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Architectural Monuments as a Resource: Reworking Heritage and Ideologies in Nazi-Occupied Estonia*

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Although we might find attempts to organise protection of the architectural heritage found in the territory of today's Estonia as early as the 19th century, and certainly at the beginning of the 20th century (by Baltic German activists), it was during the First World War that Estonians first started to notice and take care of these monuments of art history. In the 1920s, this developed into the systematic preservation of the heritage. Having been able to develop for only two decades, it was sharply disrupted by the beginning of the first Soviet occupation (1940–1941). While usually the year 1940 is conceived as the borderline that ends one era and begins another, I am especially interested in the ambiguity of this boundary: in the points of contact as well as the extreme contradictions between the systems before and after – that is, in the ways the previous methods, means and specialists were, or were not, incorporated into the activity.

This complexity is more evident in the circumstances of war, but much of it also applies to the peaceful decades between the two wars. The era of the independent Republic of Estonia witnessed different, less aggressive, but nonetheless intense debates over the heritage. My intention is to shed some light on institutional aspects of the then non-existent heritage board throughout those multifaceted decades, with the

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main focus on the Second World War, when several new parties entered the already vague scene.

I will start by looking at the status and the definitions of heritage – with regard to the Baltic Germans and primarily their heritage – during these consecutive phases in the development of heritage protection in Estonia. Besides the institutional account, I intend to discuss the wider meanings and effects of heritage protection, and its relation to ideologies, letting these different epochs in the maintenance and conservation of artistic and architectural monuments illustrate the reevaluations of history evident under the Nazi-German occupation (1941–1944). Due to the great number of essential changes in society at large during and between the world wars, the traditional categories and oppositions were no longer valid, but acquired new meanings, making questions of dissonance and disinheritance central to the discussion.

In this respect, we could speak of the heritage left between several fires: heritage literally on fire (bombing, war damage, and so on), but also the sharp political shifts, leaving those involved in heritage protection as if in a mental battlefield, and in the case of the Second World War, even between direct political ‘fires’.

A Dissonant Heritage

Because of its retrospective nature, heritage protection as a subject of research seems to be especially multi-layered: it inevitably evokes the tense relationship between the present and the period protected, and often includes conflicts of interest.¹ What constitutes the cultural heritage in Estonia? By the time independence was declared in 1918, various interpretations co-existed that did not form a single whole. In order to give a background to the discussion on heritage protection under the Nazi-German regime, I will have to briefly outline the developments of the previous decades.

¹ See: J.E. Tunbridge, G.J. Ashworth, *Dissonant Heritage: The Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict*, New York: Chicester, 1995; G.J. Ashworth, *Contested Heritage: Why, How and so What?*, *Levend Erfgoed*, 2006, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 10–15.

Since the earliest endeavours of Estonian scholars during the national awakening of the late 19th century, it was exclusively the prehistoric archaeological or ethnographic heritage that came to the fore – the one that was considered our ‘own’, as opposed to the foreign and ‘alien’ German, Swedish or Russian heritage.² Whereas the artistic heritage was the domain of primarily Baltic Germans, the Estonian side preferred to stay outside the field of art history. Also the first independence-era publications on heritage protection concentrated on ‘monuments of the Estonian people’.³

It has to be borne in mind that there had existed no Estonian ‘high culture’; thus, what was left by the foreign invaders of past centuries was the only cultural and artistic heritage in Estonia. In the 1920s – the age of many anxious beginnings – art historians, among others, had to, and indeed wanted to, comply with the international standards of the discipline, even despite the general nationalist agenda. Therefore, it is perhaps not surprising that they searched for ways to include the ethnographic heritage inside the framework of art history.⁴

Considering that only a decade earlier, during the revolution of 1905, Estonian peasants had organised a vast rebellious plundering of manor houses (Fig. 1), mostly belonging to Baltic Germans (more than 100 architecturally important buildings were lost to arson⁵), it does not

² For example, L. Kaljundi, Muinasmaa süünd (The Birth of the Ancient Homeland), *Vikerkaar*, 2008, nos. 7–8, pp. 98–112. Notably the ethnographic objects reflecting Estonianness were not intact in their archaic form either, but had adjusted elements of ‘high art’ throughout the centuries (K. Kodres, Rahvuslik identiteet ja selle vorm. Sada aastat otsinguid [National Identity and its Form: A Hundred Years of Searching], *Akadeemia*, 1995, no. 6, p. 1137).

³ *Jubatuskiri korjajale* (Instructions to Collectors), Tartu, 1920, pp. 3, 5–6, 10. See also: *Eesti kinnismuistised: muinasaegsed ja poolajaloolised* (Immovable Monuments in Estonia: Prehistoric and Half-Historical), ed. H. Moora, Tartu, 1925.

⁴ K. Kodres, How to Write Art History: The Estonian Experience, *Acta Historiae Artium Balticae*, vol. 1, Vilnius, 2005, p. 8. See: K. Jõealka, „Võõra“ pärandiga leppimine ja lepitamine. Suhtest ajaloolisesse arhitektuuri 1920.–1930. aastatel (Coping and Reconciling with the ‘Alien’ Heritage: Some Approaches to Historical Architecture during the 1920s and 1930s), *Maastik ja mälu. Eesti pärandilooma arengujooni*, eds. H. Sooväli-Sepping, L. Kaljundi, Tallinn (forthcoming).

⁵ For example, M. Raal, Kunstiväärtuste kaitsmine Eestis 1919–1921 (Protection of Art Works in Estonia in 1919–1921), *Mälu*, ed. A. Randla, Tallinn, 2011, pp. 142–143. For earlier develop-



1. The former manor house in Varangu in northern Estonia was turned into a school in the 1920s in the effort to give nationalised manors a public function. 1930

seem natural that Estonians were soon to show an interest in the preservation of the same heritage. This is a polemicising simplification, of course. The different types of buildings, from residences to religious structures (Fig. 2), already had completely different connotations. It goes without saying that in spite of the opposition, neither the Estonians nor the Baltic Germans formed an integrated group: there were plenty of Estonians promoting the idea of Germans as the *Kulturträger*, and believing that the model for Estonian culture ought to be derived from their example,

ments, see: A. Hein, On the Early History of the Restoration and Protection of Architectural Landmarks in Estonia, *Centropa*, 2007, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 20-31. See also: *Nordost-Archiv*, 1997, vol. 6, issue 1 (special issue *Das Denkmal im nördlichen Ostmitteleuropa im 20. Jahrhundert. Politischer Kontext und nationale Funktion*).



2. Masons conserving the ruins of the Cistercian abbey in Padise in north-west Estonia (under the supervision of Villem Raam). Ca. 1936

as well as (maybe not Estonian-minded, but at least) those less opposed to the evident nationalism of the Estonians among this slender five per cent of the population that the Baltic Germans formed.⁶

Writing earlier art history based on Estonian territory (not the ethnicity of artists, architects, masons, and so on) indeed became an acknowledged practice only in the 1930s.⁷ In the study of local art history,

⁶ Cf. Kodres, *Rahvuslik identiteet ja selle vorm*, op. cit., p. 1137; A. Selart, *Muistne vabadusvõitlus* (The Ancient Struggle for Freedom), *Vikerkaar*, 2003, nos. 10-11, pp. 108-120.

⁷ Especially after the publication of the first general overview of local art history: A. Vaga, *Eesti kunsti ajalugu. Esimene osa, Keskaeg* (The History of Estonian Art, vol. 1, The Middle Ages), Tartu, 1932. See: K. Kodres, *Our Own Estonian Art History: Changing Geographies of Art-Historical Narrative*, *Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi/Studies on Art and Architecture*, 2010, vol. 19, nos. 3-4, pp. 14-19; Kodres, *How to Write Art History*, op. cit., pp. 8-10. A general consensus

one of the biggest steps of the 1920s and 1930s was the long struggle to stop seeing oneself as a mere province of German culture. The existing narrative was now combined with alternative perspectives, such as belonging to the Nordic *Kulturraum*. Emphasising the impact of Scandinavia instead made it possible to keep ‘alien’ and ‘German’ separate. The same questions also caused disputes in both Latvia⁸ and Lithuania,⁹ where the ethnic divide was somewhat different, but the general situation nonetheless similar.

Ever since the University of Tartu was reformed in 1919, the research into newly found ‘national disciplines’ encountered vast gaps. It was only now that Estonian art history, as well as local history, archaeology and ethnography, entered the curriculum. Due to a lack of adequate candidates for posts of professor among Estonians, many of the professors in the humanities came from abroad, including those in art history. Both of the professors at the Institute of Art History in Tartu (Dorpat) during the interwar era, Tor Helge Kjellin¹⁰ (1885–1984, professor from 1921 to 1924) (Fig. 3) and Sten Karling¹¹ (1906–1987, professor from 1933 to

was reached that the beginning of true Estonian art history should be dated to roughly 1900.

⁸ M. Mintauris, Latvia’s Architectural Heritage and its Protection 1880–1940, *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 2006, vol. 37, no. 3, pp. 300, 309; S. Pelše, Creating the Discipline: Facts, Stories and Sources of Latvian Art History, *Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi/Studies on Art and Architecture*, 2010, vol. 19, nos. 3–4, pp. 27–31; H. Šimkuva, Cultural and Historical Heritage of Baltic Germans in Latvia – Research Results and Prospects, *The Baltic States at Historical Crossroads: Political, Economic and Legal Problems in the Context of the International Co-operation at the Beginning of the 21st Century*, ed. T. Jundzis, Riga, 2001, pp. 407, 411–412; I. Lancmanis, Lettlands Identität im Spiegel der Architektur, *Mare Balticum. Regionale Identitäten in den Ostseeländern. Partnerschaft im Ostseeraum, kulturelle und maritime Beziehungen, Wirtschaft und Verkehr*, eds. G. Meier et al., Lübeck, 1993, pp. 46–47; M. Mintauris, *Arhitektūras pieminekļu saglabāšana Latvijā, 19. gadsimta 2. puse – 1940. gads/Protection of Architectural Heritage in Latvia: 2nd Half of the 19th Century – 1940*, summary of diss., Riga, 2008.

⁹ For example, G. Mickūnaitė, Art Historical Research in Lithuania: Making Local Global and the Other Way Round, *Acta Historiae Artium Balticae*, vol. 1, Vilnius, 2005, pp. 15–16.

¹⁰ For instance: H. Kjellin, *Die Kirche zu Karris auf Ösel und ihre Beziehungen zu Gotland*, Lund, 1928. See: E. Kangor, Looking for the Professor and Defining Estonian Academic Art History, *Meno istorija ir kritika/Art History & Criticism*, 2011, vol. 7, pp. 166–178; E. Kangor, Art Historical Photograph Collection of the University of Tartu: From the Past to the Future, *Baltic Journal of Art History*, 2009, issue Autumn, pp. 157–164.

¹¹ For example, S. Karling, *Narva. Eine baugeschichtliche Untersuchung*, Stockholm, 1936;



3. Professor Helge Kjellin and his team of conservators during the renovation of the 13th-century Ridala church in western Estonia. From left: Kjellin himself, construction surveyor and student at Tallinn College of Engineering Nikolai Paulsen, art history student Georges Liedemann, student at Tallinn Industrial Art School Heinrich Hein, and art history student Helmi Saarmann (Saadre at the time). 1924

1940), were from Sweden, which was certainly considered a good alternative to Germany. Whereas in many other fields experts of Estonian origin soon replaced the first wave of foreign professors¹², in art history

S. Karling, *Medeltida träskulptur i Estland*, Stockholm, 1946. See also: K. Kodres, Freedom from Theory? An Attempt to Analyse Sten Karling's Views on (Estonian) Art History, *Journal of Art Historiography*, 2010, no. 3, http://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2011/02/media_183177_en.pdf (accessed 2012 04 12); *Sten Karling and Baltic Art History/Sten Karling und Kunstgeschichte im Ostseeraum*, eds. K. Kodres, J. Maiste, V. Vabar, Tallinn, 1999.

¹² 54 per cent of the lecturers were Estonians in 1919, by 1932 the number had risen to 78. In 1919, 59 per cent of the lectures were held in Estonian, 12 in German and 29 in Russian; in 1932, already 90 per cent of the classes were taught in Estonian, 9 in German and only 1 in Russian (E. Laid, *Tartu eesti ülikool 1919–1932* [The Estonian University of Tartu, 1919–1932], *Tartu*

the first Estonian to take up the post was Armin Tuulse¹³ (Neumann until estonianisation in 1936, 1907–1977) in 1942. He only acted as professor until 1944, however. After he emigrated to Sweden, Voldemar Vaga¹⁴ (1899–1999, an employee of the institute from 1922 to 1986, and professor from 1946 to 1969) became his successor.

Previous Approaches to Heritage Protection

It became evident during the War of Independence (1918–1920) that the existing Imperial Russian legislation regarding artistic and architectural valuables did not fulfil its purpose (the attempts by the Baltic Germans to constitute a separate legislation had been interrupted by the war¹⁵). Voluntary art protection committees (*kunstikaitse toimkond*), made up mostly of artists, one based in Tallinn (Reval), the other in Tartu, thus started registering and guarding unattended items of value. Most energy was concentrated on the evacuation of moveable artefacts under threat. Although these actions only had a temporary effect (after the war, the owners had the right to reclaim their property, the rest was handed over to museums),

Ülikool sõnas ja pildis 1919–1932, eds. E. Laid et al., Tartu, 1932, pp. 26–27).

¹³ For example, A. Tuulse, *Die Burgen in Estland und Lettland*, Dorpat, 1942; A. Tuulse, *Burgen des Abendlandes*, Wien, München, 1958. See also: K. Altoa, Armin Tuulse ja Eesti keskaegsed linnused (Armin Tuulse and Estonian Medieval Castles), *Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi/Studies on Art and Architecture*, 2008, vol. 17, no. 3, pp. 13–22; K. Markus, Armin Tuulse ja kirikute uurimine (Armin Tuulse and the Study of Churches), *Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi/Studies on Art and Architecture*, 2008, vol. 17, no. 3, pp. 25–37.

¹⁴ For example, V. Vaga, *Eesti kunst. Kunstide ajalugu Eestis keskajast meie päevini* (Estonian Art: A History of the Arts in Estonia from the Middle Ages to the Present Day), Tartu, Tallinn, 1940; V. Vaga, *Das Problem der Raumform in der mittelalterlichen Baukunst Lettlands und Estlands*, Tartu, 1960. See also: M. Nõmmela, *Voldemar Vaga (1899–1999) ja Eesti kunsti ajalugu* (Voldemar Vaga (1899–1999) and Estonian Art History), Tartu, 2008; K. Kodres, Voldemar Vaga and Estonian Art History, *Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi/Studies on Art and Architecture*, 2010, vol. 19, nos. 3–4, pp. 160–163.

¹⁵ H. Pirang, Denkmalfpflege, *Arbeiten des Ersten Baltischen Historikertages zu Riga 1908*, Riga, 1909, pp. 225–228; H. Pirang, Die gesetzliche Regelung der Denkmalfpflege, *Arbeiten des Zweiten Baltischen Historikertages zu Riga 1912*, Riga, 1932, pp. 175, 178. Cf. A. Tvauri, The Conservation of Archaeological Heritage in Estonia, *Archaeological Research in Estonia 1865–2005*, eds. V. Lang, M. Laneman, Tartu (2006), pp. 247–266.

some longer-term decisions were also made: together with the declaration of the nation-state itself, a department for art and heritage (*kunsti- ja muinsusasjade osakond*) was founded under the Ministry of Education.¹⁶

The spontaneous and somewhat random activity accompanying the events of the war raised the need for a new legislation. The young state was beginning to realise that the heritage could be seen as a political resource that acquires an essentially socio-political function through its potential to define and also shape culture.¹⁷ It should not be forgotten that at the time, Estonianness itself was not yet clearly defined. The ways found to connect the construct of the nation and the 'alien' heritage, and even to make it a source of national sovereignty or pride, show perfectly that it is the uses of the past *in the present* that constitute the heritage. The concept of heritage certainly accords better with contemporaneous values, intermingled with the inherent potential for the expected future, rather than past ones that created the monuments.¹⁸

Together with the inherited estates and the properties of Baltic Germans (Fig. 1), heritage protection itself had been nationalised. The first legislative act on the protection of monuments in Estonia was finally formulated in 1925.¹⁹ With regard to the artistic and architectural

¹⁶ Also the lead in heritage-related issues was taken by the well-known artist Kristjan Raud. See: M. Raisma, Uus mälu. Eesti Vabariigi muuseumipoliitika 1919–1924 (New Memory: The Museum Policy of the Republic of Estonia from 1919 to 1924), *Mälu*, op. cit., pp. 8–10, 14–19; Raal, op. cit., pp. 149–151, 172–174.

¹⁷ See: D. Lowenthal, Fabricating Heritage, *History & Memory*, 1998, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 5–7, 12; E. Hobsbawm, Introduction: Inventing Traditions, *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. E. Hobsbawm, T. Ranger, Cambridge, 2007, p. 9; J. Leerksen, Nationalism and the Cultivation of Culture, *Nations and Nationalism*, 2006, vol. 12, issue 4, pp. 569–571.

¹⁸ See: B. Graham, G.J. Ashworth, J.E. Tunbridge, *A Geography of Heritage: Power, Culture and Economy*, London, 2000.

¹⁹ Muinsusvarade kaitse seadus (Heritage Conservation Act), *Riigi Teataja*, 1925, nos. 111/112, pp. 603–605. The part regarding architectural monuments was soon perfected by an additional regulation: Haridusministeeriumi sundmäärus registreeritud kinnismuinsusvarade kaitseabinõude käsitamise kohta (By-Law of the Ministry of Education on the Means of Protection of Immoveable Monuments), *Riigi Teataja*, 1926, no. 47, pp. 638–639. Both were commented on and translated for an international audience: A.M.T.(allgren), Die Denkmalpflege in Estland, *Eurasia Septentrionalis Antiqua*, vol. 1, Helsinki, 1927, pp. 130–138; G. Ney, *Denkmalschutz in Estland*, Tallinn, 1931; G. Ney, *La protection des antiquités en Estonie*, Tallinn, 1931. There is data

heritage, this meant, on the one hand, that by the time any interest was being taken in these affairs on a state level, the heritage itself had become somewhat ‘alien’. On the other hand, it was no surprise that in order to legitimise its existence in the eyes of the West, the newly born democracy needed to create the image of a nation with far-reaching traditions, and display its roots in correlation with European history – also by means of art history.²⁰

According to the Heritage Conservation Act (literally the ‘Act on the Protection of Ancient Monuments’), the tasks were divided between four main fields, depending on the historical, archaeological, art-historical or ethnographic value of the physical remains in question. The Ministry of Education became responsible for preservation activities, but the actual work was first and foremost carried out by university professors and motivated students in particular fields (Fig. 3). A Heritage Council (Muinsusnõukogu in Estonian, later Muinsuskaitse Nõukogu),²¹ meeting about four times a year, was made up of professors of history, archaeology and art history, the head of the Estonian National Museum, and one representative from the ministry. In 1936, the system underwent a modification, the law was perfected, and the position of a state antiquarian – the inspector of heritage protection (*muinsuskaitse inspektor*), formally an employee of the ministry – was established.²² So there was now

(V. Vaga, Une publication sur la protection des monuments historiques en Pologne, *Õpetatud Eesti Seltsi Aastaraamat 1930/Sitzungsberichte der Gelehrten Estnischen Gesellschaft 1930*, Tartu, 1932, p. 221) that the act was also available in Polish: W. Antoniewicz, *Ochrona zabytków kultury i sztuki w krajach bałtyckich (Protection of Cultural and Artistic Monuments in the Baltic States)*, *Ochrona Zabytków Sztuki/La protection des monuments artistiques*, issues 1-4 (in two volumes), vol. 2, Warsaw, 1930–1931.

²⁰ For a more detailed discussion, see: Jõekalda, „Võõra“ pärandiga leppimine ja lepitamine, op. cit.

²¹ A table of members in both 1925–1940 and 1942 accompanies K. Jõekalda, *Kunstiajaloo pärand mitme tule vahel. Muinsuskaitsest Eestis II maailmasõja ajal (Heritage of Art History between Multiple Fires: On Estonian Heritage Conservation during the Second World War)*, *Muinsuskaitseraamat 2010*, Tallinn, 2011, p. 101.

²² *Muinasvarade kaitse seadus (Heritage Conservation Act)*, *Riigi Teataja*, 1936, no. 67, pp. 1489–1494. It was followed by yet another translation and commentary: E. Laid, *Législation sur la protection des monuments historiques en Estonie*, Tallinn, 1937.

one person officially responsible for all the listed monuments within the state borders (as opposed to over 60 today).²³

The need for didactic enterprise to shape and increase public awareness in relation to the heritage was constantly debated during the early 1920s, when the law had not yet come into effect, but it remained a problem throughout the interwar period. (Already the Baltic Germans had sensed the need for extensive *Denkmalpropaganda* early in the 20th century.²⁴) Despite the efforts to popularise heritage protection, no specific publications reaching a wider audience were issued in Estonian,²⁵ the only adequate overviews being in German and French instead.²⁶ Apart from frequent attempts through instructive letters, radio programmes and local voluntary activists, the pedagogy on preserving the cultural heritage was carried out on a more abstract level, primarily through popular overviews²⁷ and various newspaper and magazine articles on the history of specific sites and structures.

Archaeology and ethnography were certainly favoured over art history on every level in the interwar period, and many people objected to the necessity to care for the 'alien' heritage at all.²⁸ It is impossible to say whether the larger number of publications on archaeology depended on its privileged status (as more 'Estonian' than the heritage of art and

²³ A more detailed account is available in K. Jöekalda, *Muinsuskaitsekorraldus 1920.–30. aastate Eestis. Idee ja praktika arhitektuuripärandi kaitsel* (Arrangement of Heritage Protection in Estonia during the 1920s and 1930s: Ideas and Practice in the Conservation of Architectural Monuments), *Muinsuskaitse aastaraamat 2009*, (Tallinn) 2010, pp. 97–102.

²⁴ H. Pirang, *Denkmalpflege*, op. cit., pp. 225–228.

²⁵ Brochures in Estonian were planned both during the interwar era and the Nazi occupation, but remained largely unpublished (*Muinsuskaitse aastaraamatu sisukorralduse kava* [Agenda for the Contents of a Yearbook on Heritage Protection], mid-1930s, Estonian State Archives [ERA], R-14.1.467, p. 149; *Soove muinsuskaitse korralduse kohta* [Some Wishes Relating to the Arrangement of Heritage Protection], July 1942, Estonian Historical Archives [EAA], 5358.1.56, p. 155).

²⁶ Ney, op. cit.; Laid, *Législation sur la protection...*, op. cit.

²⁷ The most prominent of the latter were: A. Vaga, *Eesti kunsti ajalugu*, op. cit.; V. Vaga, *Eesti kunst*, op. cit., 1940.

²⁸ This was also the case in Latvia: Mintaur, *Latvia's Architectural Heritage...*, op. cit., p. 309. See: Tvauri, op. cit.

architecture), or, regardless of this privilege, the remnants of archaeological sites were simply more often maltreated and the extensive heritage pedagogy was therefore meant to prevent this. In one way or another, even before the authoritarian regime of Konstantin Päts (1874–1956) was declared in 1934, heritage conservation had been successfully incorporated into the national propaganda, and continued to be so even more intensely during the latter half of the decade. Nevertheless, heritage protection was not made into a means for merely reinforcing nationalism, as might easily have been the case with a newly born state that possessed no heroic past of its own to refer to and build upon, but remained relatively tolerant towards the various legacies of the past.²⁹

Continuation or Disinheritance?

Typically, one would consider the year 1940 to end the existence of most independence-era institutions, including the heritage preservation system. This is partly because these years of a multitude of changes are often neglected or left out of the narrative: nearly all existing overviews related to the topic tend to jump from describing the late interwar period straight to the latter half of the 1940s, skipping the war years as a period that is too vague. To my mind, the changes the system went through during the occupation(s) serve as an intriguing topic of research precisely due to their multifaceted nature.

During the first Soviet occupation,³⁰ the large-scale standardisation processes within the whole Soviet Union also affected the way issues of heritage were handled, ‘freezing’ the previous system, and thus indeed closing an epoch. Among the first steps, all institutions forming the ‘base’

²⁹ See: K. Jõekalda, Eesti aja muinsuskaitse rahvuslikkus/rahvalikkus. Muinsuspedagoogika ja „võõras“ arhitektuur aastatel 1918–1940 (Nationalism and Populism in the Heritage Protection of Inter-war Republic of Estonia: Heritage Pedagogy and ‘Alien’ Architecture in the Period 1918–1940), *Mälu*, op. cit., pp. 73–136.

³⁰ See: H. Liivrand, Eesti kunstiteadus esimesel Nõukogude okupatsiooni aastal: kollaboratsiooni geneesist (Art History in Estonia during the First Year of the Soviet Occupation: On the Genesis of Collaboration), *Eesti kunstiteadus ja -kriitika 20. sajandil*, eds. T. Abel, P. Lindpere, (Tallinn) 2002, pp. 111–113, 119–120.

had to be eliminated, culture as part of the ‘superstructure’ had its turn only thereafter.³¹ (According to Hannah Arendt, it is exactly this feature – the systematic and absolute denial of the region’s previous social, legal and political traditions, substituting these with entirely new ones – that differentiates totalitarianism from other types of dictatorship, despotism or tyranny.³²)

Remarkably, however, only a year later, Nazi-German officials started taking advantage of the former institutions and methods, an approach naturally highly welcomed by the locals – a well-planned and disingenuous manipulation indeed. It has often been noted that while Stalinism built its authority heavily on institutions, the Nazi regime was more oriented at the general mobilisation of the locals, especially the masses, by means of propaganda and agitation, leaving institutions the status of mere marginal tools.³³ The shifts and connections come to be seen most clearly through the action of the Heritage Commission (Muinsuskaitse Komisjon), the Nazi-period descendant of the former Heritage Council.

Having held no further sessions after 1940 (whereas in Latvia the Monument Board, or *Pieminekļu valde*, established in 1923, continued to exist throughout the war years³⁴), in 1942 the council suddenly reassembled, meeting on three occasions (in April, May and June).³⁵ Also,

³¹ K. Kirme, *Muusad ei vaikinud. Kunst Eestis sõja-aastail 1941–1944* (The Muses did not Remain Silent: Art in Estonia during the War Years, 1941–1944), Tallinn, 2007, pp. 9, 20, 26.

³² H. Arendt, *Ideology and Terror: A Novel Form of Government*, H. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Cleveland, New York, 1962, p. 460.

³³ Y. Gorlizki, H. Mommsen, *The Political (Dis)Orders of Stalinism and National Socialism, Beyond Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism Compared*, eds. M. Geyer, S. Fitzpatrick, Cambridge, 2009, p. 85.

³⁴ Mintauris, *Latvia’s Architectural Heritage...*, op. cit., pp. 308–309. See: J. Lejnicks, *Protection of Architectural Monuments in Latvia, Latvijas Arhitektūra/Lettische Architektur/Latvian Architecture 93*, Riga, 1993, pp. 102–106; R. Pētersons, *Kultūras mantojuma aizsardzība Latvijas Republikā (1919–1923)* (Theory and Practice in the Protection of Cultural Monuments in Latvia during the First Five Years of Independence, 1919–1923), *Latvijas mākslas un mākslas vēstures lietišķāitātas*, ed. R. Kaminska, Riga, 2001, pp. 23–33. For the respective currents in Lithuania, see: M. Janušonienė, *State Protection of the Art Heritage in Lithuania 1919–2006: Historical Development and Results*, summary of diss., Vilnius, 2009, pp. 10, 20–25.

³⁵ Protocols of the Heritage Commission meetings, from April to June 1942, EAA, 5358.1.56, pp. 143–154.

Kunstiajaloolised uurimised ja muinsuskaitse tööd Eestis
Kunsthistorische Forschungen und denkmalpflegerische Arbeiten in Estland
 1920–1940



• *Väljakaevamised*
Ausgrabungen

• *Restoreerimised*
Wiederherstellungen

• *Mõõtmised*
Vermessungen

4. A map compiled at the Institute of Art History (probably by Voldemar Vaga), depicting all the conservation work, inventories and excavations carried out during the interwar era. Ca. 1943

the agenda of the Heritage Commission resembled that of the interwar era (leaving out war damage): registering new objects as protected monuments, determining the value of archaeological finds, issuing permits for excavations, discussing issues related to restoring, measuring, and inventoring the architectural heritage (Fig. 4). Although its activities fit into less than half a year, the content of the debates was serious and intense.

Furthermore, the post of heritage inspector, now officially called 'referent in the field of heritage protection' (*referent muinsuskaitse alal*), was reestablished, holding office throughout the Nazi-German period.

As in the previous decades, it was through the Institute of Art History of the University of Tartu that the former Ministry of Culture, now renamed the Bildungsdirektorium of the Estonian Landesverwaltung (Self-Administration, the Nazi-era puppet government), handled questions on art and architecture. The institute maintained its core position in heritage-related issues and was even promoted for its activity in popularising newspaper articles.³⁶

Some serious amendments to the system were still made: in addition to the above-mentioned specialists constituting the Heritage Council, the partaking members now included representatives of the Generalbezirk Estland (General Region of Estonia), who tended to vary with each meeting. Also, all but one of the specialists had changed. It cannot always be ascertained if members had intentionally been removed from the council: in connection with the Soviet year in between, some of the previous personnel had left (or were made to leave) Estonia, and some had been appointed to other institutions or jobs.³⁷ This was also the case with the independence-era inspector and most active heritage propagator Eerik Laid (Erich Arthur Ostrov until estonianisation in 1922, 1904–1961, inspector from 1936 to 1940), who maintained his connections with preservation affairs even after emigrating to Sweden in 1943 for being exposed as an activist in a nationalist (and therefore illegal) organisation.

³⁶ Ett (E. Sirg), *Kunstiajaloo Instituut chitus- ja kunstimälestiste talletajana* (The Institute of Art History as the Keeper of Built and Artistic Monuments), *Postimees*, 1943 09 11, p. 6. See also: E.J. Kuusik, *Mälestusi ja mõtisklusi*, 1-5 (Memories and Contemplations, vols. 1-5), (Tallinn) 2011, pp. 559, 562; Kangor, *Art Historical Photograph Collection...*, op. cit., pp. 165-167.

³⁷ Only one former member maintained his position in the Heritage Commission: Harri Moora (1900–1968), the archaeology professor (however, later in 1942, he too was fired from the university). Eerik Laid and Sten Karling had already lost their positions in 1940, and both soon emigrated, while Ferdinand Linnus (Leinbock until estonianisation, 1895–1942), the former head of the Estonian National Museum, had been deported to Siberia, and Hans Kruus (1891–1976), the professor of Estonian and Nordic history, had been elected rector of the university. Most of the new members, in turn, did leave Estonia by 1944.

Not surprisingly, many of the members now active in the Heritage Commission were Estonians who had already previously had close ties with Germany. For example, the newly appointed inspector Evald Uustalu (1912–1982, inspector from 1941 to 1943), a historian by background, had been an attaché in the Estonian embassy in Berlin in the 1930s. Finally, Eerik Pöld (also spelt Erik, 1908–1995), an archaeologist and ethnographer, and later in the Soviet period a renowned painting conservator-restorer and artist, served as inspector from 1943 to 1944.

In his memoirs, Uustalu quotes the unpleasant relationships and tasks assigned by German officials as the fundamental reason for his withdrawing from the post and emigrating (first to Finland, later to Sweden and the USA).³⁸ These differences and disagreements are never directly covered in documents from the period, of course. We can draw this conclusion only by reading between the lines: for instance, the protocols of the Heritage Commission never list the Generalbezirk representatives as actual members of the commission, but only as taking part in the meetings.³⁹

Professional (?) Oppositions

Local specialists deliberately collaborated with the occupiers, but their understandings of the ultimate aims of heritage protection had little in common. While the heritage specialists tried to prevent damage to valuable structures, the Germans often tried to use these same structures for martial purposes. Both parties were involved in ‘protection’ in this respect, but instead of protecting the heritage, the Germans seem to have had military defence in mind. Nazi officials clearly saw heritage as a resource, not merely on an ideological level, but also on a very practical one. Therefore, they approached the question of heritage protection with great concern and stringency, especially compared to their relative ignorance towards the contemporary visual arts.

³⁸ E. Uustalu, *Tagurpidi sõudes. Mälestusi ajavahemikult 1914–1943* (Rowing Backwards: Memoirs from the Period 1914–1943), Stockholm, 1982, pp. 182–183.

³⁹ Protocols of the Heritage Commission meetings, op. cit.

They did not engage in issues of fine art (not even the presumably dangerous continuation of nationalist currents⁴⁰), probably regarding these irrelevant, and inefficient from the point of view of ideological manipulation. If they participated in the discussions or competition juries of exhibitions at all, it was always as mere observers⁴¹ – as opposed to the strong influence they tried to impose on the Heritage Commission.

In connection with questions of heritage, a certain Dr Esser seems to have been a kind of protagonist on the side of the German civilian administration. He was the arts expert or *Kunstsachbearbeiter* for the Sonderstab Bildende Kunst in the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg. This task force was named after the notorious head of the Reich Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories, the leading Nazi ideologist Alfred Rosenberg (1893–1946), who had studied architecture in Riga, and in 1942 also paid a visit to his home town Tallinn (on this occasion a special display *Aus der Arbeit des Einsatzstabes* was exhibited⁴²).

It had many divisions according to regions; the Hauptarbeitsgruppe Ostland, centered in Riga, consisted of four working parties (with local offices in Tallinn/Tartu, Riga, Vilnius and Minsk).⁴³ The task force was an ideologically as well as politically engaged institution that selected highest-rank specialists to become its experts of particular fields. This was also the case with Dr Esser, a member of the task force since 1940, and the NSDAP since 1937. Esser arrived in his post in Tallinn in late 1941 and was also responsible for the environs of the unconquered Leningrad

⁴⁰ Cf. K. Valk, *Rahvussotsialistik ja rahvuslik Saksa okupatsiooni aegsetes kunstikirjutistes* (National Socialist and National in Writings on Art during the German Occupation), *Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi/Studies on Art and Architecture*, 2005, vol. 14, no. 1, pp. 79–80.

⁴¹ Kirme, op. cit., p. 18.

⁴² J. Hoppe, Ein Kunsthistoriker im Dienste einer NS-Organisation: Dr. Karl Heinz Esser beim Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg für die besetzten Gebiete, *Mainzer Zeitschrift*, 2010, vol. 105, p. 196.

⁴³ Tables of the structure and hierarchy available in Hoppe, Ein Kunsthistoriker im Dienste einer NS-Organisation, op. cit., p. 182. For further inquiries regarding the task force, see: *Reconstructing the Record of Nazi Cultural Plunder: A Survey of the Dispersed Archives of the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR)* (online publication), comp. by P. K. Grimsted, Amsterdam, 2011, especially pp. 25–48, *IISH Research Papers*, http://www.iisg.nl/publications/err-survey/errsurvey_total-111019.pdf (accessed 2012 04 11).

(St Petersburg) and Ingermanland. An art historian by education, his full name was Karl Heinz Esser (born in 1912 in Bonn, on duty in the so-called eastern territories from 1941 to 1943).⁴⁴

The Reichsleiter Rosenberg task force was allegedly established to supervise and protect the most valuable parts of the heritage of the recently acquired territories of the nascent empire, but in reality its function became to transport much of it to Germany. Under the pretext of the approaching Soviet forces, it was indeed repeatedly proposed to the members of the Heritage Commission that they pack the valuables kept in temporary depositories on to wagons, so that the final decision to transfer the property to 'somewhere safe' would seem to originate from the local specialists themselves.⁴⁵ In March 1944 a command was voiced to load five railway wagons with documents and artistically valuable objects in both Tallinn and Tartu daily.⁴⁶

On the one hand, this could be viewed as only one example among many of their two-faced actions. After the compilation of a thorough inventory of manor houses that the Heritage Commission had initiated in order to get an updated overview of the circumstances in which the edifices stood after the first years of the war,⁴⁷ for instance, the Germans

⁴⁴ Hoppe, *Ein Kunsthistoriker im Dienste einer NS-Organisation*, op. cit., pp. 179-180, 183, 197-198. The task force deliberately chose to mobilise young researchers who had recently earned a doctorate. Esser's duty in the task force lasted for over three years (in 1940, while responsible for France, he also worked for the competing institution *Kunstschutz* with the Wehrmacht). During these years he was active in almost all states occupied by Germany. In early 1942 he was transferred from Estonia to the *Hauptarbeitsgruppe Ostland* in Riga and now had to cover the whole Baltic region, but later briefly returned to Tallinn. In 1943 he was promoted to become the *Obereinsatzführer*, he left the post of *Leiter der Arbeitsgruppe Estland* finally in June, continuing with similar tasks in Belgium.

⁴⁵ E. Laid, *Paopaijad*, comp. by P. Ereht, H. Runnel, Tartu, 1997, p. 250.

⁴⁶ *Evakuierung der Universität Dorpat und der Kulturgüter der Generalbezirks Estland*, March 1944, Bundesarchiv (Koblenz), NS 30/151, pp. 71-79, *Das Bundesarchiv*, http://startext.net-build.de:8080/barch/MidosaseARCH/NS30_25600/index.htm?kid=ac7606ee-d355-41d7-94bd-a96a08e2b68d (accessed 2012 04 13). See also other folders under NS 30, entitled 'Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg'.

⁴⁷ *Übersicht über den Zustand der unter dem Denkmalschutz stehenden Herrenhäuser*, 1942, EAA, 5358.1.56, pp. 179-188.

used the material gathered to choose between them as possible temporary strategic bases for troops.

In the same way, the vast majority of the church bells that were documented by the commission were melted down for the war effort (in the Reich proper, similar activity had started in 1940⁴⁸). The fact that the year 1942 turned out to be the peak of the heritage activity is probably no coincidence: throughout that same year lasted a large-scale programme to collect metal, which was denominated unavoidable in order to defeat *Bolshevismus*. Although exceptions were to be made for objects that were especially noteworthy artistically or historically, even public monuments and statues (some to be substituted with plaster copies) had to be voluntarily submitted.⁴⁹ In July 1942, Esser also attended meetings discussing Latvian and Lithuanian bells. All other gathered pieces were also reevaluated by specialists in the regional collecting centres to determine their possible artistic value, making indeed exception to some listed monuments of national (!) importance, but especially those showing evidence of *deutsche Kultureinfluss*. Eleven per cent of the collected church bells from the three Baltic states were finally not melted down for their high historical value.⁵⁰

It should be mentioned that after the bells were presented to the officials (the so-called *Glockenabgabe*), no further meetings of the Heritage Commission followed, making the scenario that the whole activity of the commission was mainly Generalbezirk-driven (and in their interests) very likely, even though Esser's activity started out much earlier and continued further on.

As Esser constantly travelled across the immense territories of the Reichskommissariat Ostland carrying out this mission, it is not im-

⁴⁸ See: Hoppe, *Ein Kunsthistoriker im Dienste einer NS-Organisation*, op. cit., p. 191.

⁴⁹ Leaflets instructing the submission of noble metals, March 1942, EAA, 2100.5.286c, pp. 10-12; lists of Estonian church bells and related documents, from April to June 1942, EAA, 5358.1.56, pp. 153-162; J. Kilumets, *Kellad ja sõjad/Bells and Wars*, *Kirikukellad Eestis/Church Bells in Estonia*, comp. by J. Kilumets, T. Saaret, Tallinn, 2007, pp. 48-49. For more facts and figures, see: Jõekalda, *Kunstiajaloo pärand mitme tule vahel*, op. cit., pp. 99-100.

⁵⁰ Hoppe, *Ein Kunsthistoriker im Dienste einer NS-Organisation*, op. cit., pp. 186-190. Especially problematic was the orthodox district of Pechory (Petseri).



5. The Medieval church in Märjamaa in western Estonia suffered from a fire during the war, along with many others. Photo by Armin Tuulse, 1943

possible that the interval between the meetings of the Heritage Commission was determined exactly by his visits to Estland, but I have not been able to verify this. From February to October 1942 he spent most of his time in Riga and Tallinn (86 and 48 days respectively), and 34 days in the Reich, followed only thereafter by Kaunas, Vilnius, Pskov (Estonian Pihkva, German Pleskau) and Minsk.⁵¹ All in all, Esser served much longer in the eastern territories than most task force employees.

On the other hand, when assisting the Germans in listing historical items, the heritage specialists might have been neither fully aware of the ideological manipulations, nor the extent to which they themselves helped to prepare destroying them. But notably some employees of the Institute of Art History, such as Voldemar Vaga, were mobilised by the task force to fulfil their special

duties.⁵² Armin Tuulse as head of the institute was involved too. Esser regarded the training and inclusion of local co-workers in the activity essential for both the task force itself and the German cultural policy at large.⁵³

⁵¹ For a more detailed record, see: Hoppe, *Ein Kunsthistoriker im Dienste einer NS-Organisation*, op. cit., pp. 185–189.

⁵² Data concerning the employees of the Institute of Art History, EAA, 2100.5. 286c, p. 46.

⁵³ Hoppe, *Ein Kunsthistoriker im Dienste einer NS-Organisation*, op. cit., pp. 185, 192–193. In Tallinn, the working party occupied the specialist library formerly belonging to a well-known art and book collector, the expatriated Jew Julius Genss (also Gens, 1887–1957), for this purpose.

Due to the actual damage (Fig. 5), either intentional or by accident, the inventories and lists still have a huge value, often being the only documentation of the existence of these objects. However, there is reason to believe that several other projects of the institute shared common interests with those of the task force. For instance, in parallel with the institute that was continuing with its pre-war activity⁵⁴, Esser, too, started a general survey of the current state of the monuments in Estonia in November 1941, compiling a detailed card index of the data gathered.⁵⁵ Esser vigorously participated in debates over urban reconstruction in the bombed areas of Tartu⁵⁶ and preventive evacuation of the movable heritage, such as altarpieces⁵⁷. What is more, in Esser's own words, it was supposedly his thorough comments and positive peer-reviews that enabled the publishing of several important monographs, including those by professor Sten Karling and the Baltic German historian of architecture Paul Campe (1885–1960).⁵⁸

⁵⁴ See: M.-I. Eller, *Kunstiajaloolased Tartu Ülikoolis aastail 1940–1989* (Art Historians at the University of Tartu during the Years 1940–1989), *Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi/Studies on Art and Architecture*, vol. 7, Tallinn, 1994, pp. 66–68

⁵⁵ Hoppe, *Ein Kunsthistoriker im Dienste einer NS-Organisation*, op. cit., p. 184.

⁵⁶ Letters from the Institute of Art History, from January to March 1942, EAA, 2100.5.286b, pp. 2, 65; Protocol of the Heritage Commission meeting, June 1942, op. cit., pp. 153–154.

⁵⁷ Protocols of the Heritage Commission meetings, from May to June 1942, op. cit., pp. 149–154; Uustalu, op. cit., p. 182; E. Vende, *Kunstiväärtusi päästmas* (Saving Artistic Monuments), *Kirjutamata memuaare*, comp. by L. Lauri, Tallinn, 1986, pp. 96–98. Allegedly the Estonians feared for the pieces packed and removed from churches to prevent damage, seeing such steps as preparation for later transfer to the Reich, which might have been true in the light of the following (Hoppe, *Ein Kunsthistoriker im Dienste einer NS-Organisation*, op. cit., pp. 193–195).

⁵⁸ Hoppe, *Ein Kunsthistoriker im Dienste einer NS-Organisation*, op. cit., pp. 195–196. These are, for example: S. Karling, *Holzschnitzerei und Tischlerkunst der Renaissance und des Barocks in Estland*, Dorpat, 1943; P. Campe, *Der Stadt-Kunst- und Werkmeister Rupert Bindenschu und seine Wirksamkeit in Riga. Ein Beitrag zur Baugeschichte Rigas zu Ende des 17. Jb.*, Riga (1944). Esser also coordinated the publication of a post card series *Das schöne Ostland* together with the Tallinn photographer Richard C.E. Kirchoff (1896–1972) (Hoppe, *Ein Kunsthistoriker im Dienste einer NS-Organisation*, op. cit., p. 196), issued by the Deutsche Verlags- und Druckerei-Gesellschaft in Riga in 1942. Inserting the search phrase 'Das schöne Ostland', 22 images become available in the National Library of Estonia digital archives: *Digar*, <http://digar.nlib.ee> (accessed 2012 07 03).

Baltic Heritage? The German Perspective

Besides Esser, several others, some of them art historians, were involved, or simply used the occasion. One of these was the German scholar Konrad Strauss (1899–1978), whose lifelong project was to compile a grand overview of the history of pottery in historic German-speaking areas. He had already made study trips to Tallinn and Riga during the 1930s, and welcomed the ‘fortunate’ advent of war,⁵⁹ because it enabled him, now an army officer in a propaganda echelon in Riga, to extensively document and photograph pottery, ceramic tiles and stoves throughout the Baltic States (but also elsewhere in Ostland).⁶⁰

Also Georg von Krusenstjern (also spelt Krusenstern, 1899–1986, a Baltic German who had emigrated during the *Umsiedlung*) derived benefit from the political circumstances. An engineer and amateur researcher of Baltic (in the wide sense, incorporating western Russia) monuments, documents, manors and the genealogy of their former owners already in the interwar era, he now had the chance to continue his studies, leading the *Arbeitsgruppe zur Sicherstellung der sippenkundlichen Materialien in besetzten Ostgebieten*. With his accomplice Helmuth Speer, they initiated the project only a few weeks after the declaration of war against Russia, using extremely nationalist arguments. Von Krusenstjern held high military posts throughout the war years and was closely connected with the activity of the task force.⁶¹

⁵⁹ K. Strauss, *Die Geschichte der Töpferkunst vom Mittelalter bis zur Neuzeit und die Kunsttöpfereien in Alt-Livland (Estland und Lettland)*, Basel, 1969, p. 9.

⁶⁰ Despite this fact and Strauss’ earlier publications, according to Esser, it was his advice that directed Strauss to the topic (Hoppe, *Ein Kunsthistoriker im Dienste einer NS-Organisation*, op. cit., p. 196). See also: K. Strauß, *Studien zur mittelalterlichen Keramik*, Leipzig, 1923; K. Strauss, *Die Kachelkunst des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts in Deutschland, Österreich, der Schweiz und Skandinavien*, Basel, 1972.

⁶¹ M. Salupere, *Wie war es. Georg von Krusenstern und seine Tätigkeit im Einsatzstab Rosenberg (1941–1942)*, *Akademische Gesellschaft für Deutsch-Baltische Kultur in Tartu/Dorpat*, <http://www.aai.ee/abks/Wiewares.html> (accessed 2012 04 13); Hoppe, *Ein Kunsthistoriker im Dienste einer NS-Organisation*, op. cit., pp. 187, 198. Von Krusenstjern’s detailed reports to the task force reveal his goals and attitudes, but also his impressions of Riga, as well as of the occupied cities and sights in Estonia and western Russia (see: Georg von Krusenstjern’s materials

Naturally, the new approaches of Estonian, Latvian and almost all non-German researchers who had tried to free the local heritage from the burden of merely belonging to a German colony, were strongly criticised by their German counterparts in the Nazi period. The latter actively fought to claim the Baltic States as truly German, both in a cultural and a political-territorial sense, one of the most straightforward authors being Niels von Holst (1907–1993, born in Riga, but residing in Germany since 1919). Also an authority on questions of heritage, he had already taken strong positions during the *Umsiedlung*,⁶² and now attended the meetings of the Heritage Commission. In his main works,⁶³ he expressed the popular theory that even the Scandinavian heritage had its origins in German art history, trying to ridicule the local researchers' efforts to shift the focus.

about Estonia presented to the 'Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg für die besetzten Gebiete, Arbeitsgruppe Estland', 1941–1942, EAA, 1414.2.122; Vom Besuch der Gauschulungsleiter [manuscript by G. von Krusenstjern], September 1941, EAA, 1414.2.297, pp. 11–26). He left behind an extensive collection of photographs of the Baltic heritage, later becoming one of the key figures in compiling *Deutschbaltisches biographisches Lexikon 1710–1960*, ed. W. Lenz, Köln, Wien, 1970. See also: *Heldengedenkbuch des Baltenregiments*, ed. G. von Krusenstjern, Tallinn, 1938; *Die Landmarschälle und Landräte der Livländischen und der Öselschen Ritterschaft in Bildnissen*, ed. G. von Krusenstjern, Hamburg, 1963.

⁶² See: A. Lõugas, Baltisakslaste kunstivarad Poznańi Rahvusmuuseumis. Peatükk ühe rahvusgrupi ajaloost (Art Works of the Baltic Germans in the National Museum of Poznań: A Chapter in the History of an Ethnic Group), *Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi/Studies on Art and Architecture*, vol. 9, Tallinn, 1998, pp. 187–222; Vende, Kunstiväartusi päästmas, op. cit.; E. Vende, Idamissiooni lõpp (The End of the Eastern Mission), *Tuna*, 2003, no. 4, pp. 72–75. Cf. R. Pärpuce, Die Arbeit des Paritätischen Ausschusses in den Jahren 1939–1940. Die Aufteilung der lettischen Kulturgüter, *Forschungen zur baltischen Geschichte*, 2008, vol. 3, pp. 164–196; protocols, letters and official documents relating to the movable cultural heritage during the *Umsiedlung*, 1939–1940, ERA, 1108.5.969. The issues had been handled rather similarly without these legal instruments 20 years earlier: Raal, op. cit., pp. 149–151, 160–165, 172–174.

⁶³ N. von Holst, Die Deutsche Kunst des Baltenlandes – ein neues Forschungsgebiet der Kunstgeschichte, *Deutsche Kultur im Leben der Völker*, 1939, issue 2, pp. 161–171; N. von Holst, *Die deutsche Kunst des Baltenlandes im Lichte neuer Forschung. Bericht über das gesamte Schrifttum seit dem Weltkrieg (1919–1939)*, München, 1942. See: N. von Holst, *Das alte Reval. 110 Bilder*, Reval (1942); N. von Holst, *Baltenland*, Berlin, 1942; N. von Holst, *Riga und Reval. Ein Buch der Erinnerung*, Hameln, 1952. See also: *Reval. Ein Wegweiser durch die Stadt und ihre Kunststätten*, ed. N. von Holst, Reval, 1942; calculations and materials relating to his Tallinn guidebook proposal, 1942–1943, ERA, R-70.1.67

Karl Heinz Esser went even further, supervising the Tallinn tourist guides only to stress the indisputable German character of the city, naming the previous interwar approaches propagandist distortions of history. After all, his task in Ostland was twofold: to detect German influences on this edge of Russia, but also to reclaim cultural heritage robbed by the Soviet army. The goal Esser set for his team of art historians in Tartu was nothing less than helping prepare ground for conquering north-Russian cities beyond Moscow and Leningrad.⁶⁴ Speaking of the need for *allgemeine Kulturpropaganda*, Esser's weekly reports reveal that he, too, was a convinced extreme nationalist and true representative of the ultimate aims of the party. In order to tie the artistic and built heritage situated in Estonia even deeper into what was in his eyes righteously and exclusively German history, he was ready to bend facts towards the expected truth and go beyond the generally accepted legal or professional standards. (At the same time, he constantly kept working on his grand fantasy to compose a complete European-wide overview of artistic monuments – obtaining historiographic, photographic and archival material in the eastern territories was part of his ambitious personal cause.⁶⁵) Jens Hoppe has pertinently described Esser's activity as a 'mixture of heritage protection, art looting and ideological warfare',⁶⁶ in which the ideological engagement was not a mere by-product, but an intention in itself. In order to secure German supremacy in Europe and the world, he was gladly willing to actively contribute to the almost global network of the task force.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Hoppe, *Ein Kunsthistoriker im Dienste einer NS-Organisation*, op. cit., pp. 191, 195-196. Estonian heritage specialists were indeed asked to compile a complete list of all items taken by the Soviet forces during 1940 and 1941 (Protocol of the Heritage Commission meeting, April 1942, op. cit., pp. 147-148).

⁶⁵ Hoppe, *Ein Kunsthistoriker im Dienste einer NS-Organisation*, op. cit., pp. 185-189, 193-196, 198. He also recognised the need to study 'bolshevist' architecture, urban planning, and Soviet art historiography, trying to detect a specific nature of bolshevism. See also: K. H. Esser, *Darstellung der Formen und Wirkungen der Wallfahrtskirche zu Vierzehnheiligen*, Bonn, 1940; K.-H. Esser, *Zur Baugeschichte der Kirche Groß St. Martin in Köln, Rheinische Kirchen im Wiederaufbau*, Mönchengladbach, 1951, pp. 77-80; K. H. Esser, *Mainz*, (München) 1961. The latter were notably published in the series *Deutsche Lande – Deutsche Kunst*.

⁶⁶ Hoppe, *Ein Kunsthistoriker im Dienste einer NS-Organisation*, op. cit., p. 189.

⁶⁷ For his productive and ideologically efficient activity he was awarded the 2nd-class War

The same attitude, stating that the eastern territories were necessary for German *Lebensraum*, was reflected and propagated by many art historians in Germany. Earlier writings by Baltic German authors themselves provided a fertile ground for interpretations of this kind. For example, those of the productive Wilhelm Neumann (known in Latvia as Vilhelms Neimanis, 1849–1919, based in Riga), or more international figures such as Georg Dehio (1850–1932), also a Baltic German by descent, to name just some of the most influential ones.⁶⁸

On the state level, these and several other prevailing views of National Socialism were, of course, developed and propagated by the same Alfred Rosenberg. The question of a dominant race and a nation's affinity with culture thus smoothly entered the debates over the heritage, to promote a completely different kind of nationalism.

Conclusion

In Estonia, the two world wars shared a somewhat similar agenda, involving both a German and a Russian occupation, but had, of course, very different outcomes. At the approach of the First World War, the Estonians were only starting to value this 'alien' heritage, but by the Second World War, they had familiarised and institutionalised it: what was formerly regarded as 'alien' had now become part of 'our' heritage. Reconciling

Merit Cross in September 1942. What concerns his later long career as an art historian, it was hardly haunted by his war-time experience – in fact any reminiscence of his military past was absolutely denied (as was often the case with former Nazi accomplices). Ironically Esser, who had among other duties been involved in destroying Jewish manuscripts (and approved of the activity), acted as the head of a museum of Judaism in Mainz from the 1950s onwards (Hoppe, *Ein Kunsthistoriker im Dienste einer NS-Organisation*, op. cit., pp. 179–180, 185–189, 194–198; J. Hoppe, *Jüdische Geschichte und Kultur in Museen. Zur nichtjüdischen Museologie des Jüdischen in Deutschland*, Münster, New York, München, Berlin, 2002, pp. 119–120).

⁶⁸ See: Kodres, *Our Own Estonian Art History*, op. cit., pp. 13–15; K. Kodres, *Two Art Histories: The (Baltic) German and Estonian Versions of the History of Estonian Art*, *History of Art History in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe*, ed. J. Malinowski, vol. 2, Toruń, 2012, 67–72. Cf. H. von zur Mühlen, *Die deutschbaltische Geschichtsschreibung 1918–1939/45 in Estland*, *Geschichte der deutschbaltischen Geschichtsschreibung*, ed. G. von Rauch, Köln, Wien, 1986, pp. 366–369.

Estonians with their troublesome past – finding positive points of contact and harmonious co-existence – were certainly among the basic functions of heritage-related discussions of the period.

Warmer attitudes towards art history and its physical remains during the 1940s were, in part, the effect of war damage itself, reinforced by the opposition towards new political leaders: with new threats and enemies approaching, considering Baltic German monuments worthy of protection was no longer a question. Furthermore, the former dominance of the archaeological and ethnographic heritage over art history went through another shift: due to the preferences of the Nazis, who naturally did not care for Estonian prehistory, it was now the artistic and architectural heritage that most attention was paid to. In addition to being ‘German’, it simply had much better military potential, or strategic ‘value’.

The interests of those speaking in favour of the heritage and those acting in the interests of the Reich were thus not only different, but often quite the opposite: despite their cooperation, one was trying to defend monuments from the war, while the other was guided by military ambitions. Although in their decisions, both the local heritage specialists and the Nazi officials largely depended on the ongoing war, the goals and motives of the parties were rather distinct from each other.

It seems only natural that the Nazis decided to exploit a pre-existing structure, instead of reorganising the whole institution in the time of war. But no less important was, of course, the image of a liberal ruler, promoting anti-communist views and returning to the people what the Soviet occupation had taken from them (also in other fields besides culture, Soviet legislation was largely annulled as a deliberate policy).

Still, it is only in institutional terms that we can see the link with the prewar means and methods; in what concerns the nature and principal aims of heritage protection, they had altered to a great degree. The years of the Nazi-German occupation, especially 1942, merely functioned as a deformed culmination of the independence-era system. Even though the connections had already been severed in 1940, formally the year 1944

was an even sharper turning point.⁶⁹ Nonetheless, in the shadow of new Soviet legislation and reforms, the values and methods developed during the interwar period of independence, and carried further during the Nazi-German occupation with the illusory continuation of the previous system, maintained a hidden, but essential role for years to come.

⁶⁹ In Lithuania, where the interwar developments in institutionalising the protection of monuments were somewhat different, also the new era in heritage conservation that came with the 1940s might be seen in an alternative light, already from the point of view of periodisation. Cf. S. Kulevičius, *Lietuvos paveldosaugos idėjiniai modeliai ir jų raiška praktikoje sovietmečiu/Ideological Models of Lithuanian Heritage Protection and their Practical Expression at the Soviet Period*, summary of diss., Vilnius, 2010, pp. 8-9, 14-16.

Kristina Jōekalda

Architektūros paminklai kaip išteklius: persvarstant paveldą ir ideologijas nacių okupuotoje Estijoje

Santrauka

Straipsnyje analizuojami Estijos paveldosaugos ideologiniai aspektai, susiję su politika ir nacionalizmu. Egzistuoja nesuskaičiuojama daugybė paveldo apibrėžimų ir galimybių nustatyti jo vertes. Estijos atveju, kur visi dailės istorijos požiūriu vertingi pastatai buvo pastatyti užsienio kolonistų, visų pirma Baltijos vokiečių, į svarbiausią vietą iškyla priešiško santykio su paveldu arba nesugebėjimo jį priimti problemos. Susitaikymą su šiuo „svetimų“ paveldu, jo priėmimą sąlygojo įvairūs veiksniai ir įvykiai, tarp kurių karas buvo ne paskutinėje vietoje.

Straipsnio problematika sutelkta į nacių okupacijos laikotarpio procesus, tačiau trumpai referuojama ir juos sąlygojusi ankstesnė Estijos paveldosaugos padėtis, taip pat požiūris į paveldą. Palyginimai su kitų Baltijos šalių situacija liudija apie analogijas, būdingas visoms regiono valstybėms.

Sisteminę ir organizuotą paveldosaugos pradžią Estijoje skaičiuojama nuo XX a. trečiojo dešimtmečio, nors jau Pirmojo pasaulinio karo metais būta pastangų priimti ir apsaugoti „svetimųjų“ palikimą. Du dešimtmečius vykę procesai nutrūko Antrojo pasaulinio karo pradžioje. Įprasta šią ribą nukelti į sovietų okupacijos pradžią 1940 m., tačiau iš tikrųjų nacių okupacija suteikė Estijos paveldosaugai naujų impulsų. Straipsnyje siekiama atskleisti sąlyčio ir prieštaravimo taškus tarp nepriklausomos ir okupuotos Estijos paveldosaugos sampratų, metodų, priemonių, aptarti žmoniškųjų resursų (ne) panaudojimo atvejus ir konkrečių asmenų dalyvavimą ideologinėse manipuliacijose bei manipuliavimą jais.

Ypač aktyvi paveldosaugos veikla vyko 1942 metais. Iš naujo susirinkusi sovietų suardyta Paveldosaugos taryba, aptarė keletą neatidėliotinos svarbos klausimų, tačiau tuo jos aktyvumas išsisėmė. Straipsnyje teigiama, kad klausimas, ar šį epizodą galima interpretuoti kaip prieškarinio veiklos tąsą, lieka atviras. Paveldosaugos specialistai ir už šią sritį atsakingi valdininkai, priimdami sprendimus reagavo į karo realijas ne visada rasdami bendrą kalbą. Tarpusavio nesupratimą gilino esminiai požiūrio į meninį paveldą skirtumai, kūrę ne tik teorinio, bet ir praktinio pobūdžio nesutarimus paveldosaugos atžvilgiu. Normatyvinių nacionalsocializmo idėjų poveikis dailės istorijai atgaivino Baltijos vokiečių dominavimo laikų antagonizmą, kurį vietiniai dailės specialistai mėgino įveikti.