

Monuments as a Responsibility: Baltic German Learned Societies and the Construction of Cultural Heritage around 1900

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SUMMARY

My article deals with the (mostly medieval) German architectural heritage in present-day Estonia and with the history of monument preservation in the Baltic region in connection with the Baltic German identity. The central area of interest for me are the representations and constructions of this heritage in the texts written about monument preservation.

With the Enlightenment and Romanticism of the late eighteenth century, the first Baltic German scholars—*literati* began to show interest in old houses and works of art. The University of Dorpat (Tartu) was re-established in the early nineteenth century, but local affairs were not included in its teaching curriculum. Because of this, many Baltic Germans felt compelled to research the regional history and historical monuments themselves. During the nineteenth century, numerous learned societies were established, some of which focused specifically on cultural heritage, for example the Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Altertumskunde der Ostseeprovinzen Russlands (Society for the History and Archaeology of the Baltic Sea Provinces of Russia), which was founded in 1834 and was based in Riga.

In a situation where the Russian state and the Estonian and Latvian populations were also undergoing a process of cultural and national awakening, material heritage became a key element in the development of a Baltic German identity. With a shared patriotic agenda, the learned societies gave new impulses to monument preservation and, around 1900, they published a number of popularizing texts. In my article, I analyze three examples: *Die Erhaltung unserer Denkmäler* (The Preservation of Our Monuments, 1888), *Verhandlungen der Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Altertumskunde der Ostseeprovinzen Russlands, betreffend die Organisation der Denkmalpflege* (Negotiations of the Society for History and Antiquarian Research of the Baltic Provinces of Russia, Concerning the Organization of Monument Preservation, 1906), and *Merkbüchlein zur Denkmalpflege auf dem Lande* (The Notebook on the Preservation of Monuments in the Countryside, 1911). The first and third of these texts were written by the art historian and architect Wilhelm Neumann.

These texts appear to have been motivated by a combination of pragmatic and national objectives. But what importance did the monument conservators themselves attribute to their initiatives? What arguments did they put forward in order to convince society, or at least those circles who were interested in culture, of the need to protect the remnants of the past?

KEYWORDS Heritage preservation, art history, art historiography, public education, popularization, *Heimat*, nationalism, identity, Baltic studies

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Introduction

The nineteenth century was the period that saw the rise of architectural heritage as an entity of cultural and national value. One might reason that in the course of the pan-European “discovery” of one’s own past and heritage, the historical buildings of the then Russian provinces of Estonia (Estland), Livonia (Livland) and Courland (Kurland) might have also become key elements in the construction of a Baltic German identity. This article seeks to investigate the extent to which this process may be associated with the nation-building endeavors of the Baltic region during the final stage of the “long nineteenth century.”

The Russian Empire lacked a state policy for the protection of monuments: although some steps were taken, the state was unable to produce an effective system of heritage preservation that would satisfy the needs of the Baltic German intellectual community. As late as the early twentieth century, the legal provisions in the area were deemed “as good as useless” due to the lack of proper supervising institutions or any system of penalties.¹ As a response to these shortcomings, the Baltic Germans began taking active steps to produce their own legislation—but they were also to remain unsuccessful in their attempts before the outbreak of the First World War. I make it my task to concentrate on the ways in which the region’s heritage specialists tried to find a common ground with the public at large—on which academic art history could interact with the lay people. My article will focus on such issues on three levels: the popularization of heritage, the contribution of the learned societies to that popularization, and the process of identity-building that the first two elements involved.

Previous studies have already addressed aspects of the history of Baltic heritage conservation², but very seldom have they touched upon the popular dimension of scholarly practice. Studies on Baltic cultural identity, however, tend to neglect the role of material heritage altogether.³ Although art history

¹ “Diese Gesetzesvorschriften sind aber [...] tatsächlich so gut wie völlig wirkungslos geblieben.” Verhandlungen der Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Altertumskunde der Ostseeprovinzen Russlands, betreffend die Organisierung der Denkmalpflege, Riga 1906, p. 12.

² E.g. ANTS HEIN: On the Early History of the Restoration and Protection of Architectural Landmarks in Estonia, in: *Centropa* 7 (2007), 1, pp. 20-31; MĀRTIŅŠ MINTAURS: Latvia’s Architectural Heritage and its Protection 1880-1940, in: *Journal of Baltic Studies* 37 (2006), 3, pp. 298-312; VALTER LANG, MARGOT LANEMAN (eds.): *Archaeological Research in Estonia, 1865-2005*, Tartu 2006; INDREK JÜRJO: Die Estländische Literarische Gesellschaft 1842-1918, in: JÖRG HACKMANN (ed.): *Vereinskultur und Zivildgesellschaft in Nordosteuropa: Regionale Spezifik und europäische Zusammenhänge / Associational Culture and Civil Society in North Eastern Europe: Regional Features and the European Context*, Wien et al. 2012, pp. 129-178.

³ Curiously, no importance has been attributed to art and architecture—despite naming all of cultural activity an essential part of this regional identity—in e.g. ANDRES ANDRESEN: *Formal Stipulation and Practical Implementation of Religious Privileges in*

always concerns heritage at least indirectly, not many works have been published in this field either that position themselves in a similar way to what interests me here.⁴ This is essential, because questions of belonging and responsibility relate to categories like cultural identity on the one hand, but also bring along very practical, financial considerations on the other, with such matters as inheritance, cooperation and legislation instantly arising as issues. Therefore, the lens provided by heritage studies makes the pragmatic, economic and also political aspects of the topic much more visible than the view provided by art history. At the same time, the field of heritage studies tends to focus on contemporary rather than historical perceptions, though a number of studies in art history have been published more recently that place the concept of heritage within a historical context.⁵

Firstly, based on theoretical accounts of cultural memory, heritage and nationalism, I aim to ask what meaning the promoters of heritage preservation themselves attributed to their initiatives. Efforts to popularize cultural heritage tended to be concerned first and foremost with medieval and early modern monuments at the time. I shall concentrate on three case studies: a journal article from 1888, a commentary on draft legislation dating from 1906, and a popular booklet published in 1911. Rather than studying the reception they received, or the actual effects they had on the practice and institutionalization of heritage preservation (a topic that could also be analyzed through these same texts), my aim is to look at the authors' intentions and the values they aimed to express. As it happens, two of the texts were written by art historian and architect Wilhelm Neumann (1849-1919; fig. 1), who was to become a key figure in the Baltic heritage preservation movement.⁶ One of my chosen

Estland, Livland, and Courland under Russian Supremacy: Researching the Core of Baltic Regional Identity, in: *Ajalooline Ajakiri* 1-2 (2012), pp. 33-54.

⁴ There are also notable exceptions to this, e.g. BENGT THORDEMAN: *Medieval Wooden Sculpture in Sweden, 1: Attitudes to the Heritage*, Stockholm et al. 1964; WINFRIED SPEITKAMP: *Die Verwaltung der Geschichte: Denkmalpflege und Staat in Deutschland 1871-1933*, Göttingen 1996; GERHARD EIMER, ERNST GIERLICH (eds.): *Kunsthistoriker und Denkmalpfleger des Ostens: Der Beitrag zur Entwicklung des Faches im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Bonn 2007; HANS-RUDOLF MEIER: *Kunstgeschichte und Denkmalpflege: Zur Geschichte einer zuweilen schwierigen Beziehung*, in: *Akten der Jahrestagung "Kunstgeschichte und Denkmalpflege. Ausbildungsperspektiven—Praxisfelder" der Vereinigung der Kunsthistorikerinnen und Kunsthistoriker in der Schweiz (VKKS)*, 14.-15. November 2014, Bern 2016, pp. 1-11.

⁵ MATTHEW RAMPLEY (ed.): *Heritage, Ideology, and Identity in Central and Eastern Europe: Contested Pasts, Contested Presents*, Woodbridge—Rochester 2012; ASTRID SWENSON: *The Rise of Heritage: Preserving the Past in France, Germany and England, 1789-1914*, Cambridge 2013; KRISTINA JÕEKALDA, KRISTA KODRES (eds.): *Debating German Heritage: Art History and Nationalism during the Long Nineteenth Century*, in: *Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi / Studies on Art and Architecture* 23 (2014), 3/4, special issue.

⁶ He has also been referred to as the first professional art historian in both Estonia and Latvia; for a critical discussion see KRISTINA JÕEKALDA: *Baltic Identity via German*

texts was published in Tallinn (Reval) and two in Riga, but they all addressed the populations of all three Baltic provinces. These texts proved to be influential and were all widely distributed, leading one to ask about the development of the whole field from the 1880s to the 1910s, as well as about the differing agendas of the texts. I seek to inquire into what kinds of arguments the authors used in trying to convince society, or at least those circles that were active in cultural issues, of the necessity to protect remnants of the past.



Fig. 1: Wilhelm Neumann's personal entrance card to the 700th anniversary celebration of the city of Riga, June—August 1901, to which he contributed many reconstruction designs of "Old Riga." Latvian Academic Library, Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books, Riga

All three texts under analysis concern the work of the learned societies, which constitute the second focus of my article. The role of learned societies in general has been studied on numerous occasions and from a variety of angles⁷, but my account limits itself to those of their activities that are related

Heritage? Seeking Baltic German Art in the Nineteenth Century, in: *Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi* 23 (2014), 3/4, pp. 79-110, here p. 107; EADEM: Art History in Nineteenth Century Estonia? Scholarly Endeavours in the Context of an Emerging Discipline, *ibidem* 24 (2015), 3/4, pp. 115-143, here pp. 138-141.

⁷ E.g. EA JANSEN: Selts ja seisus 19. sajandi teisel poolel [Societies and Class during the Latter 19th Century], in: EADEM, JAANUS ARUKAEVU (eds.): *Seltsid ja ühiskonna muutumine. Talupojaühiskonnast rahvusriigini*, Tartu—Tallinn 1995, pp. 22-43; JÖRG HACKMANN: Vereinskultur und Zivilgesellschaft in Nordosteuropa: lokal, national, regional, europäisch oder global?, in: IDEM, *Vereinskultur* (as in footnote 2), pp. 11-36.

to material culture, and in particular to architectural heritage and its preservation. Two out of the three texts represent the official standpoint of the leading institution of the time on such issues, the Society for History and Antiquarian Research of the Baltic Provinces of Russia (Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Altertumskunde der Ostseeprovinzen Russlands, GGA) in Riga.⁸ Needless to say, the case studies represent topics that go far beyond that narrow field, and reveal much about the self-perception of the Baltic Germans at large.⁹

My third goal is to address questions that relate to identity-building, patriotism and nationalism in this context. The close relationship between the Baltic learned societies and the development of a modern national society, and ultimately of today's nation-states in the region, has already been pointed out by several authors.¹⁰ Along with the Herderian idea of self-identification with the nation, the writing of national histories indeed began during the nineteenth century to seem the only appropriate way of representing the past. Philosopher of history Chris Lorenz argues that the emergence of “academic history presupposed a specific conception of space—that of the nation-state—and that it identified history with the process of nation formation,”¹¹ to the extent that nation-states came to be seen as the basis of scholarly objectivity. Art historian Hubert Locher asserts: “Art history in this century of the development of the nation-states in Europe was a thoroughly political enterprise. Very often it was motivated by patriotism and the desire to define a collective identity.”¹² What sort of relevance do claims like this carry for the case of the Baltic Germans? After all, not all nineteenth century nationalisms succeeded in establishing nation-states, or even set that aim as their ultimate goal. The Baltic Germans, whose conception of cultural identity was oriented more to-

⁸ Of all the learned societies, this one has enjoyed the most attention in previous research, see especially MĀRTIŅŠ MINTAURS: *Heritage for the Public? The Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Altertumskunde in Riga and the Protection of Architectural Monuments in the Baltic Provinces, 1834-1914*, in: *Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi* 23 (2014), 3/4, pp. 111-133; MARGIT ROMANG: *Die Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Altertumskunde der russischen Ostseeprovinzen zu Riga*, in: HACKMANN, *Vereinskultur* (as in footnote 2), pp. 203-223.

⁹ Although Estonian and Latvian natives as well as the tsarist Russian state constitute influential background forces in the processes discussed here, my gaze turns towards the Baltic German perspective, because it was that community that was most closely involved in discussions on the history and preservation of “high” art and architecture until the First World War.

¹⁰ See JÖRG HACKMANN: *Von der “Gelehrten Estnischen Gesellschaft” zu “Õpetatud Eesti Selts.” Verein und Nation in Estland*, in: NORBERT ANGERMANN, MICHAEL GARLEFF et al. (eds.): *Ostseeprovinzen, Baltische Staaten und das Nationale*, Münster 2005, pp. 185-211, here p. 186.

¹¹ CHRIS LORENZ: *Unstuck in Time. Or: The Sudden Presence of the Past*, in: KARIN TILMANS, FRANK VAN VREE et al. (eds.): *Performing the Past: Memory, History, and Identity in Modern Europe*, Amsterdam 2010, pp. 67-102, here p. 70.

¹² HUBERT LOCHER: *The Idea of Cultural Heritage and the Canon of Art*, in: *Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi* 23 (2014), 3/4, pp. 20-35, here p. 34.

wards their historical territory than direct political aims, are a case in point—and a particularly interesting one for precisely this reason.

As much as I am intrigued by the modes of envisioning the past that the Baltic German scholars applied when writing on the subject of heritage conservation, I am—given that the civil society had to take action—particularly fascinated by their agenda for the present. The dimension of the past is obviously central to the concept of heritage, but celebrating, imitating, banishing or simply visiting heritage sites are all nonetheless practices that primarily relate to the present. Heide W. Whelan, too, proposes that associating the monuments with the Baltic *Heimat* had a compensatory function—that the Baltic Germans were “looking to the past and tradition with a view to the present and future.”¹³ We may even ask, as François Hartog does in a different context, whether the Baltic German scholars were first and foremost interested in “[p]rotecting the present or preserving the future?”¹⁴

Learned Societies with a Patriotic Agenda

The foundations that permitted research into Baltic artistic and architectural monuments had been laid by late eighteenth and early nineteenth century antiquarians and *literati*.¹⁵ The re-inauguration of the University of Tartu (Dorpat) in 1802 initially raised hopes among the Baltic Germans that the writing of local history would gain new qualities. But ever since the establishment of the Courland Society for Literature and Art (Kurländische Gesellschaft für Literatur und Kunst) in Jelgava (Mitau) in 1815, it was gradually becoming evident that *Landesgeschichte* was to remain a venture for independent scholars, especially through their collectives in the form of the learned societies—a situation similar to what applied internationally. Given the romantic attitudes prevailing at the time, the numerous new societies in the region became almost a necessity—a means of demonstrating the *raison d'être* of the Baltic Germans by bringing the historical and cultural development of the Baltic provinces to a wider audience.¹⁶

The GGA was established in 1834 in Riga. At his speech to open the new body, Karl Eduard von Napiersky (1793-1864) directly referred to the growing interest in local history and in political ideas, as well as to the flourishing

¹³ HEIDE W. WHELAN: *Adapting to Modernity: Family, Caste and Capitalism among the Baltic German Nobility*, Köln et al. 1999, p. 238, see pp. 134-139, 237.

¹⁴ FRANÇOIS HARTOG: *Regimes of Historicity: Presentism and Experiences of Time*, New York 2015, pp. 189, 201.

¹⁵ Including such figures as August Wilhelm Hupel (1737-1819), Johann Christoph Brotze (1742-1823), Eduard Philipp Körber (1770-1850) and Julius Döring (1818-1898). See also the recently published autobiography JULIUS DÖRING: *Was ich nicht gern vergessen möchte oder Erinnerungen aus meinem Leben*, ed. by VALDA PĒTERSONE, Rīga 2016.

¹⁶ See also ROMANG (as in footnote 8), pp. 204, 214, 217.

of similar societies in Germany, as the main reasons behind establishing it.¹⁷ The claim to speak for the whole region was certainly expected to have the effect of reinforcing a regional consciousness: the opening paragraphs of the society's statutes formulated its primary aim as being to promote and preserve everything that related to the history and monuments of any of the three Baltic provinces and of the island of Saaremaa (Ösel).¹⁸ The GGA was indeed destined to remain behind most of the region's central heritage initiatives, relating both to the practical organization of heritage conservation and to raising popular consciousness in the field.

To better grasp the context in which the GGA operated, it should be noted that the Learned Estonian Society (Gelehrte Estnische Gesellschaft / Õpetatud Eesti Selts, est. 1838) in Tartu also occasionally paid some attention to architectural heritage, though it more often concerned itself with archaeological and ethnographical matters.¹⁹ Nevertheless, in the late nineteenth century the Society put together a systematic collection of drawings, prints and photographs of Livonian architectural sights.²⁰ It also organized one-day study and maintenance trips to particular monuments.²¹ In the early 1900s, heritage conservation and related practical tasks suddenly became its principal activity—a change of emphasis that was primarily motivated by numerous reports of extensive plundering of historical ruins for construction material. It was their intervention, for example, that prevented the destruction of the last remains of

¹⁷ CARL EDUARD NAPIERSKY: Über die Quellen und Hilfsmittel der livländischen Geschichte. Vortrag bei der feierlichen Eröffnung der Allerhöchst bestätigten Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Altertumskunde der Ostsee-Provinzen 1834, in: Mitteilungen aus dem Gebiet der Geschichte Liv-, Est- und Kurlands 1 (1837), pp. 61-89, here p. 61.

¹⁸ See Verhandlungen (as in footnote 1), pp. 5-6.

¹⁹ See KERSTI TAAL: Õpetatud Eesti Seltsi muuseumi asutamiseest [Of the Founding of the Learned Estonian Society Museum], in: TÖNIS LIIBEK (ed.): Eestimaa Provintsi muuseum ja muuseumitraditsiooni algus Eestis, Tallinn 2013, pp. 11-24; HACKMANN, Von der "Gelehrten Estnischen Gesellschaft" (as in footnote 10), pp. 194-195.

²⁰ A[RMIN] TUULSE: Kunstiajalugu [Art History], in: Õpetatud Eesti Selts 1838-1938. Lühike tegevus-ülevaade / A Brief Survey of the Activities of the Learned Estonian Society, 1838-1938, Tartu 1938, pp. 41-44, here p. 42. See also KRISTINA JÕEKALDA: Baltic Heritage and Picturesque Ruins: Visual Art as a Means of "Inventing" the Local, in: Eesti Kunstimuuseumi toimetised / Proceedings of the Art Museum of Estonia 5 [10] (2015), pp. 437-474.

²¹ In the 1880s, for example, to the ruins of Vastseliina (Neuhausen) episcopal castle and Kärkna (Falkenau) abbey. See A[RNOLD] HASSELBLATT: Dritte Archäologische Excursion der Gel. estn. Gesellschaft am 22. Mai 1888, in: Sitzungsberichte der Gelehrten estnischen Gesellschaft zu Dorpat (1888) [1889], pp. 148-154, here p. 148; KARL VON LÖWIS OF MENAR: Zur livländischen Burgenkunde im 19. Jahrhundert, in: Der Burgwart 15 (1901), pp. 137-141.

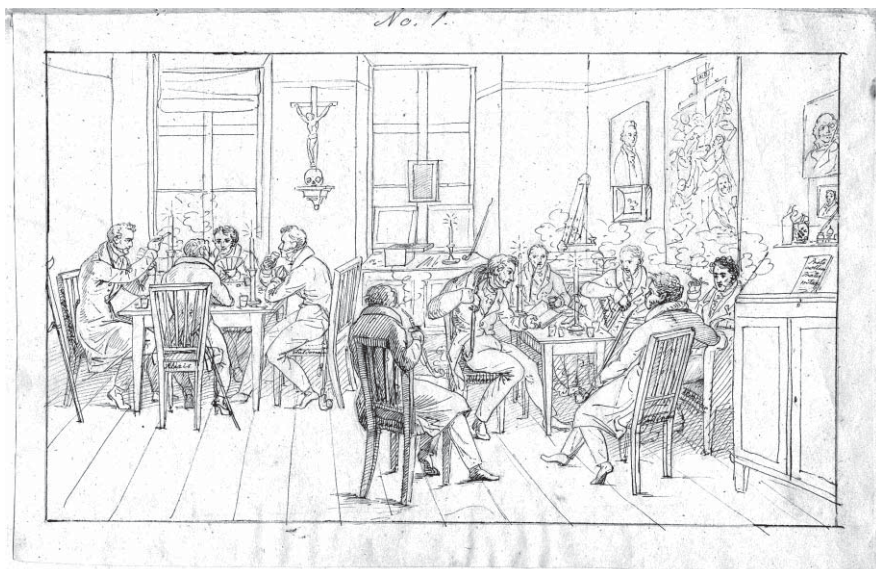


Fig. 2: Meeting of the “Bruderkrantz” (Fraternitas Revaliensis), indirect predecessor of the Estonian Literary Society, in Tallinn. Drawing by Carl Sigismund Walther, 1820s. Estonian History Museum, Tallinn. AM D 130-1-2, I 8p

the Tartu town wall in 1904. The Society’s most professional undertaking in the field was its conservation of the ruins of Tartu cathedral in 1907.²²

From early in its existence, the Estonian Literary Society (Estländische Literarische Gesellschaft / Eestimaa Kirjanduse Ühing, est. 1842; fig. 2) in Tallinn declared its essential goal as being to “gather and spread knowledge of the fatherland and its inhabitants, both in olden days and in recent times”²³ Although *Vaterlandskunde* constituted only one of the six sections of the Society, it was this field of activity that was to become their most visible and dominant trademark²⁴: it was their initiative that inspired much work to conserve artistic and architectural monuments in the northern parts of Estonia.²⁵

²² TUULSE (as in footnote 20), p. 42; KERSTI TAAL: Õpetatud Eesti Selts muinsuste kaitsel [The Learned Estonian Society Protecting Monuments], in: Lee. Eesti Rahva Muuseumi Sõprade Seltsi väljaanne 19 (2013), pp. 60-71, here pp. 60-61, 63-66, 70.

²³ “[...] beizutragen zur Erlangung und Mittheilung genauer Kenntnis vom Vaterlande”: Statut der 1842 Allerhöchst bestätigten Ehstländischen Literarischen Gesellschaft, Reval 1896, p. 5, § 1.

²⁴ Allerhöchst bestätigte ehstländische literarische Gesellschaft und deren Geschichte vom 24. Juni 1847 bis 24. Juni 1850, Reval 1851, p. III. Besides, the activities of other sections also touched upon issues of heritage conservation: e.g. in 1880s and 1890s the technical division took on the job of modernizing the heating system of St Olaf’s church in Tallinn: JÜRJO (as in footnote 2), p. 152.

²⁵ E.g. archaeological and conservation works in Tallinn cathedral and the churches of the Holy Spirit and St Nicholas (altarpieces and the *Danse Macabre*); the ruins of the

In 1896, the Society established a separate section for the preservation of domestic monuments (Section zur Erhaltung einheimischer Baudenkmäler und sonstiger Alterthümer)²⁶, with funding mainly from the Estonian knighthood (Estländische Ritterschaft). As one of its essential goals the section set itself the task of raising popular awareness—in order to prevent “destruction resulting from ignorance, indifference and greed,” as historian and vice president of the society Eugen von Nottbeck (1842-1900) put it.²⁷

From the 1860s onwards in particular, their attention turned towards the topic of architectural monuments, and that attention was now no longer centered on their historical value alone, but also on their artistic qualities.²⁸ Although none of the societies²⁹ were specialized in material heritage, all the above-mentioned examples dealt with the topic in one way or another. Their collections were often to form the basis of later museums, and they organized international contacts and book exchange arrangements with numerous similar societies across the Baltic area, Russia and Germany.³⁰

Many of the members of these societies were active opinion leaders and publicists, some of them editors of the leading journals or newspapers. The

castles at Rakvere (Wesenberg) and Haapsalu (Hapsal); the Pirita convent in Tallinn; the Viru-Nigula (Maholm) chapel. See JÜRJO (as in footnote 2), p. 166; Pirita klooster ja selle 500-aastase pühitsemispäeva juubel 15. ja 16. augustil 1936. a. Ühes mõningate ajalooliste andmetega / Birgittaklostret vid Tallinn. Och firandet av dess 500-årsjubileum den 15 och 16 augusti 1936: Jämte några historiska upplysningar [Pirita Convent and the 500th Anniversary of its Consecration, 15th-16th August 1936: Accompanied by Some Historical Data], Pirita 1940, p. 41; ANTS HEIN: Viru-Nigula Maarja kabelist nii- ja naapidi [Chapel of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Viru-Nigula], in: Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi 22 (2013), 1/2, pp. 123-150, here pp. 129-130.

²⁶ A beneficial collection of newspaper clippings relating to the Estonian Literary Society can be found in Indrek Jürjo's personal archives: Tallinna Linnaarhiiv [Tallinn City Archives], sign. 1481-1-201.

²⁷ EUGEN VON NOTTBECK: Ueber Massnahmen zur Erhaltung der alten Baudenkmäler in den baltischen Provinzen, in: Aus den Arbeiten des X. archäologischen Congresses zu Riga 1896, Riga 1898, pp. 52-54.

²⁸ WILHELM NEUMANN: Denkmalschutz und Denkmalpflege in den baltischen Provinzen Liv-, Est- und Kurland, in: Baltische Studien zur Archäologie und Geschichte: Arbeiten des Baltischen Vorbereitenden Komitees für den XVI. Archäologischen Kongress in Pleskau 1914, Berlin 1914, pp. 285-293, here pp. 286-289. See ROMANG (as in footnote 8), pp. 211-214.

²⁹ In Riga alone there were close to 700 active societies in the early 1900s: ULRIKE VON HIRSCHHAUSEN: Die Grenzen der Gemeinsamkeit: Deutsche, Letten, Russen und Juden in Riga 1860-1914, Göttingen 2006, p. 212.

³⁰ For example, as early as 1888, the Learned Estonian Society had 38 partner institutions in Russia and 118 abroad. By the 1910s the GGA was in correspondence with more than 200 societies, including practically all German ones as well as some in the USA and Canada: KERSTI TAAL: Õpetatud Eesti Selts: rahvalalgustuslikust seltsist teaduseltsiks kujunemine [The Learned Estonian Society: From a Society Promoting Popular Enlightenment to a Learned Society], MA thesis, University of Tartu, 2006, p. 19; ROMANG (as in footnote 8), pp. 208, 211.

membership was dominated by the local intelligentsia (doctors, engineers, teachers, town officials, gentry, pastors etc.), some were open-minded enough to accept native Baltic people and women as members.³¹ The learned societies were indeed keen promoters of scholarly thought in the public sphere—it was through their events, museums and heritage preservation activities that history of local art and architecture began to attract renewed attention.³² After the publication of artist and journalist Leopold von Pezold's (1832–1907) *Vorschlag an alle Kunstfreunde und Patrioten Revels*, in which he proposed the creation of a public museum³³, the collections of the Estonian Literary Society, for instance, were opened under the name of the Estonian Provincial Museum (the predecessor of what is now the Estonian History Museum). The provincial museums in Tallinn and Jelgava were the closest the Baltic Germans would ever get to establishing their own national museum.

A new wave of awareness—“our awakening interest towards our medieval monuments”³⁴—can be attributed to the early 1880s, and was to regather strength in the 1890s. General interest in local monuments gained ground among middle-class intellectuals, artists, school teachers and such like, and increased immensely with the GGA's popular exhibition of the cultural history of Riga in 1883.³⁵ It was also at this time that the GGA's more direct engagement with heritage preservation began. The conservation project it undertook on Riga cathedral from 1884 on, for which purpose the Cathedral Construction Society (*Dombauverein*) and later the Cathedral Museum (*Dom-museum*) were established, provided the most professional platform and testing ground for the latest principles of restoration in the Baltic region.³⁶

³¹ See ENE HIIO: *Literaatiidest ja Eestimaa Kirjanduse Ühingu algusaastatest: õpetlased, entusiasm ja miljö* [Of Literati and the Early Years of the Literary Society of Estonian Province: Scholars, Enthusiasm and Milieu], in: LIIBEK (as in footnote 19), pp. 26–40, here p. 36; JÜRJO (as in footnote 2), pp. 137, 140, 150–155, 165, 167.

³² It is worth mentioning that the boundary between associational culture and the university does not automatically represent a boundary between amateur and professional practice, i. e. between public and scientific discourse, because in the Baltic case the societies tended to be the professional side of this dichotomy, as far as the research on local history and heritage is concerned. For a more detailed discussion on this, see JÖEKALDA, *Art History* (as in footnote 6), pp. 121, 128–131.

³³ L[EOPOLD] VON P[EZOLD]: *Vorschlag an alle Kunstfreunde und Patrioten Revels*, in: *Revalsche Zeitung* from 1863-03-02.

³⁴ WILHELM NEUMANN: *Der Dom zu St. Peter und Paul in Dorpat*, in: *Sitzungsberichte der Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Altertumskunde der Ostseeprovinzen Russlands* (1913) [1914], pp. 5–15, here p. 5.

³⁵ *Katalog der Rigaschen culturhistorischen Ausstellung, Riga 1883*. On similar attempts to resurrect the past in nineteenth century Sweden cf. THORDEMAN (as in footnote 4), pp. 76, 80–84.

³⁶ NEUMANN, *Denkmalschutz* (as in footnote 28), p. 289; ARNOLD FEUEREISEN: *Denkschrift über die Notwendigkeit einer Organisation der archäologischen Forschung in den Ostseeprovinzen*, in: *Baltische Studien* (as in footnote 28), pp. 265–282, here



Fig. 3: Archaeological excavations at the Viljandi (Fellin) castle of the Livonian Order (branch of the Teutonic Order), dating from the 13th century. Photo by Theodor John, 1878/79. Collection of the Learned Estonian Society. Estonian History Museum, Tallinn. AM 13741:304-5 F 17598

A number of smaller regional societies followed, setting the production of scholarly research on neighboring monuments as their main goal. It is symptomatic that several of these were born out of collective undertakings aimed at preserving local ruins of episcopal or Teutonic Order castles. The Literary Society of Viljandi (Felliner Literärische Gesellschaft; fig. 3) emerged in 1881 as a result of excavations led by Theodor Schiemann (1847-1921), then a school teacher, later to become a renowned archivist and founding professor of East European history at the University of Berlin. Public donations were collected for the preservation of the ruins³⁷, and early in the twentieth century a special section of the society was formed to undertake this task.³⁸ Similarly,

pp. 265-266. See ROMANG (as in footnote 8), pp. 203-207, 209, 212, 215-218; JÜRJO (as in footnote 2), p. 162; MINTAURS, Heritage (as in footnote 8), pp. 123-124.

³⁷ Jahresbericht der Felliner litterarischen Gesellschaft für die Jahre 1909-1911, Fellin 1912, p. X. See REIN LOODUS: Kunstielu Eesti linnades, 1900-1918 [Artistic Life in Estonian Towns, 1900-1918], Tallinn 1994, pp. 83-84.

³⁸ 702. Sitzung am 2. (15.) November, in: Sitzungsberichte der Gelehrten Estnischen Gesellschaft (1905) [1906], pp. XXXIV-XXXV. See AIN VISLAPUU: Väljakaevamiste ko-

the Pärnu Society for Antiquities (Altertumsforschende Gesellschaft zu Pernau, 1896) grew out of archaeological fieldwork.³⁹ Renovation and archaeological research in Paide (Weißenstein) in 1892 resulted in the creation of yet another body, the Society for the Preservation of Jerwen County Antiquities (Gesellschaft zur Erhaltung Jerwscher Altertümer) in 1904.⁴⁰

It is frequently pointed out by contemporary authors that, while the sphere of activity of learned societies elsewhere in Europe was confined to merely popularizing heritage, the burden such bodies took on in the Baltic provinces was substantially heavier.⁴¹ And this was certainly the case. At a time when there was still doubt as to whether a law on cultural heritage would be enacted and when all the projects being undertaken were dependent on private initiative, one has to agree with Neumann when he concluded in 1914 that the societies used every resource in their possession to keep up the preservation activities in the region.⁴² Indeed, the societies' acceptance of this burden is described in terms indicating that they felt they had to take the responsibility of protecting the local artistic and cultural heritage upon themselves,⁴³ an idea that occurs repeatedly in the texts under analysis.

Popularization as a Romantic and Enlightenment Ideal: 1888

The fact that both the monuments themselves and their analysis was placed within the framework of Baltic German identity would seem obvious, but I now propose to take a look at the specific ways in which this relationship between the monuments and their perceived significance was communicated, as illustrated by my first case study. In the fact that the Baltic societies' heritage-related activity began to increase steadily from the late 1880s on, I would attribute particular importance to a public appeal by Wilhelm Neumann, *Die Erhaltung unserer Denkmäler*, published in 1888 in the journal *Baltische*

miteest Viljandi Muuseumini [From the Felliner Literärische Gesellschaft to the Museum Viljandi], in: Viljandi Muuseumi Aastaraamat (1997) [1998], pp. 4-15.

³⁹ KARL VON LÖWIS OF MENAR: Ausgrabung der Deutschordenskomturei Pernau, in: Sitzungsberichte der Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Altertumskunde der Ostseeprovinzen Russlands (1896) [1897], pp. 141-149, here p. 145. See INNA PÖLTSAM: Pärnu Muinasuurimise Selts [Pärnu Society for Antiquities], in: ALDUR VUNK (ed.): 100 aastat Pärnu Muinasuurimise Seltsi 1997, Pärnu 1997, pp. 10-17; AIVAR KRIISKA: Pärnu muinasuurijad ja muinasteadus [Archaeology and the Antiquarians of Pärnu], *ibidem*, pp. 18-29; ANDRES TVAURI: The Conservation of Archaeological Heritage in Estonia, in: LANG/LANEMAN (as in footnote 2), pp. 247-266, here p. 248.

⁴⁰ See LOODUS (as in footnote 37), pp. 80, 87.

⁴¹ E.g. NOTTBECK, Ueber Massnahmen (as in footnote 27), p. 52.

⁴² NEUMANN, Denkmalschutz (as in footnote 28), p. 293.

⁴³ IDEM: Merkbüchlein zur Denkmalpflege auf dem Lande, Riga 1911, p. 3; FEUEREISEN (as in footnote 36), pp. 266-267, 275.

Monatsschrift (in Tallinn at the time), and re-printed in *Revaler Beobachter*.⁴⁴ The article starts by acknowledging the beginning of a new era—the Baltic society’s coming of age:

“Wie in den übrigen bedeutenden Culturländern sehen wir auch in unserer engeren Heimat diese neue Sonne emporstrahlen. Viel wackere Männer sind beflissen, die reiche Geschichte unserer Vorzeit durch Wort und Bild zum Gemeingut aller zu machen [...]”⁴⁵

The learned societies being the agency engaged in putting the task of heritage protection into action, Neumann now calls on them to join forces (mentioning the GGA and the local societies at Tartu, Jelgava and Tallinn by name)—to work in even closer contact with one another in order to achieve an arrangement capable of preserving the remnants of their local past effectively. Emphasizing that the creation of a systematic inventory of all monuments would be required, he defends the view that concerted activity⁴⁶ was the only way in which the Baltic monuments could be given the basic protection they needed in the coming years.⁴⁷ He proposes that, after the recent progress that had been made in “Erforschung der Landesgeschichte,” it is now the turn of a “Geschichte der Denkmäler” to take the limelight, because the monuments enabled the most immediate connection with the history of the country in which they stand:

“Die Denkmäler, vor allem diejenigen der Baukunst, sind in vollstem Sinne Eigenthum der Heimat, des Volkes, und für dieses müssen sie erhalten bleiben.”⁴⁸

Heimat became the most recurrent concept in Baltic German texts from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, while previously the simple word *Land* had been preferred. Cultural and environmental historian Ulrike Plath observes that the Baltic Germans began during the nineteenth century to assimilate in a new manner with the land that they had owned and inhabited for centuries, making it more truly their own—and this applies in a context well beyond architectural landscapes (fig. 4). What previously constituted a practical duty now became a value⁴⁹—a value that brought new kinds of responsibility

⁴⁴ WILHELM NEUMANN: Die Erhaltung unserer Denkmäler, in: Baltische Monatsschrift 35 (1888), pp. 351-359, here p. 354.

⁴⁵ Ibidem, p. 352.

⁴⁶ In 1912 there was some discussion on establishing a “Verband der Vereine zur Erforschung der baltischen Provinzen und ihrer Geschichte,” but the idea was soon abandoned in the face of jurisdictional complications: see JÜRJO (as in footnote 2), pp. 172-173.

⁴⁷ NEUMANN, Die Erhaltung (as in footnote 44), pp. 355-358.

⁴⁸ Ibidem, p. 354.

⁴⁹ ULRIKE PLATH: Rändrahnu ja majaisandad: Baltisakslaste suhe maaga ja kodutunde teke 19. sajandil [Boulders and Householders: The Baltic Germans’ Relationship with their Homeland and the Birth of the Sense of Belonging in the 19th Century], in: Vikerkaar 7-8 (2008), pp. 113-122, here pp. 113, 118. See also EADEM: Heimat: Rethinking Baltic German Spaces of Belonging, in: Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi 23

along with it. Locher describes such a process as acquiring heritage—“not only materially, but also intellectually.”⁵⁰



Fig. 4a: Map of the Baltic Heimat from the mid-20th century. Reprinted by kind permission of Verlag Baltische Briefe – Wolf J. v. Kleist GmbH, Großhansdorf

(2014), 3/4, pp. 55-78, here pp. 59-61; JÖKALDA, Baltic Heritage (as in footnote 20), pp. 450-453.

⁵⁰ LOCHER (as in footnote 12), p. 35, see also pp. 20, 34-35.

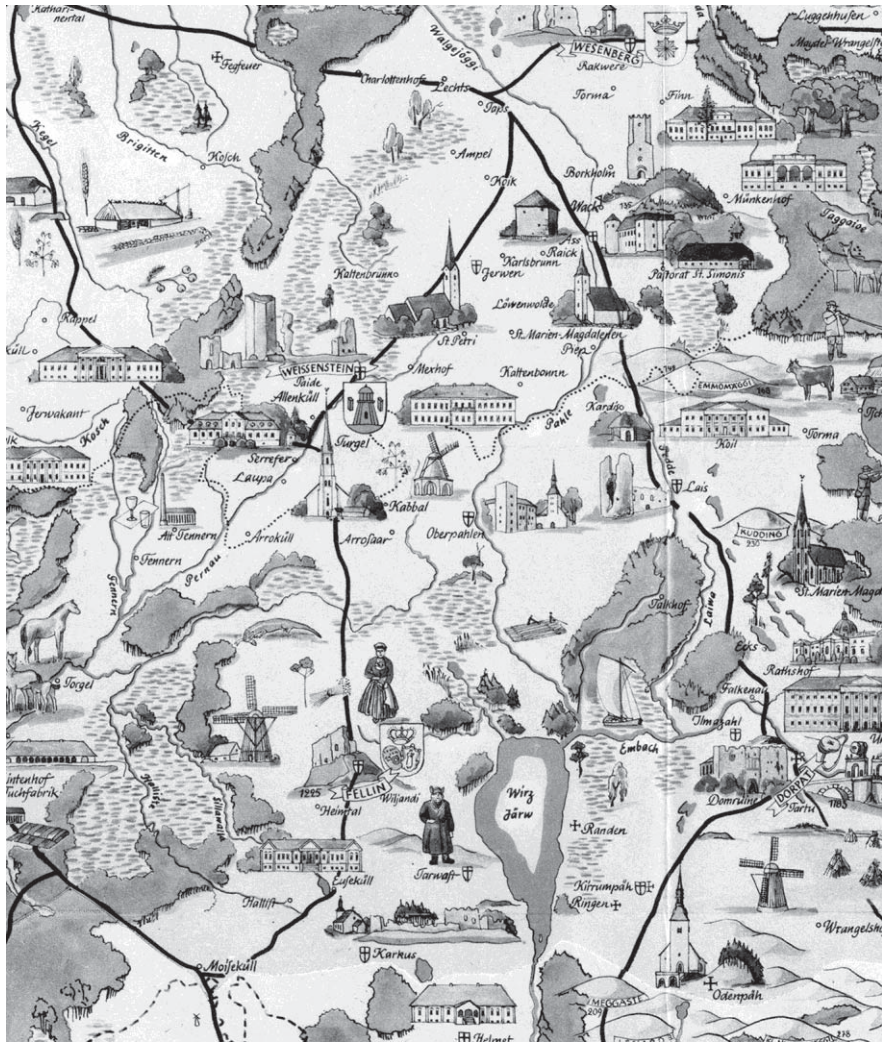


Fig. 4b: Map of the Baltic Heimat (as fig. 4a), detail

With the help of scholars and the gradual development of the humanities, buildings that had existed for centuries, serving both practical and aesthetic functions, were indeed completely reinterpreted and instrumentalized for the necessities of the moment.⁵¹ As the scholar of cultural memory Aleida Assmann puts it: “With the emergence of national movements, remembering one’s own history and observing one’s own traditions became a patriotic

⁵¹ See also JOEP LEERSSEN: Nationalism and the Cultivation of Culture, in: *Nations and Nationalism* 12 (2006), 4, pp. 559-578, here p. 568.

duty.”⁵² In place of the universal ideals that Classical antiquity or the Renaissance had previously represented, the growing interest in local matters—in one’s own past, origins and ancestors—now became the focus.⁵³ But the very idea of the national monument only finds relevance through assuming such monuments to be part of general history—the common heritage of humankind.

With his scholarly activity, Neumann—who had published his magnum opus on Baltic art history a year earlier⁵⁴—clearly sought to describe local artistic and architectural heritage as parts of the canon of international art history, and the same goal can be seen in his writings on heritage conservation, for example:

“Wir sind, wie bereits gesagt, nicht reich an hervorragenden Kunstdenkmälern, desto grösser aber wird unsere Pflicht diese zu erhalten, und besonders [...] derjenigen Männer, die die Macht besitzen über sie zu verfügen: die Corporationen und Administrationen.”⁵⁵

One might expect the art historians to attempt to define a specifically Baltic German identity in this process but, curiously enough, what one actually encounters in the texts of the time is a narrative of being part of German culture, and of accepting the status of being a historical German colony even gladly. It was through this formulation that the Baltic Germans were able to adapt to and to find a place for themselves within the international canon, which was itself still in the making.⁵⁶

Describing the local status quo by comparing it to neighboring cities or West European capitals became a model in itself, but in relation to heritage conservation, we might say that it was instead the failures in conservation practice in the West that were to be key considerations. Neumann expresses gladness in seeing that it was not common in his Baltic homeland that anything old be replaced with creations conforming to contemporary taste, and that people knew how to appreciate all bygone artistic periods. After listing a few negative examples taken from Baltic restoration practice, which he finds

⁵² ALEIDA ASSMANN: *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization: Functions, Media, Archives*, Cambridge 2011, p. 129. See KRISTINA JÖEKALDA, KRISTA KODRES: *Debating German Heritage: An Introduction*, in: *EAEDM* (as in footnote 5), pp. 7-19, here pp. 7-8.

⁵³ MATTHEW RAMPLEY: *Contested Histories: Heritage and/as the Construction of the Past: An Introduction*, in: *IDEM*, *Heritage* (as in footnote 5), pp. 1-20, here pp. 1-2.

⁵⁴ WILHELM NEUMANN: *Grundriss einer Geschichte der bildenden Künste und des Kunstgewerbes in Liv-, Est- und Kurland vom Ende des 12. bis zum Ausgang des 18. Jahrhunderts*, Reval 1887.

⁵⁵ *IDEM*, *Die Erhaltung* (as in footnote 44), p. 354.

⁵⁶ For a more detailed discussion on this topic, see JÖEKALDA, *Baltic Identity* (as in footnote 6), pp. 105-108.

rare on the whole, he energetically condemns several cases of insensitive reconstruction in Western Europe:⁵⁷

“Wie viele Schmerzensschreie sind nicht deshalb schon aus Deutschland und Italien zu uns herübergetönt, namentlich aus dem letzteren Lande, wo seit den siebenziger Jahren eine förmliche Restaurationswuth grassirt, der manch schönes Kunstwerk zum Opfer fallen musste. [...] Zum Glück haben wir in unserer Heimat dergleichen riesige Restaurirungssünden noch nicht zu beklagen.”⁵⁸

And Neumann was not the only prominent person to compliment his Baltic homeland in this way—as a feature of *Lokalpatriotismus*. A couple of years earlier, the historian Friedrich Amelung (1842-1909), too, had found it “pleasing that veneration of the monuments of the past has survived with such liveliness here in Reval,” a city that he considered richer in (art) historical monuments than Riga.⁵⁹

“Unsere Stadt, welche dem Alterthumsforscher so viel Interessantes bietet, hat zugleich in dem pietätvollen Sinne der meisten Bewohner die beste Garantie, daß die Funde aus alter Zeit sorgfältig conservirt werden. Alle Fremden, noch mehr aber die Ostseeprovinzialen, welche nach Reval kommen, können hier noch den großen Reiz historischer Erinnerungen genießen, und werden durch den Anblick alter ehrwürdiger Bauten und manchen interessanten und schönen Denkmals aus dem Mittelalter erfreut. Möge mit dem Interesse auch die Fähigkeit, zweckmäßige Sammlungen von Gegenständen für das Museum zu veranstalten, sich steigern.”⁶⁰

Popularization Arising out of Necessity: 1906

Let us now look at a different case: my second text is more “hands on” and pragmatic, both from the point of view of what inspired it and of the means of persuasion used. In 1905, the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs summoned a special commission and circulated an appeal, asking the regional societies—in the Baltic case, the GGA in Riga—to assist in preparing state regulations for heritage preservation and to coordinate the all-Russian inventory of monuments at the regional level. In response, the GGA published a thorough response and critical commentary to the appeal in 1906, suggesting some ideas for amendments. This 16-page text was issued as a supplement under the title *Verhandlungen der Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Altertumskunde der Ostseeprovinzen Russlands, betreffend die Organisierung der Denkmalpflege*. It

⁵⁷ NEUMANN, Die Erhaltung (as in footnote 44), pp. 351, 354, 358.

⁵⁸ Ibidem, p. 353. Demonstrating his knowledge of the international and disciplinary developments, Neumann adds that this “Sündenregister” could easily be extended—“die Fachblätter sind oft voll davon.”

⁵⁹ FRIEDRICH AMELUNG: Revaler Alterthümer, Reval 1884, p. 11: “erfreulich ist es, daß die Pietät gegen die Denkmäler der Vergangenheit sich bei uns in Reval so lebendig erhalten hat.”

⁶⁰ Ibidem, p. 19.

was published collectively, without any named author—the only name that appeared was that of the president of the society at the time, Bernhard von Hollander (1856-1937). The text was supposedly authored by the GGA's previous president, historian and archivist Hermann von Bruiningk (1849-1927), who occasionally published on the matters of archaeological heritage.⁶¹ This document perfectly demonstrates the problems that the first heritage specialists were—or at least thought themselves to be—faced with:

“Die Erfahrung hat gelehrt, dass die Kreierung ständiger Organe für die Denkmalpflege, vorzugsweise alter Gebäude, dringend notwendig ist und dass beim Fortbestehen des Mangels solcher Organe unersetzliche historische Denkmäler der Zerstörung durch Naturkräfte, auch wo dem vorgebeugt werden könnte, oder, was für solche Denkmäler eine kaum geringere Gefahr bedeutet, der Zerstörung durch Menschenhand, um tatsächlicher oder vermeintlicher Nützlichkeitsrücksichten willen, sowie unverständiger Restaurierung fortgesetzt anheimfallen werden.”⁶²

The GGA booklet clearly states that, in their view, architectural monuments were deserving of the most urgent action, since artistic and archival treasures were, for the most part, well looked after in any case—being in the possession of institutions or families that knew how to care for and cherish them.⁶³ At the same time, the GGA expressed itself strongly in favor of the unpopular measure of including private property under the jurisdiction of the future heritage conservation act, using an argument that became particularly curious on just this issue. The irritation of private owners would immediately dissipate, so they reasoned, once they truly understood the noble patriotic motives behind such an act. Once again, it all came down to the duty of a civilized nation to care for its material heritage:

“Es steht zu hoffen, dass, wenn erst in der Bevölkerung die Überzeugung durchgedrungen sein wird, dass das Gesetz einer patriotischen und zivilisatorischen Pflicht entsprungen ist, die Notwendigkeit zur Anwendung von Zwangsmassregeln immer seltener eintreten wird, ja dass die Eigentümer der der Pflege unterliegenden Denkmäler mehr und mehr lernen werden, nicht nur den idealen Wert ihres Eigentums zu begreifen, sondern auch einsehen werden, dass die Instandhaltung und Restaurierung derartiger Denkmäler sich unter Umständen als materiell höchst lohnend erweist, indem vielfache Erfahrungen beweisen, dass solche Denkmäler durch Hebung des Touristenverkehrs den Ortschaften, wo sie gelegen sind, speziell aber den Eigentümern, durch Eintrittsgelder und in sonstiger Weise, bedeutende Einnahmen zuführen.”⁶⁴

⁶¹ He was also a member of the Imperial Society of Archaeology in Moscow (Imperatorskoe Moskovskogo Archeologičeskoe Obščestvo). See: Bruiningk, Gottfried Robert Hermann Frh. v., in: WILHELM LENZ (ed.): *Deutschbaltisches Biographisches Lexikon 1710-1960*, Köln—Wien 1970, p. 113.

⁶² *Verhandlungen* (as in footnote 1), p. 5.

⁶³ *Ibidem*, p. 8.

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 13.

Stressing that a well-maintained and professionally conserved building would also be in the financial interests of the owner and of the entire local community, due to its ability to attract tourists, is an excellent example of how utterly pragmatic the arguments used in such popular accounts could sometimes be. In fact, the GGA even pronounced themselves in favor of publishing the financial reports of the future heritage board because doing so could, if skillfully presented,

“zugleich den Zweck erfüllen, das Interesse für Denkmalpflege in weiteren Kreisen rege zu erhalten, wie denn überhaupt das Pflegeorgan in der Verbreitung von Publikationen verschiedener Art, streng wissenschaftlicher und auch mehr populärer Natur, eine wichtige Aufgabe zu erfüllen haben wird [...]”⁶⁵

The GGA aimed “to stimulate the interest of wider circles” by publishing illustrated books on local art, applied art and architecture, but also by means of providing consulting services and even financial aid to estate owners.⁶⁶ Sometimes, though, this was not enough. Historical circumstances had certainly changed since the 1880s. The plea from the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs to start immediate action was compiled in June 1905, during the very year of the Russian Revolution. The revolution, which precipitated popular attacks on buildings representative of the ruling classes⁶⁷, was to last throughout the year, coming to a peak in late 1905 and early 1906 in Estonia and Livonia—only a few months before the GGA issued its response in the *Verhandlungen*.

As the 1906 text indicates, the GGA claimed to promote both research into and preservation of old buildings throughout the region in this state of crisis. The phrase “realizing the state of emergency now prevailing in this regard”⁶⁸ seems to refer mainly to the as yet absent system of heritage preservation, but it might also be hinting at the turmoil going on at the time. One might think that, if nothing else, the 1905 Revolution at least made the specialists aware of the abyss between professional circles and the people—that it, in other words, forced them to admit that the (art) historians themselves were the only

⁶⁵ Ibidem, p. 11. The GGA did the same with the reports on their activities, see e.g. their report on the renovation works carried out in Riga cathedral that also republished some of the key texts and fragments of relevant protocols: Einundzwanzigster (Schluss-) Rechenschaftsbericht der Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Altertumskunde der Ostseeprovinzen Russlands. Abteilung für den Dombau zu Riga. 1905-1910. I. Rechenschaftsbericht der Kommission für Denkmalpflege. 1910, Riga 1911.

⁶⁶ Verhandlungen (as in footnote 1), p. 5: “das Interesse hierfür in weiteren Kreisen zu beleben.”

⁶⁷ See TOIVO U. RAUN: The Revolution of 1905 in the Baltic Provinces and Finland, in: Slavic Review 43 (1984), 3, pp. 453-467, here pp. 456-459, 464-466. For more in the context of an “unwanted heritage” see KRISTINA JÕEKALDA: Heritage, Patrimony or Legacy? Baltic German and Estonian Cultural Dialectic in Facing the Local Past, in: Letonica 37 (2018), pp. 186-201, here p. 192.

⁶⁸ Verhandlungen (as in footnote 1), p. 5: “In der Erkenntnis des in dieser Beziehung jetzt herrschenden Notstandes.”

people capable of raising public awareness on the need to preserve heritage. One can agree with Hartog here who even goes as far as to claim that it is precisely ruptures, discontinuities, “crises of time” that define heritage historically, since “cultural heritage and social temporalities are inseparable.”⁶⁹ Politically critical situations and their aftermath have indeed been decisive in the development of heritage protection—one need only consider the French Revolution or the World Wars.⁷⁰

There was reason to believe such pragmatic arguments would serve to motivate the estate owners, also because the learned societies were not simply writing about some sort of abstract community—indeed, very often the monuments in question were in the private possession of the members of those very same societies. In fact, the focus of the learned societies had visibly become more centered on historical monuments ever since the mid-1880s, i. e. the same time as increasing numbers of the nobility had begun engaging in activities of these societies.⁷¹ Furthermore, we can clearly see that, after the Estonian Literary Society created its new section dedicated to the preservation of domestic monuments in 1896⁷², the proportion of the membership made up by the nobility—the primary landowners in the region—increased considerably, while previously they had been outnumbered by *literati*.⁷³

The fact that activity in genealogical research was gathering strength at the same time was another symptom of renewed interest in the past and in ancestors, together with the enthusiasm for the material culture that served as a reminder of that past and those ancestors. The reasons for these fascinations came down to cultural identity: even for those not specifically interested in art history, their family history and heritage stood in close relationship with the past through the physical appearance of their homes, which themselves constituted much of this heritage, not to mention their private donations to preserve or restore the local church or a neighboring ruin. This renewed focus on ancestral pride, combined with the complex intertwining of family connections among the local nobility, served as an immediate manifestation of the historical consciousness of the nobility, and sometimes even as an avenue of education.⁷⁴ The bond between the cultivation of family history and the nurture of German-ness became stronger than ever before. Plus, the unifica-

⁶⁹ HARTOG (as in footnote 14), p. 152.

⁷⁰ See also ROBERT BORN, BEATE STÖRTKUHL (eds.): *Apologeten der Vernichtung oder “Kunstschützer”?* Kunsthistoriker der Mittelmächte im Ersten Weltkrieg, Köln et al. 2017.

⁷¹ WHELAN (as in footnote 13), pp. 237-238.

⁷² NOTTBECK, *Ueber Massnahmen* (as in footnote 27), pp. 52-54. The section also provided indirect financial support for property owners by preparing restoration plans free of charge, for example.

⁷³ Of almost 100 founding members, 30 % had come from the nobility; by the 1910s their number had reached 760 and continued to grow: HIO (as in footnote 31), p. 36.

⁷⁴ WHELAN (as in footnote 13), p. 238, see pp. 134-139, 237.

tion of Germany in 1871 gradually brought about new approaches to defining Germandom in that corner of Europe. As German historian Margit Romang emphasizes, from 1900 on, the GGA was no longer concerned with the history of old Livonia as such—out of scholarly interest—but rather with the land from which its members' ancestors came, with a *Heimat* with which they sensed an emotional connection.⁷⁵ Another statement of Neumann's, this time from 1911, appears to confirm this view very neatly:

“Die Denkmäler der Kunst und der Kultur sind die Zeugen der geschichtlichen Vergangenheit unserer Heimat. Der Zweck ihrer Pflege ist, das Bewusstsein unserer Zusammengehörigkeit mit dem heimatlichen Boden, dem sie entsprossen sind, und das Andenken an die Vorfahren aufrecht und lebendig zu erhalten [...]”⁷⁶

Reworking Identities in Collective Undertakings

Before I come to my third case, the changes that had happened over these decades need to be commented on. With the coming of urban modernization, the construction of the Baltic railway (1870), a great many new industrial complexes and innumerable other structures, the everyday environment had begun to change at a rapid pace, a process that allowed heritage to become a widespread topic of discussion. Not least, the many construction projects, even of something as mundane as a new sewerage works, provided people interested in archaeology—and there were plenty of such people within the societies—with an opportunity to take a peek at earlier layers of urban history.⁷⁷ The contrast between the old and the new focused further attention on the ephemeral nature of the surrounding material culture, on the need to document the past with precision and to promote a wider appreciation of that past. Not only did researchers have the feeling of a past that was melting away, depriving the people of their history, along with the material objects that belonged to their cultural heritage—the same feelings could increasingly be ascribed to society at large.

The historicist turn that had taken place in the early nineteenth century⁷⁸ constituted both a qualitative and a quantitative turn in historical consciousness, with the result that history now penetrated everywhere, becoming the

⁷⁵ ROMANG (as in footnote 8), p. 220.

⁷⁶ NEUMANN, *Merkbüchlein* (as in footnote 43), p. 7.

⁷⁷ ROMANG (as in footnote 8), p. 215; MĀRTIŅŠ MINTAURS: The Old Town of Riga in the Architectural Historiography of Latvia, 1860s-1980s, in: HEIDI HEIN-KIRCHER, ILGVARS MISĀNS (eds.): *Stadtgeschichte des Baltikums oder baltische Stadgeschichte? Annäherungen an ein neues Forschungsfeld zur baltischen Geschichte*, Marburg 2015, pp. 167-185, here pp. 174-175.

⁷⁸ See JOEP LEERSSEN: Literary Historicism: Romanticism, Philologists, and the Presence of the Past, in: *Modern Language Quarterly* 65 (2004), 2 (June), pp. 221-243, here pp. 229, 239.

basic and determining force in all fields of cultural activity. This provincial admiration of the *Heimat* did bear some similarities with contemporary German nationalism⁷⁹, yet the Baltic learned societies were far less obsessed with the concept of the nation than their German counterparts. One explanation for this can be found in the observation that nation-building was not a concept that suited the Baltic German upper and middle classes, who made up only a modest part of the population and maintained close contacts with the Russian imperial administration, while the Estonians' and Latvians' associational culture, which was indeed nationalist, had not yet attained academic viability.⁸⁰ During the last decades of the nineteenth century, the Russian unification policy further increased the Baltic German associations' societal function as an extension of their construction of a separate cultural identity.⁸¹

Indeed, towards the turn of the century, and even more vigorously after 1905, by which time the Estonians and Latvians had established several new societies of their own, the above-mentioned learned societies' focus on and around research into Baltic German culture became almost exclusive. Whereas the Courland Society for Literature and Art, along with the Learned Estonian Society, had initially been motivated by Estophilia, Lettophilia and *Volkskunde*, the GGA and Estonian Literary Society had, from early in their existence, concentrated primarily on the "nationaldeutsche Charakter" of local history, in the belief that the region's ethnic communities had played no particular role in that history.⁸² In early 1900s, the GGA's main goal was clearly defined by president Hollander as being the preservation of German culture and heritage in the region—even if its activity had previously also included ethnographical heritage.⁸³ Even the Learned Estonian Society, which had been established with the aim of researching Estonian culture, and which provides an interesting case due to the multi-ethnic dimension of its activities, gradually began to take more interest in local colonial history. After 1900, it

⁷⁹ PÖLTSAM (as in footnote 39), p. 12. See WINFRIED SPEITKAMP: Heritage Preservation, Nationalism and the Reconstruction of Historical Monuments in Germany during the Long Nineteenth Century, in: *Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi* 23 (2014), 3/4, pp. 37-54, here pp. 39-40.

⁸⁰ JÜRJO (as in footnote 2), pp. 145, 149.

⁸¹ See PÖLTSAM (as in footnote 39), pp. 11-12.

⁸² ROMANG (as in footnote 8), pp. 205, 212-213, quote p. 212. From 1905 on, the German Association in Estonia (Deutscher Verein in Estland), established in Tallinn, became an essential partner to the Estonian Literary Society.

⁸³ For example, in putting together the Latvian open-air museum in conjunction with the Riga Society of Architects: BERNHARD VON HOLLANDER: Zur Geschichte der deutschen wissenschaftlichen Vereine in Lettland, Stuttgart 1923, p. 4. Hollander gave this evaluation, of course, retrospectively, meaning that it was further strengthened by the new historical context. See MINTAURS, Latvia's (as in footnote 2), p. 301.

tended to incline heavily towards the Baltic German past and even made a failed attempt to change its name accordingly.⁸⁴

With regard to architectural monuments, one important landmark was the creation of a common platform in the form of a range of large-scale academic events,⁸⁵ for the sake of which much effort was being expended from 1904 on: under the auspices of GGA, the first Baltic history conference, the *Baltischer Historikertag*, was held in Riga in 1908 (overseen by Hermann von Bruiningk). The second conference was to take place under the guidance of the Estonian Literary Society (Georg Schnering) in Tallinn in 1912.⁸⁶

But again, even if the *Historikertag* had initially been designed as a cooperative venture, open to all interested parties, both conferences remained strongly Baltic German in character. Some integration and cooperation between various societal groups did occur, but that did not by any means imply equal opportunities for all. Among the 163 participants in 1908 and the 188 in 1912, only a scattering of Estonian and Latvian intellectuals (and none of their societies) were present—and by the period around 1910, their scarce presence can no longer simply be explained by any simple lack of Estonian or Latvian scholars. It is also interesting to observe that, while some German societies had participated in the first conference, they were neglected at the second one, which pursued more scholarly aspirations. The Baltic German scholars indeed criticized the goals of the German societies as being too nationally minded for the purposes of their Baltic colleagues.⁸⁷

The history conferences of 1908 and 1912 set heritage preservation and the (re)structuring of archives among their priorities, and therefore played a major role in the professionalization of the discussion on heritage issues. Both conferences served as a catalyst for a number of specific developments: it was as a result of the first conference that the Commission for Heritage Preservation (Kommission für Denkmalpflege⁸⁸) was formed. Headed by Neumann, it

⁸⁴ See KERSTI TAAL: Sakslus ja eestlus Õpetatud Eesti Seltsis 20. sajandi algul [Germanism and Estonianism in the Learned Estonian Society at the Beginning of the 20th Century], in: Õpetatud Eesti Seltsi aastaraamat 2000-2001, Tartu 2002, pp. 7-26; TAAL, Õpetatud Eesti Selts: rahvaalgustuslikust (as in footnote 30), p. 17; HACKMANN, Von der “Gelehrten Estnischen Gesellschaft” (as in footnote 10), pp. 187-188, 196-206.

⁸⁵ From the point of view of ethnography and vernacular culture, the 10th All-Russian Archaeological Congress, held in Riga in 1896, was an early example of such society-wide cooperation; see JÕEKALDA, Heritage, Patrimony (as in footnote 67), pp. 188-191.

⁸⁶ FEUERISEN (as in footnote 36), pp. 277-278. Due to the outbreak of the war, the third conference, scheduled for 1915 in Jelgava, was never to take place.

⁸⁷ See JÜRJO (as in footnote 2), pp. 170-174; PÖLTSAM (as in footnote 39), pp. 11-12, 15.

⁸⁸ It is interesting to note that the General Association of German Historical and Antiquarian Associations (Gesamtverein der deutschen Geschichts- und Altertumsvereine, est. 1852) had founded a section with exactly the same name in 1898. See SPEITKAMP, Die Verwaltung (as in footnote 4), p. 129; INGRID SCHEURMANN: Georg Dehio—Leben,

was composed of leading members of GGA and the Riga Society of Architects (Rigascher Architekten-Verein), including historian Arnold Feuereisen (1868-1943) and architect Heinz (Heinrich) Pirang (1876-1936). From its inception onwards, it served as the leading institution responsible for Baltic heritage preservation, whose most essential task was—not surprisingly—to produce a first draft of a heritage conservation act⁸⁹ (which was destined never to be enacted).

The wider popularizing mission that the heritage activists were expected to pursue was repeatedly addressed at both Baltic history conferences. Pirang was an active promoter of the topic. He strongly emphasized the need for appropriate *Denkmalpropaganda*, using all possible media: the press, public lectures at the learned societies, at universities and in schools.⁹⁰

Popularization as a Form of Professional Practice: 1911

Speakers at the first *Historikertag* touched upon the urgent need for a guidebook on local monuments⁹¹, and the eminently practical 46-page *Merkbüchlein zur Denkmalpflege auf dem Lande*, printed in pocket format, was to follow in 1911 as one of the first undertakings of the Commission for Heritage Preservation. Published by the GGA in collaboration with the Riga Society of Architects, it was authored once more by Neumann. After a general introduction the chapters “Allgemeine Regeln” and “Überblick über die Entwicklung der baltischen Kirchenbaukunst” follow. Most of the text, however, is in essence a glossary titled “Innere Einrichtung und Schmuck der Kirchen” (fig. 5), designed to inform and assist rural clergymen, thus representing the cause of heritage popularization *par excellence*. The purpose of the concise account of local history of art and architecture was to guide the reader

“ohne das schwere Rüstzeug kunstwissenschaftlicher Disziplinen [...] auf die Bedeutung der einzelnen Gegenstände des Kirchenbaues und der Kirchengestaltung hinweisen und ihn mit den Grundsätzen der Denkmalpflege vertraut machen [...]”⁹²

Wirken und Fortwirken, in: EIMER/GIERLICH (as in footnote 4), pp. 119-135, here p. 134.

⁸⁹ NEUMANN, *Merkbüchlein* (as in footnote 43), p. 4. See IDEM: *Erster Bericht der Kommission für Denkmalpflege*, in: *Sitzungsberichte der Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Altertumskunde der Ostseeprovinzen Russlands* (1910) [1911], pp. 304-305.

⁹⁰ HEINZ PIRANG: *Denkmalpflege*, in: *Arbeiten des Ersten Baltischen Historikertages zu Riga 1908, Riga 1909*, pp. 219-228, here pp. 225-228. On the attempts to provide higher education in the field of heritage conservation see JÖEKALDA, *Art History* (as in footnote 6), p. 141.

⁹¹ NEUMANN, *Erster Bericht* (as in footnote 89), p. 304.

⁹² IDEM, *Merkbüchlein* (as in footnote 43), p. 5.

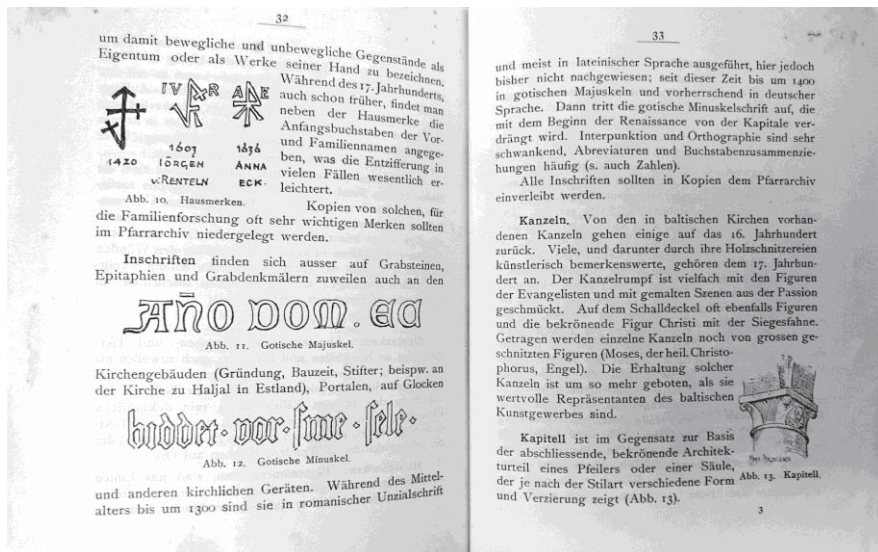


Fig. 5: Wilhelm Neumann's *Merkbüchlein zur Denkmalspflege auf dem Lande* (Riga, 1911) was an illustrated glossary of sacral art for rural clergymen

The context behind the publication was an ongoing inventory of sacral art and architecture. With the purpose of assessing the current condition of culturally relevant objects, such an inventory had been in the throes of compilation for at least three decades. By the 1910s, work on the inventory had finally begun under GGA's coordination, allowing Neumann to present its initial results at the 1912 conference. It had been compiled by means of questionnaires sent to Lutheran churches during 1912/13, a method he claimed to have learned from Georg Dehio, who was highly regarded among the Baltic Germans for his Baltic roots.⁹³

The selection of monuments certainly reflected the value system of the society. Especially in the context of this booklet, it is not surprising that rural churches⁹⁴ were presented as the most valuable part of Baltic architectural heritage, and were considered the part in most desperate need of protection, due in particular to the lack of educated specialists that one could turn to in remote areas. In Neumann's words, pastors ought to act as role models under such conditions:

⁹³ See MINTAURS, *Heritage* (as in footnote 8), p. 125. It would require a separate analysis to assess the extent to which it improved on a similar scheme used by local archaeologist and school teacher Jaan Jung, who had collected descriptions and legends about ancient Estonians' hillforts by letter much earlier. See JAAN JUNG: *Muinasaja teadus Eestlaste maalt* [Prehistoric Research from the Land of Estonians], 1-2, Jurjew 1898-1899; 3, Tallinn 1910.

⁹⁴ Lutheranism was itself an essential factor in defining Baltic Germandom, see ANDRESEN (as in footnote 3).

“durch Pflege der Kunst- und Kulturdenkmäler und durch die Heranziehung der Mitglieder ihrer Gemeinden dazu, zugleich aufklärend und erzieherisch auf diese zu wirken [...]”⁹⁵

The text of the booklet emphasizes the need for social activism and for a network of trustees whose base would be formed by countryside pastors, the supposed guardians of church buildings, but also of other nearby architectural treasures and ruins. Their help was sought in organizing measures to combat decay and to prevent dismantling or deterioration of any sort:

“Nicht allein ist zu verhüten, dass sie als wohlfeile Steinbrüche benutzt werden, auch ihrer allmählichen Zerstörung durch den Zahn der Zeit ist entgegenzuarbeiten.”⁹⁶

The missing legislation certainly did nothing to provide the answers as to whose responsibility it should be to achieve this. In the case of the ruins of the medieval castle at Laiuse (Lais, see fig. 4b), for example, which was daily being used as a quarry for road construction, and the like, the Learned Estonian Society had turned to the governor of Livonia for help in 1907, only to hear that the society should itself intervene and take the cause upon themselves, a suggestion that the society declined, on grounds of excessive distance and a lack of resources.⁹⁷

In sharp contrast to earlier art historical texts, which tended to promote the national value of Baltic German heritage alone, the 1911 booklet also preaches diversity and tolerance. Perhaps the most interesting part of the booklet is the 3-page final remark (“Anhang”) which dedicates notable attention to what is termed *Heimatschutz und Landschaftspflege* in the widest sense:

“Den Geistlichen auf dem Land wird nicht selten Gelegenheit geboten, ihre Hand schützend auch über andere Werke heimischer Kunst und Kultur auszustrecken”.⁹⁸

By this he meant the preservation of folk culture (including rural building traditions and visual art, but also folk costumes and festivities)—as well as of *Naturdenkmäler* (in which category ancient hillforts and sacred sites were included):

“Reste heidnischer Burgberge—sog. Bauernburgen—[...] sollten auch [...] nicht ohne Pflege bleiben [...]. Ihre Pflege kann nur darin bestehen, sie nach Möglichkeit unberührt zu lassen [...]. Namentlich sollte darauf gesehen werden, dass nicht, wie es leider heute so häufig geschieht, die Architektur der grossen Städte auch

⁹⁵ NEUMANN, Merkbüchlein (as in footnote 43), p. 4.

⁹⁶ Ibidem, p. 44, see also pp. 4, 46.

⁹⁷ 717. Sitzung am 5. (18.) September 1907, in: Sitzungsberichte der Gelehrten Estnischen Gesellschaft zu Dorpat (1907) [1908], pp. XXIV-XXV. See TAAL, Õpetatud Eesti Selts muinsuste (as in footnote 22), pp. 62-63.

⁹⁸ NEUMANN, Merkbüchlein (as in footnote 43), p. 44.

auf die kleinen ländlichen Bauten übertragen wird; Bauwerke solcher Art wirken in der bescheidenen Umgebung parventüchtig.”⁹⁹

This sort of thinking was not typical of contemporary discussions on heritage, which had hitherto almost always kept the discussion of archaeologically or ethnographically valuable items in separate categories from items whose value was primarily art historical. This becomes even more surprising when one considers that the booklet is in fact focused on sacral art and architecture. It seems to be a last hasty addition to the main text, taking advantage of the rare chance to educate the network of trustees the GGA was hoping to create through this initiative. It is essential to stress here that the conception of heritage protection that Neumann followed in the booklet observed the lines set by the German League of Heimat Protection (Bund Heimatschutz, predecessor of today’s Bund Heimat und Umwelt in Deutschland) in 1904 in Dresden.¹⁰⁰

However, to better understand the context behind the booklet, one must admit that the inventory also serves to demonstrate how heritage preservation depending on private initiative was sometimes malfunctioning. And it was failing at that despite the above-mentioned “Germanization” of the learned societies towards the turn of the century, a development which—one might reckon—should have brought them closer to one another. Namely, for various reasons, not all societies were eager to take up the task of distributing the questionnaires. While cooperation with the Estonian Literary Society worked out well in the Estonian province, in southern Estonia, the Livonian Consistory (Livländische Konsistorium) took on the task in place of the Learned Estonian Society, who would have been the logical partner in such a project, but refused to participate.¹⁰¹ In Courland only the Genealogical Society of the Baltic Provinces in Jelgava (Genealogische Gesellschaft der Ostseeprovinzen zu Mitau) was willing to contribute to the effort.¹⁰²

Reading the “success stories” of contemporary authors, one might occasionally get the impression that the self-organized heritage preservation system was effective and fruitful, but this example of anything but smooth cooperation between the learned societies reveals that this was not always the case. The Baltic German intellectual community was, of course, closely intertwined and its members were already in frequent contact with one another through the efforts of its most active enthusiasts, including Neumann, Bruiningk, Feureisen, Richard Hausmann or Jaan Jung, who all served as (honorary) mem-

⁹⁹ Ibidem, pp. 45-46. See also JÖEKALDA, *Heritage, Patrimony* (as in footnote 67), p. 190.

¹⁰⁰ MINTAURS, *Heritage* (as in footnote 8), p. 126.

¹⁰¹ Possibly related to the fact that the society was going through something of a decline in the 1910s, see TAAL, *Õpetatud Eesti Selts muinsuste* (as in footnote 22), pp. 66, 70.

¹⁰² NEUMANN, *Denkmalschutz* (as in footnote 28), p. 292; IDEM: *Über die Ergebnisse der in Liv- und Estland veranstalteten Enquête über kirchliche Denkmäler*, in: *Arbeiten des Zweiten Baltischen Historikertages zu Reval 1912, Reval 1932*, pp. 163-172, here p. 169. See JÜRJO (as in footnote 2), pp. 166, 171; MINTAURS, *Heritage* (as in footnote 8), pp. 125-126.

bers of most of the smaller societies. But it was surely not without grounds that the Riga city archivist Feuereisen, then president of GGA, expressed the opinion in 1914 that, though the “patriotic self-sacrifice” of the learned societies had produced remarkable progress for artistic and architectural monuments, further cooperation would be required to lead local heritage preservation to a new level.¹⁰³

It seems certain that the scattered nature of the various administrative entities of the Baltic provinces slowed down any region-wide activities, but could we go as far as to conclude that the above-mentioned examples of the societies’ passivity indicate that the best specialists in the field themselves doubted the grander aims of the undertaking? The above case does seem more likely to be a historical coincidence, yet nonetheless the absence of commitment calls to mind a sharp contrast with Neumann’s 1888 ideal of noble cooperation between the societies, guided by a feeling of shared patriotic duty.

On the one hand, the *Merkbüchlein* does represent the culmination—and a very suitable end product—of the long discussions on the absolute necessity of providing a more systematic pedagogical aid to non-specialists in their daily handling of ancient buildings and objects. On the other, due to the very nature of such a publication, the booklet’s text is far drier and more descriptive than many previous publications. On the whole, the 1911 booklet comes across as less visionary—and less overwhelmed by sentimental outbursts—than Neumann’s 1888 article, for example. Even if the booklet does include general comments like:

“Die Erhaltung solcher Kanzeln ist um so mehr geboten, als sie wertvolle Repräsentanten des baltischen Kunstgewerbes sind.”¹⁰⁴

Could it be that, as the 1911 booklet—with its supremely practical function—was addressed directly at pastors, its readers were expected to be more knowledgeable and therefore in lesser need of constant side remarks about the grander aims of heritage protection for its own sake? That does not seem probable, since the poor background knowledge of pastors had been raised as an issue on several occasions in discussions over the decades. Even the introduction to the *Merkbüchlein* states as the main impulse behind compiling such a booklet that “nicht jeder Geistliche ist mit dem Wesen und der Bedeutung der Denkmalpflege genügend vertraut”; moreover, in response to such worries, Neumann himself began lecturing on heritage conservation at the

¹⁰³ Adding—by way of a practical note—that this could only be achieved with even more generous financial support from the knighthoods: FEUEREISEN (as in footnote 36), pp. 265–266, 282. See MĀRTIŅŠ MINTAURS: The History of the Conservation of Latvia’s Architectural Heritage, in: IDEM: Arhitektūras mantojuma aizsardzības vēsture Latvijā, Rīga 2016, pp. 243–251, here p. 246.

¹⁰⁴ NEUMANN, *Merkbüchlein* (as in footnote 43), p. 33.

Faculty of Theology of the University of Tartu during these very same years.¹⁰⁵

We might, of course, guess that Neumann, after decades of active publishing activity—in addition to his work as architect, museum director and practicing art historian—was by now exhausted by his grand mission, no longer possessing the enthusiasm of a young up-and-coming scholar. Yet this cannot provide the full answer either, because one also has to take into account the progress made in the whole field over the years. The latter consideration provides a more likely reason to explain why Neumann thought it no longer necessary to repeat over and over again his views on the cultural (or national) value of this heritage and the resulting responsibilities—because much of the earlier popularization activities (including his own efforts) had, or were at least perceived to have, borne fruit. And the booklet does contain some more far-reaching claims about the value of Baltic heritage, even if they remain rather general in nature:

“Ein Kunstdenkmal [...] repräsentiert je nach seiner historischen und künstlerischen Bedeutung stets einen grösseren oder geringeren Wert und bildet einen Teil des Vermögens der besitzenden Gemeinde oder Körperschaft.”¹⁰⁶

Conclusions: Nationalism in the Baltic German Context

From its starting position as an elite intellectual hobby that had been working to satisfy the curiosity of art collectors and connoisseurs ever since the emergence of the romantic movement, the discipline of art history—and, along with it, history in general—gradually came to attract a wider audience¹⁰⁷, and such was the case in the Baltic provinces too. It is clear that monuments cannot speak for themselves—material heritage remains mute until it is given a voice by the professionals. The interpretations provided by specialists in the field, especially those oriented towards a wider readership, are what shape both the understanding of historical monuments and the cultural identity they are supposed to represent.

The learned societies undoubtedly provided the guiding force behind the most notable undertakings in the field of heritage conservation. The initiative for undertaking conservation works on any particular monument almost always came either from the societies or from private individuals, who often funded the work from their own pockets. The evident gaps in the imperial system of heritage preservation meant that many tasks in the area fell to the societies: it became primarily their duty to coordinate scholarly research on

¹⁰⁵ Ibidem, p. 4 (quote); IDEM, Erster Bericht (as in footnote 89), pp. 304-305. Cf. MIN-TAURS, Heritage (as in footnote 8), pp. 124-125.

¹⁰⁶ NEUMANN, Merkbüchlein (as in footnote 43), p. 8.

¹⁰⁷ See STEPHEN BANN: Romanticism and the Rise of History, New York et al. 1995, pp. 5-6.

local history in the three provinces, to work out an effective approach towards heritage preservation, as well as to take on the task of promoting this heritage. A new level of popularization was indeed reached in the pre-war years. As Neumann himself noted in 1914¹⁰⁸, also the GGA's last efforts were heavily oriented towards the goal of popularization as it sought to prepare the ground for the cultural heritage law then in the making.

While it may be that the learned societies had approached questions of heritage preservation first and foremost as a form of intellectual entertainment or pastime in the mid-nineteenth century, by the turn of the century their activities had clearly developed into a professional practice, albeit one based on voluntary effort. Did this process of professionalization coincide with an increasing stress on nationalist consideration? In the Baltic case it does indeed seem that it did.

I consider heritage to be above all a concept defined by national and local interests, and not least by the interconnectedness between those two points of view. I have chosen to concentrate on the three case studies discussed above in order to analyze the ways in which architectural monuments were placed into the framework of the past and present goals of the Baltic German community. I did not choose these texts at random—it is to these texts that I attribute the greatest importance during the final phase in the development of the discipline of Baltic German heritage preservation. In all of them, the authors followed an enlightenment model in their approach to raising public awareness, through educating the people and cultivating the nation, and including romantic and patriotic considerations in their arguments. Yet, there are also remarkable differences: while the 1888 article by Neumann was very much a personal undertaking, the two later texts, from 1906 and 1911 respectively, represented the official stance of the entire GGA. In the case of the 1906 booklet, the lack of a named author puts a particular emphasis on the power of collective will exerted by the professional body as a form of persuasion in itself. The 1911 *Merkbüchlein* was authored by Neumann alone, but clearly earned additional value and force through the strong associations it had with the GGA and Riga Society of Architects.

Looking at the texts from the point of view of their intended audience, there are also important differences to be found: the 1888 article was aimed at a general readership, but first and foremost at the active cultural elite as represented by the learned societies themselves, and it was written with an aim of inculcating a feeling of duty among that collective. For its part, the 1906 booklet was written for the benefit of state officials, though the act of publishing it as a working document or report also made it available to anyone interested in the topic. The chosen format allowed the unnamed authors to highlight the ideological aspects of the topic, but also to narrate the history of the long process directed by the GGA. The 1911 booklet, in contrast, is a

¹⁰⁸ NEUMANN, Denkmalschutz (as in footnote 28), p. 292.

product of direct preservation activity that, by that time, had already been successfully completed: a publication to accompany the society's inventory of sacral art and architecture.

In all of these three popular texts, heritage was interpreted as a responsibility—both in the sense of practical, financial thinking, and in the sense of ideological or patriotic considerations. That does not mean, of course, that we can draw any overarching conclusions on the entire society of the period—or even on the changes in the GGA's or Neumann's own positions—based on these texts alone. But all three texts were oriented at a wider readership: they seem to have been motivated by a combination of pragmatic and patriotic goals, leaving academic goals in the background, even if the very same authors had published scholarly articles or monographs and could therefore be deemed to have mastered academic writing. Despite some apparent modifications, it is to my mind surprising how similar Neumann's positions remained over three decades in which a great deal had changed in society at large.

One might claim that the dreams of the Baltic Germans never reached as far as taking on a national dimension, limiting themselves merely to an expression of romantic interest in the past and an attempt to define their cultural identity in a somewhat distinctive, patriotic manner. Yet, many of the cases and quotations cited above imply that they were beginning to dare to take the step over that boundary, particularly after the turn of the century: the Baltic German activists clearly associated their local architectural heritage with the construction of their identity and may perhaps even have thought it part of a national project of some sort.¹⁰⁹

Cultural geographer David Lowenthal¹¹⁰ and nationalism scholar Anthony D. Smith¹¹¹, among many others, claim that the topics of heritage and memory are always affected by contemporary (and prospective future) politics. At the same time, Assmann attributes this feature only to what she refers to as “functional memory,” i.e. the identities of states or nations as their official memory (as opposed to “storage memory”—left-overs from nation-building processes, stored away somewhere safe and forgotten in the archives or, at the best, remembered only within academia).¹¹² This division applies also to the material under discussion here, despite the fact that Baltic Ger-

¹⁰⁹ Cf. JÖRG HACKMANN: *Nationalisierung als Strategie gesellschaftlichen Obenbleibens? Die Deutschen Vereine in den Ostseeprovinzen Russlands*, in: PETER HASLINGER (ed.): *Schutzvereine in Ostmitteleuropa: Vereinswesen, Sprachenkonflikte und Dynamiken nationaler Mobilisierung 1860-1939*, Marburg 2009, pp. 53-78.

¹¹⁰ DAVID LOWENTHAL: *Fabricating Heritage*, in: *History & Memory* 10 (1998), 1, pp. 5-24, here pp. 7-8.

¹¹¹ ANTHONY DAVID SMITH: *Gastronomy or Geology? The Role of Nationalism in the Reconstruction of Nations*, in: *Nations and Nationalism* 1 (1995), 1, pp. 3-23, here pp. 18-19.

¹¹² ASSMANN (as in footnote 52), pp. 127-129.

mans were never to possess a nation-state of their own. Nevertheless, they might—albeit tentatively—be associated with what Joep Leerssen provocatively calls “failed nationalisms,” claiming that in “all too many cases, nationalism studies are conducted as a sort of archeology of the modern state: only those national movements and antecedents are singled out which have actually managed to constitute themselves into the states with which we are familiar nowadays.”¹¹³

The various ways history turned out to be were not known to the nineteenth century authors, naturally enough. Baltic German “nationalism” might never have led (or was never even intended to lead) to the establishment of a separate state, yet the patriotic ways in which they positioned themselves in their cultural self-determination are nonetheless more or less analogous with those of the nation-states to be.

What is more important here, however, is that also the issue of responsibility, found throughout these texts, ties discussions on Baltic German heritage and cultural identity to the framework of nationalism studies. The theoretical context of nationalism studies is tightly interwoven with discourses on heritage and memory, as we know. The constant emphasis on responsibility in all three texts accords well with theoretical studies on heritage of the last few decades, in which concepts like responsibility and the duty to remember have indeed become central. Hartog even writes of a “double indebtedness: towards the past and the future, but derived from our present and weighing upon it.”¹¹⁴ The fact that the past can be seen as a resource for the present indeed indicates its function as a kind of a repository for the goals of the present: it is the feeling of duty towards the ancestors as well as the next generations that ties remnants of the past together with contemporary ideals.¹¹⁵ This 1888 quote from Neumann is but one example among many, showing how heritage was interpreted as an obligation one owes to one’s ancestors and compatriots, but indirectly also to the world:

“Staat wie Gemeinde beginnt gleicher Schaffenstrieb, gleicher Förderungseifer zu beseelen. Die Besten des Volkes rühren in eifriger Arbeit die Hände, um der Gegenwart die Vergangenheit wieder zu geben, damit die heutige Zeit sich erwärme und stärke an den Thaten und dem Schaffen, dem Leben und Wirken der Vorväter.”¹¹⁶

¹¹³ LEERSSEN, *Nationalism* (as in footnote 51), p. 564. He goes on to ask: “Why and how did Baltic nationalism come up with nation-states like Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania—and how did these categories take over from original regional units like Livland, Courland and Samogitia?”

¹¹⁴ HARTOG (as in footnote 14), pp. 189, 201.

¹¹⁵ In the context of juxtaposing values of past (*Erinnerungswert*) and present (*Gegenwartswert*), see also the influential value categories introduced by ALOIS RIEGL: *Der moderne Denkmalkultus: Sein Wesen und seine Entstehung*, Wien—Leipzig 1903.

¹¹⁶ NEUMANN, *Die Erhaltung* (as in footnote 44), p. 351.

Was wir baltischen Deutſchen merken ſollen!

1.

Seid eingedenk deſſen, daß wir Angehörige eines der fortgeſchrittenſten Völker und zugleich eines der größten Staaten ſind; vergeſſet nie, daß unſere Vorfahren durch vielhundertjährige Kulturarbeit ſich und uns ein unvergängliches Heimatrecht in den baltiſchen Ländern erworben haben.

2.

Bedenkt, daß nächſt dem allgemein Menſchlichen das Volkstum das Urprünglichſte iſt, was jedermann auf ſeinen Lebensweg mitbekommt, daß darum, ſein Volkstum vernachläſſigen, gegen ſeine eigene Natur ſündigen heißt.

3.

Setzt allezeit euren Stolz darein, dem **Reiche**, welchem wir angehören, und ſeinem angeſtammten **Herrſcher** dieſelbe Treue zu erweiſen, die in guten wie in böſen Zeiten unwandelbar der höchſte Ruhm unſeres Volkes geweſen iſt.

4.

Liebet unſere baltiſche Heimat, verlaſſet ſie nicht, ſondern lernet ſie kennen, um ihr zu dienen; ſuchet nach ihren Mängeln und Schäden nicht, um ſie zu ſchelten, ſondern um ihnen abzuhelfen.

5.

Suchet mit niemandem Streit, aber ſeid feſt und laſſet euch nichts abſtreifen, was euch von Rechtswegen zukommt. Merket, daß in der Welt nur der geachtet wird, der ſich ſelbſt achtet.

6.

Wiſſet, daß euren Kindern und Kindeskindern außer allgemeinen Pflichten die ernſte, ſchwere Aufgabe bevorſteht, all das

Gute und Edle weiter auszubauen, was unſere Vorfahren geſchaffen, wir ſelbſt bewahrt haben; erziehet ſie darum zu frommen, klugen und ſtarken Menſchen, guten Staatsbürgern, treuen Söhnen und Töchtern unſerer Heimat.

7.

Erwäget, daß gerade **deutiſche Schulen**, die jenes hohe Ziel der Erziehung auf der Grundlage unſeres eigenen Volkstums und mit den Mitteln unſerer eigenen Kultur erſtreben, am eheſten geeignet ſind, alle geiſtigen und ſeellichen Kräfte eurer Kinder zu entfalten.

8.

Beachtet wohl, daß ihr — um durch Einigkeit ſtark ſein zu können — **gegen eure deutſchen Heimatgenoſſen beſondere Pflichten** habt: gegen ſie vor allen ſeid freundlich und verſöhnlich, hilfreich und langmütig, denket daran, daß die Schwachen unter ihnen bei Fleiß und Arbeitſamkeit ein Anrecht auf eure Fürſorge haben.

9.

Tretet den Deutiſchen Vereinen bei! Sie verfolgen keinerlei politiſche Ziele, ſind aber zur Einigung, Erhaltung und Stärkung unſeres Volkstums notwendig und deshalb ſowohl für unſere Heimat, wie auch für unſer ganzes Reich nützlich.

10.

Suchet darum die Deutiſchen Vereine jederzeit in angemessener Weiſe zu fördern; **karget insbeſondere nicht mit Beiträgen, Schenkungen** und gelegentlichen **Zuwendungen** zum Beſten dieſer Vereine; gedenket ihrer bei euren **leſtwilligen Verfügungen** und laſſet die Zuverſicht auf den Beſtand unſerer guten Sache nicht ſinken.

Fig. 6: This memo demonstrates the Baltic German love for *Heimat* and superiority over local population, yet attributes no importance to political goals. Was wir baltischen Deutschen merken sollen!, in: Kalender der deutschen Vereine in Liv-, Est- und Kurland auf das Jahr 1911, Riga [1910], p. 5

Furthermore, Leerssen's admonition that "our study of the past must include the way in which the past envisaged its future—which is not necessarily the way things turned out to be eventually"¹¹⁷ is relevant also in contexts well beyond nationalism. As university curricula of the time hardly touched upon local history and monuments, the learned societies were also laying down the scholarly foundations for research into Baltic history¹¹⁸—they remained the guiding force in research into local issues, both past and present, and this observation is particularly true of the art history of the region. It remains for us to imagine what the alternative future scenarios would have been, had the activities of most of these learned societies not ended with the war (even if some of them were to resume their work afterwards), and had the German-speaking population not become a marginal minority within the Estonian and Latvian nation-states.

¹¹⁷ LEERSSEN, Nationalism (as in footnote 51), p. 563, see pp. 569-570.

¹¹⁸ FEUERREISEN (as in footnote 36), pp. 265-266, 282. See MINTAURS, *The History* (as in footnote 102), p. 246.