

NEWS IN BRIEF

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IN SEARCH FOR PETROGLYPHS IN ESTONIA AND KARELIA

The current article describes the authors' attempt to trace oral reports on boulders with man-made prints or in Estonia and Karelia. Although not a single prehistoric rock carving except cup-marks has been found in Estonia so far, their discovery on erratic boulders is by no means inconceivable. The authors will describe some of the most interesting findings starting from the first known report about a stone with carved prints to the remarkable Devil Stone in Southeast Estonia and some less known petroglyphs in Karelia, including some accidentally found rock carvings originating from a very recent period.

IN ESTONIA: Reviewing the earliest report

At a meeting of the Estonian Learned Society 150 years ago Johann Samuel Boubrig (1788–1852) spoke about the ancient religion of Estonians as it was practised in the parish of Otepää, Southeast Estonia. Among other things Boubrig also mentioned a grove of coniferous trees located a few verst¹ from Palupera Estate, which in ancient times was used for sacrificing to a deity *Toor* or *Toro*. A roughly cut quadrangular stone was reportedly found near the grove. The stone was cut wider in the bottom and reportedly displayed a variety of apparently hewn-in figures (*allerlei wahrscheinlich eingehauene Figuren*). Unfortunately the experts had not had the chance to inspect the stone since a few years prior to the mentioned meeting the stone had been immured into a building (Boubrig 1843: 92–93; Krohn 1894: 29).

During a short field trip to Palupera in June 1988 we inquired local villagers about the abovementioned stone but unfortunately found no evidence to confirm the story. The location of the grove can probably be determined from old estate maps. The authors were referred to a stone with track prints in the village of Adra, but *in situ*

examination revealed that the stone's irregular impressions were of natural origin. Oral heritage about the stone had disappeared.

Following in Jaan Jung's footsteps

Jaan Jung (1898: 7, 40; 1910: 32; Tomson 1910), the first Estonian amateur archaeologist, has described a boulder with a few carved prints (Figures 1–2).

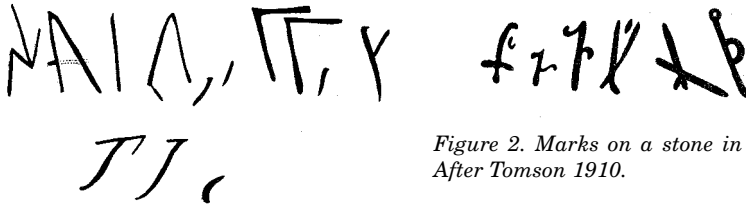


Figure 2. Marks on a stone in Nuia. After Tomson 1910.

Figure 1. Marks on a stone in Halliste parish. After Tomson 1910.

Two boulders with marks, several pood² in weight and possibly originating from a stone burial mound, were reportedly found in the vicinity of Abja-Mulgi farm, Halliste parish, Pärnu County. One had fallen in the nearby (Halliste?) river during flax retting, the other had gone to the possession of J. Jung. J. Jung had copied the marks and sent the copy to Prof. Sophus Bugge, an expert on runes in Christiania, Norway. The latter had replied that the marks did not represent ancient Scandinavian letters or any European letters, for that matter. Bugge argued that the boulder marks resembled, as it were, Turkic runic inscriptions found in Siberia. Still, the marks under discussion appear to resemble, at least partly, ordinary or reversed Latin letters, which should by no means diminish scholarly interest towards them. In August 1988 we tried to locate the boulder in the area surrounding the former Kaidi parish school but our efforts were of no avail.

J. Jung has also described a stone wall in a house in the small town of Nuia, which was said to have unique carved symbols (sword-shaped, etc.) on it. He has also mentioned that another stone with extraordinary figures was reportedly found on the field of Sargvere estate, Järva County. The land surveyor had believed it to be an ancient map(!).

Jung stated that all the material concerning representations on stones accumulated in the archives and museums should be reviewed and objects examined *in situ*. The public appeal for collection work made before World War I pointed out that information had to be gathered on all memorial stones and tombstones with or without figures, whereas “the figures and marks, as well as the shape of the stone or cross, should be copied as truthfully as possible” (Reimann & Thomson 1911: 129–130). Oral heritage, however, appeared seldom accurate. According to a report, for example, a stone located on the pasture of Torimu farm in Heimtal, Paistu parish, wore a pattern of unusual letters. After inspecting the stone J. P. Söggel determined that the marks were not man-made but natural (Söggel 1910: 114).

Discovering cup-marked stones used for ritual purposes

Approximately 1,750 cup-marked stones, i.e. ritual stones with small cup-marks, have been found in Estonia so far. Only 54 stones have been found in Southeast Estonia (Tvauri 1999: 115–119). It is known that the Kambja region in Tartu County was settled in the Early Iron Age at the latest. Until recently only one cup-marked stone had been found in the region, in the village of Kullaga.

On the field about 50 metres northwest from the buildings of Lehola farm in Suur-Kambja village lies a large erratic boulder (Figure 3). In May 1988 Tiiu Ernits discovered two adjacent regularly round cup-marks, 0.5 cm in depth and 5 cm in diameter, as if pressed with a ladle, on the stone’s surface. That boulder is situated about 5 kilometres from the cup-marked stone of Kullaga.

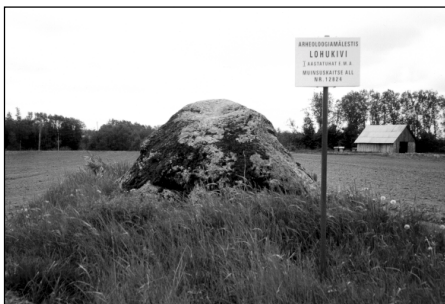


Figure 3. Cup-marked boulder on the field in Suur-Kambja. Photo by E. Ernits 2000.

Examining the erratic boulder of Lehola, forest specialist Mart Eensalu recalled a large boulder located about 500 metres southwest from the Lehola boulder in the bight of Peeda brook (Figure



Figure 4. Cup-marked boulder in the bight of the Peeda stream, Suur-Kambja. Photo by E. Ernits 1988.

of the brook about 10 metres downstream from the brook fork with one side in the water. The stone's maximum length is 3.3 m from east to west, its width is 2.9 m and height 1.3 m from the ground level and 2.3 m from the brook's bottom. On the side of the boulder facing the water, a deep north-and-southerly cleft can be found. Though the boulder is largely covered with moss, five larger (6–7 cm in diameter) and eight smaller indented smooth-bottomed and a couple of indistinct uneven-bottomed cup-marks were found on its uppermost surface (Figure 5). Both boulders are presently protected by the law for preservation of antiquities.

4). The winding small brook crosses the Tartu-Võru main road about 1.5 km from Väike-Kambja village towards the town of Võru. It flows in a deep valley and its shores are covered with a dense growth of deciduous trees. The erratic boulder is situated on a small islet (ca 50 x 30 m) bordered by two tributaries

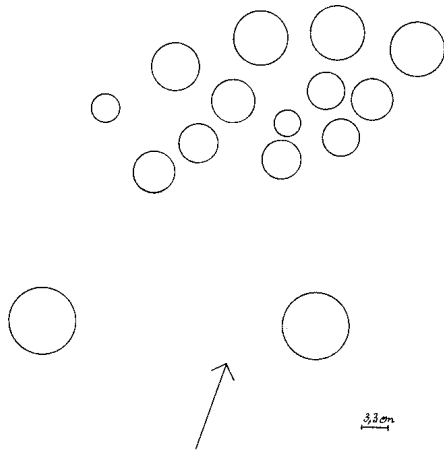


Figure 5. Cup-marks on the ritual boulder in Peeda, Suur-Kambja parish. Copied by T. Ernits and H. Kurss 1988, 1991.

***Kuradikivi* (The Devil Stone) near Antsla town**

Following our presentation “Karelian petroglyphs: the religion of forefathers carved in stone” at the Kaika summer seminar³ at Loosi village in summer 1990, the promoter of the Võru dialect and cul-

ture Jaan Pulk told the audience about an interesting stone with a swan figure arguably carved on its surface in Oe village in the vicinity of Antsla, which bears a striking resemblance to Karelian petroglyphs.

It was not before August 12, 1991 that we had an opportunity to inspect the boulder. J. Pulk kindly escorted us to the fringe of the thicket and mentioned that he believed the boulder was popularly called the Devil Stone. He also added that it was reportedly associated with witchcraft.

From the outside the Oe boulder bears a resemblance to a boat. In southern Estonia boulders of this shape are often called “the skiffs of Vanapagan⁴⁷”. The boulder is a little more than three metres in length and more than two metres in width; its height from the ground level is about 1.5 m. Its surface displays carved figures (Figures 6–7).

Unfortunately we found no swan representation on the surface. An oval figure resembling the bird trunk proved to be the result of natural weathering. Two lines meeting at an acute angle, which



Figure 6 (left). Main view of Kuradikivi, the Devil Stone in Oe village. Photo by E. Ernits 1991.



Figure 7 (right). Representations of the letter and key on the Oe Kuradikivi, the Devil Stone. Photo by E. Ernits 1991.

according to the legends mentioned below, resembled a flatiron to the locals, are unquestionably carved representations.

The meaning of these lines remains unclear, since evidently fires and carving a cross on the stone's surface has largely destroyed the representation. The cross with arms more than 10 cm in length may have been carved concurrently with the number indicating the year 1867. In the opposite end of the boulder (its north-eastern part) a representation of a 33 cm long key and a somewhat smaller letter T, which, though less likely, may also be letter F, could be found. These figures appear to be of earlier origin than the cross and the year, as the latter have been carved deeper into the surface (4–6 mm).

Later we learned that the Oe boulder is mentioned in two published legends (Laugaste & Liiv 1970: 227, 224–245). The first legend was recorded in 1956 from an inhabitant of Oe village:

There is a print on the stone that resembles a man's footprint, and it is said to be the Devil's footprint [...] People say that there is a chest of money or gold under the stone, which was put there by a rich landlord. The landlord had taken the gold or money to the woods, so that nobody would find it. The landlord had sold the gold to the Devil. And whoever gives away somebody's soul, will get the gold. A brave man wished to get the gold and promised his wife's soul to the Devil. He went to the stone at midnight to dig it up, and at the same time his wife, who was at home, saw someone driving four black horses to their yard; the woman was frightened and ran to hide at the neighbours' house. The cart had turned around and left. The man had got a good grip of the chest's edge, but since the evil one did not get his wife, the chest fell rumbling back to its place. Thus the man never got the gold. People say that the man actually lived in the former Oe village [...] (Laugaste & Liiv 1970: 227)

The same stone apparently figures also in another legend, recorded in 1958 by fifth graders at Antsla Secondary School:

There is a large stone in Õru forest, Vanapagan with a large pot of money under it. He sits under the stone and stirs money with his paw. Many have heard this chinking sound at Midsummer

Night. Before going under the stone he had printed his footprint, a key and a flatiron on the stone so that nobody would hear how he counted his money nor disturb him. It is believed that nobody can lift the stone. (Laugaste & Liiv 1970: 224–245)

It is interesting to mention that Aime Maripuu has introduced the Oe boulder also in fiction. Marju Kõivupuu has translated Maripuu's story under the title "Oe külä naasõ heng" ("The Soul of the Woman of Oe Village") into the Võru dialect and published it in the Võru dialect reader (Võrokõstõ 1993: 207–209; Võrokiilne 1995: 291–293).

Further studies on Oe boulder should focus on clarifying some issues connected with it. Was it perhaps a boundary stone, or was the cross carved on its surface to keep the Evil One away? What does the key and the letter T stand for? Was the stone used for ritual purposes?

IN KARELIA: A cup-marked stone

On August 12, 1985 we came upon a quadrangular boulder with artificial cup-marks on the waterline on the west coast of Lake Onega near the Southern End (*Suvagd'* in the Veps language) of the Veps village Kaskeza (in Russia *Kaskesruchei*) some hundred kilometres to the south of Petrozavodsk (Figure 8). The position of cup-marks shares similarities with selenomorphs or moon-shaped representations carved in the rocks of Cape Peri Nos VI on the eastern coast of Lake Onega and the position of depressions in a tombstone in Scandinavia

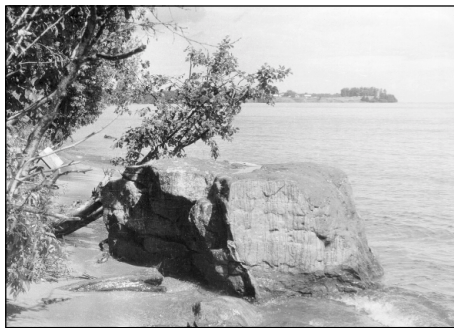


Figure 8. Cup-marked boulder in Kaskeza, on the western coast of Lake Onega. Photo by E. Ernits 1988.

(see Ernits 1987: 87; Äyräpää 1942: 185, 188). Presently, the boulder of Kaskeza is the easternmost among all the known cup-marked stones in Northern Europe. Oral conversation with archaeologist Vello Lõugas revealed that until the early 1990s the only cup-marked boulders situated east from Estonia were located on the Karelian Isth-

mus and at Lake Ilmen in the vicinity of Novgorod; by now cup-marked stones have been discovered elsewhere in Karelia.

Later, on July 22, 1988 we conducted a more detailed inspection of the Kaskeza boulder (Figure 9). The boulder is positioned almost parallelly with the more than 5 m high vertical sandstone cliff, more than 3 metres from the coast. The boulder measures 2.6 m in length and 2 m in width. The western end of the boulder rises approximately 1.5 m above the water level, its central part facing the lake 1.3 m above the water level and that facing the coast a few decimetres lower. There is a nearly three centimeter elevation in the eastern end of the greyish brown boulder; the elevation edge crosses the longitudinal axis of the stone some 50–60 cm further.



Figure 9. Cup-marks on the ritual boulder in Kaskeza. Photo by E. Ernits 1988.

The northernmost cup-mark, apparently of natural origin, is shoe-shaped, thus resembling selenomorphs among the petroglyphs of the Lake Onega region. The rest of the cup-marks are more or less round, 4.0–6.7 cm in diameter and 0.6–2.1 cm in depth. Among the cup-marks in quadrangular arrangement the two nearest to the lake are smaller (4.0–4.7 cm) and shallower (0.6 cm) than others.

“God’s Little Foot”

On July 15, 1987 we visited Maria Filippova (born in 1925), a former inhabitant of the Besov Nos village, in Shala and learned about a boulder with a depression resembling human footprint located in the area between the village and Lake Onega. The locals had called the stone *Bogovaia nozhka*, Russian for “God’s little foot”. Informant Yefim Titkov (born in 1908), who now resides in Pudozh, remembered how children used to compare their foot’s length (*v detstve vse pomeriali nozhku svoiu*) with the footprint on a *shchel’ia* (‘rock’ in local dialect) by the path from the Besov Nos village to Modozha beach. This information suggests that beliefs associated with the

boulder, if there ever were any, had fallen into oblivion already before World War I.

We managed to find the *Bogovaya nozhka* on July 21, 1987. The stone is located approximately one metre away from the path from the former Besov Nos village to the Modozha beach in the north, about half a kilometre from the village and 200 metres from the fringe of the forest. The stone is 93 cm in length, 31–50 cm in width and about 35 cm in height from the ground level (Figure 10). Relatively sparsely scattered pine trees, about half a metre in diameter, grow near the stone. A water spring overgrown by weeds is located some three metres from the boulder; the spring has been mentioned also by the informants. The footprint representation is of natural origin. It is 18 cm in full length, its width is 5 cm at the heel and 9 cm at the flat of the foot. The print is positioned transversely from the path, the part resembling toes facing towards the west. As suggested by the stone's popular name this "footprint" has been believed to be God's footprint (similar examples can be found elsewhere in Northern Russia).

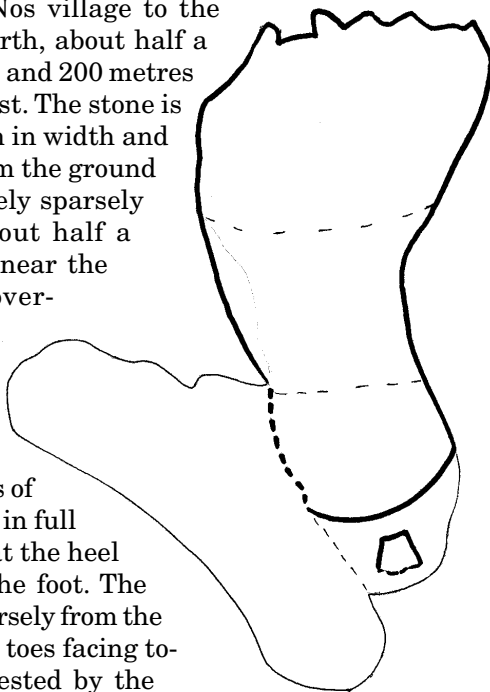


Figure 10. "God's Little Foot" in the former Besov Nos village on the eastern coast of Lake Onega. Sketch by E. Ernits 1986.

Reports on the Elk Stone

On July 18, 1988 Maria Fepionova (born in 1910) and Nikolai Fepionov (born in 1948), inhabitants of Kubovo by the middle course of the Vodla River, informed us of *Los' kamen'*, or the Elk Stone. The boulder, at least 4 m in length, is situated in the river quite near the coast 3–4 km upstream from Kubovo. The nominative com-

bination of the place name constituents refers to Balto-Finnic origin of the toponym. Taisia Krysanova (born in 1913) told us that one early morning her mother had seen a naked woman (mermaid?) bathing on the flat stone. Having spotted her, the woman had plunged into water. T. Krysanova's father had mentioned that some letters were carved (*vybity bukvy*) on the boulder popularly called *Los'ya luda'*. However, Aleksandr Shikov (50–55 years old), who used to go to the area every year to make hay, has seen no carved representations on the stone. According to Shikov, *Los'-kamen'* bore no resemblance to an elk whatsoever. He rather believed that the stone had been named after a fissured stone resembling an elk head in the woods, a few hundred metres from the coast. Shikov believed that this 6 m long boulder must be about 6 km from Kubovo. In 1998, when the waterline was generally high, the boulder was 30 cm underwater.

Further research in the surroundings of Kubovo would be highly recommendable. J. Ch. Stuckenberg (1844: 571) has mentioned the former Laplandska islet in the Vodla River that may be associated with the ancient Sami. Today the island is called Voibuch and is covered with forest.

20th Century Rock Carvings

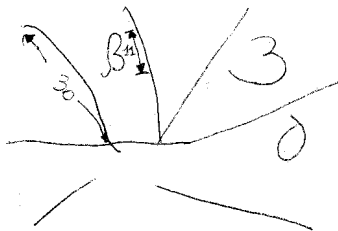
Representations carved in relatively recent periods also provide intriguing research material. Let us hereby present some examples with explanations provided by local inhabitants.



Figure 11. Figure on the front side of a stone in Kaskeza, on the western bank of Lake Onega. Sketch by T. and E. Ernits 1986.

On August 17, 1986, the grandchild of a native Veps Anna Kabakova showed us on her grandmother's request a dark stone in the coastal waters of Lake Onega. A profile representation of a man's head was carved on one of the stone's vertical sides, whereas the figure's neck extended into the water (Figures 11–12). The figure's height was 36 cm from the water level. The figure was depicted wearing an unusual anvil-shaped hat with 5 parallel lines directing backwards from the hat's 22 cm long lower part. On the opposite side of

Figure 12. Figure on the opposite side of a stone in Kaskeza, on the western bank of Lake Onega. Sketch by E. Ernits 1986.



the stone we discovered an extraordinary pattern of lines and representations resembling Cyrillic letters and figures B, 3 and O. These may have been someone's initials. Unfortunately we could not take a photograph of the stone due to twilight and the absence of flash. In summer 1988 we made a vain attempt to find the stone. Perhaps it was because of the higher water level or that the stone had been moved by drifting ice that we failed to find it.

However, we discovered some 50 years old carvings on the rocks in the same river, and inquired the local Veps population about them.

One stone that appears triangular from the end view is located near the waterline on the coast of Lake Onega. Russian initials *FTZ I STZ* (Figure 13) are carved on one of its sloping sides. According to the local Veps Nikolai Antsiferov, the initials signified the native Veps boys Fiodor and Stepan Trofimovich Zakharin from the neighbouring farm.



Figure 13. Russian initials FTZ on the boulder in Kaskeza. Photo by E. Ernits 1988.

In the coastal waters we found another, considerably larger flat stone with the following text carved on its surface: *1928 g, Pamiati VG, Na pamiat' G.A., St. Zakh.* It appears the text was carved by the same S. T. Zakharin mentioned above. The Russian expressions '*pamiati*' and '*na pamiat'*' could be translated into English as 'in remembrance of'. Nikolai Antsiferov believed that G.A. denoted either Gashin, Andrei or, which seems more likely, Grigori Antsiferov, V.G. standing for Vassili Gashin. The initials were carved in the stone to commemorate tragically departed peers.

Another text, reading *R. M. P. r. 1937 g.* is carved next to the Stone-Age petroglyphs on the west-side of cape Besov Nos. According to M. Filippova, the text marks the birth of the local villager Mikhail Pavlovich Riamzin; the small *r* is the abbreviation of a Russian word *rodilsia* – ‘was born’.

Linguistic facts concerning Karelian petroglyphs

During our expeditions to Karelia we recorded intriguing information on place names, beliefs, etc. Since there are extremely few legends related to petroglyphs, it is all the more important to inquire local inhabitants as to the suggested origin, age, creation and attitude towards of petroglyphs.

The local population has always considered the petroglyphs of Lake Onega sacred. They believe the rock carvings to be made by God, or using the words of M. Filippova *Eto vsio bogovo* – “It is all God’s”. In former times no carving was ever destroyed.

Interesting research material is provided by the popular parallels of official place names. According to many informants the islet in the Chernaia Rechka river mouth, where petroglyphs have been found, was called Koreshnitsa, since people went there to catch smelt. In the local Russian dialect smelt is called ‘*korekha*’, which in its turn is a Balto-Finnic loan (Karelian ‘*kuoreh*’, Veps ‘*kor’eh*’) (Fasmer 1986: 325).

The burbot season at Lake Onega begins in October. Several informants claim that the coastal area stretching from Cape Peri Nos to Cape Karitsky was called Blizhnaia (Near-) Modozha, from then on the area was called Dalniaia (Far-) Modozha. In contemporary literature Modozh is a small islet with petroglyphs. Local population had called it *Ostrovok*, or ‘the Islet’. Recorded materials substantiate the assumption that the name Modozha may have been derived from the Karelian and Veps word ‘*mاده*’ (‘burbot’) (Ernits 1986: 247).

J. Titkov has mentioned that the origin of the place name Karitskie Nosy, a place rich in petroglyphs, lie in the local Russian dialectal word *karitsa* (‘inlet’). True, there are several smaller promontories separated by inlets. *Karitsa* is a diminutive formation of a North

Russian word *kara* ('bay'), which in its turn is derived from a Veps word *kar* ('bay'; 'hole') (Fasmer 1986: 189). Consequently we should use the name *Karitski Nos* instead of the former *Karetski Nos*. Reality has also occasioned the use of the plural form of *Peri Nos* – *Per'i Nossy* – among the local population.

Local petroglyphs usually have a clear motif. Recording from the past 1.5 centuries indicate that petroglyphs were treated with honour, as is also seen in our interviews. Informant Tatiana Senina (born in 1932, Onezhski < Besov Nos v.) claimed that the Balto-Finnic tribes disappeared from the eastern coast of Lake Onega centuries ago and that the local Russian population regarded geese and swans sacred; of all the waterfowl only ducks were killed. On the other hand it is known that the flesh of the duck was not used for food (Briusov 1940: 118). Senina's father had even forbade her to pick gull's eggs, saying that it was wrong to take eggs from a bird. M. Filippova had a vague recollection of the goose being called the tsar's bird (*tsarskaia ptitsa*). Ivan Krysanov (born in 1915), however, called the feminine swan the tsar's bird (see also Autio 1987: 72). His wife Taissa remembered that once during fishing her father had released a large pike back into water to prevent the fish from disappearing from the coastal waters. The transmitting of the Finno-Ugrian hunter-fisher world concept to the North-Russians is reflected in these very narratives.

Proceeding from a verse from "Kalevala" by Elias Lönnrot "*kirjutti kivehen kirjan*" ("inscribed the book into stone") Eero Autio, the expert on petroglyphs, theorised that the original meaning of the Estonian word "*kirjutama*" (to write) may have been "to carve a message in stone". A Karelian proverb "*Lapsennu opastettu on gu kiveh kirjutettu*" (Things learned in childhood are as if carved in stone.) may suggest the same (Karjalaisia: 190).

Comments

¹ Verst – a Russian measure of distance equivalent to 0.6639 miles or 1.067 kilometres (Translator's note).

² Pood – a Russian weight equal to about 36 pounds avoirdupois (16 kg). (Translator's note)

³ The Kaika summer seminar has been annually held since 1989, organised by the society *Võro Selts* and the Võro Institute. The aim of the seminars is to promote the perishing Võro dialect, to support authors who use it in writing, and to introduce South-East Estonian dialects and cultural history. (Translator's note)

⁴ Vanapagan – or “the Old Heathen”, devil's nickname in Estonian folk tales. (Translator's note)

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VOTIC FAMILY SYMBOLS AND PROPERTY MARKS

Family symbols are known almost all over the world. Theodor Saar, researcher of family symbols in Kihnu Island, reported that among Finno-Ugric peoples Livonians, Estonians, Finnish, Lapps, Mordovians, and Maris have used them (Saar 1998: 29). However, Votians were not mentioned in this list.

I encountered the term ‘family symbol’ first when I was reading the papers of D. Zolotarev’s expedition of 1926 (Zolotarev 1927: 148), where he describes interesting facts about Votic villages (including Lower-Luuditsa), and mentions the usage of family symbols (*merki*) in marking the borders of hayland. He maintained that “Family symbols are made on tally sticks for counting the days laboured for the lord of the manor, on sticks for drawing lots, on tools and on everyday commodities.”

I became very interested in the topic and I sought further information from Anna Iudina, the oldest resident (born in 1906) of the village of Luuditsa (Luzhichy in Russian; named thus after Lower-Luuditsa and Liivtšülä, or Peski in Russian, were united). She said that, indeed, before the Second World War every family had had its own symbol and described some of these (see Table).

It is significant to observe how with every generation the family symbol changed: a new element was added (a line, a circle). Usually the youngest son, who stayed in the parents’ house and cared for them, inherited the father’s family symbol (Table, rows 3–5). A. Iudina could not in every case remember the owner of the family symbol, but following this logic, she inferred that an E-shape family symbol had belonged to the Nesterovs; the arc and the arc with a circle (Table, rows 13–14) must have been the Mironovs’.

The village residents Ivan Agafonov (born in 1932), Zoia Chernysheva, Anna Trofimova and Zinaida Puchkova could clearly remember their family symbols. Others needed time. Sergei Efimov tried to recall his father’s family symbol for half a year, telling me: “I have to remember this, my father always cut it into firewood.” When I asked, why had he done that, he replied: “[It was] for the forest ranger so he would know that we have kept everything in

















Symbol	Owner	Informant
	Omelia Iilia	A. Iudina (1906)
	son Omelia Füdera Roman	Roman's grandchild N.Vittong
	Nester's Vasia	Vasia's son's daughter
	Vasia's son's wife Nesterova Ogru	A. Iudina (1906)
	Nester's son's son Kirilla Ondre	
	Nester's son's son Kirilla Fedia?	
	Savvo Vasia	daughter Z. V. Chernyshova (1932)
	Jaakko Semon	son P. S. Antonov (1923)
	Agafona Misha	son I. M. Agafonov (1932)
	Luka Isakka	A. Iudina, Stepan's grandchildren
	son Luka Stepan	V. M. Lukin (1931) and N. M. Lukin (1937)
	Nikon Kostia	son S. K. Efimov (1954)
	the Mironovs?	A. Iudina
	the Mironovs?	
	Natol Vanka (Mikhail's son)	A. Iudina
	Mosse Jaakko	daugther Z. Ia. Puchkova

Table. Some Votian family symbols.

order and burnt the twigs.” Zinaida Saveleva, who was born in 1938 in Luuditsa and at that time lived in Jögöperä (Krakole in Russian), explained further: “Money for firewood was paid in advance, the forest ranger looked the felling area over, from the symbol he determined the owner and if everything was alright, then he paid half the money back.”

In most cases, those who had joined their fathers in felling or had participated in the parcelling of hayland, could quickly recall their family symbol. It was in the latter case that hewn sticks were used to draw lots; for felling, the family symbol was made on them. Symbols cut into firewood were remembered also by A. Iudina, I. Agafonov and Z. Puchkova, in addition to those mentioned earlier. According to A. Iudina, the family symbol was sometimes stuck into ground on meadows.

I. Agafonov remembered that family symbols had been drawn on all buildings, on the flax swingle-tree, and on the mangle (*rullapuu*). V. Lukin recalled a symbol on the wall of a shed and on floats; Z. Chernyshova remembered the marking of potato sacks and R. Vittong that of ploughs. N. Lukin (born in 1937) could recall their family symbol even on the back of a photo.

Family symbols were drawn with coal, carved with a knife, painted with colours.

Today it is difficult to estimate how widely family symbols were in use after the Second World War. Ivan Agafonov claimed that “as long as I felled firewood, I always used symbols”. It is possible that family symbols were used up to the beginning of the 1970s. Unfortunately, in most cases they are no longer remembered and even its name is forgotten. I noticed that in conversation family symbols were either not named at all or were named using words contained in my question – *znak* ‘mark’ and *metka* ‘sign’.

Reference to family symbols can be found from Votic dictionaries: *see öli taloo merkki, see öli itšiine* ‘it was the mark of a farm, it was ancient’ (VKS I 311); *jõka talol öli oma merkki* ‘every farm had its own mark’ (both examples from Liivtšulä village); *jõkaizöl öli öma merkki, arval, jõka talol* ‘everyone had its own mark on the stick for drawing lots, every farm had’ (Matti village), *võrkkoiil öltii pullod, tohossa tehtü, siiz neis pulloiz öltii merkid, meijee taloz öli kane mokom merkki* [arrow up] *niku ankkuri* ‘nets had floats, made from birch bark, then these floats had marks, our farm had a mark like an anchor’ (VKS III 305). In the Votic Kukkuzi dialect, the following statement is reported: *meijee saraa merkill on kolt pükälää* ‘the mark of our shed has three nicks’ (IMS 281, 403).

Additional information about the use of Votic family symbols can be found from the papers of the Votic expedition of 1942 (Talve 1981: 2.2.2, 2.2.3; Figure 27). In Matti village, random marks were usually cut into sticks for drawing lots, but Piotr Baranov, native guide of the expedition (42 years old at the time), used yet a certain mark: a circle cut around the stick.

In Kukkuzi, forest was redistributed by lot every year; to the border of every felling area a stick was placed into which the family symbol of the farms on either side was cut. If two brothers came from one farm, but lived separately, then each of them made the same family symbol to opposite ends of the stick for drawing lots. In this function were also used a line in the middle of the stick, or a small cross, also the end of the stick could be carved jagged with a knife (*rupsikodjeegaa tehtü*).

In Kattila Peenõtsa, one or two circles or a half-circle were used for family symbols, with the same symbol used both on sticks for drawing lots and sticks marking hayland borders. According to records from Kukkuzi in 1942, numbers were used for the above functions.

I found information about the usage of family symbols in Liivtsüla from Paul Ariste's collection *Votic ethnology* ("Vadja etnoloogiat"). Kostia Leontev, a well-known native guide, had said in 1971 that the family symbol (*merkki*) was cut into the handle of a spade or an ax and on buildings: *meijee taloz õli leikattu kahs ruptsaa niku silmäd* 'two nicks like eyes were cut on our house'. When land was distributed by drawing lots, then every landlord placed a marked stick into a cap. Then the cap was shaken and following the order by which sticks fell off from the cap, the family symbols on them were then made on a long rod (VE XIV, 57–58). Several family symbols that have so far not been the objects of research can be found on items in the collections of the Estonian National Museum, for example on a mushroom basket from Rajo village (No. B 134: 24). Research should be also resumed in the museums of St. Petersburg.

Personal items were marked in other ways as well. When preparing dowry, the bride always stitched initials of her first name and her father's name on pillowcases, lace edgings, towels, shirts and saraphans. Pavel Antonov recalled that his father owned a richly decorated silvery horse bow with Russian letters S (C) and Ia (Я)



Figure 1. Horse bow marked with the letters T and P (Π) .

on it (from Semjon Iakovlevich). I happened to see a horse bow with the letters T and P (Π) on it that was still in use (see Figure 1). For some reason the order of letters was inversed, as the landlord told me that it was once owned by Piotr Terentev.

Letters were also stitched on towels that were taken to the graveyard and hung over the crosses. Marfa Trofimova (born in 1903) said:

kalmoilla ku meilä avvata pokkoinikka, ni siis meilä tehiä varinikka, kumpa panna rissi i tehäs ühsi bukva i välissä mõnikkalla tehiä koko nimi

in the graveyard, when we bury our dead, then a towel is made that is put over the cross and one letter is stitched [= made], or sometimes for some the whole name (Lensu 1930: 284)

Domestic animals were also marked. Coloured bands or stitched strips of cloth were tied around the necks of sheep and goats. From the Votic dictionary we can find the following example: *lampaal piäp panna merkki kaglaa, siis tunnõd lampaa* ‘a sign has to be put around the neck of the sheep, then you know (your) sheep’ (VKS III 305).

Literature sources indicate that family symbols were also used by Izhorians, the neighbouring people of Votians. Reports similar to those from Votians come from Soikkola peninsula. Meadows were distributed by lot using alder sticks and *joga lebän oksaa tehtii joga taloim merkki* ‘in every twig of alder a farm mark was made’ (IMS 18). They were also found on floats: *hela se pidi pääl nigu merkkiin, siz löüsiid ned vergod kättee* ‘float, it had then [to have] a mark on it, then you found the [lost] net’ (IMS 55). Also sheep were marked: *pannaa lambahille mergit kaglaa, siis tunnedaad omad lampaad* ‘signs are put around the necks of sheep, then one’s own sheep are recognised’ (IMS 306). From Laukaansuu, the word *tähti* possibly in this function has been recorded: *vergon kutooja hoomuksest ku alkaa kutooa, pannoo tähee verkkoo* ‘netmaker, when starts to knit in the morning, makes a mark on the net’ (IMS 616).

Data concerning Votic family symbols is scarce and makes it difficult to follow the genesis through generations, or to determine their original meaning or possible magical purpose.

Tatiana Efimova

Translated by Kairika Kärnsa.

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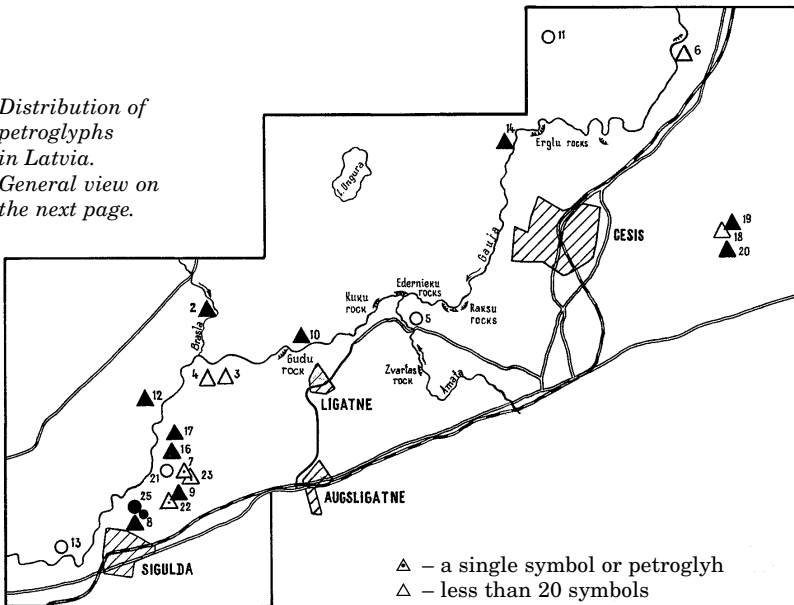
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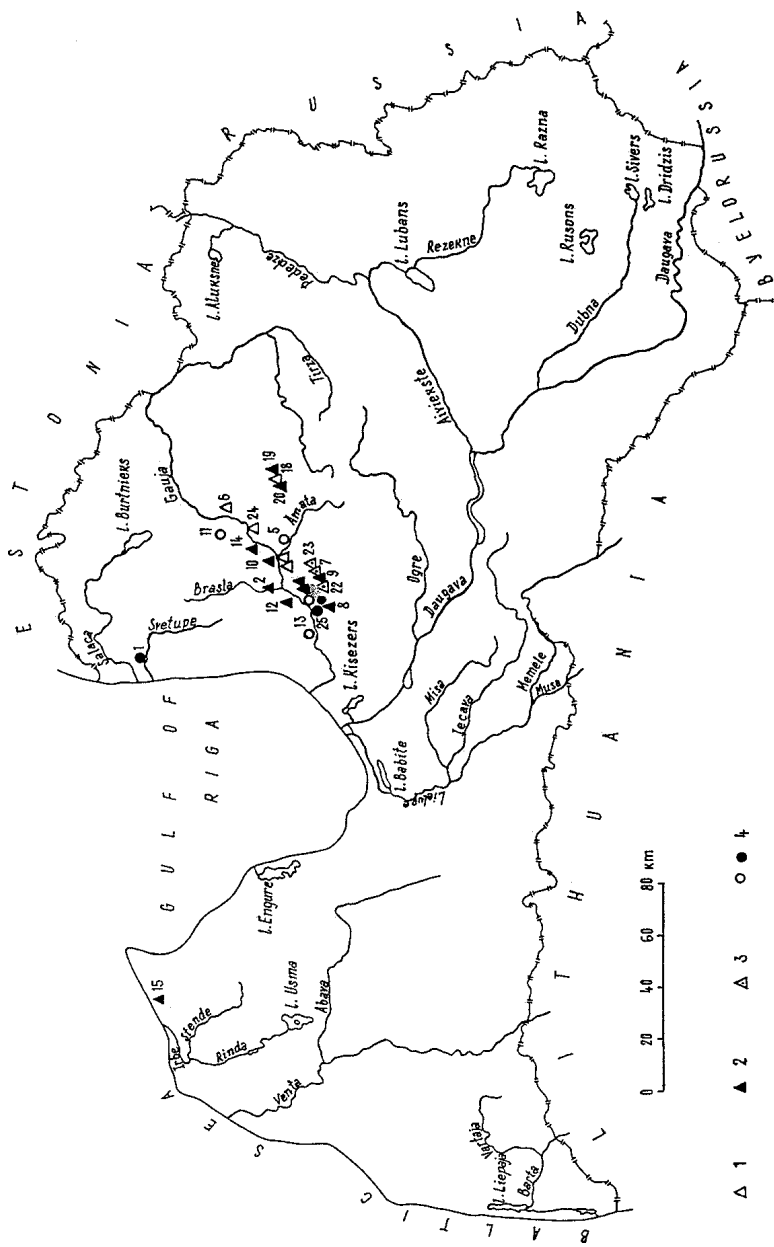
PETROGLYPHS IN LATVIA

Petroglyphs were first found in Latvia in 1986 by amateur local history researchers. These ideograms — drawings on cliffs — were carved into Devonian sandstone in remote and nearly inaccessible ravines and caves. It is difficult to see the drawings because they are overgrown with lichen, moss and algae. Thirty different groups of petroglyphs have been found so far, the overwhelming majority of them in the Gauja National Park. At each site the number of petroglyphic symbols varies between 1 and 500.

Among these petroglyphs we can discern some elements of the Latvian geometric ornament, symbols of gods and deities of the Latvian and Baltic mythology (e.g. the sign of Jumis — the god of fertility — occurring most frequently in different forms), signs denoting homes or possession (specific laconic heraldy), magic signs, as well as notches for tallying. The most frequent symbol is the sign of cross in widely differing forms; this could be considered a sign of pagan idolatry.

Distribution of petroglyphs in Latvia. General view on the next page.





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There are no records as to when the petroglyphs were carved. Since Devonian sandstone is not hard or erosion-proof, it is hardly possible that these signs are older than 1,000 years. On the other hand, two locations were found where 100 year old trees grow on a landslide covering petroglyphs, leading us to the conclusion that these signs are at least 100 years old.

It can be hypothesised that Latvian petroglyphs were signs carved by ancient sorcerers, wizards and faith-healers practicing long after the 13th century when the Germans conquered the local tribes and Christianized them. The fact that there is no information preserved in legends or stories about the sites where petroglyphs have been found, makes one think that these places were kept secret.

Guntis Eniņš



Possibly an ancient calendar of a time when a week could have been 9 days long. Brasla Region. Photo by Guntis Eniņš.

The Virtakas cliff in Brasla Region where in 1986 petroglyphs were first discovered in Latvia. Photo by Guntis Eniņš.



THE EMERGENCE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE ESTONIAN SOCIETY OF PREHISTORIC ART

Väino Poikalainen

An important role in what led to the establishment of the Estonian Society of Prehistoric Art was played by paleoastronomical research conducted under Heino Eelsalu, the Institute of Astrophysics and Atmospheric Physics (the current Tartu Astrophysical Observatory), and Estonian and Finnish people interested in Finno-Ugric prehistoric culture. Organised scientific research into prehistoric art started long before the establishment of a formal organisation. As early as in 1982, the Estonian Branch of the USSR Society of Astronomy and Geodesy (EBSAG) had an expedition to Lake Onega. This expedition was inspired by an article by Feliks Ravdonikas (1967) and the main goal was to gather data on the distribution of lunar and solar symbols (Kestlane & Raudsaar 1983).

This first expedition was followed by other, more wide-scaled ones (Kestlane 1986). In 1984, a rock art work-group was formed within the EBSAG with the aim of creating a (computer) data-base of Lake Onega petroglyphs together with graphical source material. This also led to search for connections with scientists abroad. In the same year, the work-group unofficially met with the Finnish specialist Eero Autio, but circumstances for co-operation were still small. The Karelian petroglyph areas of interest to the Finnish were closed for foreigners and Soviet people were kept from going to Finland. In 1985, on Eero Autio's initiative there was a rock art



Figure 1. On field-work by Lake Onega to plastic copying of petroglyphs. Photo by Andres Kuperjanov.

seminar in Varkaus where copies of Lake Onega petroglyphs were exhibited. This seminar led to close contact with Joensuu University and the establishment of a rock art section to the Finnish Anthropological Society.

Up to the 1986 expeditions, the main documentation methods were contact copying to paper and photographing. In 1986, the stereophotogrammetric method for recording image groups and aerophotometrics for maps was first used. In the same year, Kadi Pajupuu and Pilvi Klaassen discovered a new abundant rock art location, later named Swan Cape (Pajupuu 1987). This new material was presented in Finland on a seminar and exhibition, leading to closer connections with Finnish specialists and the continuation of documenting Lake Onega petroglyphs. The 1987 exhibition of Lake Onega petroglyphs in Turu resulted in contacts with other Scandinavian scientists. When the Finnish rock art organisation ceased, co-operation continued on personal level with Eero Autio, Erkki Suonio, Heikki Kirkinen, etc.

It was on October 16th, 1988, in Kabli, Pärnu county, that the Society for Prehistoric Art was established (since 1998 Estonian Society for Prehistoric Art). It became a national organisation based in Tartu. Members of the association include teachers, artists, archaeologists, astronomers, linguists, veterinarians, and other professionals from Estonia, Finland and Russia.

According to the statute, the society is a voluntary non-governmental organisation uniting people studying prehistoric art and interested in prehistoric cultures. The aims are mainly studying Finno-Ugric prehistoric art and neighbouring areas, and spreading information. Thus, the following tasks were taken on: 1) collecting and helping preserve prehistoric art; 2) scientific research into prehistoric art, culture and religion; 3) establishing contacts and co-operation with people, institutions and organisations worldwide; 4) popularising prehistoric culture.

In 1989, intensive documentation of Lake Onega petroglyphs continued, for the first time including also Finnish scientists. The first international rock art conference in the Soviet Union was held in Kabli, providing opportunities for Russian and Scandinavian scientists to establish contacts and international co-operation (Kaelas

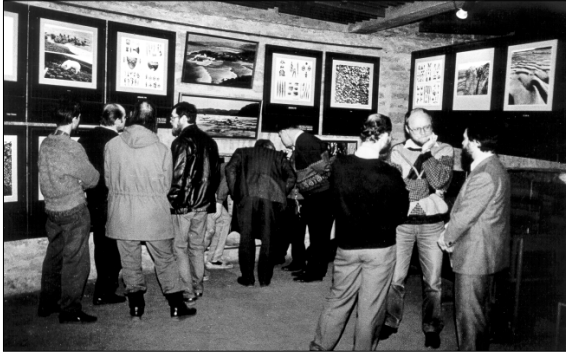


Figure 2. Opening the prehistoric art exhibition by the St. Petersburg branch of the society "Labyrinths of the North" in the Estonian Maritime Museum in 1991. Photo by Udo Veske.

1990). The next year, a field conference "Eklips" was held in Karelian rock art locations, culminating in observing the eclipse in Zalavruga (Bednarik 1990). The ensuing good relations with Russian scientists (Abram Stoliar, Vladimir Shumkin, Nadezhda Lobanova, etc.) made it possible to organise excursions to the prehistoric art locations of Kola peninsula and the Samis.

Propagation of prehistoric art via publications and public appearances also became more common. This both in the new association as well as the rock art work-group of the astronomy association "Vega". A common project to establish a museum of prehistoric religion was started, but despite permission from Tallinn city government, this has so far led nowhere. Activities at the time were sponsored by several institutes of the Estonian Science Academy, the Agricultural University, as well as other organisations (Ernits & Poikalainen 1990).

Since 1991, most expeditions, conferences, excursion, exhibitions have been participated by members from different countries. Scientific research was greatly benefited by acquisition of a computer from Joensuu University that made it possible to process and save documented petroglyphic images. We established contact with Göteborg University, Tromsö University, Alta Museum, Scandinavian Society for Prehistoric Art (*Sällskap för förhistorisk konst i Skandinavien*), Australian Rock Art Research Association and the ICOMOS Committee on Rock Art.

Since 1993, numerous rock art seminars have been held in Kotka, Hämeenlinna, Rovaniemi, by Lake Onega and Lake Võrtsjärv, etc.

There have been also common events with the St. Petersburg University, Institute of the History of Material Culture and the Hermitage prehistoric art researchers (Ernits & Poikalainen 1995). At the same time, the photometric method of documenting rock art and doing cameral works, good in requiring little finances and work, was elaborated (supported by the Estonian Science Foundation grant 1618). In 1997, after concluding field-works on Lake Onega, the verbal and parametrical methods for describing petroglyphs were established. In 1998, a catalogue covering the Vodla region prehistoric art was published (Poikalainen & Ernits 1998). Further work on this has been stalled for lack of financing. Scientific work continues in analysing material, publishing articles, participating in and organising conferences. Estonian members of the association alone have published more than 100 articles on prehistoric art.

A good means of popularising prehistoric art has been exhibitions of copies and photos made during field-work. In the 1980s, this was actively led by Eve Selisaar and in the past 10 years by Loit Jõekalda. Bigger exhibitions were in 1985, 1987 and 2000 in Tartu, 1985, 1986, 1991 and 1994 in Tallinn, 1986–1987 in Kotka, 1987 in Turu, 1990 in Hämeenlinna (Joutsenen 1990), 1990 in Joensuu, 1991 in Jyväskylä (Muinaiset 1991), 1993 in Oulu, 1994 in St. Petersburg, 1995 in Rovaniemi, 1998 in Tampere, 1998 in Sagadi. The permanent exhibition set up in spring 2000 in Tallinn, History Institute, offers a very good overview of rock art from Finno-Ugric areas. The Estonian Society for Prehistoric Art is invited to participate in the prehistoric art exhibition “Human and Animal” in the Hermitage, spring 2002.



Figure 3. Abram Stoliar giving a presentation at the 1990 rock art conference “Eklips”. Photo by Erkki Suonio.

In the recent years, activity has not been as intense as in the beginning years, but certainly there is more regularity – an annual acquainting trip to one county, an expedition, exhibition and the annual meeting with presentations. All events are mutually open for members of the Finnish Society for Prehistoric Art (established in 1998), and often also jointly organised.

Increasing public and scientific interest towards prehistoric art confirms the important role of the Estonian Society for Prehistoric Art in maintaining, researching and popularising Finno-Ugric prehistoric culture.

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