while the princely Gardziec worshiped Rugiewit, Porenut and Porewit. S. Rosik arrived at the conclusion that Radogošč and Arcona were the centres of a theocracy whose divine patrons were connected with the sun (*Rosik*, 2000, 49–50). Supposing this is true, we could easily explain why Svarog or Radegast-Svarozic is not mentioned among the 'gods of Prince Vladimir', since for the princely Kiev of the late 10th century, these deities were too archaic. However, before

this, Radegast-Svarozic must have been worshipped by both the Polabian Slavs and the population of Eastern Europe, as is proven by the numerous toponyms relating to Radogošč. That the deity was related to the cult of the sun can be seen from the surviving tradition of celebrating the summer solstice on Mount Radhošť. Apart from this, Radegast was also connected to the cult of the water, which is proven by the existence of a number of related hydronyms. Radegast's attributes were the sacred horse and the crossed spears. Besides his solar function, Radegast-Svarozic played a magical and a military role. Archaeological excavation at the Radahoshch settlement in Belarus indicates that places bearing similar names are promising indicators in the search for the remains of pagan sanctuaries.

Summary

Radogošč (Rethra), situated in the territory of the Lutizen tribal union and described in a number of early medieval written sources (Thietmar of Merseburg, Adam of Bremen, Helmold), is one of the most famous Slavonic pagan sanctuaries. According to the descriptions, the sanctuary, devoted to the god Radegast-Svarozic, was situated at the shore of a lake and surrounded by a sacred forest. The location of Radogošč is not yet established, although there are over 30 hypotheses as to its location.

A total of 40 toponyms related to Radogošč can be found within the settlement area of the Slavs – *Radegast*, *Radigošť*, *Radogošč*, *Radogošča* – from the Elbe and the eastern border of Austria to the upper reaches of the Oka, and from the Baltic Sea to the Middle Danube. There is a group of hydronyms among them, while the Czechs have an ancient tradition of celebrating the summer solstice on Mount Radigošť in Moravia.

Excavation of the Radahoshcha settlement outside Navahrudak, Belarus, indicates that it belonged to a Slavonic population with a culture similar to that of the Luka Raikovetskaia Culture (8th–10th century) and must have been used as a sanctuary (distinctive exterior features, long houses, the location of a cultural stratum in a narrow belt along the edge of the site). Finds of the late 1st millennium have also been made at other monuments with analogous names. The geographical position of such toponyms coincides with the area of the Prague Culture and the descendants of this population, as well as with that of the Sukovo-Dzedzin and Feldberg Cultures.

In spite of the fact that written sources fail to specify the functions of the god Radegast-Svarozic, they can be reconstructed on the basis of a comprehensive analysis. He was the head of the pantheon in societies with theocratic and popular assembly systems, connected with the cults of the sun and water. Apart from this, he had magic and military functions. The excavations at the Radahoshcha settlement in Belarus indicate that places bearing similar names are promising indicators in the search for the remains of pagan sanctuaries.

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