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THE ROLE OF PLACE-LORE IN ENVIRONMENTAL CONFLICT DISCOURSE: THE CASE OF PALUKÜLA SACRED HILL IN ESTONIA*

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ABSTRACT

This article is a critical study of how local place-related narratives, i.e. place-lore, is integrated into environmental discussion and how it has significant potential to illustrate local and public, as well as vernacular and institutional, meanings concerned with the environment. Combining the frameworks of ecosemiotics, environmental communication studies, and place-lore research, the article explores how a new storytelling context, ideological selection, and the logic of conflict communication influence the re-contextualisation and interpretation of place-lore. The theory is applied to an empirical examination of public discussion of Paluküla sacred hill in Central Estonia. Tracking references to previous place-lore about Paluküla Hill in the media coverage of the conflict allows a demonstration of how the contextuality and referentiality towards an extra-narrative environment that are originally present in place-lore are often overlooked or ignored in conflict discourse. This, in turn, leads to socially and ecologically disconnected discussion.

KEYWORDS: place-lore • ecosemiotics • environmental conflicts • sacred natural sites • cultural heritage

INTRODUCTION

Place-lore as part of folklore that is localisable, represents the characteristics of a specific environment, and mediates place experience, can be seen as a part of environmental communication because it manifests complex semiotic relationships between people and their surroundings (Päll forthcoming). At the same time, place-related folklore has also been involved in socially constructed environment-related ideologies, practices,

and discussions that convey various collective and institutional power relations and hierarchies. Hereby, I aim to study the ways in which place-related folklore is adapted in environmental conflicts and how the new context of conflict communication affects the interpretations of these stories. The study asserts that while in local, or community-based, communication, place-lore is semiotically contextual and related to the specific environment it represents, conflict communication can disrupt this ecological and social contextuality.

I position the analysis in the framework of ecosemiotics. Becoming disciplinarily independent in the 1990s, ecosemiotics is rooted in the Estonian scientific and cultural space along with influences from German, Italian, and Norwegian semiotics to name a few (Maran 2018). Ecosemiotics approaches its research objects as a complex hybrid natural–cultural phenomenon. The methods and concepts of ecosemiotics allow researchers to study ontological as well as discursive levels of nature–culture relation-ships (see more in Maran and Kull 2014; Maran 2020). Fruitful links in researching vernacular environmental interpretations in the ecosemiotics framework have already been established, for example, in analysing the 'herbal landscape' in ethnobotany (Sõu-kand and Kalle 2010), discussing the cultural and ecological interpretation of mires (Pungas-Kohv et al. 2015), and studying sacred natural sites in national history dis-course (Heinapuu 2016). Ecosemiotics has also been used to develop an analytical defi-nition of the concept of 'place-lore' (Päll forthcoming). To consider both semiotically complex relations between people and their surroundings, and the specific discourse of public discussion, public participation, and conflict management, I link ecosemiotics with environmental communication studies, especially David Low's (2008) application of semiotic methods in environmental communication.

In Estonian environmental discourse, place-lore has a unique role. The narrative of Estonians' strong relationship with nature, in which place-related folklore is relevant, has been a considerable part of the historical and contemporary self-image of Estonians (for example Kaljundi 2018; Remmel and Jonuks 2021). Since being connected to iden-tity discourse, place-lore is open to ideological interpretation (more on Metssalu 2008; Heinapuu 2016) and emerges constantly in public discussion related to, for example, environmental issues or cultural politics. Place-lore is also integrated into different dis-cursive practices and policies with direct environmental effect, for example in tourism (Kindel 2005; Ü. Valk 2009; Reha 2014) or cultural heritage and nature protection.[1] The most noteworthy example of the practical and ideological importance of tradition is using place-lore in the policies of protecting sacred natural sites (Jonuks et al. 2014).

This unique relevance of place-lore arises from Estonian folklorists' strong tradi-tion of collecting and archiving nature-related folklore (Remmel 2014b; Hiiemäe and Remmel 2020). Place-lore research became a disciplinarily distinctive area of study in the 1990s, and the concept itself is well known and widely used in everyday discourse in Estonia (Hiiemäe and Remmel 2020: 385). At the same time, Estonian folkloristics has so far lacked a critical approach to the different usages of place-lore in contempo-rary contexts (see more Päll forthcoming). There is a need to link place-lore research with critical topics in international cultural studies and environmental humanities and analyse place-lore in the context of changing ecological and social circumstances such as environmental change or cultural disruption. Previous folkloristic study of sacred natural sites demonstrates this research gap. The folklore concerning these sites is well

presented in archive material, although the majority of the material is represented and studied in the context of traditional 19th- and 20th-century peasant culture (for example Remmel 1998; 2014a; H. Valk 2009; Hiiemäe and Remmel 2020). Thus, folklore related to sacred sites has been framed as a fixed and historical, even nostalgic, tradition (for example Remmel 2014b). Less attention has been paid to changing vernacular interpretations related to sacred sites (for example Kõivupuu 2009; Hiiemäe 2017).

Recent research on sacred natural sites in Estonia has been developed not so much around the place-lore but has rather positioned the topic in the context of the new religious movements, especially the Estonian native faith movement and its connections with national identity politics (for example Västrik 2015; Heinapuu 2016) and its role in contemporary heritage discourse (Jonuks et al. 2014; Jonuks 2017). The ideology of the Estonian native faith movement, *maausulised* (literally 'Believers of the Earth'),[2] and their representative organisation Maavalla Koda (formed in 1995), has a crucial role in contemporary discussions related to sacred sites as well as to nature protection and environmental communication discourses in Estonia. The contemporary *maausulised* movement has its ideological origins in national Romanticism and the 1930s' national paradigm (Västrik 2015: 134–141). However, they have similarities with other neopagan or native faith movements in Europe and especially in the post-Soviet region, for example, the reconstructivist view of earlier folk tradition, stressing continuity with earlier belief systems, syncretism, etc. (see also Gregorius 2015; Peers 2015; Szilagyi 2015). *Maausulised* see themselves as part of the national culture paradigm, i.e., spokespersons for tradition, rather than a religious movement (Västrik 2015; Jonuks 2017; Jonuks and Äikäs 2019: 122; see also Peers 2015).

Maavalla Koda has managed to establish the concept of the sacred natural site in the public domain (Jonuks and Äikäs 2019: 122), finding intellectual support from international organisations for example the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and some international religious movements (Jonuks et al. 2014: 96–97). Maavalla Koda has taken an active role in discussion of development projects that relate to sacred sites. Moreover, these discussions have given the native faith movement the chance to introduce the idea of sacred natural sites in the public domain, as well as authorise their position as spokesperson for tradition. Some noteworthy conflicts have related to Kunda sacred hill (2003), Purtse sacred hill (2006), a sacred site on Panga cliff (2007), and Paluküla sacred hill (2003–…). The case-study of this article, the conflict surrounding the plan to build a ski resort near Paluküla sacred hill in central Estonia, is one of the longest place-centred environmental conflicts in contemporary Estonia. Moreover, Paluküla is a good model conflict for studying the role of place-lore in similar conflicts. Since the beginning of the conflict, it has been characteristic of the debate to involve references to and discussions of oral tradition, and also to question, compare, and use place-related vernacular knowledge and narratives as part of the argumentation. Tracking references to previous place-lore about Paluküla Hill in the news media allows me to show how earlier folklore materials have been (de)contextualised and re-storied during the conflict.

The article is divided into six sections. The first section approaches place-lore as a semiotically dialogical and polyphonic tradition and presents its semiotic potential at local and institutional levels of environmental communication. The second part gives a brief overview of the conflict over Paluküla Hill, while the third part introduces materi-

als and methods. Previous folklore about Paluküla Hill is briefly described in the fourth section. The fifth part describes the role of place-lore in media discourse by outlining the representation context of folklore in the conflict discourse by giving a selection of narratives or topics, and by highlighting claims based on place-lore. The last part, the Discussion, interprets the results of the media analysis and draws some conclusions.

THE SEMIOTIC POTENTIAL OF PLACE-LORE IN ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATION

Place-lore, similarly to other environmental-related textual representations (see for example Maran 2014) is dialogical in essence, as place-related stories connect our collective and subjective interpretations with environmental or extra-narrative reality. Although Estonian folklorists have studied place-lore mainly as cultural representation, by focusing on the discursive dimension of place-lore they have acknowledged the important role of environmental structures and qualities in forming place-related tradition (see Remmel 2014b). The semiotic activity of an environment and the interpretative relations between culture and nature come to the fore through place-related narratives. The semiotic activity of the environment can be understood as inter- and intra-species communication, the temporality of the environment and processes that are based on temporality and the environmental response to human activities and disruptions. The activity and features of other species and processes in the environment are perceived as meaningful and integrated into place-related stories, place names, and various vernacular interpretations.

The relevance of environmental characteristics in place-related folklore is well demonstrated by the toponymic explanations of the ridges and valleys of Paluküla hill. The following story was collected from Liivaku farmhouse on the north-eastern side of the hill:

> *The Sacred Hill*
> The surroundings of Palu Village are very hilly with very high hill ridges and steep valleys. The earth is sandy and now covered in fields. The highest of its ridges is covered with alder forests with some spruce trees interspersed. The hill was believed to be in honour of the ancient Estonian god Hiie, thus it is called The Sacred Hill [*Hiiemägi*].
>
> A steep elongated valley called Tõnni Hollow is located near Hiiemägi in between other hills. It was presumably the location of an altar. Estonians would bring fresh meat as a sacrifice when killing an animal, as well as sacrifice a part of their yield for every harvest, shearing, monetary earning, or similar. It is also assumed that an ancient Estonian fortress was situated on these hill ridges.[3]

As this story illustrates, place-lore reflects the cultural and ecological dimensions of collective environmental experience: what kind of species grows in a specific place, what are the characteristics of the landscape, etc.? Place-lore is contextual and refers to the environment it represents, thus, place-related stories are not entirely understandable when one does not know the environment to which they refer. Timo Maran (2014) has described the same tendency in the case of Estonian nature literature.

Place-lore narratives are often motivated by environmental semiosis, and thus, inter-preting environmental signs is an important basis for these stories. To understand this, the differentiation between cultural and environmental sign processes must be high-lighted. Departing from Charles Sanders Peirce's sign theory, we can see how symbols are cultural and arbitrary while the indexical and iconic signs are based on continuity and similarity and have a perceivable relationship with the object to which they refer (see for example Wheeler 2008; Maran 2017). Environmental signs belong among the latter as they are mainly physically manifested causal and non-conventional signs, i.e. indexical and iconic sign relations that we and other species interpret in the environ-ment (Maran 2017: 356). These can be, for instance non-intentional (for example, plant cover, weather conditions), and intentional sign relations in the environment, especially interspecies communication and interpretation of the activity of other species. At the same time, symbolic interpretations are often rooted in pre-symbolic signs – indexes and icons (Wheeler 2008; Maran and Kull 2014). Environmental signs are open to cul-tural interpretation because the causal relationship between the object is often vague and remain unclear for the observer. For example, the concept of the will-o'-the-wisp in mires or so-called 'fairy rings' can be viewed as vernacular interpretations of environ-mental signs (Maran 2017: 360).

Local narratives can be viewed not only as a discursive phenomenon but as a part of environmental communication, as part of environmental practice. In addition to these narratives referring to an environment, the storytelling context of place-lore is also related to the physical surroundings that these narratives represent. People tell sto-ries about familiar surroundings, or about their engagements in an environment that is being talked about. In addition, a place or an environment presented in a folklore text often coincides with a site where folklore is mediated or spoken about, in which case the represented environment itself is present. In these situations, the environment often motivates meanings, facilitates the remembering of narratives or motifs, influences the choice of narrative, etc. (Remmel 2014b: 40–41, 54). Therefore, the environment as an interface plays important role in mediating and retaining vernacular narratives (for example Gunnell 2009: 307–308; Päll forthcoming).

Place-lore thus represents a multilevel communication relationship between the environment and the subjects inhabiting it. However, when including these kinds of contextual and environmental-related narratives in conflict communication, the narra-tive may become disconnected or de-contextualised from the environment represented. In the conflict of Paluküla Hill, as in other environmental debates, it is possible to dis-tinguish between two intertwined communication levels, the communication between the environment and people, and communication between different groups. Ideological discussions, different public representations, etc., focus attention on the latter, i.e. the discursive or representational level. David Low (2008: 48) has argued that the root prob-lem of environmental problems are "disconnections between our ways of thinking about an environment and the ways an environment asserts its own being". Low referred to situations where the representations, talking about the subject matter (for example the environment) become separated from the subject matter itself.

Low's perspective, which connects semiotics and environmental communication studies, is relevant because it illustrates the importance of considering different experi-ences, viewpoints, and narratives in environmental communication. Low stresses how

various, sometimes even conflicting, knowledge of the environment helps to acknowledge 'dissent' (ibid.: 48–50). The concept of dissent is crucial: it can be understood as part of enquiry-based environmental communication where parties to a discussion seek to understand the subject matter at an ontological, not only discursive, level. Ignoring or 'over-managing' different interpretations and experiences may lead to hermetic or dogmatising communication (see more ibid.: 50–54). Moreover, environmental agency and environmental semiosis enter the discussion through the interpretative relations people have with the environment (ibid.: 49). Place-lore or vernacular interpretations of the environment, in general, are one way to allow and encourage dissent as place-related narratives already manifest complex and multiple ecological and social relations.

However, in addition to noticing the relevance of local, environmental-related stories in conflict discussion, attention should be paid to how place-lore is used in conflict communication to express social dissent or conflicting interpretations of the environment. In environmental conflicts such as the Paluküla case, place-lore has an important position in the rhetoric of different interest groups, and in the argumentation itself as part of various discursive practices. When place-lore becomes part of topical discussions in the public sphere, the dialogical contextual relations between the environment and narratives are shifted (Remmel 2014b: 52). At the same time, the alternative or inherent narrative potential of certain motifs or stories may be activated when the community or interest groups preserve the sites or heritage as endangered. For example, when cultural heritage becomes suddenly endangered, its relevance to identity discourse and cultural memory will often become more noticeable (Hafstein 2012: 500–501).

Discussions concerning natural sacred sites are a good example of how environment-related and contextual meanings are intertwined with ideological and symbolic ones. When place-lore is adapted to cultural heritage or religious discourse, it participates in creating sacred places by establishing new arbitral distinctions, i.e. by differentiating sacred from non-sacred, setting new hierarchies, and attaching conceptual meanings to places (Barroso 2017: 343). The environment itself may become a sign or symbol of something else (ibid.: 347). Moreover, as in the Estonian context, sacred natural sites manifest various dominant meanings other than the religious. Ott Heinapuu (2016), who has studied traditional sacred sites in the context of ecosemiotic theory, has described how the sacred sites of traditional agrarian society have transformed into national monuments, and how since the 1930s such sites have been regarded as important for national identity. Thus, on the general discursive level, the topic of sacred natural sites is related to the topics of national pride, worth, and identity.

OVERVIEW OF THE PALUKÜLA HILL CONFLICT

Paluküla Hill (literally 'Palu village hill') or Paluküla Hiiemägi ('Palu village Sacred Hill') in Kehtna Municipality, Rapla County, has a height of 106.9 m and is the highest peak in central and north-west Estonia. The hill, which is actually a plateau with several ridges and hollows (see Figure 1), is well known in the region and frequently visited. It has been under nature protection since 1964[4] due to its ecological and geological characteristics and visual prominence (see Photo 1). Although there have been some previous discussions on how to manage the area, a conflict over the hill occurred in autumn 2003

when the local government of Kehtna Municipality approved a project that included a ski resort near the hill. Some of the locals as well as members of the Maavalla Koda responded with criticism of the plan and claimed that the place has traditionally been untouched and sacred, and therefore large-scale economic or recreational activity was not appropriate on the hill. Another part of the local community and municipal officials saw the ski resort project as an opportunity to create jobs, provide better conditions for different sporting activities, and raise Paluküla's importance as a tourist attraction.
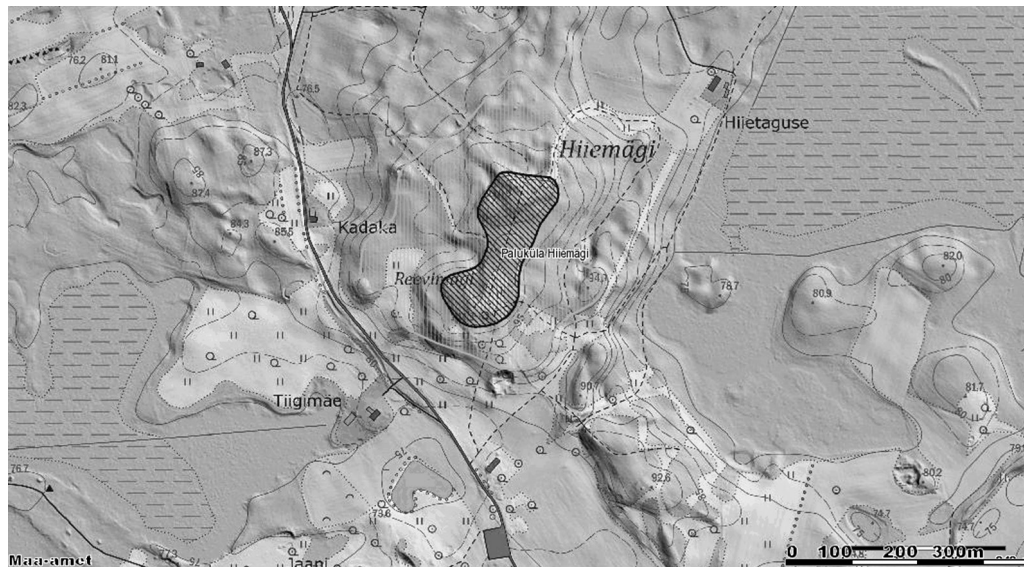

Figure 1. Paluküla Hill on a map. The blue area marks the part currently under heritage protection. Base map: Estonian Land Board 2021.

Photo 1. The south side of Paluküla Hill, also called Reevimägi ('Reevi Hill'). Photo by Lona Päll, December 2019.

The conflict has been widely covered in the local and national media. The conflict culminated in autumn 2004 when activists gathered on the hill and attempted to stop bulldozers from preparing the site for a ski lift. The event has been labelled 'Paluküla War' in public discussions. Apart from intense media coverage, videos and films were made by parties to the conflict, and signatures were collected against building the ski resort as well as in favour of the planned developments. Over the years, the discussion involved researchers from various fields, and experts from public institutions (for example the Environmental Board, the National Heritage Board, and the sacred natural sites expert group under the Heritage Board) and religious organisations, i.e., Maavalla Koda. In addition, some non-government organisations were established during the conflict, such as Union Protecting Paluküla Sacred Hill (founded in 2004), whose proclaimed aim is to push back large-scale development in the hill area, and the Paluküla Club (founded in 2013), which actively seeks opportunities to promote sports activities on the hill and manages the recreational infrastructure there. From 2008 until 2013, the case was discussed at all levels of the Estonian court system, and protectors of the hill also applied to the European Court of Human Rights.

Legal, political, and public discussions have not resulted in an agreement, and discussion over possible development in the area continues. Some nature and heritage protection measures in the area have changed over the years,[5] and part of the hill was taken under heritage protection in 2004. The original large-scale ski resort project has been dropped due to changed economic, political, and legal conditions. However, the unresolved discussion has occasionally intensified (for example in 2015 and 2017) when the government of Kehtna Municipality and local communities sought ways to develop the area, and protectors of the hill responded with queries, complaints, and public statements. The two dominant views on the usage of the hill have remained the same: the hill as an important sacred place, and the hill's appeal and potential as a place of sport and recreation. Paluküla Hill itself has turned into a medium of conflict. Any activity held on the hill (playing Frisbee golf, cutting down trees, holding prayers and ceremonies) may heat up the discussion again. The conflict also often intensifies in connection with wider environmental or cultural discussions in Estonia, such as the heated discussion of forest management in Estonia that has taken place in recent years.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

To analyse how place-lore is integrated into the public discussion concerning Paluküla Hill, I studied coverage of discussions around Paluküla in news media between 2001 and 2019. I used the keywords 'Paluküla hiiemägi' and 'Paluküla mägi' to search for articles.[6] The analysed texts constituted a corpus of 138 articles. These reflect data from all prominent Estonian news platforms and newspapers, from local newspapers (*Raplamaa Teataja*, *Valla Vaatleja*), and some relevant and topical articles about the Paluküla conflict published on smaller sites like environmental portal *Roheline Värav* or cultural weekly *Sirp*. The number of articles included in the analysis corpus varies per year and reflects the timeline of the conflict itself. The media coverage was most intense in 2003–2005 when a large-scale ski resort plan was announced, and again in 2015 when there were discussions about the new management plan of the Kõnnumaa nature pro-

tection area. While the intense conflict and protests around 2004 were covered widely, the new rather small-scale development ideas for the Paluküla area discussed between 2016 and 2018 were mainly covered in the local media.

The analysis corpus contains only articles that reflected opposition around different activities or plans related to the hill. For instance, news describing sports events or rituals on Paluküla Hill without a focus on conflict were left out, but some stories about ski centre developers or opinion pieces were included if these were clearly part of the ongoing discussion around the hill. In the text corpus, I marked various usages of and references to folklore in these texts. I noted the occasions when: (1) narratives were added or quoted; (2) certain narratives, topics, or information from place-lore was mentioned or referred to; and (3) discussion was generally supported by reference to folklore/tradition/history/heritage. To map out how and to what extent the statements made in public discussions about folkloristic interpretations of Paluküla Hill are related to earlier archival material and local narratives, I looked into previously collected place-lore about the hill and its close surrounding. Additionally, I studied interviews with conflict participants conducted in 2015 by folklorist and archaeologist Jüri Metssalu as part of his report to the National Heritage board. These interviews gave a sense of vernacular interpretation currently shared and communicated by locals that may not be reflected in earlier folklore, but also their attitudes regarding different activities and narratives related to the place.[7]

Although I analysed a corpus of news articles, the media and public representation of the conflict was wider. To be able to contextualise and justify news media coverage, I familiarised myself with wider background material such as information on the web pages of various organisations, reports from public meetings, blog posts, short films,[8] social media discussions, public documents, and expert opinions, etc. Moreover, the relevance of place-lore in environmental conflict is not always explicitly noticeable in discussions but is also manifested in policies, regulations, and various representations of place (for example tourist materials, information boards, maps). Conversations with people involved in protests or research into Paluküla and several visits to the hill helped me understand the variety of practices related to the hill and experience the ecological conditions.

A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PLACE-LORE RELATED TO PALUKÜLA HILL

I found overall 30 texts or recordings about Paluküla Hill, the earliest of these from 1906 and the latest from 2009. The earlier material from folkloristic, archaeological, language, or cultural history collections and from popular science journals includes 21 texts dating back to 1906–1948. The more recent material from the 2000s includes nine recordings collected as part of different small-scale projects.

Two of the texts from the earlier material give archaeological data about the hill,[9] five texts are descriptions of rituals, customs, or bringing the offerings to the sacrificial stone and/or Tõnni Hollow on the hillside.[10] One text collected from the nearest farmhouse mentions farming on the hill and bringing offerings to Tõnni Hollow.[11] Three texts laconically mention the hill location,[12] and two are more detailed landscape descrip-

tions including wider surroundings or other toponyms in Paluküla village.[13] Two stories are versions of the same narrative about Estonian giant hero Kalevipoeg throwing stones,[14] the motif is common in Estonia and these stories are not environment-specific. Earlier material also includes six toponymic explanations: four of these from 1948 are short mentions and localisations of Hiiemägi, Taaralepa mägi, Tõnni auk or Reevimägi, i.e., hollows and ridges relating to Paluküla Hill.[15] Two toponymic explanations are collected by Endel Varep probably in the 1960s: a description of offering at Tõnni Hollow, and a description of farmland on the hill and cellars on the hillside.[16]

Recent material includes nine recordings from 2000 to 2009. Four stories collected during local heritage inventory by the State Forest Management Centre describe cellars on the hillside, farming on the hill area, finding a vodka bottle at Tõnni Hollow, and a discussion about the boundaries of the sacred area on the hill.[17] Two texts collected during fieldwork organised by the Estonian Folklore Archives describe sports events on the hill and visiting the place on special occasions such as birthdays,[18] as well as making a midsummer bonfire.[19] The latest material also includes three short memories collected in 2000 by local Lembi Sepp who was a history student at the time and participated in the protest against the ski resort. Stories describes bringing offerings to Tõnni Hollow, and in one text about excavating on the hill, are also mentioned.[20]

Interviews made by Jüri Metssalu in 2015 aimed to study people's opinions in the context of the ongoing discussion but these include contemporary vernacular narratives shared among the community, neighbours, or family that complemented the previous folklore about Paluküla. 31 people, most of who were locals, were asked about their relationship to the place, from where they get information about the place and discussions around it, why the place is important on a personal and collective level, how they feel about different developments in the area, etc. In general, practical engagements and subjective memories were more emergent than the place's relevance as a heritage site, tourist site, or well-known symbol. The interviews showed how collective vernacular narratives and meanings related to place became clearly acknowledged in the conflict discourse but were rarely discussed before the conflict started. Some core oppositions among activities and meanings of place also emerged, i.e. seeking silence and entertainment/sports, economic and spiritual activities, contemporary and historical values. All of the interviewees expressed how they were tired of the long-lasting conflict and lack of shared understanding.

PLACE-LORE IN THE PALUKÜLA CONFLICT DISCOURSE

Media analysis and interviews showed that a variety of groups, organisations, and individuals involved in this discussion are internally heteronomous and the groups partly overlap. While media analysis detected some key groups, such as members of Maavalla Koda and local municipality officials, whose messages were more prominently present in public discussion, some general patterns of using vernacular interpretations in discussions were noticeable. Thus, in the following, I will outline some patterns, modes, and practices related to usages of place-lore that emerged from public discussions. More precisely, I discuss the following aspects: (1) in what contexts place-lore appeared in discussions, (2) which narratives or motifs were included in discussions and if some

narratives or topics were missing, and (3) how folklore or tradition was used to build up claims in the conflict. I will contextualise these results with theory from environmental communication studies and research on sacred places.

Shift of Representation Context: Folklore as Part of Fact-based Communication

All the parties in the conflict in one way or another referenced place-lore narratives. However, in the media discourse, folkloristic sources appeared more in articles, press releases, or opinion pieces, with representatives of Maavalla Koda, experts, or locals critical of the development project explaining their positions. Particular archive texts were quoted or referred to as evidence to illustrate how the place has been one of the most prominent sacred places in the region,[21] or various historical sacred usages of the hill,[22] or events celebrated on the hill.[23] At the same time, supporters of larger developments on the hill referred to the photograph from 1935[24] (see Photo 2) to justify managing the forest on the hill, and occasionally also referred to local knowledge and memories describing activities at Paluküla. Using historical sources and place-lore as proof to identify sacred places is logical, as there is usually little archaeological evidence that refers to sacral practices in these places in Estonia (Jonuks et al. 2014: 101–102).

Photo 2. Paluküla Hill in 1935. Photo by Gustav Vilbaste.

However, using the place-lore sources as evidence also marks an important shift in the context in which folklore appears. In the discussion about Paluküla Hill, folklore has become part of the authorised knowledge and official discourse: different parties in the discussion have referred to place-lore in the same way as national laws or international agreements and documents are often referred to. For instance, references to folklore were used as a source next to legislative acts, documents, and development plans (for example, the 2011 IUCN guidelines on sacred natural sites, the 2015–2020 Sacred Natural Sites in Estonia development plan, the natural conservation plan up to 2020).[25] Folklore sources were also used in expert opinions commissioned from folklorists and archaeologists[26] from where these entered the media discourse.

Considering folklore texts as a part of fact-based communication does not mean that particular narratives, some of which contain supernatural motifs[27] and figurative elements,[28] were considered factual; rather, these narratives claimed to directly represent certain historical worldviews, practices, and experiences without acknowledging these texts as interpretations. For example, narratives describing how cutting down the trees from sacred site resulted in farm animals dying in village is very common and often re-told by protectors of sacred places. A similar story about Paluküla[29] was cited in public discussions.[30] In other words, place-lore, which is essentially variable, subjective, and multivocal and expresses different, sometimes even opposing concepts on the environment, was considered univocal and coherent. However, the semiotic heterogeneity and tension between different interpretative levels in place-lore did not disappear entirely from the public discussion. For example, the relativity and subjectivity of folklore texts were more noticeable in discussions about Paluküla when local people referred to family and personal memories and activities on the hill to oppose or verify the 'official' folklore, i.e. archive source.[31]

Environmental communication studies have shown that communicating and stressing facts and authorised knowledge is a common strategy for different parties in the conflict to set their agendas (Low 2008: 49–50). Thus, in conflict discourse, participants aim to present their messages as credible and support their statements with facts and evidence. In environmental discussion, scientific knowledge has historically been considered a prominent source of authority (see for example Nisbet and Scheufele 2009), and in conflict communication, scientific or factual knowledge is often placed in opposition to emotion and opinion (Low 2008: 50–54). While considering vernacular knowledge in environmental-related discussions can be highly relevant, as explained earlier, there is a risk of dogmatising and stereotyping folklore, i.e. showing it as uniform and fixed, in conflict discussion. In the case of Paluküla, the folklore itself acts as scientific knowledge, without any critical or contextual analysis. However, it is important to note how considering folk tradition as an authoritative source in cultural heritage or landscape-related discussions is also common in the Estonian public domain (see more Remmel and Jonuks 2021).

The Basis of Narrative Selection in the Conflict: Tradition over Subjectivity

While place-lore is semiotically polyphonic, only part of its semiotic potential is activated in a particular communication situation. In the context of fact-based communi-

cation, where folklore acts as evidence, the usage of narratives or motifs is selective because the parties in the discussion choose narratives and meanings that support their arguments and interpret folklore in a way that justifies their agenda in the conflict. Media coverage indicated how some meanings, events, or motifs reflected in folklore were present in discussions and become authoritative sources in the course of the discussion. At the same time, others were left aside. For example, members of Maavalla Koda, folklorists, archaeologists, and various officials typically referred to earlier archive materials from the 19th and 20th centuries from the Estonian Folklore Archive, which emphasise the sacred site function of the place.[32] These narratives constituted a distinctive core or canon of place-lore used in the conflict. At the same time, a few earlier texts from the 1930s or 1940s that mentioned practical uses of the hill along with sacred ones,[33] and stories about giant hero Kalevipoeg, were not referred to.

As a result, the idea that earlier folklore presented Paluküla Hill as an untouched sacred site became dominant in the public discourse. In other words, sacredness was communicated as the tradition- or folklore-based view, and this assumption set the course of discussion and served as a basis of argumentation for different parties in the conflict. It is important to note that these dominant narratives in the discussion did not reflect the existing vernacular meanings and narratives either adequately or entirely. Mainly because part of the tradition was left out in the conflict discourse. While the earlier and 'traditional' archived narratives were considered to be more authoritative and were dominant, the vernacular interpretations of current locals and their stories about the hill were underrepresented in the public conflict discourse, even though some of the local families have lived in Paluküla for centuries. In addition, the earlier archive materials were not referred to or interpreted by all of the parties in the conflict. It is easy to claim that they did not feel that earlier tradition supported their agendas, but another reason may be that previously collected folklore is not equally accessible to all parties. Reaching and analysing these materials requires time and resources, digital competence, and special skills to access the archive sources (for example understanding metalanguage).

Despite being underrepresented in the discussion, the alternative interpretations of former folklore, as well as alternative narratives, exist and are apparent in local communities as well as in other groups (officials, members of the Maavalla Koda, etc.) involved in the discussion. For instance, some locals tried to oppose claims that were based on archive material. Reports of public participation meetings and local government meetings published in newspapers described how some locals questioned the folklore sources that indicated sacred uses of the hill and stressed the practical uses. For instance, they claimed that the function of the stone fences on the hill was not ritual, but practical – to mark the borders of farmlands – and midsummer festivals were more related to active local community life than ritual events.[34] A greater variety of functions and activities related to Paluküla was noticeable in materials collected by the State Forest Management Centre during local heritage inventory[35] in 2009 and in interviews conducted by Jüri Metssalu in 2015. The interviews showed a variation of entanglements with the place that are relevant to a small circle, among the community, neighbours, family, for example celebrating events on the hill, seeking silence, meditating, taking guests and friends to visit the hill, taking regular walks or maintaining other recreational or spiritual habits related to the hill, etc.

Another reason why using the place-lore in conflict discussions was rather biased is the arbitrary distinction between authoritative and nonauthoritative folklore sources that appear in discussions. As mentioned before, citing folklore texts was part of the conflicting rhetoric. As researchers and interviewees define genre boundaries differently, written documentation automatically makes the traditional text seem more reliable (Bacchilega 2012: 452). Archived texts seem less subjective or ideologically influenced. This is also well perceived in fieldwork situations where people tend to read and share archive materials with folklorists and do not rely on their own memory because they consider it 'vague' or 'subjective' (see for example Remmel 2014b: 40). However, archive sources cannot be considered more objective or reliable as archive material is influenced by such aspects as the ideological background of folklore collecting, or the archiving choices (see more Valk 2005; particularly about place-lore Remmel 2014b). These contexts are usually not visible in the media discourse, for example, the folklore texts about Paluküla were not commented on, and there was no contextual information added about archiving or collecting these texts.

However, apart from stressing official or institutional authority there was another important strategy apparent in legitimising the claims made based on folklore: stressing the historicity and continuity of folklore or tradition. This was noticeable in the discussion about Paluküla Hill, but illustrates the use of folklore in similar discussions in general and is also dominant in the constructivist discourse of the neopagan and native faith movement in Estonia and more widely (see more Gregorius 2015; Västrik 2015; Jonuks 2017). Folklore is represented as reflecting historical, old, even ancient values and meanings, and through the use of these stories, the historical importance of Paluküla Hill is also emphasised. In the Paluküla conflict, the folkloristic timeframe constantly clashed with geological time scale, for example, when "the glacial period relief forms"[36] and the cultural importance or claim that activities related to and events held on the hill being "thousands of years" old were mentioned together.[37] However, the first documented folkloristic source about Paluküla dates back to 1906.[38] Giving folklore authority by stressing historicity and the long timeframe of narratives implies that a later or contemporary part of the tradition is less valid or adequate.

Supporting Argumentation with Place-lore: Focusing on and Creating Oppositions

As illustrated in previous sections we can see that conflict discussion focuses on the opposition between two main functions of the hill – the practical use of the land, and its sacred purpose. Groups who are strongly against building ski resorts argue that any non-sacred activity in this place is not appropriate as the place has traditionally been untouched. Religious comparisons are also common in their rhetorics, for example, the head of Maavalla Koda, Ahto Kaasik, claimed that "We wouldn't build a ski resort in a churchyard the same way as we wouldn't build it on a sacred hill. Both are sacred places."[39] The groups and people who support or are not clearly against possible development refer to different kinds of practical activity that take place on the hill today[40] as well as to these activities that have taken place there in the past.[41]

In public discussions about Paluküla Hill, practical use of land and sacred purpose are in conflict. However, in the oral tradition related to the hill and in folklore related to

natural sacred sites in general, these functions are not necessarily contradictory to each other. Moreover, the concept of untouched natural sacred sites is problematic (see for example Jonuks et al. 2014; Heinapuu 2016). Although most (traditional) sacred natural sites have been regarded as unaffected by human activity, there is no evidence that being 'untouched' or 'natural' are logical prerequisites of considering certain natural places sacred. Rather, the concept of sacred natural sites is re-constructed as representing a certain culture-specific image of nature or people's relationship with nature. In the Estonian case image of 'untouched' sites is rooted in national romanticism (see more Heinapuu 2016). At the same time, archaeological and folkloristic analysis has shown how human impact is clearly noticeable in these places (for example, sacrificial objects, footpaths, walkways, bonfire pits, altars, fences, etc.), also some sacred places have been managed as cultural landscapes (for example Jonuks et al. 2014: 96–97; Heinapuu 2016: 167–169).

The folkloristic and ecological data shows how Paluküla Hill has also been a semi-wild ecosystem and managed in different ways. The opposition between the sacred and practical functions of the place is prominent in public discussion, while in earlier folklore, the question of land use is not relevant, but is noticeable in the texts collected since the 2000s after the conflict broke out. For instance, in texts collected during fieldwork in 2009 organised by the Estonian Folklore Archives are clearly approachable in conflict discourse as informants discuss the different functions and previous uses of the hill. Various activities on the hill are noticeable in earlier folklore, but they are not opposed. Apart from reports on religious rituals held on Paluküla Hill, both the older and more recent folklore accounts reflect other functions and meanings apart from religious rituals. Local people from Paluküla remember, and earlier archive texts and ecological data express, how part of Paluküla Hill was used as farmland for herding and mowing, sand was excavated from the hillside, and the forest on the hill was managed (see EFR). The hill has also been viewed as an immediate home surrounding and connected with family history, and in more recent years the hill has been seen in various ways, such as a place of recreation or a tourist spot. Interviews recorded by Metssalu in 2015 illustrate a wide spectrum of contemporary practices related to the hill. Moreover, these interviews reflected various subjective and alternative religious or spiritual practices related to the place that do not adhere to earlier Estonian religious practices.

The question of land usage and the different functions of a place reflects the problems with using archive sources in the conflict because these sources cannot be used as proof of different activities at the place. A dominant part of the earlier material about Paluküla, dating to the first half of the 1900s, was collected in the course of fieldwork or as a result of the folklore archive's collection campaigns, the stated aim of which was to collect and archive narratives about sites of folkloric significance. Folklorists did not collect data about practical, everyday, or subjective, experiences; fieldwork diaries reflect how these were not considered relevant. Thus, the early reports on the Paluküla sacred hill do not necessarily allow the conclusion that the hill was considered equally sacred by all the people living there or that the site did not serve other, more practical, functions, as these were probably not deemed important enough to be documented.

The case of Paluküla Hill illustrates the role of public discussion or conflict in constructing and shifting of, for example, the sacredness of a certain place. Paluküla Hill was not regularly used as a sacred place at least since the 18th century. However, after

the conflict broke out in 2003, members of Maavalla Koda started to hold prayers (usually in November and January) on the hill, notifying the media on these occasions and revisiting the issue of Paluküla's fate in one way or another.[42] Thus, sacredness should not be viewed as a logical premise derived from place-lore, it can also be approached as a concept devised in the course of conflict.

DISCUSSION

In conflict discourse, folklore is mediated and represented differently compared to everyday vernacular communication. For example, instead of the social media groups of the local community or casual communication in a family or community circle, the narratives have become part of public, official, and institutional discussions in news articles, reports, or expert opinions. An intersection of different descriptive levels, such as vernacular and official, local and national, private and public, and a variety of new media (written and visual media, protest campaigns, rituals, tours) allow novel trans- and intermedial interpretations of folk narratives, but also interfere with the semiotic reality that these narratives represent.

The opposition around Paluküla Hill originally arose from plans to change the local environment; however, nature is approached in the conflict communication through national, religious, and bureaucratic categories associated with cultural heritage discourse. The environmental topics are discussed clearly on the symbolic level, and the place itself is double-symbolised (Barroso 2017: 342–343), being coded through new cultural meanings and also becoming a symbol itself. During the conflict, place-related narratives become relevant as a part of self-identification and self-preservation strategies of various interest groups, and at the same time, practical functions and subjective or immediate experiences manifested in place-lore remain in the background. Thus, while place-lore is dialogical on two levels – manifesting relations between human and environment, and manifesting different cultural imaginations about place – the latter, the discursive level, i.e. interpretations of the environment, become central in the conflict.

In the conflict of Paluküla Hill, a rather arbitrary distinction emerged between authoritative sources of folklore (i.e. archival material) and everyday vernacular interpretations, which were often overlooked in discussions as subjective and biased. At the same time, the ideological context of the archived material, the selections of folklorists, and the fragmentation of archive sources were not acknowledged in the discussion. Considering place-lore as fixed knowledge can be problematic because the ecological, social, and cultural processes itself that these narratives express are dynamic and complex. Place-related narratives, being part of local communication, can make social and environmental processes visible, for example, environmental disruptions become interpreted in folklore. However, considering folklore as factual or conclusive, and thus independent of dynamic social and ecological context, alters this feedback loop between narratives and the environment.

The selective use of tradition, which is often characteristic of conflict communication and was evident in the Paluküla case, can also cause a diminishing of the semiotic coherence and polyphony in place-lore. The relations with the environment and environment-related practices are manifested in vernacular tradition specifically through

different, sometimes even conflicting narratives (see Päll forthcoming). When part of practices, activities, or ways of relating with the place are ignored in the discussion, the possible semiotic relationships with the environment also become neglected. Discussion of land use on Paluküla Hill illustrates how part of the tradition and thus extranarrative experiences were ignored. While place-lore about Paluküla Hill expresses a multitude of possible experiences and practices, the public discussion focused on the hill's function as a sacred place. Undoubtedly, religious meanings have a relevant role in previous folklore related to the hill. However, while the discussion focused on opposition around practical and sacred, other personal and collective narratives were ignored. Furthermore, syncretic religious practices related to sacred sites can be viewed as part of tourism, the new age movement, various nature-related practices, etc. (Jonuks and Äikäs 2019). These creative, subjective, and alternative practices do not necessarily adhere to the idea of authentic native faith common in public discourse dominant in discussions of Paluküla.

The potential of place-lore to reflect the multilayered, even conflicting ways of adapting and interpreting the environment is crucial in environmental discussions because a diversity of interpretations enables us to consider the semiotic activity of environment, or its 'dissent', to paraphrase Low (2008: 60). For instance, previous folklore about Paluküla Hill expresses the characteristics of the environment as well as the ecosystem's responses to different human activities. Nature was described, dealt with, manipulated, used, valued, and in short, interpreted in multiple ways. However, in media coverage of the conflict, nature is not talked about unless it has an instrumental function. For instance, the European red wood ant (Formica polyctena), called *palukuklane* in Estonian (a name that refers to the certain type of dry forest environment – *palu* – it inhabits), appears in discussions in the context of forest management issues as well as when new ski trails were planned and some ant nests were removed. Excluding the non-human agency and overlooking ecological characteristics in environmental discussions can deepen the "disconnections between our ways of thinking about an environment and the ways an environment asserts its own being" (Low 2008: 48) that are the basis of environmental problems in the first place.

Different vernacular practices and narratives are not only the source of environmental 'dissent' but also crucial for social dialogue and cooperation. Seeking and allowing social 'dissent' in a sense of different or conflicting views in discussions can help to avoid hermetic, closed communication (see more in Low 2008: 53–54). In the Paluküla case, social dissent was apparent when different parties to conflict interpreted or contested the authoritative or institutionalised views on place-lore by bringing fourth personal memories or narratives that have been absent from archive materials or official discourse. However, these contextual or subjective vernacular interpretations did not hold a dominant position in the public discussions as officials and institutions (i.e. Maavalla Koda) were more capable of getting their messages out. Ignoring locals' points of view, intentionally or unintentionally, can create miscommunication and deepen the divide between cultural heritage and nature protection officials and communities. At the same time, including local knowledge (see for example Berkes 2008) and bridging the gap between official and practical dimensions of environmental communication (see for example Pilgrim and Pretty 2010) has been increasingly stressed in various fields in environmental and cultural heritage management.

The results of this study indicate that discussing place-lore at the discursive level of conflict communication resulted in altering and transforming the dialogical potential of place-lore, that is reflecting the multilayered ways of adapting and interpreting the environment. The Paluküla conflict illustrates how the issues originally about the environment can become strongly loaded symbolic discussions, which may lead to ignoring extra-textual ecological reality. When the conflict escalated, the main question was not about what kind of human activity the specific environment can tolerate and how these new activities (such as building the ski resort) related to existing landscape practices; instead, the main question became whose idea of nature use is more valid. Moreover, in the case of Paluküla Hill, practices like heritage management, nature protection, ritual events, recreation, and protests were triggered and influenced by interpretations raised in public conflict discourse. Thus, decontextualising folklore in conflict communication can have a direct impact on the extra-narrative environment itself, and for this reason, critical analysis on vernacular interpretations in conflict discussion is not only discursively, but also ontologically, relevant.

NOTES

1 For example, place-lore collection projects in Estonian national parks (2006–2017) aimed to contribute to cultural heritage management (see ELB, Place-lore). Place-lore research is also integrated into the mire restoration project led by the Estonian Fund for Nature (see ELF).

2 The term was coined in 1992 (Västrik 2015: 138), see more on the terminology in Kuutma 2005.

3 EKLA, f. 199, m. 46, l. 31a < Rapla parish, Paluküla village, Liivaku farm < Rapla parish, Paluküla village, Magaski farm – Marta Sorgsep < Jaan Mass, 54 years old, Ann Magnus, 74 years old (1930).

4 In 2000 the hill was included in the newly formed Kõnnumaa landscape protection area (see more on protection measures see in CMP and Landscape Protection Area).

5 Some restrictions were added and management activities changed on the hill in 2015 when the management plan of the Kõnnumaa landscape area was renewed.

6 To find the articles I used the Digar database and the Estonian Reference Corpus. Since all newspapers from the period under consideration were not equally represented in databases, I conducted additional searches on newspaper sites, Google, and Keeleveeb to complement the data.

7 The report aimed to assess the existing borders of the area under heritage protection and propose changes if needed. Fieldwork was one part of the study, Metssalu also analysed a variety of earlier archaeological, geographic, and folkloristic data. The report is archived at the National Heritage Board but is not publicly available.

8 The relevant example is a series of short films about Estonian natural sacred sites directed by Anna Hints. In one of the films, writer Kristina Ehin talks about Paluküla Hill, stressing the folkloristic and sacred importance of the place (Hints 2015).

9 Jung 1910: 88; AK Juu: KK, Urgart 1925, 8.

10 ERA II 19, 534/5 (2) < Juuru parish, Kaiu municipality, Salutsi village – Rudolf Põldmäe < Juhan Klaan, 75 years old (1929); EKLA, f. 200, m. 15:2, p. 11 < Rapla parish, Paluküla village – Emma Tensmann (1930); ERA I 5, 723 (1) < Rapla parish, Paluküla village, Kruusimäe farm – Leida Varner < Tõnis Varner, 63 years old (1937); ERA I 5, 745 (3) < Rapla parish, Ingliste

municipality, Paluküla village, Põlma farm – Erna Põllumets < Jaan Klaan, 86 years old (1937); ERA II 225, 87/8 (26) < Rapla parish, Rapla municipality, Paluküla village – Asta Muusikas < Mari Treier, 72 years old (1939).

11 EKLA, f. 199, m. 46, l. 31a < Rapla parish, Paluküla village, Liivaku farm < Rapla parish, Paluküla village, Magaski farm – Marta Sorgsep < Jaan Mass, 54 years old, Ann Magnus, 74 years old (1930).

12 AI F 22 s. 73.8 < Rapla parish, Paluküla village; KKI/N (Koski 1967, p. 61); ERA II 24, 287 (2) < Türi parish, Vahastu municipality, Vahastu village, Kuusiku farm – Richard Viidebaum < Jaan Klaas, 82 years old (1930).

13 See Preisberg 1913: 98; Vilbaste 1935.

14 EKS 37, 28 (1) < Rapla parish, Valtu municipality – Hans Kanketer (1906); E, StK 11, 39/40 (12) < Rapla parish – Linda Pärt (1921).

15 EKI KN Place names from Kehtna parish, collected by L. Lipstuhl (1948).

16 EKI KN Place names from Juuru parish, collected by Endel Varep.

17 See ELB, Local heritage.

18 ERA, DH 282 (19) < Juuru parish, Maidla village, Välja farm < Juuru parish, Maidla village, Küünimäe farm – Epp Tamm < Ülo-Mihkel Väljaots, born 1933 (2009).

19 ERA, DH 497 (23) < Rapla parish, Rapla town < Juuru parish, Lau village, Väljaotsa farm – Kadri Tamm, Valdo Valper < Rein Haggi, born 1948 (2009).

20 The recordings are not archived but included in Jüri Metssalu's report.

21 AC: *Nädaline*, March 4, 2004 ("Ekspertnõukogu tegi ettepaneku võtta Paluküla Hiiemägi muinsuskaitse alla").

22 AC: *Eesti Loodus* 7–8, 2001 ("Mis toimub Kõnnumaa maastikukaitsealal?"); AC: *Nädaline*, October 4, 2003 ("Hiis on põlisrahva pühamu"); AC: *Postimees*, November 4, 2003 ("Plaanitava suusakeskuse maa-ala võeti kaitse alla").

23 AC: *Nädaline*, March 4, 2004 ("Ekspertnõukogu tegi ettepaneku võtta Paluküla Hiiemägi muinsuskaitse alla").

24 AC: *Raplamaa Sõnumid*, December 2, 2015 ("Kõnnumaa maaomanik Kehtna vald soovib leebemaid piiranguid").

25 See for example AC: *Bioneer*, September 27, 2008 ("Riik raiub oma juuri"); AC: *Postimees*, July 30, 2017 ("Arvi Sepp: miks tahetakse Paluküla hiiemäel mets maha võtta?").

26 Reports were written by folklorists Mall Hiiemäe, Mari-Ann Remmel and Ergo-Hart Västrik (2004), by archeologists Tõnno Jonuks (2003) and Heiki Valk (2004).

27 For example narrative about beer as a ritual offering ERA I 5, 723 (1) < Rapla parish, Paluküla village, Kruusimäe farm – Leida Varner < Tõnis Varner, 63 years old (1937).

28 For example narrative about Kalevipoeg, EKS 37, 28 (1) < Rapla parish, Valtu municipality – Hans Kanketer (1906).

29 ERA I 5, 723 (1) < Rapla parish, Paluküla village, Kruusimäe farm – Leida Varner < Tõnis Varner, 63 years old (1937).

30 AC: *Nädaline*, October 4, 2003 ("Hiis on põlisrahva pühamu"); AC: *Roheline Värav*, April 13, 2005 ("Paluküla hiiemägi on sümbol kogu Eestile").

31 For example AC: *Nädaline*, January 8, 2004 ("Paluküla puhke- ja spordikeskus kompromisside otsingul").

32 For example, AC: *Eesti Loodus* 7–8, 2001 ("Mis toimub Kõnnumaa maastikukaitsealal?"); AC: *Nädaline*, March 4, 2004 ("Ekspertnõukogu tegi ettepaneku võtta Paluküla Hiiemägi muinsuskaitse alla"); AC: *Nädaline*, October 4, 2003 ("Hiis on põlisrahva pühamu"); AC: *Roheline Värav*, April 13, 2005 ("Paluküla hiiemägi on sümbol kogu Eestile").

33 For example EKLA, f. 199, m. 46, l. 31a < Rapla parish, Paluküla village, Liivaku farm, Rapla parish, Paluküla village, Magaski farm – Marta Sorgsep < Jaan Mass, 54 years old, Ann Magnus, 74 years old (1930).

34 AC: *Nädaline*, March 4, 2004 ("Ekspertnõukogu tegi ettepaneku võtta Paluküla Hiiemägi muinsuskaitse alla").

35 ELB, Local heritage.

36 AC: *Nädaline*, October 7, 2003 ("Hiiemäele ei ole vaja suusatõstukit").

37 For example, AC: *Raplamaa Sõnumid*, November 11, 2015 ("Kohalviibijana Hiiemäel ehk umbusklik prügikorjaja maausuliste hingedepäeva aegu Palukülas"); AC: *Raplamaa Sõnumid*, December 2, 2015 ("Vastuseks Kehtna vallavalitsusele").

38 EKS 37, 28 (1) < Rapla parish, Valtu municipality – Hans Kanketer (1906).

39 AC: *Eesti Päevaleht*, October 7, 2003 ("Külarahvas võitleb hiiemäele suusakeskuse rajamise vastu").

40 For example, AC: *Raplamaa Sõnumid*, January 13, 2016 ("Raplamaa rahval on oma maakonnas õigus tervisele ja turvalisusele"); AC: *Raplamaa Sõnumid*, July 4, 2018 ("Raplamaa turvalisuse nõukogu seisukoht Kõnnumaa maastikukaitseala eeskirjade eelnõu kohta").

41 For example, AC: *Nädaline*, January 8, 2004 ("Paluküla puhke- ja spordikeskus kompromisside otsingul").

42 For example, AC: *Raplamaa Sõnumid*, November 12, 2014 ("Maausulised tähistasid Paluküla hiiemäel hingedepüha").

S O U R C E S

Author's materials:

AC = Analysis Corpus consisting of news media texts.

Manuscript collections:

AI – Archaeological Collections of Tallinn University

AK – Collections of the Department of Archaeology of the University of Tartu

EKI, KN – Place name Collection of the *I*nstitute of the Estonian Language. https://www.eki.ee/kohanimed (accessed November 30, 2021).

EKLA – Estonian Cultural History Archives

EKS – Folklore collection of the Estonian Literary Society (1872–1924)

ERA – Folklore collection of the Estonian Folklore Archives (1927–1944)

ERA, DH – Folklore collection of digital recordings of the Estonian Folklore Archives (2003–...)

E, StK – Folklore Collection of J. M. Eisen's Fellows Scholars (1921–1927)

KKI – Collection of the Institute of Language and Literature (1941–1984)

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