

# SUMMARY

## The sacred sites of Laukuva /LAUKUVA I

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The paper is devoted to the sacred sites of Laukuva before the Christian era. Almost 50 objects that have survived or been destroyed but had been described are presented on the basis of archaeological, historical, linguistic and folklore data. Sacred hills and stones dominate among them. Bogs, fields and water reservoirs make up a comparatively small part of those monuments.

These sites should be mentioned among the analysed ones in the paper: the complex of Šiauduva sites (3 hills, a lake, a river) that is believed to have had a great religious importance, the Palokysčio Krivė's hill which, as it is believed, served as a meeting site for the representatives of several *valsčiai* (local administrative units), the Kaštaunaliai Panų benches hill—a hypothetical site of girls initiations. Some peculiar pile-form stones (tall stones) were standing in the environs of Laukuva up to the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> c. Their mythical sense is associated with the images of posthumous souls (*vėlės*) existence: it was believed that a soul (*vėlė*) remains in the earth, water, a tree or stones for a while.

It was concluded while analysing the distribution of Laukuva sacred sites, their natural and cultural peculiarities, that most of them were established in the middle of the first millenium and at the beginning of the second millenium. Some of them did not lose their mythical and religious importance even up to the 19<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> c. (e.g. sacred stone of Kikoniai, the sacred river of Šiauduva).