

## FROM THE EDITORIAL BOARD

# THE WOLF: HUMAN/NON-HUMAN RELATIONS ON THE BASIS OF ETIOLOGIES AND VERBAL COMMUNICATION

**Mare Kõiva**

*Head of the Department of Folkloristics*

*Estonian Literary Museum, Estonia*

*Email: mare.koiva@folklore.ee*

**Abstract:** The article examines the attitudes towards wolves reflected in Estonian folklore and their etiological and religious motifs: the emergence of wolves, wolf incantations, wolves' food from heaven / from the ruler, pieces of clouds, and taboo names of wolves as expressions of mythological and religious relations. The number of grey wolves (*Canis lupus*), whose habitat once covered the entire Northern Eurasia including India, Japan, and Arabian Peninsula, has declined in most of central and southern North America, as well as almost all of Western Europe, and they are no longer known in Scandinavia, India, the United Kingdom, and Japan. The article demonstrates the parallels between Slavic and Finno-Ugric traditions.

**Keywords:** etiology, incantations, pieces of clouds, ruler of wolves, St. George, wolf

The article was inspired by Mirjam Mencej's monograph titled *The Ruler of Wolves* (2001), which thoroughly covers Slavic and partly also non-Slavic culture, and the monograph of Alexandr Gura (1997). In Mencej's monograph Estonia is represented with only one story, and there are only a few reports from Finnish folklore in the book. However, the wolf is a remarkable predator in Estonia and the specific motif of the wolf leader or ruler is widely known. Due to the language barrier, Estonian folklore has remained difficult to find and compare for the international readership, and this article is an attempt to add some facts about the wolf that was chosen as the national animal on 23 April 2018 (St. George' Day) in Estonia.

The article focuses on the grey wolf, whose former habitat covered all of Northern Eurasia, including India, Japan, and the Arabian Peninsula. Today, the habitat of the grey wolf populations has shrunk. In most of the central and southern parts of North America, as well as in almost all of Western Europe, in Scandinavia, India, in the United Kingdom, and Japan the grey wolf is no longer known.

There are many tales about wolves, also beliefs and belief narratives, and storytelling related to wolves is rich. Some motifs were still known in the 1970s and beyond. We can find a larger corpus of incantations connected with wolves, master or herder of wolves, feeding of wolves from the sky, communication with wolves, etc. Folkloristics and folk religion are mostly subject to genre-centred research (see Baumann 2000; Briggs & Baumann 1992; Ben Amos 1976; Honko 1968, 1989). Yet religious tales and messages are the most universal sets. Species, in this case the conventional categories, divide the same subject into different subcategories for the wolf ruler – legends and memorates. In the stories depicting personal experiences, there are often references to classes that are more distant in the hierarchy of texts (e.g. religious messages), or which reflect the same subject matter, which in some cases (but not always) is verbalized. On the other hand, for a fair evaluation of the material, it is necessary to look, for example, at the corpus of taboo names and expressions, and to observe the verbal and non-verbal expressions that belong to the set of customs. For example, incantations as texts behave differently from narratives as a class and, while incorporating motifs, names, and expressions from other classes and older sacred literature, however, in their peculiar laconic form, they convey individual features of beliefs.

The wolf-related tradition is a variegated and controversial corpus of stories where texts containing folk beliefs and experience about wolves attacking (and overpowering) people in the forest interweave with stories of the wolf's tricks to catch prey (tail-stabbing the sheep running out of a barn), of a kid growing in a wolf's den, or a grateful wolf, whose cubs are rescued, or humorous stories of how a thorn is pulled out of its paw, or a bone is removed from its throat, etc. Also, there are historical reports of wolf raids, accompanied by generalizations, certain hunting restrictions, and the expected limitations to wolves harming domestic livestock.

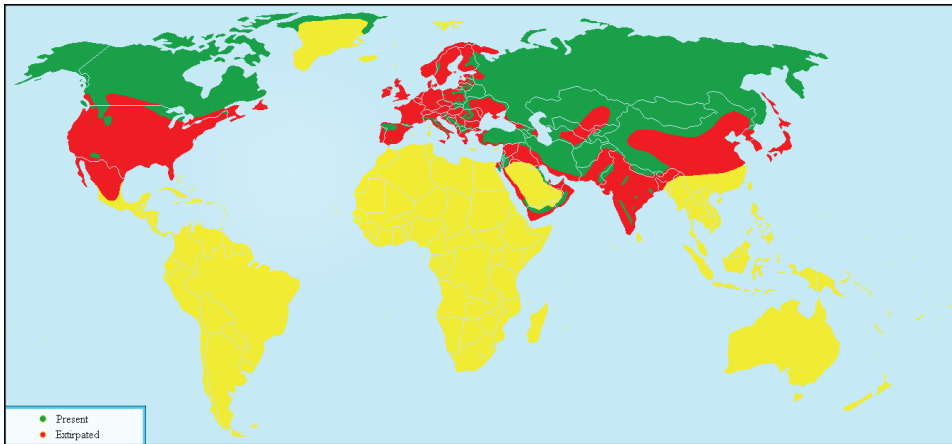
One of the peculiar moral complexes associated with wolf problematics is its etiology: the wolf was created by the devil as a creature destined to devour God, but during the failed revival process it became a creature destined to chase and kill devils, revenants (walkers), and other demonic beings. Due to this, it has been attributed an important mission in the legends – to protect human beings from the attack of demonic beings in a very physical way. For example, legends of clouds, of feeding wolves from the sky, and similar stories point to lofty aims.

But how does this abundance of different facets, symbols, and beliefs translate into everyday practice? The wolf is a carnivorous wild animal, a competitor and a threat to the farmer. Understanding and managing wildlife is also about understanding and managing societies, full of conflicting situations and values. The situation where a competitor is a threat, has been studied more closely by Herrmann et al. (2013). They used a combined approach of in-depth interviews and storytelling as a means for conveying value orientations towards wildlife. In

their research of big wildlife they reveal what causes the conflicts and impedes relations:

*The four main barriers to conservation identified for our studied felid species are most probably also valid for other conflictive carnivore species: (1) fear towards the animal which can lead to less acceptance of its presence or even reduce the willingness to protect it, (2) inconspicuousness of and missing contact possibility with the animal which favours the willingness to protect aposematic animals over cryptic animals, (3) a diminished or missing cultural dimension of the animal which might provoke less identification with the animal, and (4) a contradictory relationship towards the animal meaning that people have mixed sentiments (positive and negative at once) towards the animal, where it is not clear which values finally govern.*

To sum up, we may say that the same positive and negative features also characterize the wolf-connected folklore – it is a vast and controversial phenomenon. At the same time, it contains surprisingly plenty examples of mutual dialogue or human/non-human agreements, concessions, and room for each.



**Figure 1.** Distribution of the grey wolf (*Canis lupus*) in the world. Green – present, red – extirpated. Source: <https://et.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hunt>, last accessed on 9 December 2019.

## ETIOLOGIES: CONNECTIONS BETWEEN NARRATIVES AND NORMS

In folklore studies etiology (derived from the Greek *αἰτία*, which means cause) attempts to explain the origins of the world, creatures, natural monuments, and customs. The story of the creation of wolves and their etiological descent is

a multi-layered narrative, of which there are about four hundred records in Estonia. Wolf stories are known to have direct parallels, for instance, in the Livonian tradition (Loorits 1926), in Estonia (Loorits 1949), in Vepsian folklore (Vinokurova 2006, 2015), in Finland (Kaski 2019; Rokala 1973), Latvia (Šmits 1940–1941; Neuland 1981), Lithuania (Vėlius 1998), Russia (Gura 1997; Levkievskaya 2010; Kuznetsova 1997); Belorussia (Salavei 2011; Federowski 1897; Romanov 1891; Boganeva 2004, 2006), among the Bulgarian inhabitants in Ukraine and Moldavia (Badalanova Geller 2017), and in the East Slavic tradition (Belova 2004; Belova & Kabakova 2014; Belova et al. 2019), to name but a few. The focus of attention in Russian folklore is on bear-related etiologies (Belova 2004; Belova & Kabakova 2014). The etiologies are discussed also on the example of traditions in Sweden (Balzamo 2006), Hungary (Nagy 1990, 1998), Serbia (Katinski 2015), Mali (Johnson 1976), and Slovenia (Kropej 2012). Although narrative material does not differ much, it contains unexpected turns and forms peculiar nodes that give reason to debate categorization. These are episodes of the creation of the world when God makes animals, either alone or together with the devil. The activity is accompanied by humour, outdoing one another or pulling the wool over the nose. The devil mainly supplements God's creation with his own compliments (the cattle get devil's horns on their heads), he creates annoying and nasty creatures (mosquitoes and clegs), and he is the creator of the bat, toad, and wolf (it varies in different cultures). Then God intervenes and changes what was originally intended. In the following example, the devil is in a position of the ineffectual creator:

### ***Creation of the frog***

*The old pagan was jealous of the skylark created by God, which sings so beautifully.*

*Then he wanted to create a bird that would be more beautiful than the lark and would sing more beautifully. He took clay and made a bird as he had planned, and breathed a soul into it.*

*The bird made by the devil, however, did not take off, but began to croak and jump. It became a toad. Some people still call the frog the "Lark of the Old Pagan." (ERA II 115, 455 (1) < Mustjala, 1935)*

The wolf etiology also represents a change in the original intention, though it answers the questions of who created the wolf, what it was made of, its function and its tasks in a different way.

Let us list the reasons for the creation:

(1) The devil wants the same revered servant as God has in the person of man (H I 5, 145/6 < West Nigula, 1894) and he turns to God: "You are now done with your work, but let me make one of the lower animals, who would listen to my commandment and agree with me." God allowed him to do as

he pleased. (H II 21, 271/3 (4) < Tori, 1889). In some texts the devil wants to create a dog for himself.

(2) In variations, the devil asks for his own human and goes to create the wolf.

(3) The devil sees the animals created by God and also wants to create something (H II 21, 807/8 (6) < Tori, 1889).

(4) The devil wants to limit the number of people and animals created by God; there is also a motif in which God may go to talk to the devil while resting from the creation of the world and promises that the devil may create the destroyer:

*God asked the devil: "Is everything good now, has everything been created well?"*

*The devil replied: "Everything is good, but there is one animal still missing. There is no such animal that would eat all the filth and scum on the earth."*

*God said: "If you know that there is no such animal existing and you believe there is a need for one, then go ahead and create it."*

*And so, the devil went about in the village and collected old broom-ends, broomsticks and other garbage and crafted the body of a wolf. --- [dominant ending – the wolf eats the devil]*

(S 65492/6 < Setumaa, 1933)

In some texts God himself wants to create a predator, but the devil offers that he, for his part, will put on this animal a chain armour and a bell on its neck, then the people and the animals will see and hear that it is a predator. God resists, but decides to create the wolf with a strong stiff back, and call it *susi*. For unknown reasons, its cub started to be called hunt (wolf) in the Tallinn region (H II 32, 634 (2) < Rāpina, 1889).

(Wolf in South-Estonian dialect is called 'susi', in North-Estonian – 'hunt'. Language and vocabulary differences have prompted a range of neighbourly jokes.)

(5) The devil often decides to create an animal that would destroy all the living things, including man.

(6) The devil wants to create an animal that would destroy God.

The basic type of narrative is variant 6, in which the devil creates a clay wolf that would eat/destroy God. The devil tries his best to resurrect the wolf by saying: "Get up and eat God!", But the animal does not come round. Finally, the devil turns to God and asks him to breathe life into the new animal. God agrees to resurrect the creature when the devil says: "Get up and eat the devil!" So, the animal restored to life rushes to chase the devil, and its main task remains to chase and destroy demons, including the devil and the revenant (walker). Thus, this is the animal created by the devil, who becomes his and other evil forces' enemy. It is namely this motif that offers a series of variations of the fascinating storyline

in which the encounter with a devil or a revenant ends with the destruction of evil creatures by the wolf.

***Making of wolves and the death of the devil***

*In the olden days, the devil wanted to create the kind of wolf that would eat all people and animals. Having this in mind, the devil went to a clay pit and started to create a wolf. He gave it a fence pole for the spine and wood beam legs, a heart made of a sauna stone and hot coals for eyes and torch rods for ribs, and finally gave it flesh made of clay, but the wolf would not come to life.*

*The devil then went up to heaven to plead God to give life to the wolf, but God asked: "Why have you created this wolf?"*

*The devil replied: "To eat people and animals."*

*To this, God said: "Go down and tell your wolf to eat the devil – this will make it come to life."*

*The devil then came down to the earth and told the wolf to eat God, but this would not bring the wolf to life. Then the devil repeated its words but to no avail. After that the devil gave it some thought and then said with some discouragement: "Wolf, eat the devil!"*

*As soon as he had uttered those words, the wolf sprang to life, snatched the devil and ate him. This is how the wolf came to be and for this reason devils are said to be mighty afraid of wolves.*

*Wolves' eyes are also said to glow at night because they are made of hot coals and wolves are said to turn with difficulty because their legs are made of stiff wood beams and their spine is made of a fence pole. It is also said that you shouldn't throw stones at a wolf - it is a useless act because the wolf has a heart of stone. (E 4210/1 < Põlva 1893)*

Another etiological legend is connected with God's delegated mission to serve as a shepherd in the form of a counterpart, in the role of a shepherd, or a shepherd's assistant, and to be entitled to free food for his services. This norm results in the following etiology, which explains why the wolf's mouth is black:

1. The wolf receives food from the host/hostess for keeping the herd, but one day the hostess tells it to go and search for food itself and throws a hot stone from the stove into the wolf's mouth. The angry and wounded wolf goes to her lambs. The wolf eats the smaller lambs with his torn mouth and remains the cattle killer.
2. The wolf gets the right to feed his family for grazing animals, but one day the host/hostess throws into the wolf's mouth a hot stone instead of bread. The wolf with a black and scorched mouth starts to kill.

A blind storyteller Kaarel Jürjenson presents the story in the following way.



**Why do wolves have a black mouth?**

*In the olden days, the wolf was as meek as a lamb that never did any harm. It even minded cattle like dogs do now and every time bread was baked in the families whose cattle it had minded, the wolf was given a long herdsman's loaf by each family.*

*But one stingy old hostess didn't make a loaf for the wolf and instead threw a hot sauna stone into the wolf's mouth, which made the wolf's jaws burn black. This hurt the wolf and made it angry and it went prowling into the woods, running across bogs to go see God and tell him of its distress. The wolf asked to be promised to eat as pay fifty pigs, sixty horses, a hundred horned animals, and a thousand sheep each year.*

*God made no such promise and released the wolf from its herdsman's duties, ordering it to feed only on such animals that lose their herd and wonder off. The wolf has eaten nothing but that type of animals ever since then. After receiving this permission from God, the wolf went back and killed the fattest sheep belonging to that stingy hostess. Its mouth remained black as a result of the hot sauna stone and this characteristic has been passed on to its kind until this day. The burn also made the wolf smell of burning. Dogs sense this smell from far away and know when to expect wolves. (ERA II 54, 439/40 (495) < Tartu-Maarja, 1932)*

In some versions the text ends with the wolf's report to God about how many animals it had killed during a year. This part has also spread as a short independent fairy tale (AT 77 \* – more than 40 versions, consists only of the wolf's monologue). The same monologue also forms riddles (Kippar 2000).

Although the wolf gets the right to slaughter domestic animals, there is also a limitation:

*... The wolf came to God again, and complained of its affliction, and showed its burnt mouth. But now God said to the wolf: 'As men are so greedy and do not want to give you crumbs and thus play the rogue, I now give you permission to take a pig from where you can. But I forbid you to eat a shaft horse or a yoked ox.' And this right has remained to this day. And never will a wolf eat a shaft horse or a yoked ox. (EKS 8° 2, 482/5 (3) < Paistu, 1877)*

The most common Estonian astromyth about the Great Wagon is based on the violation of a clearly formulated ban. The wolf is lifted to heaven for killing an ox, with a chariot, host, and bull (cf. Kuperjanov 2003: 180–182; 2010: 353 ff.). Folklore researcher Rudolf Põldmäe has recorded the following version:

**Stars in the sky**

*The wagon has four wheels and a wolf and an ox are pulling it. The wolf killed the second ox and took its place in pulling the wagon. The wagon is*

*on the same line as the North Star and does not change its position.* (ERA II 19, 300 (1) < Kose, 1929)

## **ANIMATED ANIMAL THAT IS CREATED FROM INANIMATE MATTER**

In etiological legends the wolf is made of soil or clay like people and other animals, which is also a common material in Slavic (cf. Gura 1995: 411; Romanov 1891: 169; Federowski 1897: 191) and other peoples' tradition (cf. Badalanova Geller 2017: 337; Vinokurova 2015: 104 ff.). In Estonia and Belorussia, the wolf is made also from spruce or aspen trees as an alternative (for more Slavic parallels see Federowski 1897: 191).

According to frequent Estonian motifs, the wolf is created from different inanimate materials: from a stone or an oak stub and cabers for fence, with a wooden backbone, due to which it is called 'animal made of one bone' – *üksluine*. The wolf has a strong back and does not bend to look behind its back. This feature manifests in hunters' beliefs – you have to attack the wolf from behind, which makes it easier to kill it.

All other materials are very variable and a creature under creation is similar to the *kratt* 'treasure bringer', the boggard created by people, or the bogie, one of the more widely known mythical beings, who was also created using rural materials at hand.

Popular variants list that the wolf's eyes are from glowing coal, rakes for teeth, legs from oak-tree, tail from a sauna whisk, clenched around with blue clay, skinned with fir tree bark.

The wolf may also be made of rags, or its head is made of old socks and mittens, but the permanent element is the heart of stone. The tail may be a stove broom or whisk, the backbone and bones from the oak-tree, ears from oak and the rake teeth for teeth, the eyes should be pieces of coal, the skin – from the fir bark, the nails – from the fir needles.

In the etiology of trees four texts are related to the previous main legend in which the wolf is eager to destroy the devil: the devil escapes from the wolf up a tree. But the wolf reaches for his leg, his blood stains the bark of the tree / makes alder juice red; the wolf brakes off, but the blood runs down the tree, stays on the tree forever and therefore the juice of the alder is red (motifs are connected with alder or aspen; for Slavic parallels cf. Agapkina & Usacheva 2004: 1706; Agapkina 2019).

Many beliefs are related to some of the aforementioned etiologies, and their core knowledge explains the origins of the former norms:



*You mustn't hit wolves with an alder – it is said alder is the blood of the wolf; you mustn't hit wolves with a stone – it is said it has a heart of stone, or you shouldn't throw a stone at a wolf or it will take it to heart and kill you.* (ERA II 198, 465 (17) < Helme, 1940)

## **RULER OF WOLVES**

The central support of the former folk-religious way of imagination, related to animals, is the master or protector of the animal species. For example, the protector of fish – alfa-fish, fairy – protects and watches over fish. The subject of the wolf ruler or wolf master is related to the human/non-human (animal) relations, which Tim Ingold (1994 [1988]: 2 ff.) has described as follows: *animals and animality are deeply embedded in our own ways of thought*. This notion draws attention to the fact that humans and animals might actually engage in social relations with one another.

In broader terms, the protector may be a fairy related to an element of nature, such as a forest fairy, who can stand for a variety of animals and birds. For almost every major wild animal, we can see conflicting content in the texts: different experience stories, symbolic and intertwining legends, fear as well as real economic losses.

Mirjam Mencej (2001) lists different names of the wolf protector: a ruler, commander, leader, master of the wolves, sometimes also called the wolf herdsman. The herder, leader, and ruler are known also in Estonian tradition. Next, she focuses on the saints in their role, the wolf-related tradition and religious imagery, including magic spells. In Estonia and Livonia God, fairy, St. George, dwarf-size human or bigger wolf is in the role of the ruler of wolves. In incantations this role has been transferred mostly to St. George (Est. püha Jüri). In Slovenia the ruler can be a mythical being in the form of a man, an old man, horseman, or human turned into a wolf, or a half-human / half-wolf, etc. (Kropej 2012: 54).

Mencej (2001) attributes the following features to the wolf ruler: 1) commanding the wolves – driving the wolves, giving them assignments and orders, telling where they shall live, sending wolves away from livestock, etc.; 2) allotting food to or feeding the wolves; 3) protecting livestock and/or people from wolves, i.e., locking the mouths of wolves and other animals.

In Baltic-Finnic tradition we can find all these, but also an additional motif of how wolves protect livestock or herd cattle. It is shown in legends, but also in incantations.

In the Slavic tradition we can see a saint in the role of the ruler of wolves (more than 20 different saints have been named as rulers of wolves, incl. St. Mina in Bulgaria) (Gura 1995: 413, Vinokurova 2015).

The ruler is responsible for feeding wolves, keeping their mouths locked from St. George's Day to Michaelmas (the period when cattle were herded in the forest, outside the farm). There are a number of magical rituals performed in the spring, especially on St. George's Day: the symbolic acts of closing the lock, stitching the mouth shut, burning the eyes of a wolf (at the campfire).

In Livonian traditions the host ties red and blue ribbons around twigs, prompting the other person to ask: 'What is it you're doing there?', to which the former replies: 'I'm tying the wolf.' Once this is repeated nine times, he places the twigs in a pile made of other bits of wood (Loorits 1926).

St. George gathers up his wolves on St. George's Day and allocates a specific number of animals for each wolf that the latter can kill. There is a ban on killing animals in the Baltic-Finnic region from St. George's Day in spring until Michaelmas in autumn (from 23 April until 23 September). For the Slavs, the ban varies from St. George's Day in spring to St. George's Day in autumn. A widespread fairy tale tells how a man behind a bush sees a pack of wolves being fed from the sky. Each of them gets a piece, but one wolf is left without it. The wolf ruler from the sky says: 'Your portion is behind the bush.' (SUS 934B \*; Salavei 2011). Gura (1995: 413) concludes that this is the common Slavic motive.

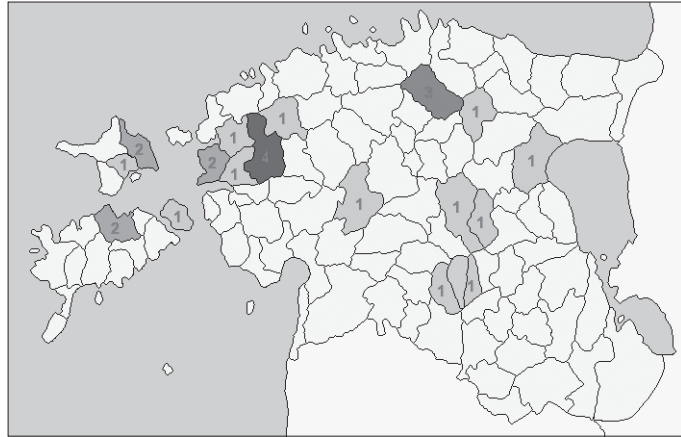
There are also other rituals associated with the beginning of spring, including St. George's Day; for instance, symbolic rituals whereby children or young animals are offered to wolves in the spring, saying: "This is your share." The idea of the ritual is that after that the wild animals have no right to take more without permission as they have already been given their share. (In the same way, in spring, goslings and chickens were placed onto a sieve and offered to a hawk – it was believed that this way the buzzard will save most of the poultry.)

## **FEEDING WOLVES FROM THE SKY**

In addition to the agreement present in etiological stories, stating that humans must feed the wolf for keeping the herd, wolves also receive food from a wolf shepherd, God or other creatures: they are thrown pieces of clouds from the sky. Pieces of clouds, or cloud chunks is a worldwide phenomenon known in the Baltic-Finnic (Estonian, Latvian, Livonian, Votic, Finnish), Slavic (Belorussia; Gura 1995: 413) and other (e.g. Swedish) beliefs (Scriptorium; Jürgenson 1997; Loorits 1926, 1949).

This cycle of beliefs and experiences represents images of the structure of the sky and the nature of the clouds. Etiology explains that clouds are solid by nature; some call it liquid, sour milk, saliva, or frogspawn. In heavy wind, storm or rain cloud pieces fall to the ground. Dozens of people have found them on the ground and studied them closely.

**Figure 2.** The figures marked on the map of Estonian parishes indicate the number of texts recorded in the 19th–20th centuries about feeding wolves from the sky. Data M. Kõiva, map A. Kuperjanov.



*A piece of cloud is like sour milk, sometimes during a storm a piece of it came down as rain.* (H II 25, 257 (208) < Helme, 1888)

*A cloud of thunderstorm is thick as meat jelly, sometimes it rains down.* (ERA II 19, 301 (4) < Kose, 1920)

*Clouds are like coagulated gravy, and many times cloud pieces have been found which were dropped in a heavy storm.* (H IV 3, 786 (12) < Puhja, 1890)

According to Livonian tradition, Loorits defines another possibility of appearing clouds: “But these are also called sea clouds, or water clouds; they also come from the sea as frogspawn, especially in the spring when the sea blooms” (Loorits 1926: 59–60).

In search of rational explanations, folklorists have associated pieces of clouds with mushrooms. M. J. Eisen argues: “Indeed, cloud pieces belong to mushrooms (*Tremella Nostoc L.*), which are invisible in dry weather, but swell after rain and have the meat-jelly-like appearance” (Eisen 1926: 59). One of the mushrooms even bears the name of wolf’s milk, but in this respect no folklore has been collected. Jürgenson (1997: 58) draws attention to a mushroom called *pilvik*, *pilveseen* (derived from the Estonian word ‘pilv’ which means a cloud).

Mycologist Erast Parmasto (1988) associated a mucous fungus (*Fuligo septica*) with a mythic motif prevalent on the islands – a witch (*ragan*) or mythical milk bringer (*vedaja*, *puuk* or *päär*) shit on walls, wells, etc. (see ERA II 188, 323(74) < Käina, 1938). A supernatural creature stealing milk is believed to leave behind yellowish poops; that is why it is known to have stolen milk or secretly suckled cows. Such a damaging object could also be sent or carried by a concrete witch, and this motif, in turn, is associated with witch-sent witchcraft and the idea of *lendva* (witch-arrow), or sent sickness (Kõiva 2007). A witch has also been associated with a *ragan* (witch on the islands; for more on the Latvian witch tradition

see Laime 2013). According to folk beliefs, cloud pieces can be eaten by wolves, but not by dogs or domestic animals; the latter get rabies after eating them.

*[W]hen you happened to come across such a piece of cloud, it had to be placed between bowl pieces and buried under a big fir tree. If you failed to do this, dogs went mad.* (E 79236 (4) < Varbla, 1932)

*When cattle eat a piece of cloud that has fallen down and been found on the ground (a meat-jelly-like hardened grey substance), they go mad.* (EKmS 48 III, 4 (30) < Palamuse)

Aivar Jürgenson (1997) regards the celestial origin of clouds as the basis for their healing power and even hypothesises about the possible hallucinogen content of cloud pieces/fungi. Convictions recommend that the pieces of clouds be buried or burned; at the same time, pieces of clouds were used in folk medicine to cure various diseases. Oskar Loorits (1949: 437) lists diseases such as grey disease (malaria, fever), stings, typhoid fever, epilepsy, toothache, warts, agria, and constipation; pieces of clouds were also used at childbirth, and against the evil eye. In Finland, pieces of clouds were used as a remedy for burns, stings, eye diseases, rashes, and internal diseases (Jürgenson 1997 with reference to Manninen). The list includes serious diseases that used to be treated with more radical remedies, including poisonous plants.

## INCANTATIONS AND WORD TABOO

There are about 400 wolf incantations in Estonian for the protection of cattle, lambs, and humans. Below is a brief description of the texts. The texts contain appeals to the wolf as a person with a higher position in social hierarchy: *metsasaks* (lit. lord of the woods), *metsaisand* (lit. master of the woods), *vana kuldjalg* (lit. old gold-foot).

<i>Metsa ukku, metsa akku / ukku –</i>	Old forest man, <i>ukku</i> , old forest lady, <i>akku</i> –
<i>metsa kuldane kuningas</i>	golden king of the woods,
<i>kuldatrooni neitsikene</i>	maiden on a golden throne.
<i>Mõtsa esä, mõtsa emä</i>	father of the woods, mother of the woods!
<i>Mõtsa kulla kuningas!</i>	Golden king of the woods!
<i>(kullane, kuldne)</i>	<i>(kullane and kuldne = versions of ‘golden’)</i>
(E, StK 1, 143 (26) < Nõo khk, 1921)	

One might meet a wolf and say: ‘Uncle, show me the way / let’s split the way’ (H I 1, 394 (1) < Risti khk, 1889).

The mouths of wolves are shut as of St. George’s Day.

When cattle were taken to the woods before St. George's Day, people would say:

<i>Pühä Jüri, pühä Jüri,</i>	St. George, St. George,
<i>pea omad koerad kinni,</i>	keep your dogs down,
<i>pane neile rauad suhu!</i>	shove a bit in their jaws!

(RKM II 208, 137 (16) < Põlva, 1966)

When the cattle of a farm were taken to the woods for the first time on a Saturday in the spring, it was believed that a wolf attack would take place. As protection against this, some medicine was tied to the horns of each cow with a piece of cloth while uttering the words:

<i>Püha Jüri Jorkuivits,</i>	St George,
<i>lase minu karjal kaugel käia.</i>	let my cattle wonder far.

(ERA II 57, 373 (3) < Otepää, 1932)

Wolves were called to help lift loads or to pick up a stone from the ground to make them release their prey.

<i>Püha Jüri kutsikad,</i>	St. George's pups,
<i>ajage kari koju</i>	drive the cattle home
<i>Vea mulle villu / lambaid</i>	Bring me wools/sheep
<i>Su koerad soos magagu</i>	May your dogs sleep in the bog

(H III 21, 289 (4) < Kursi, 1894)

You lose your voice when a wolf secretly gazes at you – if you get a sore throat or other throat disease, the voice is requested back from the wolf.

A great number of incantations refer to their practical value. They can be classified into the following groups:

- (1) Give me half a road;
- (2) Let my herd go far;
- (3) Stray in wetland / forest / go to the neighbours;
- (4) Do not sting/bite secretly!
- (5) Put your prey down! Keep your sons away;
- (6) Ritual magic: burning the wolf's eyes, stitching its mouth, etc., accompanied by incantations;
- (7) Keep my herd!

<i>Püha kallis Jürike,</i>	Dear St. George,
<i>mõtsa kuldse kuninga,</i>	Golden king of the forest,
<i>mõtsa helde emanda,</i>	Mother of the forest,
<i>hoidke meie utukeisi,</i>	Keep our sheep,
<i>kaitске ma karjakeisi,</i>	Guard my herds,
<i>sigitage mu tsiapõrsakeisi. Aamen.</i>	Conceive my piglets. Amen.

(H III 22, 175 (3) < Sangaste, 1890)

(8) Wolf/puppy of St. George, drive my cattle home!

We can see a respectful attitude towards wolves in the proverbs and nicknames used in verbal communication. As for the wolf, besides the characterizing linguistics, respectful address in speech is important and the taboo name system is eloquent. A number of cryptonyms for referring to wolves based on their appearance, habitat, and behaviour are used in daily conversations. Indirect equation of wolves with wickedness and the devil/woods is frequent: *kriimsilm* (scratch-eye), *va villasaba* (the woolly tail), *sorksaba* (droopy-tail), *kriimsilma isand* (lord scratch-eye), *hallivatimiis* (man with grey coat), *mõtsakutsu* (dog of the woods), *metsaillu* (little beast of the woods), *metsa koer* (lit. dog of the woods), *va hall* (the [colour] grey), *süsisilm / söesilm* (coal-eyed), *lambavaras* (sheep thief), *hobõsõsüüjä* (horse eater).

Another possibility for cryptonyms was connected to place and reduction: *võsavillem* (*Villem* [male name of 'wolf'] of the underwood), *pajuvasikas* (calf of willows), *võsavasikas* (calf of the underwood), *soovasikas* (calf of the bog), *kõr-bekutsikas* (puppy of the woods), *metsakutsikas* (puppy of the woods); or place: *aiatagune* (the one beyond the fence), *va sootagune* (the one beyond the bog).

Names equating wolves with the devil are the following: *vana halv* (old bad one), *mõtsakoll* (bogey [ghost] of the woods), *mets* (lit. woods), *painajavanamees* (the old nightmare man), *vanapoiss* (lit. old bachelor/boy = devil), *metsaline* (the wild beast).

Kinship terms were also used; wolves were called *onu* (uncle), *metsaonu* (uncle of the woods) or wild uncle of the woods. A wider range of kinship terms can also be found in Russian folklore.

## CONCLUSION

In mythology the wolf is an animated animal that is created from inanimate matter (usually clay or soil, wood) or from everyday rural trash. It is similar to a mythical creature called *kratt* or *pisuhänd* – 'treasure bringer', which is a human-created anthropomorphic or zoomorphic being that is magically created entirely from inanimate matter, mostly from objects at hand.

This attitude ignores eloquent traditions and themes: texts about wolf-human relationships, where a wolf gets help from a man for its cub or itself and pays off in its own way – a child who got / was taken into a wolf's lair is in good health, and so on.

The proximity of narrativity, etiologies, and beliefs is obvious; they influence each other and norms. Beliefs live longer than formulated legends. They come in a variety of layouts and styles, including humour (e.g., the devil makes a wolf and a cat from the rest of the clay), the fictional intertwines with real practices.

This article has presented only some pieces of tradition; however, it is obvious that wolf-human relationships were multifaceted. Complete material would provide an opportunity to determine exactly how Herrmann et al. (2013) defined relations between humans and predators. It is still evident that while it was important to keep wild animals away from home and herds, the relationships were diverse, and wild animals were even verbally approached for help.

However, even this limited material also reveals the need for a re-examination of human/non-human relationships, as well as for a broader analysis of printed and biblical literature, etiologies of beliefs and practices. On St. Martin's Day and St. Catherine's Day in November, when *sandid* (masked people) sang outside how wolves were looking at the house and pigs were looking at the woods, the people in the house outside of which they were singing would throw ashes at the masked people and cuss at them.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This research has been supported by the European Regional Development Fund (Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies – CEES TK 145) and is related to research project IUT 22-5 “Narrative and belief aspects of folklore studies” (Estonian Research Council) and “A Return to Interspecific Coexistence – Posthuman Interpretations from Folklore, Oral History, and Popular Culture” (Kone Foundation).

## **ARCHIVAL SOURCES**

E – Folklore collection of Matthias Johann Eisen

EKS – Folklore collection of the Estonian Literary Society

EKmS – Folklore collection of the Society of Estonian Literati

ERA – Folklore collection of the Estonian Folklore Archives

H – Folklore collection of Jakob Hurt

S – Collection of Samuel Sommer

Scriptorium – digital tool for the preservation and editing of folklore texts, Department of Folkloristics, Estonian Literary Museum

SUS – Eastern Slavic catalogue of tale types

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**Mare Kõiva** (PhD) is Leading Researcher at the Department of Folkloristics at the Estonian Literary Museum, Estonia, and Head of the Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies. She has published several monographs and edited various books (incl. *Estonian Incantations*; co-edited *Mission Possible* (2018), *Balkan and Baltic Studies* (2017)). She has also written a wide range of articles and chapters on folk legends and beliefs, ethnomedicine, and the ritual year. Her current research focuses on mythology and belief narratives, human/non-human relationships, and incantations.

mare.koiva@folklore.ee