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EXPERIENCING THE LANDSCAPE

The article is an attempt to analyse the sense of place and attitude towards the surrounding landscape of people as it can be traced on the basis of archaeological objects. A sense of place depends largely on the landscape experience and resulting from this, on the evaluation of places. Places on landscape have different value and are respectively used in different ways. At the same time, the use of landscape depends on the possibilities of local microenvironment. Nature can vary in a small area and people use these differences actively. Although landscapes change in the course of time, it can still be supposed what caused a certain use of landscape in some places. The article focuses on the visible archaeological objects on landscape. A case study has been carried out in Rebala, Jõelähtme and Võerdla villages in the historical Jõelähtme parish in Harjumaa. Undulating land and probably also bogs were of importance in Rebala and Võerdla villages during the Bronze and Pre-Roman Iron Ages. In Jõelähtme the most important features of landscape were river, karst and the rising and lowering of the earth. In later period, arable land shifted to the centre of attention and previous connections on the landscape and with it lost their meaning.

On vaadeldud inimeste kohatunnet ja suhtumist ümbritsevasse maastikku, nagu seda võib oletada muististe põhjal. Kohatunne sõltub paljuski inimeste maastikukogemusest ja sellest tulenevalt kohtade väärtustamisest. Kohad maastikul on erineva tähtsusega ja vastavalt sellele on neid ka erinevalt kasutatud. Samas sõltub maastikukasutus ennekõike sellest, mida kohalikul mikrokeskkonnal pakkuda on. Ühes väikeses piirkonnas võib loodus olla eriilmeline ja seda kasutatakse inimeste poolt aktiivselt ära. Kuigi maastikud muutuvad aegade jooksul, on siiski võimalik oletada, mis võis ühel või teisel juhul osutada maastikukasutusel määravaks. Artiklis on keskendutud nähtavatele monumentidele maastikul. Illustreerivateks näideteks on valitud Rebala ja selle naaberkülad ajaloolises Jõelähtme kihelkonnas Harjumaa. Pronksi- ja eelrooma rauaajal olid Rebalas olulised maapinna ebatasasused ning ilmselt ka sood ja/või rabad, Jõelähtmes olid tähtsamateks maastikuelementideks jõgi, karst ja maapinna tõusud ning langused. Hilisemal ajal nihkus tähelepanu keskmesse sobilik põllumaa ja varasemad seosed maastikul ning maastikuga kaotasid oma tähtsuse.

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Introduction

*To be human is to be place-bound in a fundamental way
(Tilley 2004, 25)*

The connections between people and their surrounding landscape have been different in different places and times. In the past, as amongst present traditional tribes, it was probably more intimate and deeper. The landscape was treated as an animated whole and people communicated with it. Originally even hostile landscape was humanized and socialized through social practices (Taçon 2000, 50). All that might have left some marks on landscape, but not necessarily. At the same time these relations between the people and the landscape affected people's mental worlds, their mental map. Although landscape is a physical entity, it is socially constructed in the minds of people and these mental images and cognitive constructions are controlled by people (Children & Nash 1997, 1). So its importance for the settlers was (and is) not only economical, but also mental.

People have always and everywhere explained their surroundings for themselves, whether it is landscape as a whole or some of its elements. These explanations and reasons for searching them have probably emerged from the sense of place and landscape experience and from personal connectedness with it, no matter if it comes directly or through the ancestors. Especially in the latter case, an oral tradition, connected with some places in the landscape has played an important part (c.f. e.g. Taçon 2000, 50). Landscape is the only real thing that connects people of different periods – the same landscapes that are inhabited today were often inhabited also millenniums ago. Undoubtedly past landscapes differed from those of the present but the prominent landscape features remain the same. Changes have taken place: once forested areas may now be open, a number of bodies of water have disappeared or turned into bogs, rivers may have changed their course, but the main features still exist.

The study of the landscape use has long traditions in Estonian archaeology. In essence, attention has been paid to the surrounding nature of almost every excavated object. True enough, it was not brought out separately in earlier period, but indirectly even these early studies give at least some idea of the landscape where some object was found, or that was used for some purpose. A large number of such works exist, the oldest of them date to the end of the 19th century (e.g. Grewingk 1884). In the first half of the 20th century, more attention was paid to the past natural environment (e.g. Indreko 1934; Vassar 1938), later years brought even more exact studies of the influence the natural environment had upon the ancient human settlement (e.g. Moora 1966; 1972; 1998; Lang 1996; 2000; Kriiska 1999; 2001; 2003; Mägi 2002; 2004). As an addition, different layers of meaning of the landscape have been studied (Lang 1999; Vedru 2002). A profound analysis of landscape studies in Estonian archaeology can be found in the article written by Valter Lang (Lang 2006).

All these works have focused on different aspects of the relations between man and landscape, the most important of these has been landscape as an environment for living. This approach is also used in the present article because the landscape experience is affected mostly by nature, but additionally other layers of meaning of the landscape are considered. Most important of them is the sense of place. Which places were valued in different periods and why? How was the attitude towards places expressed?

More and more attention has been paid to the recent landscape studies carried out in micro-scale (Bender 2001). It means more detailed analysis in local (natural) environment and enables to detect nuances that could stay unnoticed otherwise. The meaning of micro-scale can differ according to the size of the study area. In the present work it means a detailed study of the landscape. Questions considering the use of landscape and thereby also the sense of place can find answers if the small details of landscape are studied.

Viewing the landscape

Every place in landscape is meaningful for its inhabitants; it has its meaning and story, some kind of importance, hierarchy, biography and *genius loci*. The significance of places is different: some of them being more important than others. Landscape bears multi-layered meanings and symbols, it is laden with knowledge, memories and forgetting. Places differ from each other as differs also the attitude towards them. The main topic of this article considers the attitude of ancient people to their surrounding landscape. How is it possible to determine such attitude in the past if it is quite certain that it is impossible to find two persons who perceive a place in a similar way in the present (e.g. Bender 1993; Tuan 1990)? The only source of interpretation is the landscape, how and why people used it, how they changed it or, vice versa, left unchanged. The main obstacle in such study can be the landscape use of later periods that has caused several, sometimes quite cardinal changes that can complicate not only the discovery of ancient settlement traces but also enable the reconstruction of palaeo-environment. A number of several long-termed processes where the exact chronology is not possible to detect have also taken place in the landscape. So the task is rather difficult, but starting from the local landscape and its archaeological objects, one can make some suppositions on the topic.

One premise for such work is the good knowledge of landscape of the study area. It is based on several field walks in different seasons and hours, walking between the archaeological sites and approaching them from different directions. Christopher Tilley has expressed an opinion that unknown landscape remains invisible – it is not known where or how to look for it. To learn how to do it one must visit the landscape; take time for getting acquainted with it and get into the spirit of it. In the course of being on the landscape, the previously hidden archaeological sites come to the fore and the relations between them and their surroundings become evident (Tilley 1994, 75).

The meaning of landscape varies among researchers, it is even said that landscape is in the eyes of the viewer and as such it is perceived in different ways by people and cultures (Taçon 2000, 34). Today, the socio-symbolic dimensions of the landscape are emphasised, it exists because people experience, perceive and contextualise it (Knapp & Ashmore 2000, 1). The present text is also based on that definition. Landscape in this text means both the nature and man-made objects of different periods (e.g. stone graves, fossil fields).

Several other definitions for landscape exist, and there are different approaches in landscape archaeology. The latter have one common statement – landscape is considered as an active component in human activities, being something that often caused some type of human behaviour (c.f. Vedru 2004, 183–184 and references). That principle is the starting point also in the present article which analyses a prehistoric settlement of a restricted area in northern Estonia.

The prehistoric use of landscape in three villages – Rebala, Jõelähtme and Võerdla – is presented, focusing on monumental stone graves and their places on landscape. Human settlement preceding the stone graves left only modest traces to the landscape and it is difficult to believe that they were somehow visible in the Bronze Age. Nevertheless, quite often traces of earlier habitation have been found during the excavations of stone graves. Probably the re-use of such places emerges from the landscape, its specific features. In later periods people lived in changed landscape in which stone graves were an inseparable part. Settlement traces of different periods form an integral pattern that can be analysed as a whole to get a good review of the long-term processes in the landscape.

I have been interested in the landscapes of Rebala since 2005 when I carried out archaeological supervision in the village. Walking in a strange and unknown location, new places opened to me; they posed questions and made me search for answers in the local landscape. These searches, walks and discussions with local people inspired me to study this topic more thoroughly. The first short visits were followed by others that were more exhaustive; my understanding of the landscape, its past and present was formed during these visits.

Rebala and its neighbouring villages are interrelated and it is not always possible to mark exact boundaries where the lands of one village end and others start. In nature several places occur that can be interpreted as borders, but Rebala and its neighbours are not divided in that way. The klint terrace, steep in some places and separating the North-Estonian Plateau from the lowlands situated north of it, is the only visible boundary here.

One point of interest for me is the question of borders in the landscape. How did they look in concrete places and how people perceived and marked them. Intermediate zones, separating different settlement units are often considered in archaeological literature. These were areas with unsuitable conditions for human activities like bogs, river valleys, forests (Lang 1996, 349). These are natural boundaries or transitional places where ordinary landscape was transformed. Stone graves were often built in liminal places: near the klint escarpment, karst and bodies of water. Such liminal places in landscape could possess special

importance for people, they were connected with change, transition in landscape and also in mentality. Similarly the grave might have been considered as a ritual place that was connected with persons *resp.* dead transition from one world to another, from one existence to another. So the double effect was operating and one change and transition emphasized another. But not all graves were built in such places, so my interest expanded to the possible importance of other kind of landscapes and I searched for reasons that made them important and attractive enough to be proper places for graves.

The aim of this work is not to give a detailed review of the archaeological sites, or of the finds of Rebala, Jõelähtme and Võerdla, that information is partly published elsewhere (Lõugas 1983; 1997; Kalman 1999; Lang 1996, 397–405; Lang et al. 2001). The results of excavations are used to reconstruct the overall settlement, but I concentrate on landscape experience through selection and use of places. This text gives no descriptions of the surroundings of every grave and cup-marked stone and/or the views that open from them, but emphasizes the major features of the landscape that might have been treated as special. As the graves and sometimes also the cup-marked stones are located in close groups, the views from them are quite similar. The views opened to prominent features of the landscape that were and still are different, with different meaning and range of influence.¹

Rebala, Võerdla and Jõelähtme: nature, sites and the use of landscape

Three villages under study are located in Jõelähtme parish, Harjumaa. The North-Estonian klint is not very far: Võerdla and Rebala are ca 4 and 3 km from it; the lands of Jõelähtme reach to it through Ellandvahe. The study area is bordered by the valley of the Jägala River in the east that separates it from the settlement units of Jägala and Ruu, located on the eastern riverbank. Jõelähtme River flows through Jõelähtme village. It starts near Voose village and runs into Jägala River 46 km away; in the karst region of Kostivere the Jõelähtme River goes underground and runs there for 2.5 km. It comes in sight again in the southern part of Jõelähtme village ca 20 m south from present St Petersburg highway (Järvekül 2001, 482). The large karst region of Kostivere is situated southeast from the centre of present Jõelähtme village. In this whole region both alvars and thicker moraine soils can be found. A few damp areas are located in the lands of the Rebala village that probably mark previous bogs. The areas north and west from the Rebala and Võerdla villages are damaged by the phosphorite mining that has left deep openwork pits surrounded by high soil mounds. In other places the landscapes are quite original. As it is difficult to draw borders between the Rebala and Võerdla villages, their material is discussed together.

The oldest traces of human activities in the region date back to the Late Neolithic. A settlement site of the Corded Ware Culture (AI 4779) is located in the eastern part of Võerdla village on a meadow not very far from the damp area

¹ The views given on maps reach to 0.5 km and more.

(Lang 1996, 397–398, fig. 112). It is possible that the southern part of the Võerdla village was inhabited as early as in the Mesolithic, where several pieces of quartz flakes with working traces were gathered (Vedru 2005, 1). That possible settlement site is situated far from the bodies of water and it is not in accordance with the typical landscape use of the Mesolithic. As the quartz tools were also used in later periods, this settlement site remains undated.

Two stone axes have been found from the study area. One of them is an adze that was found from the village of Rebala (AI 5381) and the other is a late shaft-hole axe (Lang 1996, 397), found on the left bank of Jägala River, somewhere near Ellandvahe, the area of stone graves in later period.

Changes in people's worldview, beliefs and through that also in the use of the landscape found their ultimate expression in the Bronze Age. These changes left their visible marks also on the study area. A large number of stone-cist graves and cup-marked stones are known. Both form groups mostly but sometimes they can be found separately. Although the graves and stones are often in similar natural conditions, it is not always so. All the graves are situated on dry land and possibly also on higher spots, but some of the cup-marked stones are located on the edges of damp areas or even in the middle of them. These latter places can be considered as liminal.

In Rebala and Võerdla villages both stone-cist graves and cup-marked stones can be found, the number of graves is especially in Rebala higher than the number of stones. The stones concentrate mainly on areas south from Rebala.

The cup-marked stones of the villages of Rebala and Võerdla are rather big and clearly visible on the landscape. Some of them are located within a short distance of each other and they have visual bounds. The earth's surface is undulating, but the changes in height remain marginal and the views opening up from most of the stones are wide and far-reaching.

In the village of Võerdla, the largest area with stones and graves is situated north from the Old Narva road and east and southeast from the present village (Figs 1, 2). Fifteen stone graves and seven cup-marked stones are located in an area measuring ca 700 × 850 m. These sites are located on flat terrain, and the views from them are wide (Fig. 3).

Some cup-marked stones are located in the western part of the Rebala village. Two of them have been moved from their original places in the course of stone clearing, carried out during the Soviet period. The third stone not very far from these two is very big and it stands in its original place. It is on a sloping land: the surface rises in northeast and east and closes the view, in other points of compass the surface remains in the same level or descends a little. At present the land surrounding that stone is damp and bumpy. That could result from the drainage of the Soviet period, but it may be a relic from a previous bog that was drained.²

² The nature of the high moors of Rebala cannot be determined because they have been destroyed by the phosphorite mines. 2000–3000 years ago later high moors were probably marshes (Mati Ilomets – to the author).

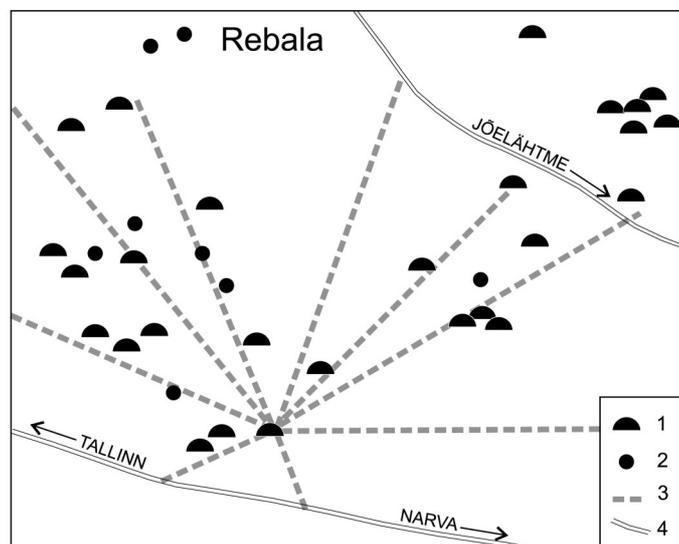


Fig. 1. Stone graves and cup-marked stones in Võerdla. 1 stone grave, 2 cup-marked stone, 3 view, 4 road.

Joon 1. Võerdla kivist kalmed ja lohukivid. 1 kivist kalme, 2 lohukivi, 3 vaade, 4 tee.

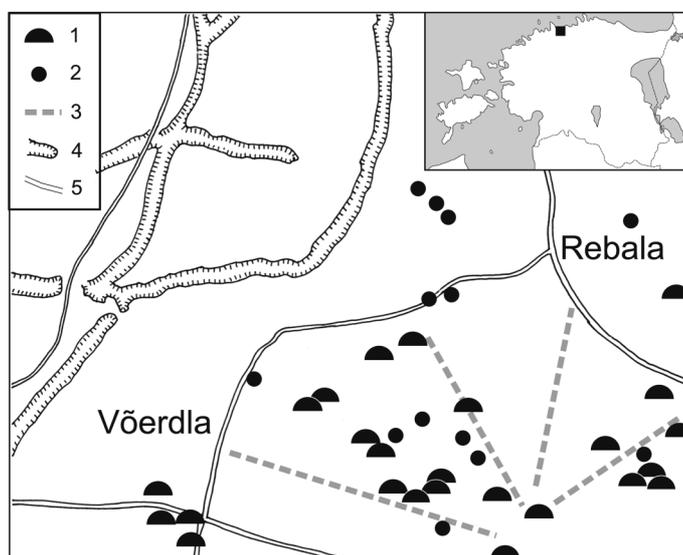


Fig. 2. Graves and cup-marked stones in Võerdla. 1 stone grave, 2 cup-marked stone, 3 view, 4 quarry, 5 road.

Joon 2. Võerdla kalmed ja lohukivid. 1 kivist kalme, 2 lohukivi, 3 vaade, 4 karjäär, 5 tee.



Fig. 3. Stone graves and cup-marked stones in Võerdla. View from the southeast (photo by G. Vedru).

Joon 3. Kivikalmed ja lohukivid Võerdlas. Vaade kagu poolt.

The graves of Rebala are situated in three main groups that have different natural settings. *Lastekangrud* are located ca 1.5 km north of Rebala village, the edge of North-Estonian klint is situated ca 0.8 km from them. The other group of stone graves is located on a ridge ca 0.7 km east from *Lastekangrud* and the third group can be found by the Rebala–Jõelähtme road.

Lastekangrud are located on an alvar area that seems flat. Their surroundings were partly destroyed by the phosphorite mining (Fig. 4). Five graves belong to that group. Vello Lõugas, who excavated them, found traces from the sixth grave that was only partly preserved (Lõugas 1983, 295). The graves are in two groups located at a distance of ca 60 m (Lang et al. 2001, fig. 1). In both groups the graves are quite close and the views from them are similar.

The southern group consists of three graves located on the northwest–southeast line; the grave in the middle is in the highest spot. Differences in the height of the surface are minor, but clearly visible; the grave in the middle might possess special status in this group. Maybe it is the oldest, i.e. the first grave? Charcoal gathered beneath the graves was dated to the 12th–10th centuries BC. One of the skeletons from the first grave was dated to the 8th–6th centuries BC, also the grave goods were of later date, but these can indicate that the graves were used as burial and

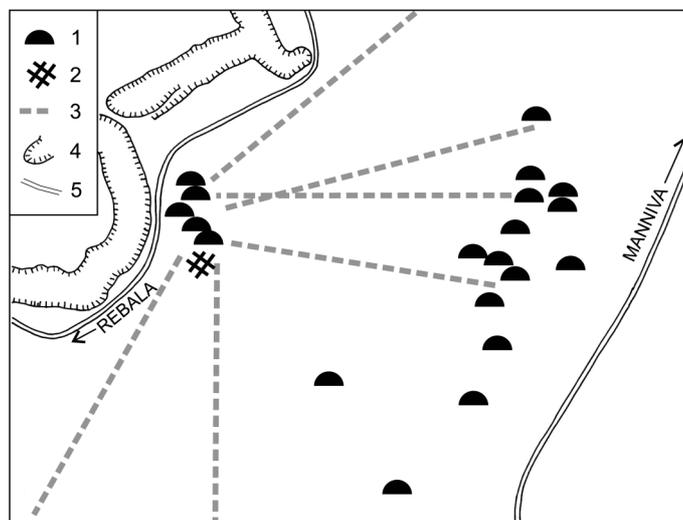


Fig. 4. Stone-cist graves of the *Lastekangrud* group and graves on the ridge. 1 stone grave, 2 fossil field, 3 view, 4 quarry, 5 road.

Joon 4. Lastekangrud ja seljandikukalmed. 1 kivistkalme, 2 põllujäänused, 3 vaade, 4 karjäär, 5 tee.

cult places also in later periods. The original burials had probably no grave goods (Lang 2007a, 120).

The surrounding terrain is slightly undulating, farther in the south and south-west it lowers, ca 0.8 m in the northeast the land rises to a ridge near the klint edge. This rise is quite high and restricts the view to the sea. An alvar area is located to the east from the graves, ca 0.7 m farther it also ascends to a ridge where a number of stone graves are located (Fig. 4).

It is certain that the landscapes of the Bronze Age were different from the present landscapes. The primeval alvar forests still existed at least to some extent, as indicated in pollen analysis (e.g. Saarse et al. 1999, 397). It is supposed that graves were built into sparse thin forests, used for pasture (Lang 2000, 104; Vedru 2002, 108–109). The landscapes of Rebala and Jõelähtme might, at least partly, have been covered with forest.

Beneath grave I of the southernmost group of *Lastekangrud* two sherds of Corded Ware vessel, a number of animal bones and charcoal were found, interpreted as indicators of an earlier settlement site (Lang et al. 2001, 39).

The second group of graves is situated ca 0.7 km east of the *Lastekangrud* and ca 0.2 km to the west of Manniva road (Kalman 1999, fig. 1). Graves are located on a large ridge near the buried klint. The ridge is clearly visible from *Lastekangrud* but the graves on it remain invisible. It seems that both the ridge and the klint edge were important for grave builders.

The stone graves near the klint of Rebala can be divided into two groups, both oriented to the klint edge. Some of them – the first group – were built on a ridge

running towards the klint edge. It consists of a dozen graves. The ridge rises about 1.5 metres from the surrounding landscape and approaching it from lower areas, especially from southeast, the graves on it loom monumentally (Fig. 5). One of the graves on the ridge is very large, the others are more modest. As the ridge is directed approximately in the south–north direction, the klint edge is not visible on the southernmost graves. On the graves located on the northern part of the ridge, the coastal plain and also the sea are visible. The other group of graves is located on a lower area, on the gently sloping klint edge, covered with soil. The remote Valkla klint is also visible from most of the graves near the klint of Rebala. Just some 20 m to the west, a small damp area is located,³ the age of which is not possible to determine.

The graves on the ridge, as elsewhere, have been built in the course of a long time and the present picture is the result of a long process. At the beginning both the ridge and klint edge were probably considered important, as might also be the sea in the distance. What was the most important of them is of course not known; maybe it was the fact that all these special features occurred in one place.



Fig. 5. Graves on the ridge. View from the southeast (photo by G. Vedru).

Joon 5. Seljandikukalmed. Vaade kagu poolt.

³ These small wet spots cannot be dated properly. They may have been bogs, but at least some of them could be man-made – the results of quarrying limestone for building graves (Mati Ilomets – to the author).

No graves have been investigated here, but deciding from their location, the oldest graves are possibly the graves on the ridge; the graves located on the lower area might be of later date.

The third group of graves is situated by the small road that leads from Rebala to Jõelähtme; to the east and southeast from Rebala (Fig. 6). These graves can be divided into several groups; the first is in the vicinity of Rebala village (Fig. 6: I); the second can be found by the Manniva road (Fig. 6: II) and the third in Jõelähtme (Fig. 7). Those groups can in turn be divided into subgroups.

The quite large graves of group I are located on flat terrain in similar natural conditions. The distance between the graves is from 2 to 20 metres. Views from the graves are quite similar: ca 1 km to the north and northwest is the same ridge where the previous graves are located and which closes further view; in the east the terrain gently slopes and the view is extensive; from the southeast to the southwest the land is undulating, as is the view. Behind the northernmost graves of this group the land declines. Approaching these graves from the northwest direction, we can see only the farther areas in the west and northwest, all other directions are closed off and the only view opens to the grave in front.

A separate group of stone-cist graves is located west of the small road that leads from Rebala–Jõelähtme road to Manniva road (Fig. 6: II). These graves are more modest as is their natural setting. Three graves are located in close group on the slightly undulating terrain. One stone grave is located near the crossroad, and does not belong to the same group.⁴

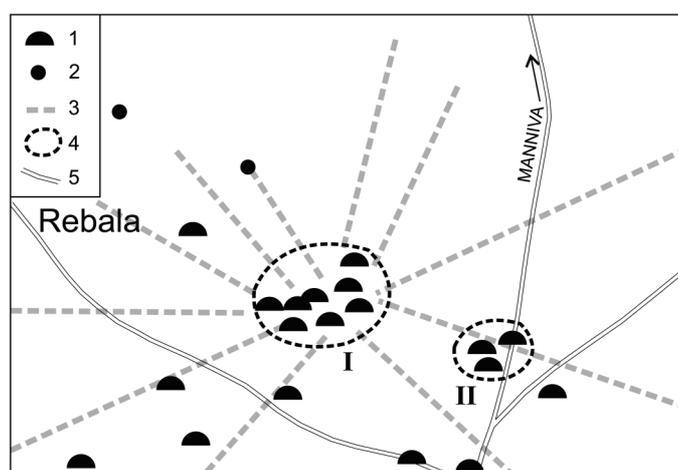


Fig. 6. Stone graves by the Rebala–Jõelähtme road. 1 stone grave, 2 cup-marked stone, 3 view, 4 group, 5 road.

Joon 6. Kivikalmed Rebala–Jõelähtme tee ääres. 1 kivikalme, 2 lohukivi, 3 vaade, 4 rühm, 5 tee.

⁴ This heap may not be a grave at all. It is situated on the land of a former farmstead and it might be a ruin of some smaller building.

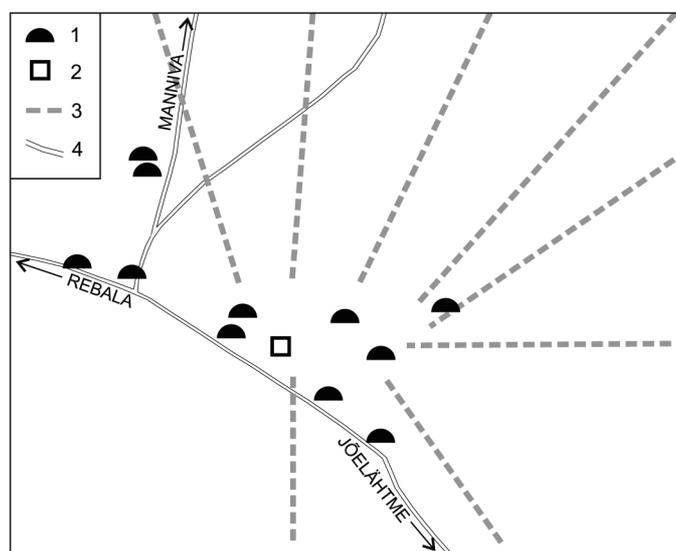


Fig. 7. Stone graves by the eastern end of the Rebala–Jõelähtme road. 1 stone grave, 2 find spot, 3 view, 4 road.

Joon 7. Kivikalmed Rebala–Jõelähtme tee idapoolses otsas. 1 kivikalme, 2 leiukoht, 3 vaade, 4 tee.

A number of stone graves are situated by the eastern part of the same road leading from Rebala to Jõelähtme (Fig. 7). They stand from two to twenty metres from each other in similar natural context. Searching for characteristic features of the landscape we can say that these graves are situated at the edge of openness and closedness. The view is closed in the directions between the southwest and north-northeast; the view towards the southern areas is also not very extensive. A wider view opens only to the northeast and east direction. Approaching from the northeast direction from Ellandvahe, the land rises in front and the only views open to two stone graves, which look monumental on the horizon (Fig. 8).

The twenty stone graves of Ellandvahe are located north of Jõelähtme on the lands of Ellandvahe farmstead (Fig. 9). Graves are located about 60–200 metres from the escarpment on the land descending towards west and south. As the land rises also between the graves and the escarpment, both the coastal plain and river valley are not visible from the graves. As an addition to the klint edge, the big stones of the area were taken into consideration when the graves were built. The big boulder of Ellandvahe (height 5.7 m, circuit 32.3 m) is only some 30–40 metres from the southernmost graves of the group and on the same level with them. A little farther to the south and southwest the land starts to get lower again. All the graves in Ellandvahe are positioned between the boulder and the klint escarpment. It is possible that the boulder acted as a landmark for people who came from southern directions, and marked the way to the graves and/or a



Fig. 8. Stone grave by the Rebala–Jõelähtme road. View from the northeast (photo by G. Vedru).

Joon 8. Kivikalme Rebala–Jõelähtme tee ääres. Vaade kirde poolt.

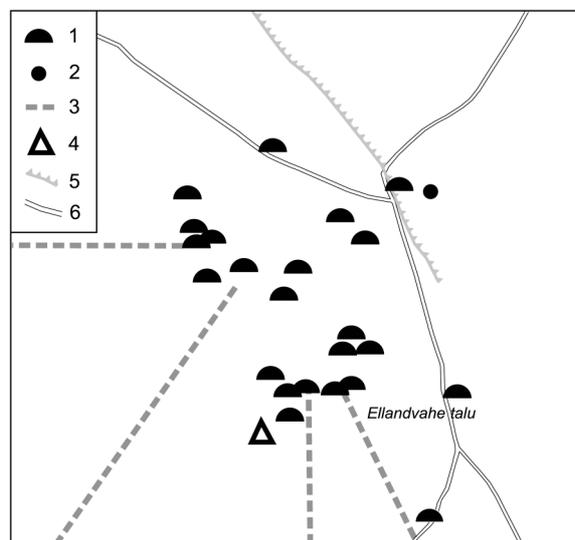


Fig. 9. Stone graves in Ellandvahe. 1 stone grave, 2 cup-marked stone, 3 view, 4 boulder, 5 klint, 6 road.

Joon 9. Ellandvahe kivikalmed. 1 kivikalme, 2 lohukivi, 3 vaade, 4 rändrahn, 5 klint, 6 tee.

ritual area. A number of smaller stones are also located in the vicinity. The south-easternmost of the graves is surrounded by three large stones at a distance of ca 20 m: the boulder is in the south, and others in north and northwest. It seems that the most important features have been the stones in different directions and the grave was built between them. Maybe it is the oldest grave in Ellandvahe group?

Arthur Spreckelsen excavated three of them in the 1920s; two were dated to the Bronze Age and one to the 3rd–4th centuries (Lang 1996, 401–402).

Beside the graves, there is also a cup-marked stone. Unlike the graves, it is on the coastal plain, some dozen metres from the escarpment. So it was in the same area with the graves, but entirely in different natural conditions.

As in several other places near the North-Estonian klint, the graves were built in the zone of the escarpment but not in its immediate visibility. So it was not important to have a view to lower areas or to some body of water; due to the rise of land they are invisible from the graves. If the graves had been built about 20–100 metres from their present location, they would have been in places where both could be visible. It seems that the closest vicinity of the klint edge was avoided intentionally.

There are also other stone graves and cup-marked stones in Jõelähtme. The graves are located in several groups of different sizes. The biggest of them consists of 36 graves and is located at the distance of some 100 metres from Jõelähtme river, not far from the place where the river appears again. Those graves are not in their original location; previously they were even closer to the river. As an addition, two graves are situated closer to the river: one on its left and the other on its right bank. On the left riverbank also a probable cup-marked stone is located. The graves are visible from each other. There is a difference between the locations of these graves: the riverbed is visible from the grave on the left bank, but not from the grave on the right bank. From the latter it seems that there is no river between the two graves. The characteristic feature is spaciousness.

Later developments on the landscape

Human settlement of the study area continued also in later centuries. At least one of the graves of Ellandvahe was used for burials in the Roman Iron Age, and it is possible that other graves were used in that period as well. Also stone graves in *Lastekangrud* and Jõelähtme were used then. In the Middle Iron Age people were buried in the stone-grave of Rebala Presti. According to archaeological finds, settlements were established in all three villages in the Viking Age. The settlement site of Rebala was located on the dry higher parts of the present village. Traces of human activity of the Viking Age were found between the easternmost graves that are situated by the Rebala–Jõelähtme road. A few potsherds were gathered

from the surface of the earth. No settlement layer was detracted; maybe the area was used for some other purpose. The settlement site of Võerdla was located on the southern part of the present village and the settlement site of Jõelähtme on both sides of the river by the sides of the Old Narva road.

Discussion: (re)interpreting the landscape – people's landscapes

Three questions arise from the text above. First, how did ancient people experience the world and what was important for them? The activities that were carried out in landscape were determined by the experience of landscape and its interpretation for people and for the community. Which places were preferred and why? Second, what made one place more important than others? Some of the places had more power and they were finally ritualised through grave building. Third, what was important in the landscape and why?

Landscape has been a source of inspiration for people living in different times and places. People's myths and understanding of the world and its genesis are connected with it, as is the understanding of a righteous way of living. People feel safe in their natural environment where they can read every sign, the existence of which remains invisible to outsiders. Such a starting point is characteristic of people living in any type of natural conditions, also of those whose environment seems rough or unfriendly (Tuan 1990, 77–85). It is quite understandable that the inhabitants of northern Estonia had similar relations to their surrounding environment.

Why did people decide to alter some places by constructing monuments? It has been stressed that stone graves were built to places that differed from the ordinary, e.g. on elevations, near the klint edge and bodies of water (Lang 1999; 2000, 202). The study area is no exception, but in the micro-scale more details can be determined.

Why a place was selected can be explained more easily in such places where some outstanding natural object is located. In the study area this is most obvious in the cases of the ridge in Rebala village; near Jõelähtme River and in Ellandvahe. These are all understandable choices. The ridge with graves comes to the fore from all directions. Compared to the location of the *Lastekangrud* group, it is much more impressive; the views from the ridge open widely to lower areas and from its northern end the sea is also visible. It is possible that there was also a bog near the ridge. Bogs and mires have possessed ritual meaning in several places and during a long period. Sacrifices have been made in them since the Mesolithic until today in Britain, Ireland, the Netherlands, Northern Germany, Denmark and southern Scandinavia (Williams 2003, 91 and references). Among the sacrifices, dated to the Bronze and Iron Ages are humans (Williams 2003), skulls (Lang 2007b, 37), bronze and golden objects (Kristiansen & Larsson 2005, 294, 306, fig. 139), pottery, etc. (Bradley 2002, 53, 55, 61). Relying on similar

ritual activity it has been suggested that such places acted as natural sanctuaries for the Bronze Age people, representing the lower world in their cosmology (Kristiansen & Larsson 2005, 306, 355). Building graves near bogs may carry the same belief. As an addition to Rebala, graves can be found near bogs in Vão (Lang 1996, fig. 102) and in Saunja (Lang 1996, 121). Cup-marked stones are located near bogs and mires more often than graves. Such stones are known in Rebala, Vandjala, Maardu and other places.

Maybe the nearby bog was one of the natural attractions for the builders of the graves of the *Lastekangrud* group. Large peat bogs were once in the place of the present phosphorite quarry. So it seems that *Lastekangrud* were built on flat fertile terrain in the vicinity of the bog. As the place was inhabited earlier, this environment could have been connected with ancestors or gods and their deeds. So the bog in the west and the ridge farther in the east were mentally important. Evidence for such connections between the features of the landscape and ancestral activities are known from traditional cultures inhabiting several places of the world (e.g. Taçon 2000; Tilley 1994, 37–67). The landscape is represented in myth and it represents the myth (Tilley 1994, 47). Although these cultures remain far in time and distance, they can be mentioned just for understanding how different people's understandings and attitudes towards the landscape can be.

At the same time, building graves on previously important locations has altered them essentially (Cummings 2003, 35) and with that act, also the attitude of the future generations was changed. New features were added to the landscape and new relevant knowledge.

What features were considered important in Võerdla where twenty graves are located? This area is characterized by spaciousness and wide views in all directions. Prominent features of the landscape are missing at present. In the vicinity of the grave field and cup-marked stones is a settlement site of the Corded Ware Culture and so the place is connected with previous generations. A bog was located at a distance of ca 150 m from the north-westernmost graves and stones. If bogs and swamps were considered important places, then its vicinity may have been influential in this location. Some of the cup-marked stones were situated at the edge of the bog. It is not a unique case. In the neighbourhood of the study area a number of cup-marked stones can be found near swamps. In Loo village several cup-marked stones are standing near the swamp and one is in the middle. In Maardu village one stone is in a damp depression. Viewing the distribution maps from a wider area, it is clear that cup-marked stones can often be found on the edges of swamps and bogs (c.f. Lang 1996, figs 102, 108, 113, 118, 121, 129, 132). One can suppose that this indicates the peculiar nature of such places and these places were consequently treated in a different way.

The other stone graves in Rebala are on quite flat terrain. Two graves of the first group are located on the edge of a small terrace; approaching these graves from the northeast, most of the landscape remains invisible and the graves look

monumental on the horizon. The same effect appears in two graves of the Jõelähtme group, located only ca 0.5 km to the east. Also the proper or right direction for approaching them is the same – northeast. It is not possible that the impression of the graves in a closed landscape was unnoticed by the grave builders. That leads to the suggestion that people who built the graves knew their landscape in detail. A place for future graves was chosen carefully, and the first grave was built in the most prominent location. Maybe the north-eastern direction had some kind of ritual importance? Also the boulder of Ellandvahe, visible from the graves of Jõelähtme is situated northeast from the graves (Fig. 10). The distance between two locations is ca 1.5 km; it is possible that a road connecting them went also in that direction.

In the case of Ellandvahe the nature is visibly different from other areas – the place is at the edge of settled land, a liminal place in itself. As in several other places near the North-Estonian klint, the graves were built in the zone of the escarpment, but are visible. So it was not important to have a view of the lower



Fig. 10. View to a stone grave in the eastern end of Rebala–Jõelähtme road. View from the southwest. Farther on the right the boulder of Ellandvahe (photo by G. Vedru).

Joon 10. Vaade ühele kivikalmele Rebala–Jõelähtme tee idapoolses otsas. Vaade edela poolt. Tagaplaanil paremal Ellandvahe rändrahn.

areas or of some body of water, due to the rise of land they are invisible from the graves. If the graves had been built about 20–100 metres from their present location, they would have been in places where both could be visible. It seems that the closest vicinity of the klint edge was avoided intentionally. Other important landmarks were the boulder and possibly other smaller stones in the vicinity. Although these stones bear no cup-marks, the importance of big stones is quite obvious.

It is possible that some important places were changed through human activities while others remained unchanged. Both stone-cist graves and cup-marked stones were often situated in natural borders – in liminal places, e.g. the *Lastekangrud* of Rebala, graves on the ridge and graves of Ellandvahe.

Conclusions

People experience and interpret landscape in different ways and it is not possible to decide why some places were used for some activities. Especially difficult is to answer the question why graves were built in one place and why some stones bear cup-marks and others do not. In a micro-scale analysis we can point to some features in the local landscape that could promote such activities. People have sought for difference in landscape and when they found it, they used it with a different purpose. The important features of the study area were ridges and lower terraces, klint, karst and probably also bogs. Wide views open from graves and stones and several natural objects are visible in distances. People in the landscape moved between the places, experienced and interpreted their surroundings. A number of graves and cup-marked stones are located in places that can be considered liminal. These are borders in the landscape where the ordinary meets the different, that were perceived as special. These were the places where alvar met the bog, high limestone plateau ended suddenly, a river suddenly appears. These places were often used differently, mostly for burying the dead; cup-marked stones can be found in these locations as well. Somewhere between these liminal places were the settlement sites and ordinary landscapes of people. These landscapes carried their own meanings and were experienced and perceived in different ways. All these places together formed part of people's worldview, their self-determination and understanding of the world.

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MAASTIKKU KOGEDES

Resümee

Inimese seos maastikuga ja selle mõtestamine on eri aegadel ja kohtades erinev olnud. Minevikus nagu tänapäeva traditsionaalsete hõimude juureski oli see ilmselt isiklikum ja sügavam. Maastikku on käsitatud hingestatud tervikuna, millega on suheldud ja mida on erinevalt koheldud. Algselt kohati võib-olla isegi vaenulikuks peetud maastikku on humaniseeritud ja sotsialiseeritud. Arvatavasti on inimesed läbi aegade kõikjal enese jaoks neid ümbritsevat lahti seletanud, olgu selleks siis kas maastik tervikuna või mõni selle üksikelement. Sellised seletused ja põhjused nende otsimiseks on tõenäoliselt välja kasvanud eelkõige

maastiku- ning kohatunnetusest ja isiklikust seotusest sellega, ükskõik kas vahetult või näiteks esivanemate kaudu. Eriti viimasel juhul on oma osa olnud ilmselt mitmesugustel suuliselt edasi antavatel pärimustel ja traditsioonidel, millest vähemalt osa on olnud seotud mingite kohtadega maastikul. On ju maastik ainus reaalsus, mis seob erinevate aegade inimesi – tänapäeval asustatud maastikel elati sageli juba aastatuhandeid tagasi, tegutsedes samades kohtades kus praegugi. Kahtlemata erinesid need maastikud paljuski nüüdsetest, kuid suured maastiku- elementid olid ikkagi samad.

Viimasel ajal on hakatud järjest rohkem tähelepanu pöörama maastiku- uuringutele mikrotasandil. See tähendab üha detailsemat analüüsi kohalikus (loodus)keskkonnas ja sellesse põhjalikumat süüvimist, võimaldades välja selgitada nüansse, mis muul juhul võiksid tähelepanuta jääda.

Artiklis on esitatud kolme põlisküla – Rebala, Jõelähtme ja Võerdla – maastiku- kasutuse ülevaade läbi kogu muinasaja. Rõhuasetus on monumentaalsetel kivi- kalmetel ja nende asetusel maastikul. Kivikalmete-eelne asustus jättis enesest maastikule vaid tagasihoidlikke märke, ja on vähetõenäoline, et asulakohad ise mingil moel jälgitavad olid. Inimeste suhtumist aitab mõista ka hilisemate elanike maastikukasutus, mis lähtub juba muudetud maastikust. Eri aegade asustusest jäänud jäljed moodustavad ühtse mustri, kus terviku analüüsiks pole vaja seda eri perioodideks lahutada, vaid ka nende koos vaatlemine annab hea ülevaate maas- tikul aset leidnud pikaajalistest protsessidest. Artiklis ongi püütud uurida just prot- sessi, mitte üksnes selle tulemusel tekkinud asustuspilti, kuigi nende eraldamine on kohati võimatu ning mõttetu.

Üheks küsimuseks, millele on vastust otsitud, ongi piirid maastikul: millised need konkreetsetes kohtades olid ja kuidas neid inimeste poolt mõisteti ning tähis- tati? Need olid looduslikud servaalad või üleminekukohad, kus tavamaastik muutus teistsuguseks, sageli ehitati kivikalmeid just sellistesse kohtadesse. Maastikulistel servaaladel võis aga olla inimeste jaoks rõhutatult eriline tähtsus: need seostu- sid muutuse ja üleminekulga maastikul, võimalik, et ka mentaalses tähenduses. Sarnasel moel võidi käsitada ka kalmet kui rituaalset kohta, mis oli seotud inimese, *resp* surnu üleminekulga ühest ilmast teise, ühest olekust teise. Seega võis toimida topeltefekt, kus üks muutus ja üleminek rõhutas teist. Ent mitte kõiki kalmeid ei ehitatud sellistesse kohtadesse. Seega huvitab autorit ka teistsuguste maastike võimalik tähtsus, püüdes leida põhjusi, mis muutsid need piisavalt olu- listeks ja atraktiivseteks, et sinna matmispaiku rajada.

Kolm uuritavat küla asuvad tänapäeva Jõelähtme vallas Harjumaal. Tegu on suhteliselt klindiservalähedaste küladega.

Vanimad kindlad jäljed piirkonna inimasustusest pärinevad hilisneoliitikumist. Pronksiajal lõpliku väljenduse saanud muutused inimeste maailmavaates, usundis ja selle kaudu ka maastikukasutuses jätsid oma nähtavad jäljed ka vaadeldavale alale. Piirkonnast on teada lohukive ja kivikirstkalmeid, kusjuures mõlemaid võib leida suuremate rühmadena, lohukive siiski ka üksikult. Kuigi nii kalmed kui kivid võivad paikneda sarnastes looduslikes tingimustes, ei ole see sugugi mitte

alati nii. Kui eranditult kõik kalmed on kuivadel ja võimaluse korral kõrgematel aladel, siis lohukivid paiknevad mõnikord niiskete alade servadel või koguni keskel ehk siis ilmselgetel piirialadel.

Võerdla suurim kalmete ja lohukividega ala jääb Vana-Narva maanteest põhja poole ja tänapäevasesest külast ida ja kagu poole (joon 1–3). Rebala kalmed asuvad põhiliselt kolmes, maastikuliselt üsnagi erinevas kohas. Lastekangrud jäävad külast põhja poole, klindiservast umbes 0,8 km kaugusele. Teine ja arvukam rühm asub neist omakorda umbes 0,7 km ida pool oleval seljandikul ja kolmas rühm Rebala ning Jõelähtme vahelise tee ääres. Viimane rühm liitub ida pool Jõelähtme läänepoolsete kalmetega (joon 4–8). Rebalast Jõelähtmesse viiva tee idapoolses osas, praeguse Jõelähtme surnuaia lähedal, on samuti terve hulk kivi-kirstkalmeid (joon 7–8). Ellandvahe kalmed jäävad Jõelähtmest põhja poole, Ellandvahe talu maadele Ristikangrumäele (joon 9).

Kõige lihtsam on kohalikult seletada neis paigus, kus maastikul on mingi silmapaistev objekt. Selles suhtes on hästi eristuvad Manniva tee lähedased kalmed ja Ellandvahe kalmerühm. Neist esimene on eriti silmapaistev: kalmetega seljandik tuleb kõikjalt lähenedes hästi esile. Seljandikult avaneb vaade madalamatele aladele ja selle põhjapoolsematelt kalmetelt ka kaugemale jäävale merele. Võimalik, et juba tol ajal oli läheduses soine ala ja märgalad osutusid määravaks ka Lastekangrute asukoha valikul. Lisaks neist kirde ja ida pool olevale raba-laigule, mille olemasolu pronksiajal ei ole päris kindel, jäid need varem ka läände ning pisut kaugemale põhja poole. Praeguseks on rabad aga karjääridega hävitatud. Seega näib, et Lastekangrute ehitamiseks valiti tasane koht märgalade läheduses, mis ise oli siiski viljakal maal.

Võerdla kalmeid ja lohukive iseloomustavaks märksõnaks võib pidada avarust. Varasematel aegadel jäi kalmevälja loodepoolsetest kalmetest-lohukividest vaid umbes 150 m kaugusele raba, mille ala on tänaseks osaliselt kuivendatud ja suuremas osas karjääri alla jäänud. Kui oletada selliste kohtade tähtsust kivikalmeid ehitanud inimeste jaoks, siis võis seegi olla üheks teguriks, miks kalmeid hakati just sellesse kohta ehitama. Mõned lohukivid olid aga algselt ilmselt niiskel alal või siis päris selle servas.

Rebala I ja II kalmerühm on samuti suhteliselt tasasel maal. Kaks esimese rühma kalmet jäävad aga kirde poolt lähenedes väikese astangu servale, mistõttu avaneb sealtpoolt lähenejale vaatepilt, kus maastik on suuremas osas suletud ja ees kõrguvad kaks kalmet. Sama efekt ja suund tulevad esile ka Jõelähtme surnuaia läheduses oleva kahe kalme puhul. Mulje, mida kalmed kirdest lähenedes jätavad, on märkimisväärne. Pole võimalik, et kalmete ehitajatele jäi see märkamata ja et need oleksid sellele kohale juhuslikult tehtud.

Ellandvahe kalmete puhul võib samuti oletada koha valikut maastiku erilise põhjal. Nagu mitmel pool mujalgi Põhja-Eesti klindiserva lähistel rajati ka siin kalmed kohta, kus paeastang jäi küll lähedusse, ent siiski mitte päris selle servale. Seega ei osutunud tähtsaks konkreetne kalmetelt avanev vaade veekogule, kuna nii meri kui jõeorg jäävad kalmete juurest maatõusu tõttu nähtamatuks. Määra-

vaks võis saada hoopis rändrahn ja teised suured kivid selle läheduses. Kuigi ühelgi neist kalmete juures asuvatest kividest lohke peal ei ole, võib selle järgi oletada (mõnede) suurte kivide tähtsust toleaeagsete inimeste jaoks ja seda arvata-vasti mingis ulatuses ka siis, kui neid ei ole lohkudega märgistatud.

Inimesed on otsinud maastikus teistsugusust ja seda eriliseks otstarbeks kasu-tanud. Vaatlusaluses piirkonnas on ilmselt oluliseks osutunud rabad, aga ka seljan-dikud ja väiksemad astringud. Paljude muististe juurest avanevad avarad vaated ja nii mõnigi loodusobjekt on olnud kaugele nähtav. Maastikul liikusid aga inime-sed, kes kõike seda enese jaoks lahti seletasid, tunnetasid ja mõtestasid. Füüsili-sed maastikud olid samaaegselt ka mentaalse tähendusega. Paljud siinsetest kal-metest ja lohukividest on sellistes kohtades, mida saab pidada looduslikuks serva-alaks. Need on piiriks maastikul, kus harilik kohtub teistsugusega, mida tunnetati erilisena.