

The Baltic 'Art Spring': Artists and Art Lovers in Estonia and Livonia ca. 1800

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Baltischer „Kunstfrühling“. Künstler und Kunstliebhaber in Estland und Livland um 1800

Das bildliche Erbe der baltischen Spätaufklärung (ca. 1770-1820) besteht in erster Linie im praktischen und amateurhaften Charakter des Geschaffenen. In Est- und Livland mangelte es an professionellen Schöpfern, vielmehr dominierten die Zeichnungen eingewanderter deutscher Literaten, progressiver Adliger und Pastoren. Topografische und kartografische Aufzeichnungen, visuelle Dokumente heimatkundlichen Interesses und Tagebuch- oder Gedichtvignetten zeigen die Welt der Aufklärungszeit auf der Ebene sowohl der Wissenschaft als auch der Emotion, umgesetzt durch das explosionsartige Anwachsen der Druckgrafik.

Es lohnt sich somit, die Bildkultur der Aufklärungszeit in einem größeren Rahmen zu betrachten und den großen Kreis der Amateurlünstler zu berücksichtigen. Die vorliegende Untersuchung sieht in deren eklektischem Bildschaffen einen Hauptstrang der deutschbaltischen Kunstkultur. Dank zeitgenössischer Kunstliebhaber schlugen in den 1780er und 1790er Jahren u. a. der Geist der Antike und eine gefühlsbetonte Naturauffassung Wurzeln in der baltischen visuellen Kultur. Diese Impulse wirkten bis in die architektonische Gestaltung der Universität Dorpat (Tartu), die Herausbildung ihrer Kunstsammlungen und Zeichenschule sowie die deutschbaltische darstellende Kunst des 19. Jahrhunderts hinein. Verständlicherweise drückten sich die Fertigkeiten der Amateure in kleinen Formaten und schnellen Techniken aus – Zeichnung, Sepia und Aquarell –, aber nicht in technisch anspruchsvolleren Ölgemälden.

Welches waren aber der soziale und kulturelle Hintergrund dieser Kunstliebhaber, deren Interessenhorizont und Ziele? Wie wurden die eigenen Zeichenübungen reflektiert? Wie verortete sich das künstlerische Amateurwesen in dem adligen, von Luxus geprägten Lebensstil, dem Bildungsdiskurs der Aufklärungszeit und einem gesellschaftlichen Umfeld, das von einer sich gerade erst herausbildenden Professionalisierung geprägt war? Was wurde über Kunst und Künstler gedacht? Dem örtlichen Maler stand das zu derselben Zeit in der deutsch-italienischen Kunstlandschaft entstehende Ideal des genialen Schöpfers und romantischen Künstlers gegenüber.

Im Beitrag werden die verschiedenen Kunst- und Zeichenpraktiken um 1800 betrachtet, aber auch die mit der Kunst und dem Beruf des Künstlers verbundenen sozialen und landsmannschaftlichen Selbstreflexionen und -stilisierungen – was, wie die baltische Aufklärungszeit als Ganzes, zu einem wichtigen Ausgangspunkt für die deutschbaltische kulturelle Identität des 19. Jahrhunderts wurde. Als Quellenmaterial dienen die frühe baltische Publizistik, Briefe und autobiografische Texte, insbesondere des Architekten Johann Wilhelm Krause (1757-1828) und des Künstlers und Dichters Carl Gotthard Grass (1767-1814). Gleichzeitig wird auch das visuelle Material betrachtet, also frühe Künstlerporträts, verbunden mit der Frage, ob man für die baltischen Provinzen um 1800 überhaupt von „Künstlern“ und „Künstlerporträts“ sprechen kann.

KEYWORDS: Baltic-German art; arts of the Enlightenment; art lovers/dilettantism; luxury; self-image of the artist; pictorial culture

When examining the written and pictorial legacy of the Late Baltic Enlightenment (ca 1770-1820)¹, the first conspicuous feature and common denominator we will notice is the practical and avocational nature of the work. It is generally known that, in early Baltic German literature, commentaries on history, economics, natural sciences and biography, as well as exploratory, applied and educational writings, predominated over works of fiction.² In the same way, there was a dearth of professional artists and higher genres of paintings (mythology, history) in the region during this period. The most interesting components of the local pictorial legacy are the drawings made by the local nobility and the—mostly immigrant—literati. These avocational travel sketches, topographical and cartographical drawings and visual documents related to local history and reflect an interest in antiquities. Diaries and poetry vignettes, as well as sentimental renditions of nature (including sketched studies produced by noblewomen) display the expanded world of the Enlightenment era in the geographic, intellectual and social plane. They also reflect the new visualization strategies and pictorial awareness that were brought on by the so-called pictorial revolution—the explosive proliferation of printed images—that occurred simultaneously with the ‘reading revolution’ during the Enlightenment.³ Thus, art history, similarly to the history of Baltic literature, is faced with the choice of focusing, either in a traditional way, on only the few professionals that worked in the higher genres, or it can be expanded to include the dilettantish pictures of the Baltic art lovers. Along with oil paintings, these also include small-format ink and sepia drawings that are often based more on practical than purely artistic objectives.

This article prefers the latter focus and sees the eclectic Enlightenment-era pictorial heritage and its didactic nature, which considered the promotion of society to be more important than aesthetic values, to be a basic trait of Baltic-German art. Thanks to these amateurs and their awareness, a series of trends burgeoned in Baltic visual culture in the 1780s and 1790s: an Antiquity

¹ In this article the concept of the Baltic (countries) is used as a synonym for the Baltic provinces of Estonia, Livonia and Courland or the Baltic Sea provinces. For more about the term ‘Late Baltic Enlightenment’ and its temporal limitations, see INDREK JÜRJO: *Balti valgustusliikumine* [The Baltic Enlightenment], in: *Ideed ja ühiskond. Balti provintside mõtte- ja kultuuriloost 18.-19. sajandil*, Tartu 2011, pp. 16-24; HANS-PETER SCHÜTT: *Über Begriff und Idee einer Spätaufklärung*, in: ULRICH KRONAUER (ed.): *Aufklärer im Baltikum: Europäischer Kontext und regionale Besonderheiten*, Heidelberg 2011, pp. 99-113.

² JAAN UNDUSK: *Baltisaksa kirjakuultuuri struktuurist: Ärgituseks erinumbri lugejale* [The Structure of Baltic German Literary Culture], in: *Keel ja Kirjandus* (2011), 8-9, pp. 561-571.

³ NORBERTO GRAMACCINI: *Die Druckgraphik im Licht: Der Durchbruch eines populären Mediums*, in: HERBERT BECK, PETER BOL et al. (eds.): *Mehr Licht: Europa um 1770. Die bildende Kunst der Aufklärung*, Frankfurt a. M.—München 1999, pp. 435-449; STEPHEN BANN: *Distinguished Images: Prints in the Visual Economy of Nineteenth-Century France*, New Haven 2013.

movement, the perceptive treatment of nature, plein-air drawing trips, a sense of appreciation for the local landscape and antiquities—based on the example of the Swiss-German vedute masters—and many other fresh impulses. These served as a prelude to the development of the University of Tartu (especially its architectural ensemble, art collection and drawing school) and Baltic-German fine art in the 19th century. Understandably, the enlightened idea of art professed by the Baltic educated class initially seldom found expression in the higher genres (history painting), or monumental forms, but was instead expressed in small formats and by quick techniques—drawings, sepias, water-colours—that were better suited to the abilities of the amateurs than more technically demanding oil paintings.

What were the social and cultural backgrounds of these art lovers, the range of their interests and objectives? How was their own drawing avocation introspected? Where does this artistic avocation stand in the context of a noble lifestyle, the discursive perspectives on and against luxury, the enlightened educational program, and the multidimensionality of the fields of activity (which were just starting to professionalize and specialize⁴) that was still inherent to this society? Below, I am going to examine the various functions of drawing skills at the turn of the 19th century in the Baltics, as well as the existential, social and territorial self-reflections and stylizations related to the art and artist's profession. The main source material is provided by the early Baltic press and biographic texts of the art lovers. The greatest use is made of the letters and memoirs of two close friends, and yet contradictory creative types, Johann Wilhelm Krause (1757-1828)⁵, the Baltic home tutor from Silesia who later became the architect of and professor at the University of Tartu, and Carl Gotthard Grass (1767-1814)⁶, a local pastor's son and an art and

⁴ ULRIKE PLATH: Zwischen Multidimensionalität und Spezialisierung: Arbeitswelten auf dem baltischen Gutshof im Umbruch (1750-1850), in: BURGHART SCHMIDT, JÜRGEN HOGEFORSTER (eds.): Von der Geschichte zur Gegenwart und Zukunft: Mehrdimensionale Arbeitswelten im Baltischen Raum, Hamburg 2007, pp. 46-69, here p. 46.

⁵ Krause has written 10 volumes of memoirs *Wilhelms Erinnerungen für seine Gattin (1815-1827)*, which cover the first 39 years of his life. The original manuscript can be found in the University of Tartu Library, a digitalized version at <http://dspace.ut.ee/handle/10062/15856> (31.03.2017). The section dealing with his Livonian years (vols. VII-X) has been published in a summarized and edited form: Bilder aus Altlivland: Aus den Aufzeichnungen eines livländischen Hofmeisters vom Ende des vorigen Jahrhunderts, in: Baltische Monatsschrift (1900), 50, pp. 248-280, 345-360; ibidem (1901), 51, pp. 31-48, 123-136, 201-214, 291-304, 422-448; ibidem (1901), 52, pp. 1-26, 81-127 (also published in: Rigaer Tageblatt (1895), 118-128). In this article a contemporary transcription of the original manuscript from the University of Tartu Library has been used: Etliche Lichtpunkte des Lebens aus der bedeutenden Vergangenheit der guten Julia gewidmet zum 22ten May 1812 von ihrem mit Liebe und Dank ewig verpflichteten Wilhelm / Computerabschrift, mit Anmerkungen von V. von Krause 1997 (further: KRAUSE, Etliche Lichtpunkte).

⁶ From Grass's rich written legacy the main source material for this article is provided by his letters, published in: GOTTHARD TIELEMANN: Karl Gotthard Graß: Eine biogra-

poetry lover. At the same time, the visual material i. e. early artists' portraits produced in the Baltic provinces, will also be examined, to the extent that we even talk about 'artists' and correspondingly 'artists' portraits' in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

The Research Tradition: The Baltic 'Art Spring' (Kunstfrühling) and 'Arts of the Enlightenment' (Künste der Aufklärung)

Early Baltic art life is characterized by relative contrasts. According to several contemporary sources, the awareness of art, especially painting, was quite limited in the Baltic provinces of Russia in the late 18th century. In the words of Heinrich Johann Jannau, a Livonian columnist and pastor in 1781:

'Mahlerey ist bey uns vielleicht noch in der größten Kindheit. Einzelne gefühlvolle Kenner gibt es zerstreut in der Stadt und auf dem Lande. Manche recht artige Galerie findet sich in Riga, und einige sehr wenige Sammlungen vertheilen sich wie die rareste Medaillen unter dem Adel. Gewöhnlich aber vertreten bey uns die Stelle der Mahlerey, verzerrte englische Gruppen, so häßlich wie die Nacht, so ungeschickt wie die Zeichnung des Töpfers. [...] oder noch ärger ist es, wenn die elendesten Kupferstiche von den italiänischen Bilderkrämern unsere Stuben zieren, wo nicht gar, was noch lächerlicher ist, Landcharten unsere Wände bekläkern.'⁷

In Baltic art history, however, there is a contradictory concept of this period—on the one hand it is clear that masterpieces of an estimable aesthetic quality do not exist; on the other hand, the great changes occurring in art life in regard to both practices and attitude are apparent. Across the whole of Europe, the turn of the 19th century is recognized as a turning point in art, when the pictures themselves⁸ changed as did the relationship between the art and the viewer, and the nature of the artist's occupation.⁹ In the social history

phische Skizze. Nebst einigen Briefen von ihm an seine Freunde in Livland geschrieben, in: IDEM (ed.): *Livona's Blumenkranz, mit fünf Kupfern*, Riga—Dorpat 1818, pp. 179-246; KARL MORGENSTERN (ed.): *Dörptische Beyträge für Freunde der Philosophie, Literatur und Kunst* (1814), erste Hälfte, pp. 262-269; Auszüge aus Briefen von Karl Grass an einen seiner ältesten Freunde in Livland, in: KARL MORGENSTERN (ed.): *Dörptische Beyträge für Freunde der Philosophie, Litteratur und Kunst* (1817), pp. 125-172. For the list of Grass's writings see: <https://utlib.ut.ee/eeva/index.php?lang=et&do=autor&aid=38> (31.03.2017).

⁷ HEINRICH JOHANN JANNAU: *Sitten und Zeit*, Riga 1781, pp. 64-65.

⁸ WERNER BUSCH: *Das sentimentalische Bild: Die Krise der Kunst im 18. Jahrhundert und die Geburt der Moderne*, München 1993, pp. 9-18.

⁹ The changes that occurred in the art life and artist's position in Europe during the 18th century have been thoroughly examined by: ALEXIS JOACHIMIDES: *Verwandlungskünstler: Der Beginn künstlerischer Selbststilisierung in den Metropolen Paris und London im 18. Jahrhundert*, München—Berlin 2008, pp. 12-17; ERIK FORSSMAN: *Goethezeit: Über die Entstehung des bürgerlichen Kunstverständnisses*, München—Berlin 1999, p. 7. For changes in English art culture in the 18th century, e. g. HOLGER HOOCK: *The King's Artists: The Royal Academy of Arts and the Politics of British*

of art, new creative types of artists date from this period: besides the court artists, romantic artists as well as 'revolutionary artists' start being talked about.¹⁰ The construct of the romantic artist grew out of the *Sturm und Drang* period and neo-romanticism and embodied a concept of artists as individual creators and geniuses, who valued their own inner lives more than anything else and, burning with creative enthusiasm, expressed the 'truth' of their feeling. Naturally, this construct of the romantic artist combines many of the creative myths that we had encountered before, which were fine-tuned during the 19th century, such as the artist's foresight, divine inevitability, creative fever, melancholy, seclusion, etc.¹¹ The revolutionary creative type can be described as artists who are characterized by a belief in progress and who harness the visual to serve their social agendas. Although, traditionally, the chrestomathic masters that worked in the higher genres, such as the French historical painter Jacques-Louis David, German Anton Raphael Mengs and Spanish social critic Francisco Goya, have been presented as the clearest examples of revolutionary artists¹², to a great extent the scope of this artist type can be related to all the artists of the Enlightenment century, who considered it important to help shape society, and improve and change scientific and technological means.

When talking about artists in the Baltic provinces in the late 18th century, one must take into account the traditional system of guild masters and court artists.¹³ At that time, however, also in Livonia and Estonia art can already be seen as an expression of the emancipatory aspirations of a creative activity, as a creator of new identities, as a means of modern communication (the press, art criticism, exhibitions) and as art education. Since the turn of the 19th century was also an important time for the development of regional and national self-awareness in the Baltic provinces, Wilhelm Neumann, the author of the period's first survey of art history, has called the period the Baltic 'art spring':

Culture 1760-1840, Oxford 2003, p. 5. For the historiography of French 18th-century art SERGIUSZ MICHALSKI: Studien zur französischen Malerei des 18. Jahrhunderts: Eine Forschungsrevolution und ihre Folgen, in: Kunstchronik 44 (1991), pp. 415-440.

¹⁰ On the so-called genius concept of the Enlightenment era: ARNOLD HAUSER: The Social History of Art, vol. III: Rococo, Classicism, and Romanticism, London 1962, pp. 110-113; EDMUND B. FELDMAN: The Artist: A Social History, New Jersey 1995, pp. 131-133; PAUL FLEMING: Exemplarity and Mediocrity: The Art of the Average from Bourgeois Tragedy to Realism, Stanford 2008.

¹¹ ERNST KRIS, OTTO KURZ: Legend, Myth, and Magic in the Image of the Artist: A Historical Experiment, New Haven—London 1979; BERNHARD MAAZ (ed.): Im Tempel der Kunst: Die Künstlermythen der Deutschen, München—Berlin 2008, p. 10.

¹² FELDMAN (as in footnote 10), pp. 111-123.

¹³ Although one cannot speak explicitly of court artists in Estonia and Livonia, where courts did not exist, several of the travelling artists operating locally in the 18th century had the relevant experience (and, for instance, sought work at the nearest court in St. Petersburg).

‘Zu den interessantesten Kapiteln aus der baltischen Kunstgeschichte gehört das die Zeit der letzten 25 Jahre des 18. und der ersten 25 Jahre des 19. Jahrhunderts umfassende. Dieser Ausspruch mag etwas unwahrscheinlich klingen, denn was wir im Allgemeinen schnellen Blicks als Kunsterzeugnisse jener Zeit erkennen und um uns sehen, trägt vielfach nicht den Stempel eines höheren künstlerischen Vermögens. Für unsere Heimat aber deutet diese Zeit einen Kunstfrühling’.¹⁴

Neumann links the spring of Baltic German art to the early knowledge about the new passion for antiquities in the European metropolises and therefore to the ideas of J. J. Winckelmann and the impact of the art created by A. F. Oeser, A. R. Mengs and A. Graff. This knowledge spread in the Baltic provinces through the travels of the nobility, but primarily as a result of the great wave of young German intellectuals who immigrated to Livonia and Estonia in the second half of the 18th century.¹⁵

The 20th-century art history of Estonia did not share this sentiment regarding the Baltic ‘art spring’, but was guided primarily by the academic canon of art history¹⁶, whereby the local art production was constantly compared to the large European art centres and the example of prominent international masters.¹⁷ It looked for the first local creative artists, the first exhibitions, and the first signs of a European concept of ‘fine arts’.¹⁸ Unfortunately, Estonia and Livonia, where there was no court or academy of art, offer very little from the aspect of this high artistic canon, and this is especially true for 18th-century fine art. There was no real art life in Estonia and Livonia at the end of the 18th century (there were no institutions teaching art nor did a permanent independent art community exist) and there were no monumental forms or really any painting. The first institutional framework did not develop until the beginning of the 19th century when a drawing school was established at the

¹⁴ WILHELM NEUMANN: *Baltische Kunstzustände 1775 bis 1825*, in: *Baltische Monatschrift* 53 (1902), pp. 281-299.

¹⁵ ULRIKE PLATH: *Heimat: Rethinking Baltic German Spaces of Belonging*, in: *Kunsteiaduslikke Uurimusi* 23 (2014), 3-4, pp. 55-78, here p. 56; EADEM: *Nichts Neues im wilden Osten? Die baltischen Provinzen Russlands im Blick deutscher Reisender und Migranten um 1800*, in: ARND BAUERKÄMPER, HANS ERICH BÖDEKER et al. (eds.): *Die Welt erfahren: Reisen als kulturelle Begegnung von 1780 bis heute*, Frankfurt a. M. 2004, pp. 43-70.

¹⁶ ANNA BRZYSKI (ed.): *Partisan Canons*, Durham—London 2007, pp. 1-26; HUBERT LOCHER: *The Idea of the Canon and Canon Formation in Art History*, in: MATTHEW RAMPLEY, THIERRY LENAIN et al. (eds.): *Art History and Visual Studies in Europe: Transnational Discourses and National Frameworks*, Leiden—Boston 2012, pp. 29-40.

¹⁷ Estonian art writing is analyzed by KRISTA KODRES: *Esitledes iseend: Tallinlane ja tema elamu varauusajal* [Presenting Oneself: Tallinn's Bourgeois and his Dwelling in the Early Modern Period], Tallinn 2014, p. 261.

¹⁸ REIN LOODUS: *Kunstieliu Eesti linnades 19. sajandil: Uurimusi Eesti kunstist ja kunstielust* [Art Life in Estonian Cities in the 19th Century: Studies on Art and Art Life in Estonia], Tallinn 1993; JUTA KEEVALLIK: *Kunstikogumine Eestis 19. sajandil: Kunstiteadus Eestis 19. sajandil* [Collecting Art in Estonia in the 19th Century: Art History in Estonia in the 19th Century], Tallinn 1993.

University of Tartu.¹⁹ Thus, this early period has been overlooked in Estonian art history writing until recently.

This paper accepts the peripheral nature of Baltic art and its avocational level, but is interested in the reasons for, as well as in the special local traits of, the artistic creation. In this regard, the wider context of cultural history is a suitable point of departure, be it the treatment of 18th-century pictorial culture²⁰ or the description of local sentimental and romantic creative impulses, which in literary research are associated with the 'artistic period' (Kunstperiode), and in the fine arts, with the concept of 'Goethe-era art' (Kunst der Goethezeit).²¹ In both cases this means moving from art-specific problems of form and individual prominent masters to an analysis of the mutual relations of cultural fields and the specific nature of pictorial phenomena. There seems to be great potential in the 'Arts of the Enlightenment' (Künste der Aufklärung) approach, which is gaining ground within the framework of visual research, i. e. specifically, the enlightened pictorial language and mind.²² This concept is not based on the continued analysis of the great names of art history and style metropolises (because it is clear that 'Enlightenment art is not only comprised of great paintings, but more often, the great ideas are represented in smaller forms'²³), but on an approach that sees the visual communications of the period as a whole integrating the 'fine arts' and 'popular art'. Therefore, the study of the arts of the Enlightenment also deals with the explosion of pictorial production in the 18th century, the distribution of printed graphic art, as well as the new techniques and practical pictorial

¹⁹ Most of the general treatments of Baltic-German fine art start with the following: IRINA SOLOMŌKOVA (ed.): *Eesti kunsti ajalugu. 1. köide, I: Eesti kunst kõige varasemast ajast kuni 19. saj. keskpaigani* [History of Estonian Art. Vol. 1: Estonian Art from the Earliest Time to the Mid-19th Century], Tallinn 1975; VOLDEMAR VAGA: *Kunst Tartus XIX sajandil* [Art in Tartu in the 19th Century], Tallinn 1971; IDEM: *Kunst Tallinnas XIX sajandil* [Art in Tallinn in the 19th Century], Tallinn 1976.

²⁰ MORITZ WULLEN (ed.): *Von mehr als einer Welt: Die Künste der Aufklärung*, Berlin 2012. The following also emphasizes the Enlightenment as an epochal concept for art history: MAX KUNZE (ed.): *Kunst und Aufklärung im 18. Jahrhundert: Kunst und Aufklärung. Kunstausbildung—Kunstvermittlung—Kunstsammlung*, Ruppolding 2005; HERBERT BECK, PETER BOL et al. (eds.): *Mehr Licht: Europa um 1770. Die bildende Kunst der Aufklärung*, München 1999; WERNER HOFMANN (ed.): *Europa 1789: Aufklärung, Verklärung, Verfall*, Köln 1989; JEAN-PATRICE MARANDEL: *Introduction*, in: *Europe in the Age of Enlightenment and Revolution*, New York 1987, pp. 6-17.

²¹ Naturally, 'Goethe-era art' is very clearly a German-centered concept and reflects the broadly established understanding of the literary dictate over the other fields of art: e. g. FRANZ LANDSBERGER: *Die Kunst der Goethezeit: Kunst und Kunstschauung von 1750 bis 1830*, Berlin 1999; GISOLD LAMMEL: *Kunst im Aufbruch: Malerei, Graphik und Plastik zur Zeit Goethes*, Stuttgart—Weimar 1998; BIRGIT VERWIEBE (ed.): *'Classizismus und Romantizismus': Kunst der Goethezeit*, Berlin 1999; FORSSMAN (as in footnote 9).

²² WULLEN (as in footnote 20), p. 14.

²³ Ibidem, p. 11.

genres, such as book illustrations, travel scenes, scientific drawings, etc. When dealing with the visual communications and pictorial language of the Enlightenment more broadly, we are simultaneously going beyond the concept of the fine arts, which has prevailed for a long time, as a passive medium in the context of the Enlightenment.²⁴

In regard to late 18th-century pictorial heritage in the Baltics, an approach that focuses on the visual communications of the period seems to be especially appropriate. By stepping out of the elite-aesthetic ivory tower of art history, we are able to take a fresh look at the creators and consumers of the local pictorial legacy, to understand the multidimensional fields of activity of the nobility and intellectuals, as well as the connectivity between the pictorial and written culture. A central aim of this article is, therefore, to add pictorial culture to the new description of the territorial cultural tradition, which until now has focused primarily on the story of Baltic literature and thought.²⁵ In regard to the self-description of local culture, Baltic visualia—in architecture, park art and pictures—is an eloquent and focal component. Both the philosophical foundation of the Baltic ‘art spring’ (the ‘Weimar classics’, Immanuel Kant, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe etc.), as well as the institutional focal points of local art life—the manor (as the place for teaching, practicing and collected art; as an ‘academy’), and the University of Tartu—speak more broadly of the epistemological connections and rules that define the Baltic cultural space.²⁶ In the Baltic provinces and beyond, the Republic of Letters (Gelehrtenrepublik) of the Enlightenment era meant not only the ideas and texts that united the intelligentsia, but also its pictorial culture.

²⁴ No mention is made of art in the great theoretical writing on the Enlightenment era in the 20th century (Jürgen Habermas, Niklas Luhmann).

²⁵ Primarily Jaan Undusk's numerous articles on the forms of expression related to the ‘Baltic spirit’: e. g. JAAN UNDUSK: *Baltisaksa kirjanduse breviaar: põhilaad, erijooned, esindajad* [A Guide to Baltic German Literature: Its General Character, Specific Features, Outstanding Representatives], in: REIN UNDUSK (ed.): *Rahvuskultuur ja tema teised*, Tallinn 2008, pp. 93-122; IDEM: *Das baltische Pantheon in der Naturphilosophie: Baer, Uexküll, Oswald und das Problem der Zeit*, in: LIINA LUKAS, ULRIKE PLATH et al. (eds.): *Umweltphilosophie und Landschaftsdenken im baltischen Kulturraum*, Tallinn 2011, pp. 112-136. The following examine 19th-century pictorial culture, especially in the context of Baltic German historical and national discourse: LINDA KALJUNDI, TIINA-MALL KREEM (eds.): *Friedrich Ludwig von Maydelli pildid Baltimaade ajaloost* [Friedrich Ludwig von Maydell's Baltic History in Images], Tallinn 2013.

²⁶ MAREK TAMM, KALEV KULL: *Eesti teooria* [Estonian Theory], in: *Akadeemia* (2015), 4 (313), pp. 584-597.

The Baltic Art Lovers

In this article the concept of the 'art lover' (*Kunstliebhaber*) is interpreted primarily as the practical executer, i. e. primarily the drawer, and less frequently the avocational painter. When we examine writing on early Baltic art, this distinction is sometimes difficult to make, because, based on the contemporary lexicon²⁷, the art lovers are defined both as those who drew or practiced architecture, as well as those who supported, promoted and collected art. Thus, in the 1780s, August Wilhelm Hupel's magazine *Nordische Miscellaneen*, which was the Baltic Enlightenment's principal anthology, introduced the local art lovers as a diverse group of people. On the territory of today's Estonia, this included, for example, Christian Engelbrecht von Stackelberg (1735-1792), the owner of the Vääna (Fähna) Manor, whose son Otto Magnus von Stackelberg (1786-1837) later became an internationally known archaeologist and artist, Otto Gustav von Rosen, the owner of the Kaiavere (Kayafer) Manor, as well as Friedrich Wilhelm von Sivers (1716-1781), the owner of the Õisu (Oiseküll) Manor, and Otto Friedrich von Pistohlkors (1754-1831), the Rutikvere (Ruttigfer) manor lord, who tried his hand at drawing, cartography and architecture.²⁸ Based on other contemporary sources, several other manor owners known as art supporters and avocational drawers in Estonia as well as in Latvia can be added to this list: Carl Friedrich von Staal (1721-1789), Otto Hermann von Vietinghoff (1722-1792) in Aluksne (Marienburg), Count Jacob Johann von Sievers (1731-1808), Karl Magnus von Lilienfeldt (1754-1835), the owner of Uus-Põltsamaa Manor; Peter Reinhold von Sivers (1760-1835), the owner of Heimtal Manor; count Ludwig August Mellin (1754-1835), who compiled an atlas of the Estonian and Livonian provinces etc. Serious avocational artists could also be found among the young noblewomen. It is known that a high-quality drawing teacher with an art education was specially hired by Wilhelm Johann Zoege von Manteuffel, the owner of the Ojasoo Manor, to teach his older daughters Helene Marie (later, von Kugelgen, 1773/74-1842) and Anna Sophie (later, von Stackelberg, 1775-1828).²⁹ When examining the local press, it becomes clear that in the late 18th century only nobles were described as 'art lovers'. Therefore, this

²⁷ For example, Johann Georg Sulzer's influential treatment *Allgemeine Theorie der Schönen Künste* (1771/74) views the 'art lovers' primarily as people with a certain amount of knowledge, who were interested in, collected and appreciated art. For the discursive perspectives of *Kunstliehberei* and dilettantism in the 18th century, see: HELMUT KOOPMANN: *Dilettantismus: Bemerkungen zu einem Phänomen der Goethezeit*, in: HELMUT HOLTZHAUER, BERNHARD ZELLER (eds.): *Studien zur Goethezeit: Festschrift für Lieselotte Blumenthal*, Weimar 1968, pp. 177-208; ALEXANDER ROSENBAUM: *Der Amateur als Künstler: Studien zu Geschichte und Funktion des Dilettantismus im 18. Jahrhundert*, Berlin 2010.

²⁸ AUGUST WILHELM HUPEL: *Der in Lif- und Ehtland zunehmende gute Geschmack*, in: *Nordische Miscellaneen*, 13.-14. Stück, Riga 1787, pp. 289-502, here p. 495.

²⁹ *Ibidem*.

can be associated with aristocratic art dilettantism, and indirectly also with the example of the English Society of Dilettanti.³⁰

The concept used in this article perhaps coincides best with an early concept expressed by Goethe, who saw the art lover as a practitioner who ‘die Künste nicht allein betrachten und geniessen, sondern auch an ihrer Ausübung Teil nehmen will’—including himself.³¹ For the same reason and sometimes even based directly on Goethe’s example, drawing was a practical and important avocation for several German and Baltic intellectuals with bourgeoisie backgrounds, who became leading figures in the Baltic Enlightenment. The culture of the word as well as the picture of the Baltic Enlightenment—the philosophy, science and arts—was often promoted by the same people. These included the compilers of the Baltic pictorial ‘topographies’—above all of course, Johann Christoph Brotze (1742-1823), the Riga teacher and researcher of local history, whose ten-volume *Sammlung verschiedener Livländischer Monumente, Prospecte, Münzen, Wapen etc*³² contains contributions from many local art lovers. These included Johann Wilhelm Krause and Carl Gotthard Grass, whose relationship with art and ambitions in the field will be discussed in more detail below. An interest in local history and the avocation of drawing also united many Pietist pastors in the Baltic provinces, such as Johann Ludwig Börger, Johann Daniel Horeb and the most renowned Estonian, Eduard Philipp Körber (1770-1850).³³ A contribution was also made by Ernst Markus Ulprecht (1770-1831), Brotze’s stepson, who later worked at the Mineralogical Cabinet at the University of Tartu.

Along with the avocation of creating enlightened and applied drawings, the late 18th-century Baltic pictorial legacy also provides examples of sentimental approaches related to *Sturm und Drang*, which introduced personal feelings and egocentric approaches to poetry as well as to music notebooks and sketchbooks, thereby paving the way for a new type of artist identity. Thus, at the turn of the century, we can already see points of contact between the local literati and the criticism related to dilettantish art practices, which appeared in the German cultural space. In contrast to the approving attitude of the Enlightenment toward an artistic avocation, a differentiation had slowly started to develop between the art lovers-dilettantes and ‘true artistry’ (wahres Künstlertum). This paved the way for a cult of genius and a romantic vision

³⁰ LIONEL CUST, SIDNEY COLVIN: *History of the Society of Dilettanti*, London 1898.

³¹ JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE: *Werke*, Weimarer Ausgabe: Abt. 1, Bd. 47, reprint, München 1987, p. 321.

³² This manuscript was compiled 1771-1818 and appeared in print as: Johans Kristofs Broce: *Zīmējumi un apraksti. 1.-4. sējums* [Johann Christoph Brotze: *Drawings and Descriptions. Vol. 1-4*], Rīga 1992-2007; ANTS HEIN, IVAR LEIMUS et al. (eds.): *Johann Christoph Brotze Estonica*, Tallinn 2006.

³³ Körber’s six-volume collection of manuscripts *Vaterländische Merkwürdigkeiten* (1802) is stored at the Estonian Literary Museum, in the collection of the Õpetatud Eesti Selts, MB 56-61.

of the artist as a creator with divine talent, in whose regard their natural talent, the constant development of their artistic skill, the deep emotional values of creation and acceptance in the art world was of primary importance.³⁴ Of the Baltic amateurs, the one who corresponds best to this model of the romantic creative type is Carl Gotthard Grass. He was a poetry- and art-loving Livonian, who abandoned his theological studies and career as a pastor in the late 1790s, and decided to dedicate himself exclusively to art. The contemporary reactions to his decision and career provide some of the best source material for describing the position of the artist as a creator in Baltic society at the turn of the 19th century.

Thus, art lovers were not a homogeneous group, but rather included different social strata (nobles and literati), and also had different reasons for being interested in art/drawing (a luxurious avocation of the nobility, upbringing, science, creation, etc). Certain socio-political traits become evident when investigating the literati who drew, and especially the young intellectuals among them who had migrated from Germany. We find striking similarities in the educational background of Brotze and Krause, two of the most important avocational drawers of the Baltic Enlightenment. Both come from the families of minor officials with small incomes³⁵ in Silesia and saw drawing as a skill that was worth developing to help them advance. When they were still at school, they were both able to earn pocket money to continue their education by giving drawing lessons, while also educating themselves by drawing their surroundings and copying the available pictorial material. They clearly belonged to that first generation of German intellectuals, whose self-taught education and self-realization was made possible by the pictorial revolution. This included an explosive proliferation of printed graphic art, which brought calendars filled with title pictures, vignettes and illustrations, textbooks, travelogues, scientific publications, and many other examples of pictorial material to the reading tables of the bourgeoisie.³⁶ The sample pictures that

³⁴ JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE. Über den sogenannten Dilettantismus oder die praktische Liebhaberey in den Künsten, in: Goethes Werke: Vollständige Ausgabe letzter Hand, 44. Band: Goethes nachgelassene Werke, Stuttgart—Tübingen 1833, pp. 255-285, here p. 261.

³⁵ Brotze's father was a salt weigher for the Görlitz town council; Krause's father was a forester. J. C. Brotze's biographical information is based on: Einladung zur feierlichen Amts-Niederlegung des Herrn Oberlehrers, Kaiserlichen Raths, Dr. Johann Christoph Brotze, am 16. September 1815 Vormittags um 10 Uhr im Kaiserlichen Gouvernements-Gymnasium zu Riga. Biographische Nachrichten von dem Abschied nehmenden Greise enthaltend, Riga 1815.

³⁶ ARNOLD HAUSER: Sozialgeschichte der Kunst und Literatur, München 1990, pp. 616-648; ANNE-MARIE LINK: Das neue Graphikpublikum und die Graphikmode im Deutschland des späten 18. Jahrhunderts, in: NORBERT MICHELS, ALEX REINHARD (eds.): '...Waren nicht des ersten Bedürfnisses, sondern des Geschmacks und des Luxus': Zum 200. Gründungstag der Chalcographischen Gesellschaft Dessau, Weimar 1996, pp. 33-44.

they copied lived on in their drawing exercises, thereby directly influencing that which was considered worth portraying in their new homeland, as well as the way in which it was depicted.

The second common denominator that characterizes the Baltic art lovers is the type of drawing they practiced. Namely, many of them had experience with cartography. Brotze had taken private lessons in geometry and geography in Görlitz, while Krause practiced drafting and cartography under the guidance of the Zittau town architect and later in the army. Several noblemen, such as von Pistohlkors and von Mellin, had been military cartographers. Typically, the only training of the early art lovers in the Baltics was technical drafting and military cartography, which is clearly discernible from the appearance and typology of the pictorial legacy of the Baltic Enlightenment.³⁷

Art as a Luxury: The Artistic Avocation of the Nobility

Regardless of their similar backgrounds in technical drafting and military cartography, there were clear differences in the artistic vision and awareness of the educated immigrants and local nobility in the second half of the 18th century. The respective differences in understandings and social positions are clearly evident in the contemporary topical discussion about the connections between art and luxury.³⁸ Many of the enlightened educational articles in the early Baltic press deal with the topic of luxury, as do individual art lovers in their private diaries and thoughts.

For the enlightened German intelligentsia, it was important to reject court art and declare the need for the internal renewal of art.³⁹ Many such topical criticisms of court art and aristocratic luxury can be found in Krause's memoirs, especially in regard to his time at university in Leipzig and Dresden in the 1770s.

‘Die Künste Machen den Menschen zum Menschen, sie erhöhen ihn zum Engel, und doch beym Lichten besehen, konnte ers nicht läugnen: Musik, Liederkunst, Malerey und Bildschnitzen wären Kinder des Ueberflusses, der durch sehr gemeine Arbeiten, durch Fleiß, Nachdenken und Mühe erworben. Der Ueberfluß verfeinere, künstele aus Langweile, mache am Ende fürs Wahre, Nöthige träge, faul, weichlich, misbrauchend. Er verglich das mit dem Wenigen, was er aus der Welt und Staatengeschichte, aus der Geschichte noch lebender Familien wußte, sahe, und fand es wahr: auf einen Erwerber folgt ein Verderber, so oder so—in

³⁷ For more on the pictorial legacy of the Baltic Enlightenment and the pictorial ‘topographies’ of the local *Heimatkunde* see KADI POLLI: The Role of Pictures in the Late Baltic Enlightenment, in: *Žurnāls Mākslas Vēsture un Teorija* 18 (2015), pp. 18-33.

³⁸ The *Journal des Luxus und der Moden* (published 1786-1827 in Weimar), the most significant publication covering the themes of art, luxury and fashion, was also well-known in the Baltic provinces. Also see ANGELA BORCHERT, RALF DRESSSEL (eds.): *Das Journal des Luxus und der Moden: Kultur um 1800*, Heidelberg 2004.

³⁹ FORSSMAN (as in footnote 9), pp. 7-8.

Familien in 2-3 Menschenaltern, bey Völkern und Staaten in Jahrhunderten. Und diese so auffallende Veränderung schien ihm in der so hochgepriesenen Vervollkommnung der Künste und Sitten zu liegen; also gleichviel. Mein Gott!⁴⁰

In the eyes of a young bourgeois man like Krause, the image of art as a luxury of the elite and a manifestation of idleness could only be redeemed by the high goals assigned to the work, be this based on additional social assignments or the idiom and content of the new neoclassical form, greatness of the subjects or majesty of the expression of the art itself:

‘So etwas erdenken und schaffen zu können, das jeden anspricht, jedem auf seine besten Gedanken hilft, das lange dauert und wovon man den Macher nicht mehr zu nennen weiß, wenigstens nicht gekannt hat, und gleichgültig wie von Moses, Sokrates, Christus und Luther spricht, über deren Machwerk sich jeder freut, keiner weint; dies schien ihm der höchste und schönste Beruf zu seyn.’⁴¹

On the other hand, the reality in Livonia and Estonia was something else. At a time when the sentiments of the great French Revolution had created opposition in Europe to the aristocracy, and also to court/aristocratic art, the Baltic manor lords were just launching their noble lifestyle in the broadest sense. In the case of the nobles, the collection of and support for art, as well as drawing practices, have traditionally not been treated as a profession, or even a leisure-time avocation, but as a part of the occupation.⁴² This also became the case in regard to the Baltic nobility, but not until the second half of the 18th century. Meanwhile, freemasonry also played an important role in the promotion of art and architecture as a noble occupation and linked many influential people in Baltic cultural history, for whom architecture, the arts and sciences became important fields of activity at their manors. This was also true of society as a whole, where these disciplines were promoted by various public scientific associations, societies and clubs.⁴³

Thus, in the Baltic countries, the enlightened intelligentsia wanted to promote the artistic and cultural avocations of the nobility rather than criticize them. The key to this legitimate declaration of support for the local nobility's move toward a lifestyle that was enamoured of culture and art was provided by a mercantile-economic approach, which connected art, luxury and fashion, and thereby added great weight to the idea of culture as a manufactured and

⁴⁰ KRAUSE, *Etliche Lichtpunkte* (as in footnote 5), vol. 3 (1774-1778), p. 271.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, vol. 2 (1774), p. 47.

⁴² WOLFGANG KEMP: ‘... einen wahrhaft bildenden Zeichenunterricht überall einführen’: *Zeichnen und Zeichenunterricht der Laien 1500-1870*, Frankfurt a. M. 1979, p. 82.

⁴³ HENNING VON WISTINGHAUSEN: *Freimaurer in Estland: Ihre Sozialstruktur am Beispiel der Revaler Loge ‘Isis’ 1773-1820*, in: OTTO-HEINRICH ELIAS (ed.): *Zwischen Aufklärung und baltischem Biedermeier: Elf Beiträge zum 14. Baltischen Seminar 2002*, Lüneburg 2007, pp. 177-210.

hand-crafted product.⁴⁴ An article called 'Der Luxus in unsern Nordländern' by Hupel appeared in the *Nordische Miscellaneen* during its first year of publication.⁴⁵ This was one of the earliest texts in the Baltic German press that dealt with culture and art, and is a telling example of how economic and regional value was placed on culture.⁴⁶ Prompted by the Enlightenment criticism of luxury as an expression of frivolity, excess and degeneration, the article considers it important to reveal luxury's positive fields of meaning—good manners and cultured acts. In a way, the article defends the conditions in the Baltic provinces of the Russian Tsarist state and the local way of life against the more radical views of the Enlightenment. It also emphasizes that the criticism that was heard from time to time regarding the excessive luxury of the Baltic lifestyle came from the immigrants who had grown up under poorer conditions (i. e. the young immigrant intelligentsia such as Krause and others), and who tended to immediately generalize '... da sie hier in einer sechsspännigen Kutsche jeden Landedelmann fahren, auf etlichen Tafeln mehrere Gerichte, und manche deutsche Professionisten wenig arbeiten aber gut essen, sahen'.⁴⁷

On the other hand, Hupel does not consider the luxury in Livonia and Estonia to be a problem and, in comparison to the rest of Europe, considers it to be a more modest phenomenon in the northern countries. The writer promotes luxury by pointing out that the country manors and wealthier townhouses where 'luxury' prevailed—a mentality that valued not only acquirement but also enjoyment—helped to enliven the entire surroundings with their good taste and hospitality. Furthermore, he asserts, it would be even better if there were more of those among the rich who, instead of collecting and growing their assets, put their income into tastefully established picture and book collections, beautiful music and dignified households, as well as gardens that bloom during the short Nordic summers and greenhouses that bring joy during the long winters.⁴⁸ The arts are clearly seen here as a component of luxury. And the luxury lovers themselves are seen in a positive light as a phenomenon beneficial to the economy and society, which provides work and food for artisans, artists and scholars. Hupel directly relates the national and

⁴⁴ ANGELA BORCHERT: Ein Seismograph des Zeitalters: Kultur, Kulturgeschichte und Kulturkritik im 'Journal des Luxus und der Moden', in: EADEM/DRESSSEL (as in footnote 38), pp. 73-104, here p. 77.

⁴⁵ AUGUST WILHELM HUPEL: Der Luxus in unsern Nordländern, in: *Nordische Miscellaneen*, 3. Stück, Riga 1781, pp. 113-135.

⁴⁶ Also see JUTA KEEVALLIK: A. W. Hupeli 'Topographische Nachrichten', 'Nordische Miscellaneen' ja 'Neue Nordische Miscellaneen' kunstinformatsiooni allikana ['Topographische Nachrichten', 'Nordische Miscellaneen' and 'Neue Nordische Miscellaneen' as sources of information about art], in: *Acta Historica Tallinnensia* (1998), 2, pp. 83-95.

⁴⁷ HUPEL, Der Luxus (as in footnote 45), p. 131.

⁴⁸ Ibidem, pp. 134-135.

international circulation of ideas and money to the blossoming of taste and art.

Thus, Hupel's magazine prepared the groundwork for good manners, as well as tasteful and cultural entertainment. It also tried to find common denominators that the existing aristocratic and court creation of art and luxury could share with the new enlightened bourgeois consumption of culture, which forced culture to prove its social benefit. A similar pragmatic mercantile justification for the arts can also be seen in some other articles in early issues of the *Nordische Miscellaneen*, which linked art manufacture and commerce; and the artist was seen primarily as an artisan who mastered certain skills and had manual talent.⁴⁹ In regard to the Baltic pictorial legacy from this period, the art collections of the manors, which started to be more deliberately compiled in the late 18th century, can definitely be categorized as positive luxurious avocations.⁵⁰ Johann Heinrich Baumann (1753-1832), a painter of animals and birds from Courland, perfectly embodied this local artist type during this transition period. His unique and naïve painting style did not seek any link to classical tastes or higher artistic ideals, but provided an excellent picture of the local Baltic way of life and lifestyle, as well as the natural environment, the manor, parks, domestic animals, the hunt, etc.



Fig. 1: Johann Heinrich Baumann: Self-portrait (c. 1820). Latvian National Museum of Art, VMM GL-1207

⁴⁹ [A correspondent of A. W. Hupel]: Ueber den Aufbau neuer Städte in Hinsicht auf das Russische Reich, besonders auf Liefland, in: *Nordische Miscellaneen*, 8. Stück, Riga 1784, pp. 12-15. See also KEEVALLIK, A. W. Hupeli (as in footnote 46), pp. 92-93.

⁵⁰ KEEVALLIK, *Kunstikogumine Eestis* (as in footnote 18), pp. 12-14.

Art as Education: Art Teachers and Students at the Manors

In 1787 *Nordische Miscellaneen* write about the arts not only in connection with luxury, but also with 'good taste' and its basis—the arts and education.⁵¹ Therefore, the social value of the arts is not only determined by its economic benefit, which blossoming handicrafts and well-organized production provide, but also the spiritual and educational value hidden in the arts.

One of the most important points of departure for the enlightened idea of art was the concept of the specific role that the arts should play in people's education. Art was assigned the ability to provoke feelings in the viewers, to morally inspire them, and thereby help to achieve virtuousness and higher realization.⁵² In addition, there were the egalitarian concepts that everyone is capable of understanding art, at least indirectly, and that everyone possesses artistic will, which can be developed through viewing and practical exercise. The belief that creating art is a rational and observable process, and therefore learnable, motivated the idea of art education that operated didactically and according to specific rules. During the 18th century, art academies were established in many German cities, and collections of sample drawings and drawing textbooks were published for a broad circle of amateurs.⁵³ There were publications produced for beginners and advanced students, for antique lovers, landscape drawers, portraitists, and even exclusively for women.⁵⁴ In the Baltic countries these books were extremely successful⁵⁵ and far exceeded the amounts and distribution of art literature. Therefore, the books that taught people to draw were a very important shaper of the canon of form and aesthetics in Europe's pictorial memory.

Across the whole of Enlightenment-era Europe, the education-themed discussions of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi had increased the value of the arts and promoted the skill of drawing in the upbringing of children. Thus, in the late 18th century, art education also took some early steps in the educational life of the Baltic provinces. Initially it

⁵¹ HUPEL, Geschmack (as in footnote 28), pp. 489-502.

⁵² JOHANNES DOBAI: Die bildenden Künste in Johann Georg Sulzers Ästhetik, Winterthur 1978, p. 52; ULRICH KRONAUER: Rousseaus Kulturkritik und die Aufgabe der Kunst: Zwei Studien zur deutschen Kunsttheorie des 18. Jahrhunderts, Heidelberg 1978, p. 8.

⁵³ CHRISTOPH HELM: Bildung und Ausbildung im 18. Jahrhundert, in: KUNZE (as in footnote 20), pp. 13-22.

⁵⁴ MARIA HEILMANN, NINO NANOBASHVILI et al. (eds.): Punkt, Punkt, Komma, Strich: Zeichenbücher in Europa, ca. 1525-1925, Passau 2014, URL: http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/artdok/3344/1/Punkt_Punkt_Komma_Strich_2014.pdf (03.04.2017); IDEM (eds.): Lernt Zeichnen! Techniken zwischen Kunst und Wissenschaft 1525-1925, Passau 2015.

⁵⁵ Karl August Senff and Karl Ferdinand von Kügelgen made their own drawing samples and published them locally; and today, a large selection of books intended for art instruction can be found in the University of Tartu Library.

took the form of home tutoring and private lessons for the nobility but was increasingly taught at the general education schools.⁵⁶ The Philanthropinum, Johann Bernhard Basedow's freemasonry educational institution in Dessau, clearly set an influential example for an education that valued the arts and handicrafts, and many young people from Estonia, Livonia and Courland attended this institution.⁵⁷

The opportunities for local art education can be mapped to some extent through the local school system and a survey of the private tutors in the larger Estonian towns (in the late 18th century, most of these individual teachers were travelling artists, whose teaching was limited to short-term elementary courses).⁵⁸ On the other hand, an examination has yet to be made of the art education or art upbringing in the Baltic manors, where governesses and tutors (*Hofmeister*) with the status of literati cared for the next generations of Baltic nobles.⁵⁹ It can only be assumed that in a situation where, in the late 18th century, there were few suitable art teachers available locally, the ability to draw was a great added value for a *Hofmeister*. This is splendidly confirmed by the rapid success experienced in the Livonian manors by Johann Wilhelm Krause, who had not completed his theological studies, but was well-versed in drawing, cartography and architecture. His career started modestly and dismally in 1784 at Gaujiena Jaunmuiža (Adsel-Neuhof) owned by the von Delwigs. It continued at the Zeltiņi Manor (Seltinghof) where he worked for the family of district judge Gottfried Christian von Kahlen ('ein stattlicher Mann mit einem Falkenblicke und Habichtsnase', who had read *Émile* and wanted his children to be brought up in the spirit of Rousseau⁶⁰). Here the tutor was able to try his hand at designing outbuildings for the manor. Krause finished in the early 1790s with Count Ludwig August Mellin, one of the most cultivated Baltic nobles who owned Eikazi (Eikasch) and

⁵⁶ For example, in the Tallinn secondary school or in the Tallinn Cathedral School, which was reconstructed into the Knighthood School in 1756: ARVO TERING: Eesti-, liivi- ja kuramaalased Euroopa ülikoolides 1561-1798 [Estonians, Livonians and Courlanders in the Universities of Europe 1561-1798], Tartu 2008, p. 520; LOODUS (as in footnote 18), pp. 11, 101.

⁵⁷ OTTO FRANKE: Beziehungen Kurlands und Livlands zum Philanthropin in Dessau, in: Baltische Monatsschrift (1896), 43, pp. 111-137, here pp. 131-133.

⁵⁸ LOODUS (as in footnote 18), pp. 13, 100-101.

⁵⁹ WILHELM LENZ: Der baltische Literatenstand, Marburg 1953; HEINRICH BOSSE: Die Hofmeister in Livland und Estland: Ein Berufsstand als Vermittler der Aufklärung, in: OTTO-HEINRICH ELIAS, INDREK JÜRJO et al. (eds.): Aufklärung in den baltischen Provinzen Rußlands: Ideologie und soziale Wirklichkeit, Köln 1996, pp. 165-208. The role of arts and drawing skills in the education given by the *Hofmeister* is not treated separately.

⁶⁰ KRAUSE, Etliche Lichtpunkte (as in footnote 5), vol. 8 (1784-1792), p. 79.

Bīriņi (Koltzen) manors, where the count and his *Hofmeister* worked on the large atlas of the Baltic provinces together.⁶¹

In addition to the literati who drew and, as the *Hofmeister* or private tutors, contributed to the education of the local nobility or even to the general artistic and architectural environment at the manors, a few professional artists also worked as tutors. Several masters came, or were specially invited from Germany, for instance, Christian Gottlieb Welté (1745/49-1792) and Franz Gerhard von Kügelgen (1772-1820), who came from the Rhineland and were employed by the Zoege von Manteuffel family in Võisiku and Ojasoo, as well as Paridon Jakob Neus who worked for the Stackelbergs in Vääna, and Carl Sigismund Walther (1783-1866) who taught August von Kotzebue's children at Vardi Manor. A famous example of art education in a Baltic manor from an earlier period in the 1780s and 1790s comes from Ojasoo Manor, where Wilhelm Johann Zoege von Manteuffel had

‘Lehrer der verschiedensten Art an sich gezogen, Handwerker, Künstler und Gelehrte, die alle unter seinem Dache wohnten und dem Hause das Ansehen einer kleinen Akademie gaben. Neben wissenschaftlichen Disziplinen wurden neuere Sprachen getrieben, man malte, modellierte, kupferstecherte, drechselte, tischlerte, klempnerte und machte ganz vortreffliche Musik.’⁶²

The metaphor of an academy has been repeatedly used in connection with Ojasoo; this was very characteristic of the time and provided a model that could be identified with several Baltic manors, where there was an aesthetized environment, art and book collections, and a focus on teaching and up-bringing.

Several of the drawings made by Zoege von Manteuffel's older daughters have survived and give us insight into the activity of the first women to play an active role in Baltic art life.⁶³ The oldest daughter, Helene Marie married her tutor, the artist Gerhard von Kügelgen, and lived in Dresden after 1804, while her sister Anna Sophie von Stackelberg, remained in Estonia. Several portraits of Helene Marie exist.⁶⁴ Of these, Franz Gerhard Kügelgen's early work from 1798, which dates back to the time that he arrived at Ojasoo Manor as Helene Marie's art teacher, is especially interesting. It shows his

⁶¹ LUDWIG AUGUST GRAF MELLIN: *Atlas von Liefland oder von den beyden Gouvernemen-tern u. Herzogthümern Lief- und Ehtland und der Provinz Oesel*, Riga—Leipzig 1798. In the 1790s, Krause was the tutor at Count Mellin's Eikaži Manor, but also the illustrator of his Baltic atlas.

⁶² WILHELM VON KÜGELGEN: *Jugenderinnerungen eines alten Mannes*, Ebenhausen 1909, p. 6.

⁶³ KADI POLLI: *Balti aadlipreili kunstiharrastusest: Helene Marie Zoege von Manteuffel (1773/74-1842)* [Artistic Pursuits of an Aristocratic Baltic Lady: Helene Marie Zoege von Manteuffel (1773/74-1842)], in: *Eesti Kunstimuseumi toimetised / Proceedings of the Art Museum of Estonia* (2014), 4 (9), pp. 11-38.

⁶⁴ A pastel portrait made by Christian Gottlieb Welté and seven portraits by Gerhard von Kügelgen have survived: DOROTHEE VON HELLERMANN: *Gerhard von Kügelgen (1772-1820): Das zeichnerische und malerische Werk*, Berlin 2001, p. 171.

student at her easel and is very similar in composition to Elisabeth Vigée-Le Brun's and Angelika Kauffmann's famous self-portraits. As such, it was not only a rare picture of a woman painting, but one of the earliest pictorial representations of artistic activity in the Baltic German cultural space.



Fig. 2: Franz Gerhard Kügelgen: Helene Marie Before an Easel, Painting the Portrait of Her Father (1798), Oil painting. Private collection. Reproduced from VON HELLER-MANN (as in footnote 64)

Education and upbringing were the means for finally introducing the arts to the sphere of spiritual activities in the Baltic countries. However, this was seen neither as creative self-expression nor a profession. Rather, it was an avocation that showed good taste and status, but only as an addition to the more serious social occupations and weightier sciences. Or as Hupel's *Nordische Miscellaneen* hastily confirms at the conclusion of an article that praised the increased artistic awareness of the Estonian and Livonian nobility, the local nobility did not deal exclusively with the humanities or fine arts, but truly erudite men could be found among them:

‘Doch muß man aus dem was bisher ist angezeigt worden, nicht etwa den Schluß machen, als lege sich der hiesige Adel bloß auf die schönen Wissenschaften und auf die sogenannten freien Künste: nein man findet unter ihm Männer, die wahre Gelehrsamkeit besitzen und sich dadurch ausgezeichnet haben.’⁶⁵

⁶⁵ HUPEL, Geschmack (as in footnote 28), p. 498; also see: JUTA KEEVALLIK, REIN LOODUS, LEHTI VIROJA: Tekste kunstist ja arhitektuurist [Texts on Architecture and Arts], vol. 1, Tallinn 2000, pp. 20-21.

Art as a Profession: The Self-Image of the Artist

At the turn of the 19th century in Estonia and Livonia, the guild system and understanding of art as a handicraft provide a useful background when discussing the occupation of artist, or art as a career. This idea was slow to change, regardless of the fact that the 18th century brought immigrants from German areas and Denmark to the Baltic provinces and individual free masters and travelling artists were also seeking work alongside the guild masters.⁶⁶ No matter how these masters (e. g. Tallinn's most renowned guild painters Michael Ludwig Claus (1724-1773) or Johannes Hau (1771-1838)) presented themselves—as artistic painters (*Kunstmaler*), painters (*Maler*) or drawing masters (*Zeichenmeister*)—as a rule, based on their skills, they produced portraits, city scenes and altarpieces, but were also willing to accept ordinary painting jobs, since they did not compare themselves to the creator-geniuses who had studied at art academies and could be found in the courts of Europe.⁶⁷ With a few exceptions, these lines written by Sophie Knorre in Tartu in 1791 provide a realistic picture of the general quality of the local masters:

‘Ich habe hier noch nichts Leidliches gemahlt gesehen, obgleich zwei hier sind, die für Geld mahlen und auch Unterricht geben, wo sich der eine gar Professor nennt und die Stuben auch ausmahlt, auch Schränke und Komoden mit Öhlfarbe anstreicht.’⁶⁸

The exceptions are Franz Gerhard (1772-1820) and Karl Ferdinand Kügelgen (1772-1832), twin brothers as well as learned and ambitious masters, who immediately challenged the artisanal image of art in the Baltic countries. In the late 1790s, the young German artists arrived in Livonia and Estonia from Rome, the international art capital.⁶⁹ While still in Rome, Gerhard Kügelgen had painted impressive portraits of himself and his landscape painter brother Karl, which he repeated and developed further in Livonia.

⁶⁶ In the 18th century, for instance in Tallinn, the artisans from abroad significantly outnumbered the local masters: KODRES, *Estiledes iseend* (as in footnote 17), p. 247.

⁶⁷ Also see: JUTA KEEVALLIK, KADI POLLI: *Kunstieliu 18. sajandi lõpus: Käsitöölt vaba kunsti poole* [Domestication of the ‘Fine Arts’ from Handicrafts to Fine Art], in: JUHAN MAISTE (ed.): *Eesti kunsti ajalugu III (1770-1840)*, Tallinn 2017, pp. 71-75; JUTA KEEVALLIK: *Märkmeid portreemaalist Eestis 18. sajandil* [Notes on Portraiture in Estonia in the 18th Century], in: *Töid kunstiteaduse ja -kriirika alalt 3*, Tallinn 1980, pp. 138-139; KRISTA KODRES: *Tallinna maalijad 17. ja 18. sajandil* [Painters from Tallinn in the 17th and 18th Centuries], in: *Kunstiteaduslikke uurimusi 7* (1994), pp. 134-155, here p. 149.

⁶⁸ Cited from WILHELM NEUMANN: *Karl August Senff: Ein baltischer Kupferstecher*, Reval 1895, p. 11.

⁶⁹ KADI POLLI (ed.): *Dresdeni ja Peterburi vahel: Kunstnikest kaksikvennad von Kügelgenid* [Between Dresden and Saint Petersburg: Artist Twin Brothers von Kügelgen], Tallinn 2015.

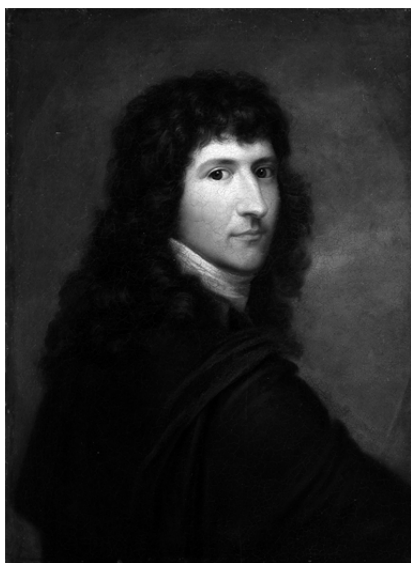


Fig. 3: Gerhard Kügelgen: Self-Portrait (1797/98). Oil on paper, glued to wood. 61.2 x 46.6 cm. Art Museum of Estonia, M 1948

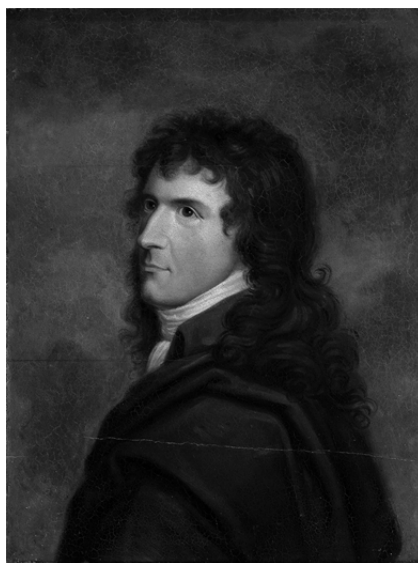


Fig. 4: Gerhard Kügelgen: Portrait of his Brother Karl Kügelgen (1797/98). Oil on paper, glued to wood. 60.6 x 46.6 cm. Art Museum of Estonia, M 1949

These portraits, which are some of the earliest and most outstanding in Baltic art, show the brothers with their long curly hair, a style that was no longer fashionable in the late 18th century, but was a sign of the freedom and creativity associated with the status of artist. Against the background of simply draped coats, curls and dark skies, the faces with their classical features are highlighted. The light falls on the foreheads and eyes as the artists' most important sensory organs. The pose assumed by the Kügelgen brothers in the portraits seems very meaningful from the standpoint of art history: the subject gazing over his shoulder is a classic type of artistic self-portrait, which is familiar to us from the opening page of Anthonis van Dyck's famous portrait series 'Iconography'.⁷⁰ In the Kügelgens' day, this pose for portraying creative people was made fashionable by Angelika Kauffmann⁷¹ and Anton Graff⁷². Therefore, with this self-image and portrait of his brother, Kügelgen consciously engaged in a dialogue with art (history) by creating portraits that, although they lacked the elements of the artist's profession—a brush, easel

⁷⁰ HANS-JOACHIM RAUPP: *Untersuchungen zu Künstlerbildnis und Künstlerdarstellung in den Niederlanden im 17. Jahrhundert*, Hildesheim—New York 1984, pp. 181-220.

⁷¹ Angelika Kauffmann: *Portrait of David Garrick, 1764* (Stamford, The Burghley House).

⁷² Anton Graff: *Self-Portrait, ca. 1776* (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin).

and drawing book—were still immediately associated with inspiration and creativity.

In Estonia and Livonia, these portraits acted like advertising posters or calling cards for the Kügelgens, which they used to introduce themselves to possible Baltic clients:

‘Mein Mann hatte indes in der Nebenstube einen jungen, sehr berühmten Künstler empfangen, dessen weiche Flötenstimme zu mir drang. Er hatte die Güte gehabt, Bilder mitzubringen, und mein Mann trug das eigene schöne Bildnis des Malers zu mir herein und stellte es zu meinen Füßen auf. Dieses schöne, blühende Gesicht, von dichten, wallenden Locken umgeben [...]’,

Sophie von Stackelberg wrote in her diary about her meeting with Gerhard Kügelgen in Riga in 1797.⁷³ The fact that Gerhard Kügelgen dealt intensively with creating an image for himself and his brother in Estonia and Livonia, together with the way in which he used his self-portrait, and the fact that he produced another self-portrait as his work for admission to the St. Petersburg Academy of Art in 1800⁷⁴, allow us to conclude that this was not just an individual construct of an artistic ego, but expressed a need to deal with the reinterpretation of the artist’s role in the Baltic provinces of the Russian Empire.⁷⁵

In the Kügelgen (self-)portraits, the roles of intellectual and artist overlap, thereby manifesting the self-stylization of art as a spiritual activity. Against the background of limited professionalism and an artisanal image of the art life in the Baltic countries, the twin brothers now clearly provided a new perspective on the artist’s profession.

Art as a Scientific Tool: The University of Tartu Drawing School

In Livonia and Estonia, Gerhard Kügelgen was able to portray many art-aware noblemen, as well as promoters of art, art lovers, and scholars at the University of Tartu, which had been recently reopened in 1802. This included Johann Wilhelm Krause, who had become the architect of the university ensemble and professor of agriculture and civil engineering, as well as Georg Friedrich Parrot, the rector of the university. Another was Karl Simon Morgenstern (1770-1852), professor of classical philology, elocution, aesthetics, and the history of literature and art, as well as founder of the library and art

⁷³ Cited from LEO VON KÜGELGEN: *Gerhard von Kügelgen, ein Malerleben um 1800 und die anderen sieben Künstler der Familie*, Stuttgart 1924, p. 33.

⁷⁴ Gerhard von Kügelgen: *Self-Portrait*, ca. 1800 (The State Hermitage Museum). In this self-portrait, Kügelgen depicted himself as a ‘painter-prince’: POLLI (as in footnote 69), pp. 50-51.

⁷⁵ After leaving the Baltic provinces of Russia and returning to Germany in late 1803, Gerhard von Kügelgen’s portraiture image changed fundamentally—the timeless curls that were part of the ‘painter-prince’ image were replaced by a shorter and more modern hairstyle and the new, considerably more modest self-presentation was better suited to the circle of Romanticists in Dresden.

museum at the University of Tartu. He was also the director of the university's Teachers' Institute, helped to organize the local educational system,⁷⁶ and practiced drawing throughout his life⁷⁷.

For the Baltic art lovers, for noble dilettantes, as well as for the literati who drew, art was definitely not an occupation or work that would be reflected in their portraits. According to the subdivisions of Enlightenment-era portraiture, the small portrait drawings in a 'friend's album' format were used mostly to record the subjects' human side and ingenuous personality, while the completed paintings presented a dignified personage—be it as a nobleman, pastor, scholar or professor.



Fig. 5: Gerhard Kügelgen: Johann Wilhelm Krause (1804). Watercolour. 17.3 x 10.5 cm. Museum of the History of Riga and Navigation, VRVM 36058

At the University of Tartu, the general didactic values of drawing skills were combined with applied utilitarian fields. Practical drawing was needed in agriculture, mechanics and architecture—in fields that were covered by Krause's professorship. 'Sie, die Kunstsinnige, benutzt alle Wissenschaften. Sie arbeitet und schafft für alle. Die Mathematik, selbst ihre höhern Theoreme

⁷⁶ About his positions, for example, about women's (art) education, see KARL MORGENSTERN: Von den Grenzen weiblicher Bildung. Rede bey Eröffnung der Kaiserlichen Töchterschule zu Wyborg, gehalten den 28. Jul. / 9. Aug. 1805, in: Johannes Müller oder Plan im Leben nebst Plan im Lesen und von den weiblichen Bildung: Drey Reden von D. Karl Morgenstern, Leipzig 1808.

⁷⁷ Karl Morgenstern's drawings are stored in the collection of his manuscripts at the University of Tartu Library, URL: <http://dspace.ut.ee/handle/10062/2/browse?type=author&value=Morgenstern%2C+Karl> (03.03.2017).

sind ihr zinsbar. Chemie, und Physik, die Mineralogie, Thier- und Pflanzenkunde gehören in ihr Gebiet; die Mechanik ist ihr Werkzeug', Krause affirmed in an accreditation lecture in 1803.⁷⁸ But the picture also had to record new geographic and spiritual magnitudes in the form of explorations (of the sky or the earth's surface) or the anatomy and psychology of humans themselves. The drawings and the graphic art that widely distributed these phenomena became the visible documents of collected knowledge—and in the best case, the people who looked and saw were the ones who did the drawing, without artistic additions or the help of a third party.⁷⁹ Therefore, the establishment of the institution of a drawing instructor at the University of Tartu was considered to be of the utmost importance, since it was in the interests of the future zoologists, botanists, doctors, geographers and scientists, from whom the skill of pictorial depiction was required. In 1802, Karl August Senff (1770-1838), who had acquired his art education in Dresden, was invited to Tartu. His assignment was to teach drawing to the students studying medicine and the natural sciences and, as of 1804, also to train art teachers for secondary schools.⁸⁰

Therefore, it was in Tartu, as in many other Enlightenment-era universities, that the increased visibility of the scientific world motivated artists to draw objects of natural science and share their drawing skills with the students. In a professional sense, the role of the 'university artist' or university drawing teacher was contradictory to begin with, as it brought scientific drawing into potential conflict with artistic creation.⁸¹ In Baltic German, and therefore also Estonian, art history, Senff, the first drawing teacher at the University of Tartu and the director of the Drawing School, has been described mainly as an individual artist and creator. Generally, it can be said that, instead of the practical objective of teaching the students studying various scientific subjects to draw, the local art history has always seen the University of Tartu Drawing School as something more important. It has seen it as the first educational institution to provide higher art education in the Baltic provinces that

⁷⁸ JOHANN WILHELM KRAUSE: *Öconomie und Architectur: Eine Skizze über den wechselseitigen Einfluß derselben auf Gemeinwohl* als Antrittsrede gehalten den 13ten Junius 1803, Dorpat 1803, p. 17.

⁷⁹ Already in 1747, Christian Wolff, the educational philosopher of the German Enlightenment wrote: 'Wie gut es wäre, wenn einer, der durch Vergrößerungs-Gläser observiren und dadurch Erkäntnis der Natur befördern wollte, selbst wohl zeichnen, und die Kupfer stechen könnte': CHRISTIAN WOLFF: *Allerhand nützliche Versuche, dadurch zu einer genauer Erkäntnis der Natur und Kunst der Weg gebahnet wird, denen Liebhabern der Wahrheit mitgetheilet*, Halle 1747, p. 302; ROBERT TRAUTWEIN: *Geschichte der Kunstbetrachtung*, Köln 1997, p. 80.

⁸⁰ INGE KUKK, EPP PREEM (eds.): *200 aastat kunstiharidust Eestis. Tartu Ülikooli joonistuskool 1803-1893* [200 Years of Art Education in Estonia. The Drawing School at the University of Tartu 1803-1893], Tartu 2002.

⁸¹ ELKE SCHULZE: *Nulla dies sine linea: Universitärer Zeichenunterricht—eine problemgeschichtliche Studie*, Stuttgart 2004, pp. 106-109.

introduced the 'academic neoclassic' teaching experience and ideals of beauty 'spiced with emotionality', thereby establishing the basis for 'the identity of a national artists' school in Estonia and Latvia'.⁸² Based on the regional-national importance of the University of Tartu Drawing School, the teachers at the school have been treated mostly as individual masters with creative biographies—as creative artists, which was not actually their assignment.⁸³ Thus, in the art writing of the 19th century, the primary, enlightened nature of the university's drawing school has been overshadowed by the rhetoric of constructing local national histories.

This article does not see the establishment of the drawing school at the University of Tartu as a separate starting point in the local art life or as a change of paradigm that would have created a new position for art and artists in the society. However, it does view it as a characteristic milestone in the enlightened processes that took place in the region. The opening of the University of Tartu, the appointment of professors, the founding of the university's book and art collection, and the establishment of the institution of a drawing teacher magnified pictorial communication in the Baltic provinces, but also reinforced the position of drawing as a secondary discipline and not as creative self-expression. Other, parallel roads led to the establishment of art as creation in the Baltic provinces, which had also already started to diverge in the second half of the 18th century.

Art as Aesthetic Self-expression

Therefore, the rational, practical and instructive approach to art and artistic avocation at the turn of the 19th century in the Baltic provinces is obvious, as are the direct connections between the pictorial culture and the local enlightened literature, sciences, theology, and school education. However, I would like to take a look at the local pictorial legacy and investigate the impact of the creative individualism of the era and the Schiller and Jena romantics, which in the local cultural history has been seen as marginal and unusual.⁸⁴

⁸² GERD-HELGE VOGEL: Von Paris über Dresden ins Baltikum: Ein Beispiel für die Verbreitung akademischer Lehrprinzipien in Europa, in: KUNZE (as in footnote 20), pp. 27-34, here p. 33; IDEM: Die Anfänge der Zeichenausbildung an der Universität Dorpat und ihre Bedeutung für die Herausbildung der bildenden Kunst in Riga in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts, in: EDUARD MÜHLE, NORBERT ANGERMANN (eds.): Riga im Prozeß der Modernisierung. Studien zum Wandel einer Ostseemetropole im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert, Marburg 2004, pp. 78-104, here p. 80.

⁸³ Attention is also directed to this subsequent focus in the art history of the Baltics by LEA LEPPIK: Kalefaktoripojast professoriks: Tartu ülikooli teenistujate sotsiaalne mobiilsus 1802-1918 [From Stoker's Son to Professor: The Social Mobility of the Workers at the University of Tartu 1802-1918], Tartu 2011, p. 109.

⁸⁴ Vt THOMAS TATERKA: Lāti talupoeg asutub kirjandusväljale. Lāti rahvusliku kirjanāduse sūnd kunstiajastu vaimus [A Latvian Peasant Enters the Literary Field. The Birth

The so-called *Prophetenclub*, a circle of friends comprised of young intellectuals that congregated in Riga with varying success between 1786 and 1794, can be treated as one of the most promising phenomena in the cultural life of Livonia. In historical research, the *Prophetenclub* has been of interest primarily as a colourful example of the club and society movement during the Age of Enlightenment, which advanced social thinking and directed attention to the situation of the peasantry and agrarian issues.⁸⁵ However, the *Prophetenclub* was also characterized by the fact that most of the membership—the core of which, in the 1780s, was comprised of German actors who had just come to work at the Riga Theatre—was directly or indirectly connected to the art life in Riga. The actors were joined later by many other ‘foreigners’ who had migrated to Livonia from Germany and, at the time, worked as tutors in the manors in the vicinity (e. g. musician Johann Friedrich La Trobe (1769–1845), future columnist and historian Wilhelm Christian Friebe (1762–1811), J. W. Krause, etc.), as well as young, local intellectuals who were still studying or had just started their careers as officials.⁸⁶ They were united by creative interests and avocations. Thus, Friedrich von Meck (1769–1794), one of the leading figures in the *Prophetenclub* in the early 1790s⁸⁷, as well as Garlieb Helwig Merkel (1769–1850) and Carl Gotthard Grass, the sons of local pastors, were all searching for creative self-expression. In the early years of the *Prophetenclub*, Merkel, a writer and one of the great figures of the Baltic Enlightenment, was interested in the theatre, and in addition to the poetry avocation of his youth also had a short career as an actor.⁸⁸ Grass divided his time between writing—primarily poetry—and art, being excited by the spirit and literary heroes of *Sturm und Drang*.⁸⁹ Friedrich Schiller can be seen as the great spiritual example for the core members of the *Prophetenclub*, especially starting in 1792, when Grass, who had been studying theology in Jena, returned to Riga with the glowing reputation of being Schiller’s student and friend. From that time, Krause characterizes Grass as

‘einen kleinen sabelbeinigten jungen Mann mit verwilderten Haaren und schloddrigen Kleidern und grosen FingerNageln—Er sprach gewahlt—fein aphoristisch abgerundet, oft spitz—wie der Blick seiner Augen, die unter einem Anscheine von

of Latvian National Literature in the Spirit of the Art Age], in: Keel ja Kirjandus (2011), 8–9, pp. 660–674, here p. 663.

⁸⁵ GEORG VON RAUCH: Der Rigaer Prophetenclub und andere Aufsätze zur baltischen und russischen Geschichte, in: Beiträge zur baltischen Geschichte 11 (1988), pp. 73–88.

⁸⁶ GARLIEB HELWIG MERKEL: Darstellungen und Charakteristiken aus meinem Leben, vol. 1, Leipzig 1839, p. 134.

⁸⁷ von Meck studied law with Immanuel Kant in Königsberg and thereafter in Jena.

⁸⁸ MERKEL (as in footnote 86), p. 132.

⁸⁹ KADI POLLI: ‘Est pictura poësis, est poësis pictura’: Die Landschaften von Carl Grass (1767–1814), in: Eesti Kunstimuuseumi toimetised / Proceedings of the Art Museum of Estonia (2009), 5, pp. 29–90.

Uebersehen doch spaheten. Schiller war sein Ideal—Herder—Göthe pasirten so nebenbey.⁹⁰

Thus, by the 1790s, the example and ideals for Grass, and on his heels for the entire *Prophetenclub* fellowship, were provided by the German romantics rather than the enlightened belief in reason, a strict message of morality and didactics that was otherwise inherent to Baltic society. Individual freedom and creativity was important. This also applied to the *Burschen*-jovial management of the club's activities, which did not ensure a permanent membership or positions. Instead, a new chairman was chosen at each meeting, based on who recited the best poem.⁹¹ Thus, for the participants, the *Prophetenclub* was not just a pleasant way to spend time, but also created a sense of camaraderie that instilled a self-belief and a higher, chosen reality. Together they supported and amplified each other's genius, creative talents and ambitions; as Merkel states: The *Prophetenclub*

'gab mir nicht nur heiteren Lebensmuth, sondern auch Selbstgefühl und sogar höhere Geltung: denn der vertraute Umgang mit einer Zahl junger Gelehrten, die im Publicum, so oft es auch den Kopf über sie schüttelte, doch für ausgezeichnete Talente anerkannt wurden, lies mich bald selbst für einen Solchen gelten.'⁹²

Examining the impact and inspiring nature of the *Prophetenclub* based on the sentiments and self-awareness of its generation, a comparison with the *Hainbund* in Göttingen, as well as the circle of romantics in Heidelberg and Jena is justified.

The Artist's 'Calling as a Man's Identity' (Bestimmung eines Mannes). The Social and Geographic Positions of the Baltic Art

It is to be expected that in the Baltic provinces some of the first aspirations to realize oneself as an original genius of the *Sturm und Drang* period is associated with the fellowship of the *Prophetenclub*: in 1796, Riga society was jolted by Carl Grass's sudden decision to resign from his safe and secure future as pastor in Suntaži (Sundzel) to go on a long drawing journey in Switzerland. This was motivated by an unhappy love affair, but also a conscious wish to tie his future life permanently and exclusively to art, as befitted a romantic creative type with an artistic talent that he felt to be god-given:

'Ich hoffe dahin zu kommen, daß ich es mir selber bezeugen kann, die Kunstanlage sei eine meiner bestimmten. Damit sage ich nicht, daß ich nicht, daß ich niemals Künstler sein werde, genug, wenn ich für mich selbst gerechtfertigt bin.'⁹³

⁹⁰ KRAUSE, Etliche Lichtpunkte (as in footnote 5), vol. 9 (1792-1796), p. 87.

⁹¹ MERKEL (as in footnote 87), p. 136.

⁹² Ibidem, p. 138.

⁹³ Carl Grass's letter to Karl Gottlob Sonntag, Rome, 09.03.1806, quoted from TIELEMANN (as in footnote 6), p. 229.

And five years later, he wrote:

‘[Es] ist in meiner Seele geschrieben, daß die Kunst mir Brot geben wird, [...] und gern denk ich’s auch, daß ich auf keinerlei Weise meinem Vaterlande mehr Ehre machen könnte, als wenn ich’s zu einem honorigen Namen in der Künstlerwelt bringe. Daß ich die Natur fühle, das weiß ich, am Geiste Gottes fehlt es mir auch, Gottlob! nicht, und da ich bey keinem Meister in die Schule gegangen bin, so sollte ich, wenn ich aus den Dünen herauskäme, segeln und fliegen wie ein Schwan der dem Parnasse zufliegt.’⁹⁴

In Switzerland, Grass became a student, friend and later biographer of the landscape painter Ludwig Hess. The second half of his short life was spent as an artist, poet and columnist in Italy, initially in Sicily and thereafter, from 1805 until his death in 1814, in Rome. He never returned to Livonia.

Grass’s sudden departure from Livonia and his life as an artist abroad caused strong reactions at home. The honest criticism regarding the impulsiveness of Grass’s life choices by Garlieb Merkel, his friend from the *Prophetenclub* years, can be considered a good mirror of the attitude at the time, which developed into a broader introspection of the insufficient nature of art and the calling or occupation of the artist as an identity of a man or life purpose:

‘Aber auch der wahrste Enthusiasmus, dacht’ ich damals: wozu macht er den Künstler? Es war mir unbegreiflich, wie ein Mann es zu seinem höchsten Lebenszweck wählen könne, aus einer durchlöchernten Röhre oder einem hohlen, mit Saiten bezogenen Kästchen wohlklingende Töne hervor zu locken, oder gefallende Bilder mit Farben oder aus Stein zu machen, oder seinen Körper graziös zu bewegen [...]. Mir schien, das Talent zu solchen Leistungen sey eine herrliche Zugabe zu dem Vermögen und Bestreben, Höheres zu leisten; aber allein schienen solche Leistungen nicht fähig und—nicht würdig genug, die ganze Bestimmung eines Mannes zu seyn, oder sein Geistesbedürfniß zu befriedigen, sein Leben zu füllen. Was ich von dem staatsbürgerlichen Verhältnisse, den gesellschaftlichen Charakter und der Lebensweise vieler Künstler hörte und selbst sah, bestärkte mich in meiner Ansicht von dem Ungenügenden der Ausübung schöner Künste, als einzigem Lebenszweck.’⁹⁵

Merkel’s position gives us a good idea of the approach of the Baltic enlightenment, but also of the mentality of the nobility, which appreciated social activities, sociability and considered deeds for the public good to be more important than individual creative self-realization. However, in any case, self-realization, whether through social activity or the arts, is seen as something reserved exclusively for men (‘Bestimmung eines Mannes’).

The current literary research describes the corresponding mentality based on the conflict between ‘acts and texts’, which assigned artistic texts a sub-

⁹⁴ Carl Grass’s letter to Morgenstern. Rome, Christmas 1811, quoted from MORGENSTERN (as in footnote 6), pp. 267-268.

⁹⁵ MERKEL (as in footnote 87), pp. 182-183.

ordinate role, since they were seen as having a secondary imprint.⁹⁶ This hierarchical relationship between a real act and its artistic record is characteristic not only of Baltic written culture, but also applies to the local art field, and functions not only as a conflict between acts and text, but also between acts and image. Noting this, it is possible to generally acknowledge that the limited aesthetic quality and low creative aspirations of early Baltic literature and art were caused not only by inability, but logically accompanied the social and class-related limits set on creative freedom.⁹⁷

In addition to the special social traits, the spatial categories that have dominated local thinking are also conspicuous in the Estonian territorial history of culture. This includes a focus on the centre and the periphery, the internal and the external, one's own and the foreign and an increased attention on the environment and landscape.⁹⁸ Early self-analysis of Estonian and Livonian art emphasizes the different characteristics of the North and the South, which were based on antiquity, and reiterated by Montesquieu in his analysis of the connections between climate and human society.⁹⁹ Since the early 18th century, a special place was assigned to the Italians in European artistic thought. As painters, they were considered to be unsurpassable, and this thanks to the air that they breathed every day.¹⁰⁰ In the German-speaking world, the enriching impact of the Mediterranean environment on culture and art was discussed by Johann Joachim Winckelmann, who demonstrated that the climate plays a role in shaping people's customs and use of form and colour and thereby established an approach to art that was based on national differences and the various schools of art. Winckelmann considered a favourable climate to be one of the most important preconditions for antique art and linked the heat and sun of Greece with scant clothing, and this, in turn, with the opportunity to freely see, learn about and depict the naked body.¹⁰¹

Starting with the earliest self-descriptions of Baltic culture, be it in the articles about luxury and good taste in *Nordische Miscellaneen*, or the biographies of the art lovers, the local culture is, time and again, associated with the climatic and natural inevitabilities of Nordica or the North (Nordenland, Norden). As Carl Grass's letters home demonstrate so well, the cradle of art

⁹⁶ JAAN UNDUŠK: Baltisaksa kirjandus: Tegu ja tekst [Baltic German Literature: Deed and Text], in: Vikerraar (1993), 10, pp. 26-31, here p. 27.

⁹⁷ Ibidem, p. 28.

⁹⁸ TAMM/KULL (as in footnote 26), p. 606.

⁹⁹ CLARENCE J. GLACKEN: Traces on the Rhodian Shore. Nature and Culture in Western Thought from Ancient Times to the End of the Eighteenth Century, Berkeley 1967.

¹⁰⁰ THOMAS DACOSTA KAUFMANN: Towards a Geography of Art, Chicago—London 2004, p. 36.

¹⁰¹ SEBASTIAN KAUFFMANN: Klassische Anthropometrie: Idealschöne Griechen vs. 'entlegene Völker' in Winckelmanns 'Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums', in: Aufklärung. Interdisziplinäres Jahrbuch für die Erforschung des 18. Jahrhunderts und seiner Wirkungsgeschichte 27 (2015), pp. 7-30, here p. 21.

could only be found in the South—in Greece and Italy: ‘Konnte diese [die Kunst] doch selbst bei den gebildeten Völkern des Alterthums, durch besondere Umstände begünstigt, nur unter dem milden griechischen Himmel zu dieser Hoheit gelangen, die wir noch jetzt bewundern. Der klassische Boden Italiens wurde späterhin ihr Lieblingsaufenthalt.’¹⁰² On the contrary, Nordic countries were not suitable for the higher arts at all (‘Von Kunst, als Kunst, kann für den Norden wohl kaum je die Rede sein’¹⁰³): The ‘thin conifer forests’ of the Baltic could provide shelter for poetry and music (quoting Johann Gottfried Herder, Grass recalls his homeland as a land where ‘eine natürliche Poesie’ is even a part of the peasantry’s nature and ‘sanftes Nationaltemperament’¹⁰⁴ inherited from the Livonians’ reigns), but the region was not, as he saw it, suitable for finer cultural and artistic living that would give birth to Raphaels, Michelangelos or Canovas:

‘Leider ist es wahr, das das geistige Leben in unsern Gegenden schwerlich jemals zu der Regsamkeit aufblühen wird, welche Deutschland und einige andere südlichen Gegenden auszeichnet. Es wirken mächtige Ursachen dagegen. Die erhöhten Lebensbedürfnisse in unserm Norden nöthigen nicht selten den Gelehrten zur Aufopferung seiner Zeit durch erschöpfende Nebenarbeiten, die den Wissenschaften wenige Stunden übrig lassen, und um Bedeutendes zu leisten, fordern die ernstesten Musen, daß man ihnen den größern Theil seines Lebens widme. Rechnet man dazu noch den Mangel an manchen literarischen Hülfsmitteln, so leuchtet es von selbst ein, daß das Fortschreiten zum Höhern—bei uns wenigstens—sehr erschwert wird. [...] Dieß ist noch mehr der Fall mit der Kunst. [...] Und wo wären denn im Norden die Raphaele, Michel Angelos und Canova’s?’¹⁰⁵

Another aspect of self-determination inherent in the Baltic cultural space can be mentioned here—namely the vision of Riga and Tallinn as Hanseatic cities, i. e. primarily commercial and not cultural, centres.¹⁰⁶ Together these discussions about the geographic-climatic disadvantages of the Baltic provinces, which are typical of the Enlightenment, provide an additional explanation for why local creative culture, and especially the fine arts, could not aspire to higher goals, but was already pre-destined to a narrow and low bed, to the practical deed rather than creative self-expression.

Against the background of this territorial way of thinking, it is apparent that the long-held belief about Baltic German literature also applied to Baltic fine arts. Namely, the Baltic Germans with greater aesthetic ambitions, those who truly wanted to become writers and artists, found their creative freedom

¹⁰² Carl Grass’s letter to G. Tielemann, Rome, quoted from KARL LUDWIG GRAVE (ed.): *Caritas. 1: Ein Taschenbuch zum Besten der Unterstützungs-Casse des Frauen-Vereins zu Riga*, Riga 1825, p. 90.

¹⁰³ Quoted from TIELEMANN (as in footnote 6), p. 241.

¹⁰⁴ Ibidem, p. 240.

¹⁰⁵ GRAVE (as in footnote 102), pp. 89-91.

¹⁰⁶ Also see MERKEL (as in footnote 87), pp. 203-204.

abroad.¹⁰⁷ On the other hand, those who remained in the Baltic provinces for a longer time tended to quickly lose their higher creative ideals and, in the case of pictorial art, delved into the tangible Biedermeier-style and the realistic description of nature. In order to become an artist, it was worth going to study in Italy 'under the golden sun'; and to remain an artist, one sometimes had to remain here. The few early 'romantic-type' artist's portraits to be recognized in the local history of art were all created when the artist was living or studying abroad: be it a pastel of Carl Gotthard Grass that has survived, the excellent self-portrait of an unknown Riga-born artist Johann Peter Pfab (1769-1811), who died in Paris¹⁰⁸, or the portrait drawings and paintings from a slightly later period by Otto Friedrich Ignatius (1794-1824), August Georg Wilhelm Pezold (1794-1859) and Gustav Adolf Hippius (1792-1856)¹⁰⁹ or Friedrich Ludwig von Maydell (1795-1846) from 1825 (Museum der bildenden Künste Leipzig)—all Baltic German artists who travelled and studied in Italy.



Fig. 6: Unknown author: Portrait of Carl Grass, after the painting by Johann Georg von Dillis. Pastel. 32 x 29 cm. Latvian National Museum of Art

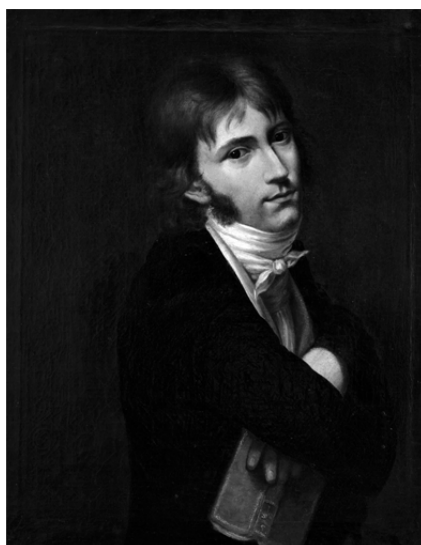


Fig. 7: Johann Peter Pfab: Self-Portrait (before 1811). Oil on canvas, 65 x 53,5 cm. Museum of the History of Riga and Navigation, VRVM 56331

¹⁰⁷ UNDUSK, Baltisaksa (as in footnote 2), pp. 561-571.

¹⁰⁸ DAINIS BRUGIS, INTA PUJĀTE (eds.): *Portrets Latvijā: 19. gadsimts* [The Portrait in Latvia: The 19th Century], Riga 2014, p. 465.

¹⁰⁹ Compare, for example, Carl Philipp Fohr's drawing of Ignatius, Pezold and Hippius (Kurpfälzisches Museum der Stadt Heidelberg); Pezold's self-portrait from 1818 (Eesti Kunstimuuseum).

southern contrasts, as can be seen in Julius Eckardt's colourful description of Grass's portrait from 1868 that reinforces the myth of a romantic artist with every epithet:

'ungeordnet herabhängendes schwarzes Haar fällt über eine hohe, gedankenreiche Stirn, unter welcher ein paar ernste blaue Augen hervorblitzen, die durch die kühnen scharf geschnitzten Züge, welche sie einschließen, noch an Interesse gewinnen. Der Mann, dem diese Züge angehört haben, sieht weder nach einem gestrengen Rathsherrn, noch nach einem würdigen Pfarrherrn aus [...], er blickt so düster und gespenstlich drein, daß man kaum glauben kann, er sei überhaupt unserem behaglich-gemütlichen Norden entstammt und habe sich daran genügen lassen, nach der Väter Sitte schlecht und recht in eng begrenztem Kreise zu leben.'¹¹¹

The Baltic provinces of the late 18th century did not produce any creative artists that 20th-century art history has traditionally sought and appreciated. As demonstrated in this article, not only were the institutional conditions for the maturing of such creative individuals lacking, but more importantly the necessary assumptions and ways of thinking were missing from the social attitudes. Similarly to Baltic written culture, the local art life was shaped primarily by enlightened pragmatism and social interest—by acts rather than artistic description or pictorial depiction. Thus, when speaking about art at the turn of the 19th century, one must examine the pictorial culture of the Enlightenment more broadly, taking into account the various applied functions of drawing and the wide circle of art lovers. In the Baltic provinces, the latter—both noble art dilettantes as well as avocational drawers among the literati—were definitely more important in the promotion of local pictorial awareness, of the idea of art, and art education than the professional community of masters. Also, Gerhard and Karl Kügelgen, the most outstanding international artists in Estonia and Livonia at the turn of the 19th century, found a common language with the local educated art lovers. The brothers Kügelgen did not seek common denominators with the local guilds or painting masters, but presented themselves primarily as intellectuals and literati, thereby establishing the occupation of artist as a spiritual vocation.

The artistic avocation of the Baltic nobility and literati, their picture collecting and drawing practices, are an indication of the revolution of (printed) images and visibility in the 18th century. The art lovers make it possible to speak about the 'Arts of the Enlightenment' and to value pictures at the same level as the written word in the cultural communication of the Baltic Enlightenment.

eignet, die freilich oft zu bitteren Entbehrungen führt, aber auch durch ganz eigenthümliche Genüsse entschädigt'.

¹¹¹ JULIUS ECKARDT: Die baltischen Provinzen Russlands: Politische und kulturgeschichtliche Aufsätze, Leipzig 1868, p. 260.