

# THE ALKAI: RESEARCH IN TO BALTIC SACRED PLACES

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## SUMMARY

**A** sacred place is something more than just a hill or a stone. Usually sacred places have their names and are enwrapped in unheard-of legends and beliefs. There are still believers that these places may bring happiness and health. Sacred places immortalize a contact between Nature and Culture, History of Gods and People. Therefore, sacred places should be regarded as one of the most wonderful realia of Lithuania. This book based on the doctorate defended at the Lithuanian Institute of History in 2000 is dedicated for those who are eager to learn more about sacred places.

## INTRODUCTION

In scientific studies the problems of the Baltic sacred places play a rather modest role, since the realia of religious culture are usually analyzed separately from sacred places. So far only a few special studies were devoted to sacred places, therefore most commonly their definition bases on a few written sources and their wide variety is all in all illustrated by one or two examples of excavated monuments.

Sacred places are directly related to the conception of the Baltic and Lithuanian religion, its genesis and development. Most objects with sacral status are of natural origin and often do not contain any remarkable remains left by rituals. After Conversion in 1387, the attempts were made to destroy ancient sacred places or to give a Christian sense to their existence. In the 19th – 20th centuries only a few sites of this type were recorded. In most cases place-names, place-legends or beliefs bespoke their existence, but very rarely they are recognized from a specific exterior, from finds discovered there or from episodic rituals, which people still perform there.

Consequently, the Baltic sacred places constitute a complicated and unattractive field for researches. The disembodied attitude towards these multiform data provided by several branches of science is the main difficulty preventing from larger use of this valuable base of sources for investigation into the Baltic religion and mythology.

This study proposes an object to analyze the multiform scientific information, to classify the sacred places of Lithuania by type, to single out the main types and groups, as well as to deal with their religious and historic contexts.

The study examines the ancient sacred places in a systemic way considering them typologically and applies the complex methods of archaeology, ethnology, linguistics, folklore science and cartographic analysis for monuments. The results of the latter are compared with the material received by other countries.

**TERMS AND CONCEPTS.** In this study sacred places of the Baltic religion and/or of the cult are called *Alkas* or most often *sacred places*; cult structures – *temples*; a sacred place of big area (e.g. woodland) or a complex of sacred places located in a certain territory – *a sacred site or locality*; existence of sacred places of one type (group) in the defined territory during a certain period is called a *tradition of sacred places* of respective type.

**SOURCES.** For classification and cartography of sacred places, about 1200 data on monuments have been used. The author has localized 420 of them and recorded their data during the surveys running from 1990 to 1999. The base of sources consists of data from several branches of science: archaeology, folklore, ethnology, linguistics and history. Mostly the factual data have been used only when confirmed by at least several independent sources of same nature or when received from several different branches of science.

**REVIEW OF INVESTIGATIONS.** Until the end of the 19th century, a tendency prevailed to describe this or that more interesting sacred place providing place- legends about it (M. Baliński, L. A. Jucewicz, A. H. Kirkor, E. and K. Tyszkiewicz, E. Wolter). One may single out attempts of T. Narbutt and S. Daukantas to involve ancient sacred places into the field of larger investigations of the Baltic religion and mythology. The period from the end of the 19th c. to the early thirties of the 20th c. was famous for rather professional registration of sacred places (L. Krzywicki, F. V. Pokrovskiy, W. Szukiewicz), as well as for description of single monuments (J. Totoraitis, J. Witort, J. Žiogas).

The article “The Ancient Lithuanian Temples” by P. Tarasenska in 1926 and in particular the series of his articles on sacred stones in the years from 1933 to 1934 marked a new stage in investigations of ancient sacred places. Attempts have been made to evaluate to the utmost the accumulated data in a problem-oriented way and to analyze them in the context of other countries. In 1943 and 1946 a substantial contribution to this problem-solving was made by M. Alseikaitė-Gimbutas and E. Šturms. The Šturms’ study is of particular value for the author’s ideas, in contrast to his other earlier published works. We are under impression that “Die Alkstätten in Litauen” was a peculiar scientific project of E. Šturms, by which he tried to demonstrate the methods suitable for investigation of sacred places and to reveal their scientific prospect. It is a pity that this study published in the West in postwar years became a rarity and reached Lithuania after 50 years only, so it could not make any contribution to investigations.

Exploration of archeological monuments including Alka hills and sacred stones was rather popular in the soviet Lithuania. The problems related to sacred places have been dealt with in the works of P. Tarasenska, R. Volkaitė-Kulikauskienė and some other authors.

A new reference point in researches was the start of archaeological investigations in 1970. Later V. Urbanavičius represented professionally these results in the context of relics of the ancient religion of the 14th – the 17th c. in Lithuania, however, nobody continued systematically the archaeological investigations started. Characterizing the current level of investigations of sacred places, it can be maintained that so far these monuments have been least researched and hardly evaluated.

### ALKA, ALKAS (GENERAL MEANINGS)

The researchers use these names for all Baltic sacred places in a general sense. There are about some hundred sacred places, which have the root *alk-* (or *elk-*, *olk*) in their proper names, and their variety enables to reveal some important traits of Lithuanian sacred places.

The Lithuanian *alka*, *alkas*, the Latvian *elks*, the Prussian *\*alka* belong to the Indo-European linguistic heritage. They correspond to the Germanic and Gothic *alhs*, the Anglo-Saxon *ealh*, the Saxon *alah*, the Greek *αλδοξ*. In the Indo-European parent language *\*alku/ \*elku* means a bend, an elbow, like a turn and likely a lift, since the Lithuanian *alk-*: *auk-* is directly connected to the Lithuanian *auk(u)oti* (“to lift a child”), the Latvian *auklet* (“to carry the baby on arms and to rock”), and the Gothic *auhuma* (“higher”) (E. Fraenkel, V. Mažiulis, V. Toporov).

Such meanings as the Lithuanian *alka*, *alkas* – “a sacred grove; a site where offerings were burnt;”, the Latvian *elks* – “an idol, a fetish”, the Belarussian *зальконнік* – “one who gathers offerings”, the Gothic *alhs*, the Anglo-Saxon *ealh*, the Saxon *alah* – “a temple”, the Anglo-Saxon *ealgian* – “to guard, to defend”, the Greek *αλτίς* – “a sacred enclosure in Olympia” show that the Indo-European *\*al-* or *\*alk-/ \*elk-* acquired a religious meaning and was used as a certain sacral term. The Lithuanian *alka*, *alkas*, beside the fixed common meanings such as “a sacred grove”, “an offering site”, also frequently occur in proper names of Baltic sacred places mentioned in the historic sources since the middle of the 13th c., cf.: *Elkene* in Curonia (1253), *Alkayne* in Semba (1312), *Helki* in Aukshtaitia (1478), *Elkewalke* in Curonia (1503).

The mention of *Alkas* in the Postilla of Wolfenbütel (1573), along with all other worshipped natural objects such as stones, hills, trees, woods and rivers, confirms the fact that the word *Alka* does not denote natural objects of one

type considered to be sacred, but means certain sacred places and (or) cult places.

Place-legends recorded about the sacred places named *Alkas* constitute an original oral tradition. Tales about “offerings made in ancient times” at sacred places, about “sacred fire” in them may be attributed to the genre of religious memoirs.

From the sacred places known as *Alkas*, the archaeologists investigated at large only the following: the Raizgiai Alka Hill in Lithuania (in 1972, V. Urbanavičius) and the Elka-Pekši Elku Hill in Latvia (in 1937, P. Stepiņš). All other excavations in sacred places called *Alkas* carried an explorative nature and yielded in insignificant results. As the practice showed, in most cases the exact place meant for sacrificing at an *Alka* place, e.g. on a hill or in a field, is long forgotten.

## CLASSIFICATION OF MONUMENTS

Together with the sacred places which have other sacral names, in Lithuania there are 203 sacred places known as *Alkas*, in Latvia 69, in the Kaliningradskaya oblast – 7. From those 203 sacred places called *Alkas* in Lithuania, 74 are hills, 52 – fields, 15 – lakes and wetlands, 11 – groves, 10 – little swamps, 9 – islands (cf. in Latvia respectively: 42, 17, 1, 2, 1, 5 and 1; in the Kaliningradskaja oblast: 2, -, 3, -, 2, -, -). These statistically illustrative tendencies indicate some circumstances important for investigations of ancient sacred places:

1) Distribution of same name *Alka*, *Alkas* for sacred places in the territory of Lithuania demonstrates different traditions, since in western Lithuania *Alka* hills are prevailing, in middle Lithuania – *Alka* fields at riverbanks and wetlands, in eastern Lithuania – *Alka* fields at riverbanks, lakesides, as well as wetlands and lake islands (Maps 1, 6, 19);

2) Sacred stones, sacred trees and sacred springs are not called *Alka*, *Alkas* what supports an opinion that these objects were individual elements of sacred places located in woods, fields, hills or in vicinity of rivers and lakes.

Therefore the data on sacred places named by the Indo-European sacral term *alka*, *alkas* show that they existed in various locations. This fact supposes a classification of breaking up sacred places by type of natural objects. In 1946 E. Šturms applied this model for grouping of about 200 sacred places of Lithuania. The present researchers do the same with the Latvian sacred places. In this study the sacred places are also grouped basing on the criteria mentioned above.

**HILLS.** Sacred hills are of various shape and size, however, rarely sized greater than 50–60x100 m. In most cases they have no plateau on the top. Some sacred hills are high, frequently dominating in the environs, while others are

quite small. Their variety is represented not by character of human activities, but by natural or mythological-religious realia. Therefore the groups of sacred hills may be singled out only while analyzing their location, proper names and narrative folklore.

This study represents the following groups of sacred hills: *Alka* hills and islands (74 and 9) (Map 1), Dievas (God's) hills (12) (Map 2), Perkūnas (Thunder) hills (26) (Map 3), Aušrinė (Goddess of Dawn) hills (28) (Map 4), Saulė (Sun) hills, Kupolė hills and Šatrija hills (21, 18 and 22) (Map 5), Merga (Girls) hills (160), so-called Heroes hills (10) and specific hills known in the archaeological literature as hill-forts – temples. It is supposed that the latter type of cult places was typical to eastern Baltic tribes from the 1st millennium B.C. to the 1st millennium A.D.

**FIELDS.** Existence of sacred places of this type is first of all confirmed by the historic sources. There is said that in Baltic lands the sacred fields, though suitable for cultivation, are not cultivated. They are also suitable for grazing of cattle and for haymaking. It should mean that existence of sacred fields and sacred meadows was directly related to the realia of both: mythological (cf. place-names “God's Garden”) and religious character (cf. customs of herb collection and sanctifying). Often these fields belonged to the complexes of sacred places. On the other hand, the specific places for sacrificing most likely were in the very territory of those fields.

Many fields with sacral names have no place-legends or beliefs recorded about them. A few of them have been ever surveyed, therefore in this study only *Alka* fields and Šventas (Sacred) fields are represented (52 and 20) (Maps 6 and 7).

**FORESTS AND GROVES.** A comparatively large information is provided about these monuments in the historic sources. They tell the following: 1) both: sacred forests and groves were in use; 2) a forest or a grove may carry the name of some deity residing there (e.g. Ašvytė, Ventis); 3) trees, beasts and birds from sacred forests and groves were untouchable; 4) in sacred forests and groves the specific (local) cult places were functioning with sacred fire, offering making etc.; 5) after J. Długosz (the second half of the 15th c.), among sacred forests and groves a group of “special woods” (*speciales silvas*) was found where people burnt bodies of the dead.

The most common trait of sacred forests and groves was their coexistence with other sacred places and sharing of the territory. In some cases other sacred places occupied the whole area of the sacred grove. Furthermore, it is known that the central (and the most sacred) place of the grove was at the oldest and thickest tree.

In Lithuania about 40 sacred forests and groves are known. In this study certain groups are described more largely, namely, forests called Šventas

(Sacred) and Alka forests (13 and 11) (Map 8), Gojus forests (more than 520; future investigation of individual microregions would reveal their relations to sacred places).

**TREES.** In parallel with forests and groves, the historic sources mention sacred trees. A lot of them might have grown within the territory of forests and groves, but some are known as growing beyond forestlands. E.g. in 1291 in the document of the division of Curonia, a dry sacred tree *Ouse Warpe* (an ash?) was mentioned as a reference point. Besides, during the decay of sacred forests, single-trees inherited many mythic and religious features. Since the 16th to the 17th c. the historic sources usually tell about single-tree worshipping. In Lithuania most information is retained about sacred oaks (50), sacred linden (10), and sacred pines (27) (Map 9).

**STONES.** Experience in classification of sacred stones shows how complicated is the task. During almost 50 years since appearance of this scientific idea, no uniform classification was developed (P. Tarasenska, R. Matulis, J. Urtāns, E. Levkov). This happened because of great variety of sacred stones, rather accountable for natural and mythic reasons, not for human activities.

The features of sacred stones suitable for classification may be divided into two main groups: 1) structure, shape, various peculiarities (marks, bowls or some other), geographical situation, 2) mythological and religious data (place-legends, stories, beliefs, rites). Experience shows that objections to this classification arise when the researchers try to combine these two feature-groups or also features of one type. Therefore this study proposes an alternative based on creating of many monument groups. As sacred stones have a finite number of features, each feature may serve a pretext for grouping of stones. A group of sacred stones, singled out at least by one feature, becomes an object of scientific investigation. The more features one group contains, the greater information it provides for researchers.

Presently such grouping of stones is still a proposition, nevertheless, the performed work proved a possibility to develop temporary or constant systems of new classification. Such an approach does not raise any beforehand requirements and places no restrictions on the researcher.

In fact the variety of sacred stones (more than 500 in Lithuania) is incomparably greater than any classifications reflect as yet. The first group of features, on which these monuments were grouped in this study, is their visual characteristics. So we have table-stones (27) (Map 10), stool-stones and bed-stones (25 and 10) (Map 11), tall stones (35) (Map 12), stones with footprints (about 150), cup-marked stones (33) (Map 13,14), cylinder-shaped stones with flat-bottomed bowls (35) (Map 15), stones with narrow-bottomed bowls (about 250) (Map 16). The second group of features reflects mythic or religious realia. Among

these stones there are stones “fallen from the sky” (3), stones “sewing clothes or shoes” (13) (Map 17), cursed-people stones (41) (Map 12), Mokas (Teacher) stones (4), Laumė (Fairy) stones (44) (Map 18).

**WATERS.** The historic sources provide rather many data about the Baltic sacred waters. They also tell about nature of the water cult and sometimes about concrete sacred lakes or rivers. Their sacredness is culturally connoted – waters become sacred thank to rituals. The analysis of folklore sources shows that water of any shape has its “master” – a deity. To souls of the dead, water is one form of the purgatory, so the souls also can presuppose sacredness of water. While interacting between people, “masters” and souls, rituals use to emerge, i.e. a tradition of offering would be established. Through the religious practice, waters become granting health, beauty, prolificacy, fertility, knowledge or happiness.

In Lithuania there are about 100 sacred lakes, 60 sacred swamps, 50 sacred rivers and 150 sacred springs, the sacral value of which is bespoken by their names, place-legends, beliefs or rituals. The study deals at large with Alka lakes (15) (Map 19), Šventas (Sacred) lakes (19) (Map 20), sacrifice-requesting lakes (30) and rivers (4) (Map 21), Vėlė (Soul’s) lakes (3) and Vėlė (Soul’s rivers (9) (Map 22), Čysčius (Purgatory’s) and Pekla (Hell’s) (6), Karčemvietė (Tavern-site) (10), Velnias (Devil) (about 70), Alka (10) and Šventas (Sacred) (10) (Map 23) little swamps, Alka rivers (32) (Map 24), Šventas (Sacred) rivers (53) (Map 25), Raganinė (Witch’s) depths (14) (Map 27), springs “flowing against the Sun” (22) (Map 28).

**HOLLOWS.** Various hollows shaping a close space in relief were frequently regarded as sacred in the Baltic lands. A peculiar type of hollows are failures. Many un surveyed hollows have sacral names and are enwrapped in place-legends and beliefs. Monuments of this type count about 80 in Lithuania. This study deals at large with one regional group of Velnias (Devil’s) hollows (12).

**CAVES.** In Lithuania certain riverbanks contain some caves of a mythological and (or) religious meaning. One of them, of karst origin is situated in the exposure of the Nemunėlis riverbank, the other one – in the Quaternary’s exposure on the Neris riverbank.

## LINKS BETWEEN SACRED PLACES

The classification of sacred places by type of natural objects usually reveals traits of a specific group of monuments, but poorly reflects the mutual links between different kinds (types, groups) of sacred places.

Mythological meanings and religious functions of sacred places are related to various Baltic (Lithuanian) gods and goddesses, first of all, to Perkūnas

(Thunder), Laima (Goddess of fate, luck), Saulė (Sun), Aušrinė (Goddess of Dawn), Ragana (Witch), Senelis Dievas (the Old Man God). The oral tradition does not mention other gods such as Andojus (< *anduo* “water”), Žvėrūna-Medeina (< *žvėris* “beast”; *medis* “wood; tree”), nevertheless, namely to their spheres of sacrality the meanings and functions of some sacred places may have belonged. Furthermore, in certain cases the ancient gods yielded ground to low-ranked deities. Groups of sacred places, first of all, trees, stones and waters mythologically associated with the ancient other world imagination should be mentioned apart.

The links between sacred places are reflected by various complexes consisting of sacred places of different type, for instance, an Alka hill + a stone + a spring (cf. Map 29). The complexes consisting of sacred places of one type are also known, usually in pairs. Two hills, two islands, two stones usually are linked by respective natural space or by certain mythological and religious realia. Even different sacred places far-off from each other may be mutually linked, directly (by land, water, underground roads) or mythologically (by place-legends, beliefs) (cf. Map 30). The data show that sacred roads might have had a religious purpose or that they might have served for ritual travels. First, this fact is evidenced by the very sacred places into (through) which these roads led. Second, the place-legends tell that these roads have been laid for the wedding travel to the church. Third, sometimes the road names indicate their purpose or sacral status (cf. Sacred Wade, Thunder Road, Devil's Path).

## STATUS OF SACRED PLACES

The religious and social role of sacred places, in other words their status, differs. For shortage of data, it is difficult to give a point-blank answer, therefore we provide only initial assumptions.

**HOME / FAMILY.** Among the monuments in question, stones with narrow-bottomed bowls (p. 107–113) present most emphatically sacred places, which used to function at home. In contrast to sacred hills, groves or springs that existed in the natural environment, the home cult places together with the whole homestead were being established at a particular place selected for settling, with consideration of many other factors, such as the orientation and arrangement of buildings. The religious competence of the family members differed and was differentiated in specific situations. It is admitted that the elder people held greater powers, nevertheless, the complicated procedures used for transferring or granting of power force us to question whether this model of behavior was always practised.

**VILLAGE / COMMUNITY.** Many investigated sacred places in the prehistoric settlements or near their cemeteries were used by small communities



(p. 28–46, 53–54, 57–62, 74–84, 86–107, 137, 157, 168, 176). The vicinity of sacred places and villages with theophoric names bespeaks clearly the link between communities and their sacred places. An approximate picture about worshipped gods and performed rituals in the community may be drawn based mostly on historic, folkloric and ethnologic sources of the 16th – 19th c.

Communication with sacral meaning, such as *šventvakariai* (get-togethers during holidays, in after-Christmas period), *sambariai* (collective meal after sowing, visiting fields or after collecting of crop), and *krivūlės* (meetings) took place in the settlement or near it at an particular place, in a special enclosed space, for instance, in the purposed buildings. In the lands of the western Slavs and Old Scandinavians, such buildings were sized up to 15x85 m (O. Olsen, L. Stupecki, S. Brink). Having this in mind, we would better understand the story to say that in 1384 in the middle Lithuania several Lithuanians were unexpectedly attacked near their temples (*edes sacras*). Regardless of their attempts to hide in it, they have been arrested (36 men arrested in one building, 60 men – in another one, not counting women and children).

It is not quite clear who was the performer of community's rituals. The widespread opinion is that these rites were performed by the elder of the community. The data from the 16th – 17th c. on community festivities and rituals in villages show that in most cases the elder person (who not always was a member of that community) directed the rituals. Often they were called oracles (cf.: *primus augur*), magicians (*sacrificulus*, *quem Vurschayten appellant*), and priests (*Weydullis*). We may arrive at a conclusion that these persons might be associated with Lithuanian beggars – *diedai* who represented “a degraded, but authentic stratum of priests of the old Lithuanian religion” (A. J. Greimas). They usually had no constant residing place and earned for living (for food and some other donations) by praying for the dead relatives of offering persons.

**REGIONAL SACRED PLACES.** In many localities of the Lithuanian State of the 13th –14th c. – in the supposed administrative and defensive centres – sacred places are also known. It is difficult to speak about their rank as yet, due to poor knowledge on most prehistoric territorial framework. The fact that these sacred places are reasonably associated with monument complexes (the dwelling-, the defensive- and the burial-sites) in the mentioned centres confirms the links between administrative centres and sacred places, the latter playing a role of eventual regional religious centres.

The sacred places certainly were also situated in the centres administering country districts and lands and coordinating their defence. The sacred places recorded there represent cult sites of various kinds (e.g. hills, groves, and waters) or are their elements (e.g. stones, springs). The place-legends about them usually

do not detail what god- or deity cult has been practised here. The place-names containing words *alka*, *sacred*, *God* do not reflect this either.

The question remains open: who served in the regional sacred places? The view is taken that the institution of military leaders and that of high priests coincided. This problem goes beyond limits of this study. Nonetheless, we will draw attention to the fact that priests of the ancient religion lived by villages in the immediate environment of the Lithuanian administrative and defensive centres of the 13th – 14th c. (as well as in vicinity of some sacred places) (cf. Map 31). A special mention should be made of the communication dated to 1362–1364 about the Šėtijai village, regarded as sacred (*que dicitur sancta*), where the crusaders managed to capture a sacred man (*sanctum virum*).

Presently it is too complicated to speak about the sacred places of **INTER-REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE**. Their best representatives are situated between the territories administered from the centres. Cartography of archaeological sites and comparison of received results with the historic data on territorial framework (country districts, lands, and tribes) proved that often on borders of territorial units or between them various sacred places use to concentrate (p. 29, 35–36, 53, 57, 161–162). Today it is difficult to describe particular features of such sacred places. The most vivid geographic feature is their location in the woody highlands or marshy lowlands of the watersheds. Here the sacred places often join into complexes. They are of great size and abound in various place-legends, as well as in other natural or cultural features. The sacred places situated in the large intertribal wastelands, in the small borderline sectors between lands and country districts might have been associated with various mythological imaginations about, first of all, the other world of gods and the dead people extending beyond the cultural space controlled by human beings.

Little can be said about the functioning of interregional sacred places. Thank to written sources, we might imagine that people residing in different villages, different country districts or different lands used to gather at a specified time at a sacred place.

Romuva (*Romow*) in the Prussian Nadrovia was of an interregional or, to be more precise, even of an intertribal importance. The words of Peter from Dusburg said in 1326 basing on the oral tradition should be stressed once again: 1) Romuva was in the middle of the Prussian lands; 2) the name of Romuva was associated with Rome, and veneration of Krivis who resided in Romuva – with the power and authorizations of the Pope; the Prussian tribes, the Lithuanians and “other nations living in the land of Livonia” obeyed the will (*nūtus*) of Krivis; the Krivis’ courier carrying the stick (“krivulė”) was shown the highest respect in these lands; 3) Krivis was a heathen priest; he received one third of gained spoils and offered them to gods by burning in fire.

The doubts on the story by Peter from Dusburg are poorly substantiated. First, the phenomenon of the meeting *krivŭlē* convened by circling around the stick in some places of Prussia, Poland and Lithuania was preserved up to the 19th – 20th c. Second, the data show that at the end of the 1st millennium – the beginning of the 2nd millennium, the centres of Romuva type existed in other countries of the Baltic Sea as well. Very often these centres played an important administrative role, too. Lejre in Denmark and Uppsala in Sweden were the places where beside the priests the representatives of royal dynasties lived. The political importance of temples *Rethra* and *Svantevit* in Germany illustrates well that intertribal religious centres did not always meet the State's centres (or centres of ethnic land units, respectively). Same can be said about the sacred place of Romuva functioned Nadrovia.

The central position of Romuva, the residing place of Krivis (a person who has *\*krivē* or *krivŭlē* in his disposition), and his couriers traveling with this stick to surrounding regions – all that indicate that Romuva was the major meeting place for several Baltic tribes or, to be precise, for their authorized representatives. The authority of Krivis and his religious duties evidence in their turn the high (supreme?) religious status of the sacred place functioning in Romuva.

It should be particularly noted that Romuva in Nadrovia (*Romow*) and Rome in Gothland (*Rumum*) have functioned by same model, as places for general meetings and religious rituals: they both were situated in the middle and namely in them the representatives of all surrounding regions gathered for mentioned purposes. Who initiated and (or) convened the *Althinget Gutnalia* in Rome (cf. Krivis of Nadrovia) is an enigma, nonetheless, the investigations made in the nearby cemeteries and the hoards found there tell us that in the epoch of Vikings at Rome there used to live people of high social status.

Though the German *rum-* and Baltic *ram-*: *rom-* are regarded to be different components, nevertheless, the very fact that in Gothland *Rumum* was pronounced as *rāmme* and that the name of one Prussian village in Samland varies in the sources of the 14th c. as *Romehnen* / *Romaynis* / *Rummove* shows that the German *rum* “an open place; a field” and the Baltic *ram-* : *rom-* in place-names (<*ramus*, *romus* – “calm”) may be semantically related.

It should be mentioned that following the model of Romuva in Nadrovia, some not big peripheral centres might have functioned in Lithuania, as well. The frequent occurrence of pairs of place-names with roots *ram-*, *rom-* and *kriv-*, *kreiv-* keeps us thinking in this way.

Some data allow us to speak about **SACRED PLACES OF STATE'S RANK**, as well. Some sacred places related to the State's ruling military stratum of the 13th – 14th c. – the Grand Duke and his noblemen – are recorded in their lands: residencies, administrative centres or domains. The broadest examples of them

are Šventaragai (composed of *šventas* “sacred” and *ragas* “horn; peninsular; fire”) (9) (Map 32). Various components of landscape, such as hills in the confluences of rivers and lake peninsulae, as well as woods, swamps or bogs bear this name. They usually lie behind the river in respect to settlements / defence sites and often in 0.5/0.3 km distance from the sacred places called Alka, typical to the tribal period (e.i. to the middle of the 1st – beginning of the 2nd millennium).

The distribution of Šventaragai correlates with the geography of early political centres in the State’s core and its periphery. This fact forces us to stress not the State’s policy in the person of the Grand Duke, but the dispersion of this policy through a political, military and social stratum of the Sovereign’s servants – Leičiai. This institution existed as early as the 1st half of the 13th c. and served a peculiar “mechanism of development” for ideology of the central power (A. Dubonis). One may jump to a conclusion that sacred places called Šventaragai were established in the centralized way during a short period of the first half – the middle of the 13th c. Two of them (in Vilnius and in the Betygala environs) having a status of State’s cult places functioned up to the very Conversion of Lithuania in 1387 and 1413.

## SACRED PLACES AND CULT OF THE DEAD

After examination of sacred places mythologically related to imagination about the world of the dead, the state of souls and their mythological relations with trees, stones, and waters (p. 55–56, 89, 123–126, 146–148), we should deal with the problems of sacred places and cremation- and burial-sites of the dead.

According to the data from two sources of the 15th c. (G. de Lanua, J. Długosz), the Curonians, the Samogitians and the Lithuanians were cremated in forests near their settlements. After J. Długosz, these “special” forests were regarded as sacred and one of them at Maišiagala bore a name of *Kokiveithus*.

The place-names with the root *kauk-* : *kuk-* often occur near prehistoric settlements and hill-forts in the whole Lithuania. Their analysis reveals the meanings of *kaukas*, *kukas* as “the devil; the soul of the dead; mythological being” (S. Karaliūnas). So, the “special” forest named *Kokiveithus* where the dead were cremated (not excluding Grand Dukes) confirms an assumption that *kaukas* and related words were associated with souls. Consequently, beyond the cultural space of prehistoric settlements, the sacred places accompanied by particular mythological meanings were situated. Presumably, there were places for cremation of the dead.

So far, the problem of identity of burial sites and cult places was not properly tackled either. We know some sacral burial places from various periods

bespoken by the oral tradition and historic data, as well as presence of sacred trees and stones in the territory of burial sites. The plainest explanation would be that in Christian times the dead were buried in the ancient sacred areas. Of course, most likely such cases happened. On the second hand, in the context of the cult of the dead, the ancient rituals took place, without any doubt, in the existing burial sites as well. The various data including archaeological and historical ones proved it. So the most important cause is to note the more vivid bound between the sacred places – landscape details of various kinds – related to certain deities (also imaginations about souls of the dead) and ritual places of the cult of the dead in burial sites near family/kin/community ancestors graves. The large investigations in the Birutė Hill in Palanga (1983–1984, by V. Žulkus) demonstrated that in fact sacred places of this kind were not meant for burying.

By the way, one may arrive at a conclusion that cemeteries of the 16th–18th c. called Devil's hills received their name thank to rites for the dead, by old custom arranged there. On the other hand, the problems related to sacred places bearing Devil's name are very complicated and not thoroughly investigated as yet.

## **TRADITIONS OF SACRED PLACES (CHRONOLOGY AND GEOGRAPHY)**

In this study all currently known groups of sacred places are represented. Beyond any doubt, this classification based on analysis of 1200 monuments reflects the present degree of knowledge and should be adjusted and added in future. Beside investigations into the social role and religious meanings of sacred places, we shall define in short their chronological and geographical “dimensions”.

The sacred places are, first of all, an expression of religious culture and their sacrality is not easily definable chronologically. Up to now, the sacred places were not investigated in such aspects as the formation of their traditions, the chronological sequence or variation. The examined data enable us to speak rather precisely only about regional distribution of these monuments. In sight of only few chronological indicators available, the distribution plays an important role.

The summarized scientific information and analysis of cartographed monuments shows that regions most probably related to territories of archaeological cultures, lands or tribes are usually characteristic of local traditions of sacred places.

In West Lithuania, in the territory of the Curonian and Samogitian tribes, there used to appear common traditions of ancient sacred places. Most likely during formation of these tribes in the middle of the 1st millennium, many similar mythological and religious realia linked them. This region abounds with Alka hills,

Goddess of Dawn hills, Sun hills, Šatrija hills, sacred fields, sacred woods, sacred oaks, sacred pines, and various sacred stones. Many sacred places are associated with complexes of monuments from the second half of the 1st millennium to the 14th c.

It is reasonable to associate cup-marked stones with the Culture of Barrows of the West Balts and of North Lithuania – Samogitia, and to date back these stones to the end of the 1st millennium B.C. (at the seashore) and to the 2nd – 4th c. A.D., (in the middle Lithuania).

Stones belonging to other groups of sacred stones and related to the second half of the 1st millennium up to the 14th c. are often spread in rather small cultural habitats. Namely, tables-stones, bed-stones are spread within limits of the Curonian Duvzare and Ceklis, Fairy's stones, cylinder-shaped stones with flat-bottomed bowls in the lands of Duvzare, Ceklis and Mėguva, tall stones in the south of the Medininkai (Varniai) land, in the country districts of Laukuva and Šiauduva.

At the Samogitians cemeteries of the middle of the 1st millennium up to 13th–14th c., the little swamps called Tavern-sites used to appear in quite a number. Swamps of Hell (Pekla) and Purgatory are known at the Curonian cemeteries of same period in the Ceklis land. This land is also characteristic of "springs flowing against the Sun" (southwards in this region). Alka rivers are widespread in southern Samogitia and Middle Lithuania.

The Middle Lithuania, a cultural region of the Auhštaitians, is a peculiar crossroad of sacred place traditions or their transit zone. The areas of almost all sacred places known here are extending westwards, northwards or eastwards. We can mention such groups of monuments as cup-marked stones associated with the Barrow Culture in North Lithuania of the 2nd to the 4th c., as well as Šatrija hills, stool-stones, Alka fields, Alka wetlands, Devil swamps and Alka rivers related in some cases to cemeteries of the Middle Lithuania of the second half of the 1st millennium.

Stones with narrow-bottomed bowls spread in about the 16th – 17th c. in territory of Middle and North Lithuania (only one area is known in East Lithuania with its epicentre in the Utena environs). However, in the North they did not cross the borders of the Curonian Duchy.

In East Lithuania, in the territory of the Lithuanian tribe, Alka islands, Alka fields, Sacred lakes, sacrifice-requesting lakes, Sacred rivers are widely known. The sacred places of those groups frequently are related to monuments (settlements, hill-forts, and barrows) of the middle of the 1st millennium to the 13th c. This region abounds in Kupolė hills, cursed-people stones (including Mokai stones as well), stool-stones, tailor-stones, cylinder-shaped stones with flat-bottomed bowls. These are related to the Curonian refugees who came to settle

down in East Lithuania since the middle of the 13th c. The area of tailor-stones covers the lands of the northwestern Belarus what shows that this sacred place tradition might have formed in the period of Brushed Ware Culture before its end in the 3rd c. A.D. Furthermore, the territory of the Brushed Ware Culture, as well as that of the Dnieper–Dauguva culture located eastwards from the former was full of hill-forts – temples with round or oval cult buildings dated back to the 1st millennium B.C. up to the first half of the 1st millennium A.D.

Besides there are Dievas (God's) and Laumė (Fairy) hills, Laumė (Fairy) stones, Alka swamps recorded in relatively small local areas of Eastern Lithuania (Anykščiai, Molėtai, Ukmergė, and Utena regions). These monuments are dated back to the mid–1st millennium – early 2nd millennium without more accurate chronology.

In south – southeast Lithuania the sacred place traditions of East Lithuania are partially echoed, nevertheless, the original groups also come our way. Presumably, this fact may be associated with the Culture of stone covered barrows dated back to the 4th – 7th c. Some monuments typical to southeast Lithuania should be mentioned separately, such as Devil's hollows, Sacred lakes, sacrifice-requesting lakes, tall-stones and cursed-people stones frequently related to monuments of the middle – second half of the 1st millennium. Besides, some cursed-people stones with Christian signs carved on them in south Lithuania and north-west Belarus may be related to the Yatvingians baptized in the 11th – 17th c.

In rather compact, so far not precisely dated cultural areas, Thunder hills (Alytus) and “springs flowing against the Sun” (eastwards in this area) (Kazokiškės) are spread.

To sum up, the chronological and geographical data show that sacred places are more or less typically found in the certain cultural regions. Monuments of some certain groups of sacred places may look at a first glance uniformly spread in whole Lithuania (e.g. Thunder hills, Girls hills, Alka fields, Gojai, Sacred swamps, Soul's swamps, Fairy's stones). Nevertheless, the closer examination usually reveals existence of local areas in particular characteristic of a concrete sacred place tradition (e.g. Thunder hills in the Alytus environs, Fairy's stones in the Salantai environs). Therefore, one may think with reason that most sacred place traditions, singled out and dealt with in this study, emerged before formation of the State of Lithuania, i.e. during existence of aforementioned cultural areas. After introduction of Christianity, these traditions (e.g. Alka fields, Sun's hills, Kupolė hills, Šatrija hills, Sacred groves, sacred oaks, sacred linden, sacred pines, tall stones, stones with footprints, cylinder-shaped stones with flat-bottomed bowls, Sacred lakes, sacrifice-requesting lakes, Sacred rivers, Witch's depths, “springs flowing against the Sun”, and Devil's hollows) frequently continued their existence in natural or transformed forms.

Little is known about traditions of sacred places after introduction of Christianity. A prime example of them may be stones with narrow-bottomed bowls.

The chronological research of sacred places would be benefited from the data about Užnemunė region, which emptied after the crusaders' attacks at the end of the 13th century and since the 16th century was gradually settled anew. In Užnemunė only few sacred places are known. Their number may be compared with that of long occupied localities of the Klaipėda and Vilnius lands or of regions not inhabited for long time for natural reasons.

In the Užnemunė region most groups of sacred places recorded in other regions of Lithuania are not known at all. Here is not even one sacred place called Alka and most groups of sacred stones. Some single God's hills, Thunder hills, Sun's hills, and Goddess' of Dawn hills, Sacred rivers, Sacred lakes, Sacred springs and some other monuments are virtually concentrated in few micro-regions: Vištytis–Bartninkai, Daukšiai, Simnas–Seirijai–Veisiejai, and on the left bank of the Nemunas River – in the environs of Liškiava, Krikštonys, Pakuonis and Zapyškis. There are recorded some hill-forts of the beginning of the 2nd millennium, in some cases burial sites of the same period, as well as cemeteries of the early Middle Ages, estate- and village-sites. So, the known sacred places in the mentioned micro-regions might belong to the heritage of the pre-Christian period (Vištytis, the banks of the Nemunas River) or they should be connected with people who colonized Užnemunė since the 16th century (cf. the small towns of Simnas, Seirijai, Veisiejai, Leipalingis emerged as residing places with churches in the 16th century).

A somewhat similar situation may be observed in the lands of the Skalovians, the Selonians and in the northern Lithuania. True, in the northern and northeastern Lithuania various sacred places are really numerous. Among them there are such single monuments as Sun's hills, Alka fields, stool-stones, that have been already discussed. The traditions of Devil's swamps, Witch's depths, stones with narrow-bottomed bowls stand out, but hardly they are the whole spectrum of sacred places in the Semigalian lands of Žagarė and Upmalė. Besides, stones with narrow-bottomed bowls distributed in the 16th – 17th centuries.

Semigalia, as a Baltic land conquered at the end of the 13th century, was settled anew in large measure since the late 15th – early 16th centuries. The sacred places, more known in localities of Žagarė (Žagarė–Skaistgirys–Joniškis), Upmalė (Pašvintinys, Lygumai) lands, as well as on the banks of the Mūša River (Linkuva, Pasvalys, Krinčinas, Saločiai), may reflect the ancient Semigalians traditions of sacred places. However, a conclusion arrives that the traditions encountered in North Lithuania mostly are left by people who colonized this region from south and north. The communications written by Jesuits in the 17th – 18th centuries bespeak that the colonists kept pre-Christian traditions for long time.



## CONCLUSIONS

1. The use of the sacral term *alka* (*alkas*) in place-names and the tendencies of their distribution is an expression of several different traditions of Baltic sacred places. The sacred places used to exist on the top of hills, in fields and meadows, forests and groves, on banks of lakes and swamps, rivers, as well as at trees, stones, springs, valleys and hollows, caves.

2. Different traditions of sacred places are typical of individual regions or local areas, which may be related to territories of archaeological cultures, lands or tribes. It shows that such traditions emerged in the period before formation of the State of Lithuania.

In the period of the State of Lithuania of the 13th–14th centuries the sacred places inherited from the tribal epoch were still in use. For development of the State religion in the political centres, new sacred places had been also founded in the domains administered by the Grand Duke and his noblemen.

After Conversion the traditions of pre-Christian sacred places frequently were in use in its pure or transformed form. Stones with narrow-bottomed bowls may serve a good example of the traditions appeared in this period.

3. The sacred places are associated with the territorial complexes of archaeological (dwelling, defensive, and burial) sites. The sacred places also existed by complexes: in pairs, by several of them, of one or of different kinds (types, groups).

Taken on a social perspective, the status of sacred places is connected with their religious functions. The sacred places in homesteads were designed for worshipping of home (family, kin) gods. Predominantly the sacred places functioned in villages or in close vicinity and served for religious needs of the community. In the administrative and (or) defensive centres of country districts, lands or tribes, regional sacred places were in use, while between territories administered from the centres – those of interregional significance. A special attention should be drawn to Romuva in Nadrovia, the sacred site of a particular intertribal importance.

The places of the State cult situated in the capital, in political centres in periphery and domain administered by the Grand Duke and his noblemen expressed, first of all, the religious needs of the ruling social stratum.

4. The ancient sacred places are a unique expression of the Baltic religion. The mythological meanings of sacred places are related to many gods and goddesses such as Perkūnas (Thunder), Saulė (Sun), Aušrinė (Goddess of Dawn), Laima (Goddess of Fate, Luck), Ragana (Witch), Žvėrūna-Medeina (Goddess of Woods), Laumė (Fairy), Senelis Dievas (the Old Man God), as well as to “devils”, chthonic beings; to local deities representing certain spheres of sacrality (e.g. “masters” of woods or waters), souls of the dead.

Sacredness of sacred places linked to the dead is of a specific character. It is motivated by ties between the mythological state of souls after death and the primary elements such as water, fire, tree, and stone.

5. Pre-Christian sacred places of Lithuania are an integral complex of the Lithuanian cultural heritage. The multifaceted research of it provides an opportunity to shed light on the Baltic (Lithuanian) religion and mythology expressed by the elements of landscape with sacral status.

## MAPS

Map 1. Distribution of the Alka hills (●) and Alka islands (◆) (according to author (1998) with additions).

Map 2. Distributions of the Dievas hills (God's hills) (drawn by author).

Map 3. Distribution of the Perkūnas hills (Thunder hills) (drawn by author).

Map 4. Distribution of the Aušrinė hills (hills of the Goddess of Dawn) (drawn by author).

Map 5. Distribution of the Saulė hills (hills of the Sun) (●) (according to author (1998) with additions), Kupolė hills (Kupolė is a feast period similar to St. John celebration day) (◆) (drawn by author), and Šatrija hills (Šatrija sometimes is an epithet of the witch) (■) (drawn by author).

Map 6. Distribution of the Alka fields (according to author (1998) with additions).

Map 7. Distribution of the Šventas fields (Sacred fields) (drawn by author).

Map 8. Distribution of the Alka groves (●) (according to author (1998) with additions) and Šventas groves (Sacred groves) (◆) (drawn by author).

Map 9. Distribution of the sacred pines (drawn by author).

Map 10. Distribution of the table-stones (drawn by author).

Map 11. Distribution of the bed-stones (●) and stool-stones (◆) (drawn by author).

Map 12. Distribution of the cursed-people stones: tall stones (◆), stones of natural forms (●) (according to author (1995) with additions).

Map 13. Distribution of the cup-marked stones in Estonia (according to A. Tvaari, 1997), Latvia (according to J. Urtāns, 1987), former Prussia (according to C. Beckhern, 1893), Belarus (according to E. Zaikovskiy, 1997 and 2000), and Lithuania (according to author, 1996a).

Map 14. Distribution of the cup-marked stones in Lithuania (according to author (1996) with additions), Latvia (according to J. Urtāns, 1987), former Prussia (according to C. Beckhern, 1893), and Belarus (according to E. Zaikovskiy, 1997 and 2000).

Map 15. Distribution of the cylinder-shaped stones with flat-bottomed bowls in Latvia (according to J. Urtāns, 1992) and Lithuania (according to author (1999) with additions).

Map 16. Distribution of the stones with narrow-bottomed bowls in Latvia (according to J. Urtāns, 1994) and Lithuania (according to R. Matulis (1990) supplemented by author).

Map 17. Distribution of the tailor-stones in Belarus (according to Levkov, 1992) and Lithuania (drawn by author).

Map 18. Distribution of the Laumė (Fairy) stones (according to author (1998) with additions).

Map 19. Distribution of lakes and little swamps called Alka (according to author (1998) with additions).

Map 20. Distribution of the Šventas (Sacred) lakes (drawn by author).

Map 21. Distribution of the sacrifice-requesting waters: lakes (●), wetlands (■), and rivers (◆) (drawn by author).

Map 22. Distribution of the Vėlė (Souls) waters: lakes (●), rivers (◆), and wetlands (■) (drawn by author).

Map 23. Distribution of the Alka (●) (according to author (1998) with additions) and Šventa (Sacred) (■) wetlands (drawn by author).

Map 24. Distribution of the Alka rivers (according to author (1998) with additions).

Map 25. Distribution of the Šventa (Sacred) rivers (drawn by author).

Map 26. Distribution of the sacred places in Švenčionys region and supposed boundaries of the Nalšia land districts in the 11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> centuries (according to G. Zabiela, 1992a) (dotted line); theophoric names of settlements (underlined) and rivers, lakes, and little swamps called Šventa (Sacred) (drawn by author).

Map 27. Distribution of the Raganinės (Witches' depths) (drawn by author).

Map 28. Distribution of the springs flowing 'against the Sun': eastwards (●) and southwards (◆) (drawn by author).

Map 29. The sacred places in the environs of Lembas and Gvaldai (Šilalė district). Dotted line means absolute pitch of the 90 m.

Map 30. Complexes of sacred places associated with *laumės* (fairies) and *raganos* (witches) in the environs of Molėtai and Dubingiai (jointed by dotted line), as well as more important hydronyms (italics) and names of settlements (underlined) (drawn by author).

Map 31. The sacred places in the environs of Raganiai and Romučiai (Šiauliai district) (drawn by author).

Map 32. Distribution of the sacred places called Šventaragis (originated from *šventas* 'sacred' and *ragas* 'horn; peninsular; fire') (according to author (2001) with additions).

Map 33. The Balts' tribes in the investigated area in the late 1st – early 2nd millennium A.D. (according to G. Zabiela).

## PHOTOGRAPHS

Fig. 1. Alka Hill of Erkšva (Skuodas district). Archive of Lithuanian Institute of History (LIH).

Fig. 2. Alka Island-penninsula of Kupriai (Ignalina district).

Fig. 3. Dievas (God's) Hill of Šlapelės (Anykščiai district).

Fig. 4. Perkūnas (Thunder) Hill of Trauleiniai (Šiauliai district).

Fig. 5. Aušrinė (Goddess of Dawn) Hill of Kaušai (Šilalė district). Archive of the Centre of Cultural Heritage (CCH).

Fig. 6. Saulės krėslas (Sun's chair) Hill of Radžiūnai (Ukmergė district).

Fig. 7. Kupolis (mythological being replaced by St John) Hill of Pypliai (Širvintos district).

Fig. 8. Hill-fort of Pašatrija (Telšiai district) called Šatrija (sometimes it means Witch). LIH.

Fig. 9. Boba (Woman) Hill of Lepšiai (Ignalina district).

Fig. 10. Pajauta's Grave of Guronys (Kaišiadorys district).

Fig. 11. Stajėtiškis (Švenčionys district). Sacred service at the cross on the hill-fort on the tenth Friday after Easter.

Fig. 12. Alka Field of Kulautuva (Kaunas district) at the Nemunas River.

Fig. 13. A fragment from the map drawn by Caspar Hennenberger in 1584 where the Šventas (Sacred) Grove (originally – *Heiligwald*) is shown in the environs of Žemaičių Naumiestis (Šilutė district), at the Šūstis River.

Fig. 14. Vladislavava (Trakai district). The site of the former Gojus Oakery turned to arable land and pasture.

Fig. 15. Sacred Oak in the Alkūnai forest (Molėtai district).

Fig. 16. Sacred Pine of Girmikai (Šiauliai district).

Fig. 17. Kiškio bažnyčia (Hares Church) Stone of Genionys (Varėna district).

Fig. 18. Laumių stolas (Fairies' Table) Stone of Painsdrė (Zarasai district). CCH.

Fig. 19. Marijos kėdė (St Mary's Chair) Stone of Jaurai (Molėtai district).

Fig. 20. Karalienės lova (Queen's Bed) Stone of Senoji Įpiltis (Kretinga district).

Fig. 21. Laumė (Fairy) Stones of Noreikiškės (Prienai district).

Fig. 22. Perkūnas (Thunder) Stone of Papiškės (Varėna district).

Fig. 23. Ajočiai (Zarasai district). Site called Velniapėdis (Devil's Footprint); the stone with footprints is lying in the bushes (in the background, in the centre). LIH.

Fig. 24. Stone of Panorai (Kaišiadorys district) with two God's footprints (on the top of stone, in parallel with each other).

Fig. 25. Velnias (Devil's) Stone of Švendubrė (Varėna district) with some cup-marks. Lithuanian Archive of Visual and Acoustic Records (LAVAR).

Fig. 26. The 2<sup>nd</sup> cup-marked stone of Jakštaičiukai (Šiauliai district). LIH.

Fig. 27. Trumponys (Molėtai district). The cylinder-shaped stone with flat-bottomed bowl during excavation; in the foreground – a fireplace. LIH.

Fig. 28. Site of Paduobužė (Molėtai district) called Molėtų bažnyčia (Molėtai Church). The cylinder-shaped stone with flat-bottomed bowl is lying at the road (in the background, in the centre). LIH.

Fig. 29. Stone with narrow-bottomed bowl of Luponiai (Šiauliai district).

Fig. 30. Stone of Nemaitonys (Kaišiadorys district) with irregular bowl on the top.

Fig. 31. Stone of Nikronys (Trakai district) with some carved symbols and irregular bowl on the top (in the background, on the right).

Fig. 32. Čimbaris (local mythological being's) Stone of Čimbariškės (Molėtai district).

Fig. 33. Velnio kėdė (Devil's Chair) Stone of Legiškis (Rokiškis district). CCH.

Fig. 34. Svadba (Wedding's) Stones in the Neris River near Verksnionys (Vilnius district).

Fig. 35. Mokas ('Teacher') Stones of Sukiniai (Ukmergė district): Father Mokas (on the right) and Child Mokiukas. LIH.

Fig. 36. Martynas (probably St Martin) Stone in the Skaistgirys forest (Kelmė district). LIH.

Fig. 37. The 1<sup>st</sup> Laumė (Fairy's) Stone of Salantai (Kretinga district) in the Salantas River.

Fig. 38. Skudutiškis (Molėtai district). People are praying, kissing the sacred stone, and plucking moss from it on the St Trinity Sunday.

Fig. 39. Nuotaka (Bride's) Stone of Akmuo (Varėna district) regarded as sacred, with small iron cross on the top. The Crucifix has a miniature apron tied to it, what means that prayers are said imploring for child birth. LIH.

Fig. 40. Stone with footprints of Mitkiškės (Trakai district) regarded as sacred. On the ninth Thursday after Easter the stone is ornamented with nine small wooden crosses and two crowns made from flowers (the latter will be used for curing purposes). LIH.

Fig. 41. Šventas (Sacred) Lake of Girutiškė (Zarasai district).

Fig. 42. Alka little swamp of Palendriai (Raseiniai district).

Fig. 43. Plateliai Lake (Plungė district).

Fig. 44. Šventorėlis (Churchyard's) little swamp of Pamerkiai (Varėna district).

Fig. 45. Karčiamvietė (Tavern-site) little swamp of Šiaudaliai (Šilalė district). CCH, neg 2814.

Fig. 46. Veliuona (the name composed of *vėlė* 'soul') Stream of Veliuona (Jurbarkas district).

Fig. 47. Švendubrė (Varėna district). View to the reclaimed Raigardas marshy valley.

Fig. 48. Alka Hill of Rūdaičiai (Kretinga district) (in the background) surrounded by the reclaimed Alka Wetlands.

Fig. 49. The Alka River of Pašiliai (Jurbarkas district). On the right – the spring called Alkus.

Fig. 50. The Šventupis (Sacred) River of Užlieknė (Mažeikiai district). Once at the bridge across the stream there was lying a stone with footprints. Further, in the valley, there has been a chapel in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Fig. 51. Begalinė ('Abyss') Depth in the Kvistė River in Asteikiai (Mažeikiai district).

Fig. 52. Sacred spring of Antalieptė (Zarasai district). LIH.

Fig. 53. Spring of Godeliai (Plungė district) flowing 'against the Sun' (southwards).

Fig. 54. Velnio duobė (Devil's) Hollow of Vindziuliškės (Kaišiadorys district).

Fig. 55. Lučionys (Vilnius district). Palina Panamarčiuk is praying at the Šventa ola (Sacred Cave).

Fig. 56. Sacred hills of Jakštai (Zarasai district): Dievaičiukas (God's) Hill (in the foreground) and Dievaitytė (Goddess') Hill (in the background). LIH.

Fig. 57. Savidėnai (Molėtai district). The Baltramiejus little swamp and the Paažuoliai (1) and Vaidulai (2) hills, looking from the Pasiėka, otherwise Raganų (Witches') hill (3). The tales tell that on these hills witches used to sing their polyphonic songs (*sutartinė*).

Fig. 58. Dvarviečiai (Raseiniai district). View to the Šventaragė (the name composed of *šventas* 'sacred' and *ragas* 'horn; peninsula; fire') Grove in the lower reaches of the Luknė River.

Fig. 59. Kaukas (one of the chthonic souls; also soul of the dead) Hill of Jogvilai.

Fig. 60. Velnias (Devil's) Hill of Videniškės (Molėtai district).