



Federal Government Commissioner
for Culture and the Media



BÖCKLER-MARE-BALTICUM-STIFTUNG

Interdisciplinary Summer School

German Heritage in Eastern Europe. Comparing Narratives, Finding New Perspectives

Ravila Manor and Tallinn, Estonia

5th–9th August 2019

Organised by:

Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg, Kompetenzzentrum Denkmalwissenschaften und Denkmaltechnologien,
Dr. Stephanie Herold

Estonian Academy of Arts, Institute of Art History and Visual Culture, Kristina Jõekalda

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Topic

What do we mean if we talk about the German heritage in Eastern Europe and the Baltic region? Which kind of narratives have resulted from the processes of appropriation, neglect and valorisation over the past centuries? Who has been involved in creating these narratives and what has been their agenda? Does the ethnical or geographical perspective on local history and heritage provide a solid way of overcoming national (heritage) narratives?

The interdisciplinary summer school wants to approach these questions in a historical perspective with a focus (but not limited to) the Baltic German heritage of art and architecture in what is today Estonia. On the one hand, the Baltic area and the Baltic Germans (*Deutschbalten*) are not actively addressed in German contemporary humanities. On the other, the Estonian scholars tend to operate with many long established interpretations or pre-conceptions. This raises questions about the afterlife of the early-20th-century concepts of Baltic German and Estonian cultures as two separate entities, a concept still alive today.

Therefore the aim of this summer school is to bring these different perspectives on heritage and history together, by inviting young researchers in humanities as well as professional experts and practitioners (conservationists, architects) and local stakeholders (e.g. monument-owners) to talk about their different perspectives on (German) heritage and exchange ideas on narrative construction and identity in art history and heritage studies. By doing this we want to question some of the existing narratives and possibly establish more multi-perspective ones.

The juxtaposition of different ethnic groups has been one of the most characteristic traits of the Baltic area over the centuries. There were the Estonians, the Russians and Swedes, even the Polish, but it was foremost the Baltic Germans who formed the cultural elite of the region from the 13th century until 1918. Moreover, also the discourse of cultural heritage was shaped ever since its beginnings by the art historical writing by the Baltic Germans. This changed only in the 1920s, when the strong focus on the 'German' heritage began to be questioned and critically re-interpreted in the context of nation building of the young Estonian and Latvian nation-states. Under the Soviet regime, history writing was guided by the Marxist dogma, focusing around the history of the (Estonian) 'lower classes', serving to further oppose the narrative of the Baltic Germans as the *Kulturträger*. As was the case in much of Eastern Europe, after the Cold War and the political shifts of early 1990s this led to another major re-evaluation of one's history, both inside the academia and the society at large. This tendency strongly foregrounded the national perspective of the Estonians and their past, but also raised the heterogeneity of the local material heritage under discussion from a different angle.

Also within Germany, and across Eastern Europe, the political events around 1990 actualised the debates on the heritage of the 'German lands'. Leaving the emphasis on transcultural exchange, cultural heritage is often presented as a potential for overcoming national, territorial and ethnic boundaries. This binding element was addressed also by the motto of the European Year of Cultural Heritage in 2018, 'Sharing Heritage'. At the *European Cultural Heritage Summit* the 'cohesive power of our shared cultural heritage and values' was yet again stressed – the overwriting of the document as '[Berliner] Apell', however, shows that these positively connoted values and effects are perhaps more of a wish scenario than a description of the actual status quo. This also suggests the emergence of a new kind of nationalism in many Eastern European states (and beyond), in the context of which the old image of the homogenous nation is critically revised.

Against this background, the summer school aims to examine and discuss the potentially unifying and dividing aspects of cultural heritage and related narratives, using the example of German heritage in Estonia in an interdisciplinary and international context. The focus is on the one hand on the study of (possibly different) historical discourses and on the changes in understanding the 'German heritage' at different times and in different research communities. On the other hand, the various concepts of cultural heritage and the connection between (cultural or national) identity and heritage should be considered and illuminated on a theoretical level. While the art historical and historiographical approaches address the history of the Germans in the Baltic region along with their material culture, putting the emphasis on professional debates, the field of Heritage Studies provides useful insights by stretching the perspective to our present day. With the help of critical Heritage Studies we can question our current perspective on what we consider to be 'German heritage' and how this term should be used in the context of the wider, social process of valorisation.

By bringing together Estonian and German researchers, different (national) narratives and their reception in different countries are juxtaposed and confronted with each other. In addition, the study of tangible architectural heritage on site in Estonia and discussions with actors who devote themselves to this heritage for different motivations (art historians, heritage conservation specialists, estate owners etc.) will offer the participants an opportunity to get insights into the various perspectives related to the objects regarded as heritage and into the social processes of heritage making. The combination of these different perspectives allows to critically rework these various professional and geographically influenced approaches and biases, and potentially develop new approaches.

The main questions are:

- What does 'German heritage' (in Estonia or elsewhere in Eastern Europe) mean to whom? How was and is it handled in art historiography and the practice of heritage conservation? Who was and is involved in the processes of 'heritage production' in its various forms?
- Which role does the emphasising of national traditions play today? And who uses the call on national heritage when, how and why?
- Is it possible to draw conclusions or suggestions for our present dealings with national heritage from the knowledge about the past handling or interpretation of nationally connoted heritage?
- What is the significance of national connoted heritage today, in times of apparent (or aspired) transnationalism? How much common ground do the transnational conceptualisations of heritage allow?

Course outline / program

The 5-day English-language summer school will be held in the former Baltic German manor in Ravila (Meks), ca. 40 km from Tallinn. The summer school takes place in the form of workshops, reading seminars, a podium discussion and an excursion. It is addressed to early career researchers, PhD students, or Master students shortly before their graduation (ca. 20 altogether), who deal either with the Baltic German heritage or with the topic of identity and heritage on a theoretical level. During the summer school, the participants will have the opportunity to present their work and to discuss it in an interdisciplinary framework.

The theoretical discussions with experts from Estonia and Germany (see below) are complemented by fieldwork investigating Baltic German heritage on site. During the summer school we want to discuss the various processes connected to heritage and heritage making in Eastern Europe (especially in Estonia) under different perspectives and question theoretical approaches, not with the aim of constructing a common narrative, but critically investigating meanings and potentials of cultural heritage in today's Europe.

Additionally, the aspects of the public image of the Baltic German history will be discussed in the evening program, focusing on the image conveyed by the recent Estonian feature films. With participation from the members of the movie's production teams, the films which implicitly or explicitly handle the subject of Baltic German heritage will be shown and discussed.

Keynote speakers:

Prof. Dr. Gabi Dolff-Bonekämper (TU Berlin)

Prof. Dr. Jörg Hackmann (University of Szczecin)

Prof. Dr. Krista Kodres (Estonian Academy of Arts, Tallinn University)

Other confirmed speakers:

Ass. Prof. Dr. Linda Kaljundi (Tallinn University)

Prof. Dr. Ulrike Plath (Tallinn University)

Ass. Prof. Dr. Anneli Randla (Estonian Academy of Arts)

Fees and application

The summer school is addressed to early career researchers, PhD students, or Master students shortly before their graduation, from the fields of art history, historic preservation, history, cultural anthropology and neighboring disciplines. The working language of summer school is English.

There is no tuition fee. Overnight stays and meals in Ravila are covered by the support of the Bundesbeauftragte für Kultur und Medien (BKM). Travel grants (arrival and departure to and from Tallinn) in the amount up to 200 eur will be awarded to participants upon completion of the summer school. A bus transfer to Ravila Manor will be organized.

Applications including a short sketch of one's research topic (max 350 words) and a CV should be sent to both stephanie.herold@uni-bamberg.de and kristina.joekalda@artun.ee until the 31st May 2019. Selection and feedback will be made within two weeks.

Subsequently, the selected participants are asked to draw up a longer abstract on their topic (1000 words) by 5th July, which will be distributed to the other participants before the seminars. The participants will be required to work through a reading list before the summer school and will be awarded 3 ECTS points.

For questions please contact stephanie.herold@uni-bamberg.de or kristina.joekalda@artun.ee