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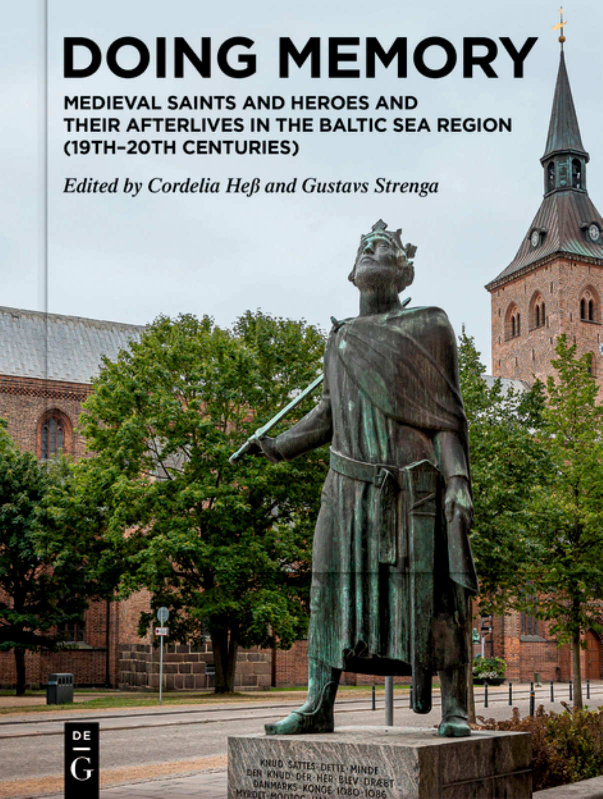
DOING MEMORY

MEDIEVAL SAINTS AND HEROES AND THEIR AFTERLIVES IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION (19TH–20TH CENTURIES)

Edited by Cordelia Heß and Gustavs Strenga



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The abovementioned conference was organized as part of a collaborative project titled "Saints and Heroes from Christianization to Nationalism: Symbol, Image, Memory (Nord-West Russia, Baltic and Nordic countries)" conducted by scholars from the University of Greifswald and Saint Petersburg State University. It was funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) and the Russian Science Foundation (RSF). In the spring of 2022, this collaboration was disrupted.

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Cordelia Heß and Gustavs Strenga
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Cordelia Heß and Gustavs Strenga

Doing Memory of Medieval Saints and Heroes in the Baltic Sea Region

Memory and Medievalism

Saints and heroes share one feature in common: they are exceptional. Or at least, they are seen as exceptional: special, not equal. The processes of heroization and sacralization are similar: a person is raised above the sphere of profane, everyday concerns and life and is projected into a sphere of the exceptional, worthy of veneration.[1] The heroes are usually associated with combative and even tragic stories; heroes have to counter something, either enormous difficulties and great challenges or mighty and powerful enemies.[2] Likewise, the saints, especially the martyrs, are people who have suffered, either because of their faith and convictions or at the hands of enemies of the faith. "Heroic" and "saintly" do not always go together, but they can overlap. Similarly, in memories and usages after their deaths, saints and heroes maintain an extraordinary and exceptional reputation that allows them to survive for centuries. Sometimes, these later usages have little to do with the person's actual life – heroization in the afterlife can far exceed a person's fame during their lifetime, and vice versa.

In the centuries after the Middle Ages, there were medieval heroes and saints who were remembered, commemorated, used and abused, applied and appropriated as figures of memory by social groups, institutions, ethnic groups, nations, states, and empires. In the modern period, some – like Scottish and Welsh insurrection leaders, William Wallace (d. 1305) and Owain Glyndŵr (d. 1415); French peasant, soldier, and saint Joan of Arc (d. 1431); Swedish noble rebel, Engelbrekt Engelbrektsson (d. 1436); Swedish mystic, Saint Birgitta (d. 1373); or Russian prince and saint Alexander Nevsky (d. 1263) – became national heroes, or at least figures of major national importance.[3] There are other heroes, like the Finnish Lalli, the

1 See Andreas Hammer and Stephanie Seidl, "Einleitung," in *Helden und Heilige: Kulturelle und literarische Integrationsfiguren des europäischen Mittelalters*, ed. Andreas Hammer and Stephanie Seidl (Heidelberg: Winter, 2010): ix–xx.

2 Ulrich Bröckling, *Postheroische Helden: ein Zeitbild* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2020).

3 On William Wallace as a Scottish national hero, see Linas Eriksonas, *National Heroes and National Identities: Scotland, Norway and Lithuania* (Frankfurt: Lang, 2004), 55–168; on Owain Glyndŵr as a Welsh national hero, see Elissa R. Henken, *National Redeemer: Owain Glyndŵr in Welsh Tradition* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996) and Rees Davies, *The Revolt of Owain Glyn Dŵr* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 325–42; on Joan of Arc's place in the French

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Estonian Lembitu, and the Latvian Imanta, whose roots lie in the crusading age but who only acquired their hero status in the modern period.[4] These saints and heroes are simultaneously both historic and mythic figures. What made them appropriate or appealing for a society or a group or region to remember, commemorate, and venerate centuries after their death? What kind of features predisposed them to a "second career" of being praised and remembered? What does it take for a medieval saint to be valued in a religiously contrary (Catholic/Orthodox vs Protestant) or even secular context? These are questions that can be examined when the history of such a person's afterlife and reception is studied over the *longue durée*.

This volume focuses on the afterlives of medieval saints and heroes during modernity – the 19th and early 20th centuries. But we are not seeking to add to the field of "heroic studies" or to compile an encyclopaedia of heroic deeds and characteristics. Rather, we want to focus on the societies which chose these heroes. There is a connection between the Middle Ages and the 19th century, the time when medieval figures were integrated into modernity first by the poets and artists of the Romantic era and then by authors, journalists, intellectuals, and historians of the nation-building age. The interest in medieval figures in the modern period can be tied to the importance of the Middle Ages in 19th-century European political and intellectual thought. The Middle Ages played an ambiguous role in modernity – they both attracted and disgusted.[5] The repulsive aspects of the Middle Ages were their political turmoil, their lack of recognition of classical culture, and, for Protestant nation states, their Catholicism. Their positive aspects, in terms of emerging national identities and their construction, were that they provided much-needed accounts of the genesis of various nations, which could be used for the construction of their national identities. As Patrick Geary has shown, stories of a nation's origins were essential during the nation-building of the 19th century: under the influence of revolutions and Romanticism, "intellectuals and

---

culture at the advent of modernity, see Nora M. Heimann, *Joan of Arc in French Art and Culture (1700–1855): From Satire to Sanctity* (London: Routledge, 2017); on the uses of Joan of Arc, see *Joan of Arc, a Saint for All Reasons: Studies in Myth and Politics*, ed. Dominique Goy-Blanquet (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003); Andrey Scheglov, "Was There a Cult of 'Saint Engelbrekt'?," *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia* 14 (2018): 185–92; for an examination of the long-term development of Alexander Nevsky as an Orthodox saint and a hero, see Frithjof Benjamin Schenk, *Aleksandr Nevskij: Heiliger – Fürst – Nationalheld. Eine Erinnerungsfigur im russischen kulturellen Gedächtnis (1263–2000)* (Köln: Böhlau, 2004).

4 The roles of Lalli, Lembitu, and Imanta are discussed later in this introduction.

5 Otto Gerhard Oexle, "Das entzweite Mittelalter," in *Die Wirklichkeit und das Wissen: Mittelalterforschung – Historische Kulturwissenschaft – Geschichte und Theorie der historischen Erkenntnis*, ed. Bernhard Jussen, Andrea von Hülsen-Esch, and Frank Rexroth (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011): 837–66, 837.

politicians created new nations, nations that they then projected into the distant past of the early Middle Ages."[6] It was not just the greater nations, like France and Germany, that were using the Middle Ages to write their past into a national present, but also nations that for centuries had been subjugated by others – for example, Norwegians and Finns were using medieval history to create modern nations.[7] In Humanist writings of the 15th and 16th centuries and even after, national heroes had been crucial for symbolizing "national virtues" and national "essence" in history writing.[8] In modernity they, together with saints, continued to fulfil this function as they became associated with national origin stories or references to the "golden age" or good times of the distant past. In the Protestant regions and states, medieval saints did not necessarily represent the negative aspects of the Catholic Church but could also be seen as signs of previous national greatness.

Less researched but equally important has been the use of medieval figures in the creation and strengthening of regional identities during modernity. As Anthony Smith has put it, "heroes provide models of virtuous conduct, their deeds of valour inspire faith and courage in their oppressed and decadent descendants."[9] Heroes shape identities. And, in many cases, these identities are shaped by intellectual elites but conceived to serve as shared and integrating for "everyone," in an attempt to gloss over struggles of the working classes, ethnic minorities, or women for representation and political change. Medieval heroes could also be used to promote an actual continuity of medieval political relations.

The heroization of medieval figures in the modern period is part of the larger phenomenon of medievalism. Medievalism can be understood as "the continuing reception of medieval culture in post-medieval times"[10] or "the reimagining and re-

6 Patrick J. Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 18.

7 See *The Uses of the Middle Ages in Modern European States: History, Nationhood and the Search for Origins*, ed. R. J. W. Evans and Guy Marchal (London: Palgrave, 2014). Specifically, the contributions by Derek Fewster, "'Braves Step Out of the Night of the Barrows': Regenerating the Heritage of Early Medieval Finland," 31–51, and Jan Eivind Myhre, "The 'Decline of Norway': Grief and Fascination in Norwegian Historiography on the Middle Ages," 18–50.

8 Stefan Berger, "The Power of National Pasts: Writing National History in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Europe," in *Writing the Nation: A Global Perspective*, ed. Stefan Berger (London: Palgrave, 2016): 30–62, 31.

9 Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 65.

10 See Richard Utz, "Coming to Terms with Medievalism," *European Journal of English Studies* 15, no. 2 (2011): 101–13, 101.

purposing of the Middle Ages" in the present.[11] Medievalism can trace its roots back to Romanticism and the birth of modernity. Valentin Groebner emphasizes the formative influence of 19th-century Romanticism on the rise of medievalism: "Since then, the Middle Ages stopped being simply a period. They became a feeling – one's own feeling."[12] Individuals from the past continued to play the role of a backdrop, creating a feeling of the past and then also suddenly appearing as real in the present in literary works, monuments, feast days, depictions in paintings, and illustrations in history books. While the significance of medieval figures for National Romanticism has already been noted in many cases and for many nations, the same mechanism operating on other levels has received less attention from researchers – what happens to medieval saints and heroes if we look not just at "the national" level of identity construction, but also at other, smaller, and perhaps even less imaginary units – units in which the members actually know each other: towns, social and professional organisations, congregations, etc.?

We want to approach these diverse representations of medieval figures by using the concept of "doing memory," rather than by simply focusing on them as elements of collective and cultural memory. As discussed below in this introduction, the concepts of collective memory, cultural memory, and realms (sites) of memory have been used quite extensively. They all take as their reference point a collectivity, usually a nation state, which uses memory culture in order to create or strengthen the imagined collectivity. Smaller units and specific societal groups and their memories are harder to identify using these broad concepts. "Doing memory" with a focus on the act of creating and maintaining an act of memory or veneration encompasses all the elements of collective memory, remembrance, expressions of various kinds of medievalisms, and the veneration of saints or heroic figures. At the same time, the concept makes it possible to grasp phenomena particular to the Baltic Sea region – certain local and group-specific forms of medievalist veneration that do not fit neatly into the concepts developed for nation states and their collective memory.

In this volume we are particularly interested in the representations and uses of medieval saints, heroes, and heroic events as elements of popular, local, and national culture during the 19th and 20th centuries in the Baltic Sea region. As such, these phenomena are also part of the region's shared heritage. Different

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11 See Helen Young and Kavita Mudan Finn, *Global Medievalism: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 1; Clare A. Simmons, "Romantic Medievalism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Medievalism*, ed. Louise D'Arcens (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016): 103–18; David Matthews, *Medievalism: A Critical History* (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2015).
12 Valentin Groebner, "Roots, Replica, Replay: European Medievalisms after 1945," *Práticas Da História. Journal on Theory, Historiography and Uses of the Past* 4 (2017): 113–26, 114.

chapters examine the process of how saints, heroes – or, in some cases, heroic events – have been remembered, commemorated, interpreted, used, and reflected during modernity, and by whom. The contributions centre on the following research questions: Which people or groups "did" the memory of specific medieval figures? How have these figures from the past been used to shape the identities of different groups?

From Heroism Studies and Collective Memory to Doing Memory

Many issues of relevance to this book can be illustrated by the example of Alexander Nevsky. He is a prime example of a medieval saint who became a hero and an important figure of national identity and identification for not just one but several modern state entities: the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union, and now present-day Russia. He is the most obvious example of a medieval figure becoming a figure of identity in modern times, as has been demonstrated by Frithjof Benjamin Schenk and other scholars.[13] In terms of the theoretical models and concepts from memory studies and heritage studies, however, such a perfect example can also lead us to difficulties and reveal gaps in what these concepts can explain. Because there are not many examples that fit the models quite so well.

Alexander Nevsky's victory over the Livonian branch of the Teutonic Order at the Battle on the Ice in 1242, an event of limited military importance in the contemporary context, has become one of the most symbolic events in Russian history.[14] Ever since the 13th century, textual and iconographic production about Alexander Nevsky has been adopted in various historical contexts, usually to promote the idea of a masculine, well-fortified nation defending itself against danger from the West. Alexander has had a long memorial career, one which has experienced many adjustments, such as sacralization, Russification, nationalization of his person, and his recruitment as a character for war propaganda.[15] He has been

13 Schenk, *Aleksandr Nevskij*; Anti Selart, "Der Krieg Russlands gegen die "NATO des 13. Jahrhunderts". Altlivländische Geschichte in den politischen Parolen des 21. Jahrhunderts," in *Das mittelalterliche Livland und sein historisches Erbe = Medieval Livonia and Its Historical Legacy*, ed. Ilgvars Misāns, Andris Levāns, and Gustavs Strenga (Marburg: Herder-Institut, 2022): 105–26.

14 Richard Hellie, "Alexander Nevskii's April 5, 1242 Battle On the Ice," *Russian History* 33, 2–4 (2006): 283–87; Donald Ostrowski, "Alexander Nevskii's 'Battle On the Ice': The Creation of a Legend," *Russian History*, 33, 2–4 (2006): 289–312.

15 Schenk, *Aleksandr Nevskij*.

fitted into the roles of an Orthodox saint, a military leader, a patron saint of a ruling family, and a Soviet national hero.[16] Over the centuries, Alexander has been commemorated, consciously forgotten and remembered again, militarized and demilitarized.[17]

The use of Alexander as a symbol of the past is taking place today, too. He continues to inspire new representations, like the monument on Lake Peipus near the village of Samolva – unveiled by Vladimir Putin himself in September of 2021 – where he is depicted alongside immense figures of medieval warriors modelled on Russian paratroopers killed during the Second Chechen War (1999–2009).[18] Alexander Nevsky, a saint and a hero, bridges the gap between medieval Rus' and contemporary Russia, by way of the Tsarist Empire and the Soviet Union, between sacred and profane configurations of heroism, and between East and West – with the movie about him by Sergei Eisenstein (1898–1948), made in 1938 under Stalin's direct supervision, being one of the most internationally well-known products of his commemoration in popular culture.[19] The leader figure from the medieval past was used for war propaganda during the Second World War and has become a national hero in post-Soviet Russia, a prominent Orthodox saint, a religious *lieu de mémoire*, and a patron saint of numerous institutions, including the Federal Security Service (FSB), the successor to the KGB.[20]

Alexander Nevsky is not only the most prominent but is also the only example of such a straightforward and long-lasting commemoration and veneration of a medieval saint-hero.[21] In most other cases, the commemoration of medieval figures underwent significant shifts prior to the modern period: religious heroization was secularized after the Reformation, veneration across the entire Catholic Christian world was reduced to popularity in a town or region, Christian qualities of martyrdom, charitable work, or asceticism were re-interpreted as feminist values, sound governance, or sacrifices for the nation.

16 Liliya Berezhnaya, "'God Is in Truth, Not in Power!': The Re-Militarization of the Cult of St Alexander Nevsky in Contemporary Russian Cultural Memory," in *Memory and Religion from a Postsecular Perspective*, ed. Zuzanna Bogumił and Yuliya Yurchuk (London: Routledge, 2022): 111–32.

17 Lilija Berezhnaja, "Soldaten und Märtyrer: Zum Prozess der Militarisierung der Heiligen im östlichen und westlichen Christentum," in *Die Militarisierung der Heiligen in Vormoderne und Moderne*, ed. Lilija Berezhnaja (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2020): 9–58, 47–48.

18 Selart, "Der Krieg Russlands gegen die "NATO des 13. Jahrhunderts"," 122–23.

19 Schenk, *Aleksandr Nevskij*, 314–17.

20 Selart, "Der Krieg Russlands gegen die "NATO des 13. Jahrhunderts"," 110; Berezhnaya, "'God Is in Truth, Not in Power!'," 111–12; Mariëlle Wijermars, *Memory Politics in Contemporary Russia: Television, Cinema and the State* (London: Routledge, 2018), 88–91.

21 See Schenk, *Aleksandr Nevskij*.

All of these phenomena have been touched upon in various fields of historical and interdisciplinary research on cultural studies: heroism studies, memory studies, medievalism studies. Heroism studies originated in the late 19th and early 20th century, as research on "the Great Man" and the charismatic leader; Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881), Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), and Max Weber (1864–1920) explored the topic, and through their work it was imbued with the spirit of their age.[22] A century later, it has developed into an interdisciplinary field that acknowledges the ambiguity of the term – a hero – and that researches heroism as an everyday phenomenon not restricted to the chosen few, studying its gendered aspects and the diversity of roles that heroes can play.[23]

Scholars from the *Heroes, Heroizations, Heroisms* (SFB 948) research group at the University of Freiburg have been analysing these processes comparatively in different times and places, mainly focusing on the figure of the hero: who he (or, much less often, she) is, what personal qualities are needed in order to be recognized as a hero, which narrative structures and patterns surround the process of heroization.[24] They have arrived at a typology of heroes: triumphant, tragic, traumatized victims, and perpetrators.[25] All of these types are described as "cultural imaginations of identity."

These are all helpful and relevant to the analysis of one aspect of the phenomenon we are examining, but they fail to grasp the variety of changes medieval heroes have experienced over time and space. The theoretical and methodological perspectives developed in heroism studies help us to understand Alexander Nevsky

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22 Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History* (London: Fraser, 1841); Max Weber, *On Charisma and Institution Building: Selected Papers*, ed. Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968); Sigmund Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, trans. James Strachey (New York: Bantam Books, 1960); Bert Alan Spector, "Carlyle, Freud, and the Great Man Theory More Fully Considered," *Leadership* 12, no. 2 (2016): 250–60.

23 Zeno E. Franco et al., "Heroism Research: A Review of Theories, Methods, Challenges, and Trends," *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 58, no. 4 (2018): 382–96; Kristian Frisk, "What Makes a Hero? Theorising the Social Structuring of Heroism," *Sociology* 53, no. 1 (2019): 87–103.

24 See the journal *helden. heroes. héros. E-Journal zu Kulturen des Heroischen*, www.sfb948.uni-freiburg.de/de/publikationen/ejournal/.

25 "Giesens Schema umfasst vier Idealtypen: triumphierende Helden, tragische Helden, traumatisierte Opfer und Täter. Die Helden verkörpern in beiden Varianten eine "ideale Subjektivität", mit der sich Menschen auf unterschiedliche Weise identifizieren; Opfer und Täter, denen im Gegensatz zu den Helden die Gefolgschaft verwehrt wird, werden in diesen Zuschreibungen hingegen zu "Objekten" gemacht. Triumphierende Helden "meistern" wie auch Täter die Welt, wohingegen tragische Helden und Opfer je auf ihre Weise Elend erleiden. Alle diese idealtypischen Figuren stellen "cultural imaginations of identity" dar." Ulrich Böckling and Tobias Schlechtriemen: "Theoretische und sozialpsychologische Studien", Das Heroische in der neueren Forschung: Ein kritischer Bericht, www.hsozkult.de/searching/id/forschungsberichte-2216.

and the role he plays as a medieval hero in modern society, but they fail to explain the role of Saint Birgitta in feminist movements in the early 20th century[26] or the uses of medieval saints in local contexts: Saint Knud in Danish Odense or Princess Olga in the northwest of Russia.[27]

Our shift in perspective is inspired by a well-established approach from hagiographic studies when dealing with medieval saints: the hagiographic text production from the time right after the person's death, the canonization process, etc. become less important, because as societies change they pick out different aspects that they find relevant in order to give new form to the cults in question. In more recent studies on saints' cults, the historical person is often more or less irrelevant; there is a dynamic process through which actors and communities create saints (and, we would argue, heroes) in a performative way, and what is focused on is understanding which aspects seem relevant and useful to them in any given situation. Two hagiographic texts about the same saint can differ widely in focus, emphasis, length, persons mentioned, and so on. Some key episodes may reoccur, but often it is as if the legends are referring to different people, depending on whether they were written for a canonization process, a liturgy, a certain religious community, in Latin or the vernacular, and so on. The range of ways in which the ideal of sainthood is portrayed in different textual communities and for different audiences relatively close to the death of the saint expands in cases where their veneration – or commemoration – has survived for centuries and the social and political circumstances in which the commemorative practices occur have changed significantly. The shift from religious to profane or secular contexts of commemoration is often observed when saints become popular as local patrons, providing useful insight into the differentiation between saints and heroes, much debated in heroism studies, and shifting the focus to the collective and individual actors who "do memory," who practice it.

When discussing the act of "doing memory," one cannot avoid discussing collective memory. Collective memory and its artefacts have been conceptualized in many different ways; the last few decades have even been described as "a memory boom" in this regard. In terms of the perception of medieval saints and heroes in modernity, too, one can consider the level of collective remembering.[28] Collective memory is shaped by the individual and collective practices of relating to the past that a group or society decides to use to define its identity. These prac-

26 Ellen Key, *Birgitta som andlig makt: föredrag i Vadstena Birgittadagen den 7 oktober 1916* (Väderstad: Ellen Key-sällskapet, 1985).

27 See the chapters by Steffen Hope and Marianna Shakhnovich in this volume.

28 On the memory boom, see Jeffrey K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Daniel Levy, eds, *The Collective Memory Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 9.

tices include remembering, commemorating, recollecting, archiving, forgetting, destroying, venerating, and condemning. Scholars of memory studies have differentiated between different kinds of collective memory – collected memory (Jeffrey Olick),[29] shared and common memory (Avishai Marglit),[30] communicative and cultural memory (Jan Assmann).[31]

Different terms and notions created by memory scholars are frequently related to one another; for instance, Jan Assmann's "figures of memory" (*Erinnerungsfiguren*) – fateful events (or places or persons) from the past whose memory is maintained by a certain group through the use of texts, rites, monuments, and communicative practices – relates to Pierre Nora's concept of "realms of memory."[32] This latter concept is one in which the ideas of cultural heritage and collective memory merge. Realms of memory – *lieux de mémoire* – were proposed by Nora in the 1980s and elaborated upon in three edited collections (*La République*; *La Nation*; *Les France*) published between 1984 and 1992.[33] What was original about Nora's idea was that he was not coining a term for physical places but was conceptualizing material and immaterial cultural heritage as a collection or collage of places, texts, holidays, events, etc. deemed relevant by the majority in a society, and which thereby together constitute said society's collective memory. Etienne François and Hagen Schulze, who later took up the concept in their publication *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte*, define realms of memory as "long-lasting, generations-enduring points of crystallization of collective memory and identity, which are embedded in social, cultural, and political practices and which change to the extent that they change in a way that their perception, appropriation, application and transmission changes."[34]

The concept has been criticized by postcolonial scholars for failing to include the memory and experience of the colonized, the oppressed, and the marginal-

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29 Jeffrey K. Olick, "Collective Memory. The Two Cultures," *Sociological Theory* 17, no. 3 (1999): 333–48, 337–341.

30 Avishai Margalit, *The Ethics of Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 44–58.

31 Jan Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

32 Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, 23–24; Jan Assmann, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," *New German Critique* 65 (1995): 125–34, 129.

33 Pierre Nora, ed., *Les lieux de mémoire*, 3 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 1984–1992); Pierre Nora and Lawrence D. Kritzman, eds, *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer, 3 vols (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

34 Etienne François and Hagen Schulze, eds, *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte*, vol. 1 (München: Beck, 2001), 18.

ized, thereby effectively defining them out of society.[35] Writing several decades after Nora, we can imagine an accessible online collection of realms of memory, collectively gathered and edited like Wikipedia articles, available for actively engaging different groups and making their struggles for inclusion, their memories, and their traumata visible; such an undertaking might better suit the original intention behind the concept.

Leaving aside the fact that, in German, the concept shares the same word with the everyday understanding of a physical place of commemoration, an *Erinnerungsort*, which often leads to misunderstandings or one-dimensional uses, and keeping in mind the significant problem of its reference to "majority society" and its focus on what has been considered important to this imagined community – the aspect of collective memory being a collection and collage of individual aspects and things still seems relevant and promising. The realms of memory do not represent local, regional, or subregional traditions: they focus on large entities. It is not a coincidence that the volumes edited by Nora and the *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte* are now themselves monuments of collective memory – not exhaustive, but as examples of the process of collecting, describing, and negotiating what is significant within a nation's collective memory at a specific point of time.

As one potential way out of the subcomplex nature of *Erinnerungsorte* and its definition of (majority) society, we can consider the concept of shared heritage. UNESCO has been promoting "shared heritage" in order to establish a nuanced view of cultural heritage, one which takes into account past and present conflicts, colonialism and post-colonialism, and the significant role material and immaterial objects of cultural memory play in international relations as well as in nation-building. In this context, shared means both common and conflicted or contested. Shared heritage can be read as the common heritage of different parties that have faced each other as enemies or through the injustices of colonialism, which now needs to be framed using new narratives, integrating the experiences of both or all sides. Shared heritage can also be read as a way of conceptualizing heritage in post-modern, multicultural societies in which various migrant and minority groups seek recognition and integration and through which their heritage can generate new knowledge and new perspectives on national heritage. This conceptualization of cultural heritage, and thereby also of collective memory, is obviously better suited to contemporary societies than a nationalist understanding of heritage in which history, artefacts, literature, and statues serve primarily to build and underpin an imagined homogeneous idea of a nation, as was popular in 19th-century National

35 Hue-Tam Ho Tai, "Remembered Realms: Pierre Nora and French National Memory," *The American Historical Review* 106, no. 3 (2001): 906–22.

Romanticism and also during most of the 20th century. However, the development of nations is far from linear, and the past decades have seen a return of the concept of the nation state, especially in Eastern and Central Europe and the Balkans.[36] The concept of shared heritage should allow us to understand the role of collective memory as having the potential to bolster nations and nationalist ideologies and also to support heterogeneous, integrational, and critical ideologies that employ postnational and transnational conceptions of identity.

Though the concept *lieux de mémoire* in Nora's initial project focused on modernity, it also featured sites of memory rooted in the Middle Ages: churches (Notre-Dame de Paris), sanctuaries, medieval cities as places of royal coronation, and a medieval personality – Joan of Arc.[37] These are realms of memory that have served as symbols of the past for modern French society and its state. Similarly, in the present volume the realms of memory are not medieval but modern with medieval roots. For our purposes, realms of memory can be understood not as a fixed theoretical concept relying on an imagined societal majority, but as a cultural practice of collecting a potentially endless number of fragments of memory – a social practice of *longue durée*. The objects of veneration may be stable, but the configurations and practices of commemoration change depending on the societies or groups which choose them. For example, Alexander Nevsky can very well be imagined as an article in a Russian collection on realms of memory, but in doing so we must keep in mind that Russia during the Revolution of 1917, Russia today, and also the site in which the historical person lived, all associated him with very different characteristics. If we see Alexander Nevsky as a realm of memory for different societies and groups, this means that the collection of Alexander Nevsky–related memory must have the potential to be open and multifaceted.[38] Processes of forgetting and re-interpretation are also part of collective memory, and they need not be conflict-laden. The memory of Saint Erik, who was dubbed "patron of the realm," was revived in 19th-century Sweden in this way; he may no longer serve as an integrating figure for contemporary Swedish society, but his statues, images, and coat of arms continue to be present in public spaces. Unlike other medieval saints and heroes, his memory is not an object of controversy – indeed, many people may not even know whose head it is that adorns the seal of the city of Stockholm – while many medievalists would un-

36 "Shared Heritage, Shared Futures," special issue, *Museum International* 62, nos. 1–2 (May 2010), https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000189718.

37 Nora, ed., *Les lieux de mémoire*, vol. 3 (Paris: Gallimard, 2013); Vincent Ferré, "Memory," in *Medievalism: Key Critical Terms*, ed. Elizabeth Emery and Richard Utz (Cambridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2015): 133–40, 135.

38 See Schenk, *Aleksandr Nevskij*, 479.

doubtedly interpret the presence of the head of a king or any other person on a medieval seal as a powerful representation of collective identity.

Lieux de mémoire, as a practice of collecting objects of collective memory and supplemented by the concept of shared heritage, allows us to shift our interpretation of medieval figures and their modern afterlives – no longer simply monuments of homogeneous nations, they can be seen as representing the heterogeneity of memory and history in general. It shifts the focus from the object of memory to the actors involved in creating, changing, adopting, and transferring it: the people, institutions, groups, and real and imagined entities that are doing memory.

Explaining the Region: Memories of Medieval Past(s), Saints, and Heroes

The case studies presented in this volume are from the Baltic Sea region: Scandinavia, Northern Germany, the eastern shores of the Baltic Sea (modern-day Latvia, Estonia, and Finland) and Northwestern Russia. The Baltic Sea region has always been heterogeneous and dynamic, and its past is multifaceted. From the Middle Ages to the present day, it has been the site of dramatic political developments and numerous conflicts. Many developments which the region underwent in the medieval period, especially during the 13th century, were foundational formative experiences which continued to echo into modernity. The question as to whether, or in which periods, the Baltic Sea region has been unified by its common experiences – or, alternatively, divided by its different traumata – remains open to debate and the subject of interdisciplinary area studies.

The history of how the region came to be predominantly a part of Latin Christendom also had a significant impact on how the medieval past was perceived in modernity. The kingdoms of Denmark and Sweden were Christianized in the 11th and early 12th centuries, while North-eastern Germany was Christianized in the latter half of the 12th century. But the Eastern Baltic was only brought under the mantle of Latin Christianity during the missions and crusades that began in the mid-12th and lasted for the whole of the 13th century. Livonia (modern-day Latvia and Estonia) and Finland came under the centuries-long control of Northern German (Saxon) and Swedish nobles and merchants.[39] It was a time when the Latin

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39 See Anti Selart, ed., *Baltic Crusades and Societal Innovation in Medieval Livonia, 1200–1350* (Leiden: Brill, 2022); Misāns, Levāns, and Strenga, eds, *Das mittelalterliche Livland und sein historisches Erbe*.

West encountered the Orthodox East on the Baltic borderlands; these encounters in the political entities of Livonia, parts of Finland, and Western Rus' (Novgorod, Polotsk, and Pskov) involved both cooperation and confrontation.[40] Similar border encounters took place in the southwest of the Baltic Sea region, where in the 13th century the interests of Danish and Saxon nobles clashed in the border areas of Schleswig, Holsatia, and Western Pomerania.[41]

Unlike Scandinavia or Northern Germany, in the Middle Ages the Eastern Baltic region was politically controlled by what were initially foreign elites; in subsequent centuries these remained territories controlled by foreign powers. Sweden, Denmark, Poland-Lithuania, and the Russian Empire controlled the Eastern Baltic; the indigenous populations were subjugated and were not part of the political and economic elites.[42] Scandinavia and Germany experienced similar waves of National Romanticism and nation state–building in the 19th century, while the Baltic countries and Finland only gained independence after the First World War, experiencing wars of independence and, in the case of Finland, a civil war. However, these smaller nations – Latvians, Estonians, and Finns – had undergone their own nation-building processes while they were still a part of the Russian Empire in the late 19th century, at a time when the empire was reinforcing its presence in the former borderlands, tightening its grip on the Baltic provinces and parts of the former Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth.

The medieval past and historical figures from the Middle Ages played an essential role in modern nation-building processes and the formation of nation states. The National Romantic period in the 19th century was a golden age for the rediscovery of medieval saints, as national saints and medieval Catholic kings renowned for their piety re-entered the scene anew within a secular context.[43] One might argue that it was the secularly applicable qualities of the medieval kings, such as being a good ruler and "gatherer of the lands" (*Mehrer des Reiches*), that made them appealing objects of collective remembrance. However, some retained only regional importance. In Sweden, the *rex perpetuus* Erik IX (d. 1160) became a symbol of good governance with several monuments dedicated to him, most of

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40 Anti Selart, *Livonia, Rus' and the Baltic Crusades in the Thirteenth Century*, trans. Fiona Robb (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

41 See Jan Rüdiger's chapter in this volume and also Michael Bregnsbo and Kurt Villads Jensen, eds, *Schleswig Holstein – Contested Region(s) through History* (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2016).

42 Andrejs Plakans, *A Concise History of the Baltic States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 77–265.

43 On St Knud as a national saint in the Middle Ages, see John D. Bergsagel, David Hiley, and Thomas Riis, eds, *Of Chronicles and Kings: National Saints and the Emergence of Nation States in the High Middle Ages* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum, 2015).

which were located in Stockholm and Uppsala.[44] As a patron saint of Stockholm he was depicted on the city's coat of arms, and Uppsala cathedral, which acquired a High Gothic appearance when it was renovated in the late 19th century, houses the king's remains to this day.[45] But his role as a patron saint and important medieval figure commemorated in public spaces never spread to the whole of modern Sweden.

In Denmark, all the modern memories referred to the former grandeur and importance of the Danish kingdom. In the early 19th century, some Danish historians viewed participation in the crusades as a process that had opened the world to Denmark.[46] The legend of the Dannebrog, Denmark's national flag, which played an important role in the development of modern Danish national identity, also has its roots in the crusading age – the Battle of Lyndanisse (near Tallinn) in 1219.[47] Following its defeat in the Second Schleswig War (1864), however, the crusades faded from Danish history writing.[48] It was after the loss of Norway (1814), the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein (1864), and the overseas colonies, that control of Northern Livonia in the Middle Ages, Danish power in the Baltic Sea region in the early modern period, and the military might of the Vikings all emerged as positive reference points. Saint Knud, a martyr king slain by his opponents in a church in Odense in the summer of 1086, was just one of the Danish medieval rulers remembered.[49] Medieval Kings Harald Blåtand (d. 985/86), Valdemar Knudsen (r. 1154–1182), Valdemar Valdemarsen (r. 1202–1241), and Valdemar Atterdag (r. 1340–1375) were not saints, yet they were seen as politically and militarily successful heroes whose deeds included attempts to increase royal power, victories

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44 See Henrik Ågren, *Erik den helige – landsfader eller beläte? En rikspatrons öde i svensk historieskrivning från reformationen till och med upplysningen* (Lund: Sekel, 2012).

45 On Erik's remains in Uppsala cathedral, see Sabine Sten et al., "Erik den heliges skelett," *Fornvännen* 111, no. 1 (2016): 27–40.

46 Janus Møller Jensen, *Denmark and the Crusades, 1400–1650* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 5.

47 Inge Adriansen, "The Danish National Flag as a Gift from God: A National-Religious Myth," *Kirchliche Zeitgeschichte* 27, no. 2 (2014): 277–98; Torben Kjersgaard Nielsen, *Dannebrog* (Århus: Århus Universitetsforlag, 2018); Janus Møller Jensen, "Danish Post-Reformation Crusaders: Jerusalem and Crusading in Denmark c.1550–1650," in *Tracing the Jerusalem Code Volume 2: The Chosen People Christian Cultures in Early Modern Scandinavia (1536–ca. 1750)*, ed. Eivor Andersen Oftestad and Joar Haga (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021): 197–232, 226–30.

48 Kurt Villads Jensen, *Crusading at the Edges of Europe: Denmark and Portugal, c. 1000–c. 1250* (London: Routledge, 2017), 1–50.

49 See Steffen Hope's chapter in this volume. See also Nils Holger Petersen, "The Image of St Knud Lavard in His Liturgical Offices and Its Historical Impact," in *Of Chronicles and Kings*, 129–58.

over the Swedes, and the unification of the island regions, all of which created and sustained their long-lasting fame.

Sweden did not experience any major ethnic or political tensions during the 19th century. Denmark, on the other hand, was shaken by its conflicts with Prussia and its allies – the two Schleswig Wars (1848–1864) – and the anti-German nationalism that accompanied them. The predominantly local nature of medieval cults was not the result of the oppression of certain groups who then selected a hero in order to make their contemporary case. In the nation-building processes in the Western Baltic, the aspect of forgetting in doing memory may be more relevant than the active appropriation of anti-heroes.

The Middle Ages caused greater controversy in the north and east of the Baltic Sea region. In Finland, where in 1809 Swedish rule had given way to incorporation into the Russian Empire, the medieval Catholic period and the Swedish cultural and political domination that had existed at the time were viewed positively by the Swedish-speaking elites and rather negatively by aspiring Finnish nationalists.[50] Unlike in other Nordic countries, the semi-mythicized pre-Christian culture was given greater importance than the medieval past.[51] The national epos *Kalevala*, its protagonists, and its visual depictions played a more important role than Christian medieval heroes, yet "Kalevala codified the medievalization of true Finnishness."[52] As part of the construction of a Finnish ethnic and national identity, both the mythological imaginings of *Kalevala* and the commemoration of the murderer of Swedish-English Bishop Henry – the Finnish peasant Lalli – deserve mention.[53] The Lalli story fit into a narrative according to which Christiani-

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50 See Anna Ripatti's chapter in this volume. See also Derek Fewster, "Approaches to the Conversion of the Finns: Ideologies, Symbols and Archaeological Features," in *The North-Eastern Frontiers of Medieval Europe: The Expansion of Latin Christendom in the Baltic Lands*, ed. Alan V. Murray (London: Routledge, 2016): 43–56, 46.

51 Tracy X. Karner, "Ideology and Nationalism: The Finnish Move to Independence, 1809–1918," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 14, no. 2 (1991): 152–69.

52 See Derek Fewster, "'Braves Step Out of the Night of the Barrows': Regenerating the Heritage of Early Medieval Finland," in *The Uses of the Middle Ages in Modern European States: History, Nationhood and the Search for Origins*, ed. R. J. W Evans and Guy Marchal (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014): 31–51, 38.

53 Sini Kangas, "The Murder of Saint Henry, Crusader Bishop of Finland," in *Les Élites Nordiques de l'Europe Occidentale (Xiie-Xve Siècle)*, ed. Tuomas M. S. Lehtonen and Élisabeth Mornet (Paris: Éditions de la Sorbonne, 2019): 189–96; Heidi Henriikka Mäkelä, "The Desired Darkness of the Ancient: Kalevalaicity, Medievalism, and Cultural Memory in the Books Niemi and Viiden Meren Kansa," *Mirator* 21, no. 1 (2021): 24–49, 40–43; Miikka Tamminen, "The Axe of Lalli and the Cap of St. Henry – A View from Finland," in *Controversial Histories – Current Views on the Crusades*, ed. Felix Hinz and Johannes Meyer-Hamme (London: Routledge, 2021): 91–93; Tuomas Heikkilä, *Lalli: Kansallismurhaajan muotokuva* (Helsinki: Tammi, 2022).

zation was part of a colonial enterprise by Sweden, with Henry's murderer Lalli representing indigenous resistance; as such, it was suitable for Finnish nationalism. Yet, as Anna Rippati demonstrates in her chapter in this volume, there are also medieval heroes who have been disputed and difficult to place in modern Finland, such as Tyrgils Knutsson (d. 1306), the founder of Viborg Castle.

Christianization by "Germans" was a recurrent narrative in the Baltic provinces of the Russian Empire (modern-day Latvia and Estonia). Baltic Germans, Latvians, and Estonians were all interested in the medieval past, but their perspectives on it were fundamentally different. All three groups employed the same medieval narratives, the surviving 13th-century chronicles – *the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia* and the *Livonian Rhymed Chronicle* – that recounted the Christian mission and the conquest of the territory of medieval Livonia, where the autochthonous population of the Baltic and Finno-Ugric people lived, by the Northern German and Scandinavian crusaders.[54] However, for the Baltic Germans, who controlled most of the political, economic, and cultural resources of the provinces, these chronicles told the story of the origin of their special status, how their ancestors brought European culture and Latin Christianity to the pagan territories, resulting in the creation of "a German colony."[55] Estonians and Latvians in the late 19th century, most of whom had been freed from serfdom only decades earlier, read the same medieval texts as stories of oppression, colonization, and resistance.[56] It was the creation of national memory using the negative experiences of the medieval conquest and nar-

54 Linda Kaljundi and Kaspars Kļaviņš, "The Chronicler and the Modern World: Henry of Livonia and the Baltic Crusades in the Enlightenment and National Traditions," in *Crusading and Chronicle Writing on the Medieval Baltic Frontier: A Companion to the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia*, ed. Marek Tamm, Linda Kaljundi, and Carsten Selch Jensen (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011): 409–56.

55 Anti Selart, "Historical Legitimacy and Crusade in Livonia," in *Crusading on the Edge: Ideas and Practice of Crusading in Iberia and the Baltic Region, 1100–1500*, ed. Torben K. Nielsen and Iben Fonnesberg-Schmidt (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016): 29–54, 34–35.

56 Ilgvars Misāns, "'Wir waren immer ein Kriegervolk.' Die Darstellung der ostbaltischen Kreuzzüge in der lettischen Geschichtsschreibung," in *Lippe und Livland: Mittelalterliche Herrschaftsbildung in Zeichen der Rose*, ed. Jutta Prieur (Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 2008): 185–207; Selart, "Historical Legitimacy and Crusade in Livonia," 36–37; Linda Kaljundi and Ulrike Plath, "Serfdom as Entanglement: Narratives of a Social Phenomenon in Baltic History Writing," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 51, no. 3 (2020): 349–72; Linda Kaljundi and Aivar Põldvee, "Conceptions of History and Imagined Regions in the Baltic Provinces in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," in *Historiography and the Shaping of Regional Identity in Europe: Regions in Clio's Looking Glass*, ed. Dick Edward Herman de Boer and Luís Adão da Fonseca (Turnhout: Brepols, 2020): 209–35; Linda Kaljundi, "Pagans into Peasants: Ethnic and Social Boundaries in Early Modern Livonia," in *Re-forming Texts, Music, and Church Art in the Early Modern North*, ed. Tuomas M. S. Lehtonen and Linda Kaljundi (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016): 355–92.

ratives about "the Ancient Struggle for Freedom."[57] As such, the heroes and historical persons depicted in these texts had very different applications. The Baltic Germans commemorated the first Livonian bishops (who had not been canonized in the Middle Ages): the first missionary Meinhard (d. 1196); Berthold (d. 1198), who was killed in battle with pagans by the Liv warrior Imanta (Ymaut); and the founder of Riga, Albert (d. 1229).[58] For Latvians and Estonians, on the other hand, it was the indigenous warriors and chieftains of the local tribes – such as Lembitu, Imanta, Viesturs, Namejs, Visvaldis, and others – who were prized as symbols of freedom and resistance.[59]

Heroes need antagonists – enemies, even – in order to win renown and engage in struggle; sometimes, heroes even become anti-heroes themselves.[60] In the case of Alexander Nevsky, the enemies were Swedes and Teutonic knights; later, in Eisenstein's interpretation, these were joined by Russian nobles and clergymen. They – heroes and enemies – seem to be interdependent. As Stefan Berger has put it, describing national heroes and enemies, "both [. . .] belonged firmly to the pantheon of Romantic national narratives."[61]

In the Nordic countries in the 19th century, the political and military narratives and features of heroes were more relevant to their veneration as medieval heroes than the religious ones. Likewise, the masculinization of heroes was more evident, as can be seen by considering the different treatment of both pre-Christian and also Christian female figures. Not one statue or monument was erected for St Birgitta in modern Sweden. Margrete I (1353–1412), the queen of the Kalmar Union and as such a potential secular female heroic figure, was perceived as representative of forced pan-Scandinavism, although local Danish legends about her did survive into modernity.[62] Other strong female rulers, such as Ingeborg of Denmark (1174–1237) or Eufemia of Rügen (1280–1312), queen of Norway, probably never received greater recognition because they contravened stereo-

57 Marek Tamm, "History as Cultural Memory: Mnemohistory and the Construction of the Estonian Nation," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 39, no. 4 (2008): 499–516.

58 Anu Mänd and Anti Selart, "Livonia – A Region without Local Saints?," in *Symbolic Identity and the Cultural Memory of Saints*, ed. Nils Holger Petersen, Anu Mänd, Sebastián Salvadó, and Tracey R. Sands (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2018): 91–122.

59 See the chapter by Gustavs Strenga in this volume. See also Anti Selart, "Lembitu: A Medieval Warlord in Estonian Culture," *Studia Slavica et Balcanica Petropolitana* 29, no. 1 (2021): 3–14.

60 Ulrich Bröckling, "Negationen des Heroischen – ein typologischer Versuch," *helden. heroes. héros. E-Journal zu Kulturen des Heroischen* 3, no. 1 (2015): 9–14.

61 Berger, "The Power of National Pasts," 55.

62 John Lindow, "The Testimony of the Hoofprints: Danish Legends about the Medieval Union Queen Margrethe," *Ethnologia Europaea* 51, no. 1 (2021): 137–155.

types about the acceptable role of women in bourgeois society. As a consequence of more recent social and political trends, these women have been receiving much more attention in scholarship and thereby in intellectual and academic culture than in centuries past, when women's influence on politics was largely neglected.

The Reformation most likely contributed to the fact that Catholic saints were only begrudgingly accepted, if they were remembered at all. Their asceticism, their pious deeds, and their association with the papacy during their lifetimes, as well as the numerous miracles that took place after their deaths, all made them less-than-ideal candidates for commemoration. National Romanticism in the Nordic countries preferred to elevate collective, mythical ancestors; for example, the Götar and the Svear, or Vikings in general.

At the same time, certain social groups sometimes used medieval figures in order to represent political or religious identities that did not find a place in the 20th-century narrative of the homogeneous welfare state. For example, the cult of St Birgitta was revived and proved itself adaptable to a surprisingly wide range of actors. The revival began in the early 1900s and resulted in establishing a new Swedish branch of the *Ordo Sanctissimi Salvatoris*. In 1920, the *Societas Sancta Birgitta* was founded, a High Church Lutheran society for priests and lay people in the Church of Sweden. Likewise, St Birgitta served as an integrational figure for Swedish Catholic converts, a culturally and politically significant group. Producing scientific and popular publications for the Protestant Swedish public, from the initial public veneration of the most famous Swedish saint this group developed a realm of memory that included numerous local saints. The *vita* and canonization processes of Saints Birgitta, Katharina, Nikolaus of Linköping, and Brynolf of Skara were published and their legends were narrated in collections such as *Svenska helgon*.[63] Later on, after the Second World War, the most famous Swedish convert – Queen Christina (1626–1689) – became the subject of a biography by Sven Stolpe (1905–1996). Somewhat surprisingly, Stolpe, although a convert, did not focus on her rejection of the Protestant faith and the Swedish crown, but on conjecture about her non-binary gender identity and her sexuality.[64]

To this day, Swedish-speaking medieval studies are strongly influenced by the works of Catholic authors who view these heroes from a religious perspective, and that perspective has influenced not only how they are remembered by the Swedish Catholic minority but also how they are imagined by most of secular

63 Tryggve Lundén, *Svenska Helgon* (Uppsala: Verbum, 1973).

64 Sven Stolpe, *Från Stoicism till Mystik: Studier i Drottning Kristinas Maximer* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1959).

Swedish society. At the same time, Birgitta and Christina are integrational figures, who are not just remembered for religious reasons. They are internationally known; once tied to the European cultural and political elites, today they are appealing as female role models and can thus serve to promote the idea of gender equality as a brand of the Nordic nations.

The other Nordic medieval figure who has some saintly features but has never been venerated or canonized is Margaretha from the Sámi region. She remained marginalized until the profile of the Sámi indigenous minority began to increase in prominence. In the late 14th century, she visited Queen Margrete in order to seek help for missionary work amongst her people, and a good number of sources about her have survived, yet in mainstream medieval studies she has been barely researched and she similarly plays only a secondary role in collective memory.[65] It is only in the last few years that her missionary work has been described and her person researched as part of efforts to revitalize a Sámi cultural identity. It remains unclear whether a person who – long before the sometimes compulsory Christianization of the Sámi people – showed an interest in the new religion and thus welcomed a form of cultural colonization, can work as a hero for a minority that is struggling for its basic rights. In contrast with the medieval sources, where she is often referred to as a *pagana* and a visionary and is only once mentioned as originating from the Sámi region, it is clear that today her ethnicity is being highlighted. Although the term "Sámi saint" has frequently been used to describe her, this seems to be a secularization and modernization of the notion of sainthood, as no evidence of any canonization attempts or veneration survives. The Sámi in Sweden have not opted to use this medieval figure to "do memory" – perhaps because the topic of forced Christianization in the 17th and 18th centuries precludes the possibility of any positive references to the process of religious change. Again, the choice to select or to not select medieval figures for modern heroization and identity building says more about the societies and groups that do so than it does about the actual medieval people in question.

In this volume, we test the concept of "doing memory" as a way of nuancing the national narratives of heroization and sacralization and of identifying smaller collectivities and groups of actors who (re)designate medieval figures as signifi-

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65 See Cordelia Heß "Margaretas periphere Visionen. Mission, Kolonisierung und "race" im Spätmittelalter am Beispiel der Saami," *Historische Zeitschrift* 316, no. 1 (2023): 1–26; Biörn Tjällén, "'Lappkvinnan Margareta' Birgitinsk mystik och kyrkoreform i den senmedeltida omvändelsen av Sápmi," in *Kvinnor och andlighet i norr: Historiska och litterära perspektiv*, ed. Daniel Lindmark and Jan Samuelsson (Skellefteå: Artos & Norma bokförlag, 2018): 27–50.

cant to their identity – in political, religious, or ethnic terms. With this approach, we hope to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of these processes of collective memory, of their historical evolution and the social and political changes in the societies that venerate them, in the context of the nation states of the Baltic Sea region.

Popular Culture

Sari Katajala-Peltomaa

A Tool to Think With? Saint Birgitta as Cultural Heritage in Post-Reformation Finland

Birgitta Birgersdotter (1303–1373) was a Swedish noblewoman, wife, and mother of eight. Canonized in 1391, she was also one of the most well-known and influential medieval mystics. Her *Revelaciones* and the Birgittine order, *Ordo Sanctissimi Salvatoris*, had a continuing influence on medieval Christianity (and beyond) that continued long after her death. There is an exceptionally vast scholarship dedicated to her;[1] her influence was particularly notable in Sweden and other Nordic countries, which have constituted the heartlands of her cult. This article focuses on her afterlife in Finland after the Reformation. Finland was a part of the Swedish kingdom where the Lutheran Reformation took place – gradually – after King Gustavus Vasa's (1496–1560, r. 1523–1560) proclamation in 1527. In 1809, after the Napoleonic wars, Finland was annexed by Orthodox Russia. This context would clearly have a major effect on the memory of a medieval saint.

While political and cultural transformations did not prevent the remembering of Birgitta, they changed the purposes it served. Birgitta became a part of the cultural heritage, which is understood here as a set of attitudes towards, and relationships with, the past. Rather than focusing on material remains, cultural heritage is approached here as a process of bestowing and transmitting meaning.[2] Birgitta was a "tool to think with" in the construction of collective identity – on the family, communal, and national levels. Birgitta featured in different yet entangled discussions; a distinction is made here between a "vernacular tradition" –

1 It is impossible to list all the relevant studies here. See, however: Maria H. Oen, ed., *A Companion to Birgitta of Sweden and Her Legacy in the Later Middle Ages* (Leiden: Brill, 2019); Päivi Salmesvuori, *Power and Sainthood. The Case of Birgitta of Sweden* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). For international publications in Birgittta's jubileum year of 2003 alone, see Birgitta Fritz, "St Birgitta and Vadstena Abbey in scholarly literature published during the jubilee year 2003," *Scandinavian Journal of History* 20 (2003): 277–86. There has been notable interest, especially in Sweden and Finland. See, for example, Annette Landen and Per Beskow, eds, *Birgitta av Vadstena. Pilgrim och profet 1303–1373. En jubileumsbok 2003* (Stockholm: Natur och cultur, 2004); Päivi Setälä and Eva Ahl, ed., *Pyhä Birgitta – Euroopan suojeluspyhimys* (Helsinki: Otava, 2003). See also Tore Nyberg, *Birgittinsk festgåva: studier om Heliga Birgitta och Birgittinorden* (Uppsala: Svenska kyrkohistoriska föreningen, 1991).
2 Tanja Vahtikari, *Valuing World Heritage Cities* (London: Routledge, 2017), 44–61; Rodney Harrison, *Heritage: Critical Approaches* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 14–15.

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that is, daily practices on a family and communal level – and official, political, and national discussions. These can all be seen as ways of "doing memory," as conceptualized in the introductory chapter to this volume – an active process that can include various elements of veneration and remembrance.

In this chapter, I examine how Birgitta has been presented in these discussions. I trace different layers of traditions and discussions, from the Reformation era to the early 20th century. Within the wide field of studies dedicated to Birgitta, this kind of approach – Birgitta as cultural heritage in Finland – is largely missing; therefore, it is clear that this article can only provide an overview pointing to the potential for future research, rather than a definitive account.

Birgitta in Finland: The Medieval Background

Medieval Finland was not a territory with administrative autonomy or clearly-defined borders. It was a part of the Swedish kingdom, which enlarged its territory eastwards all through the medieval period. Finland – as we know it today – was not understood as a single unit; "Finland" initially meant the southwestern parts of modern Finland (still called Finland Proper), and it was only from 1419 on that the connotation of the word stretched to cover the whole country – except for the eastern province of Viipuri (Vyborg). Religion and church administration functioned as unifying factors. The medieval diocese of Turku (Åbo) covered the whole of Finland (with its evolving eastern border), and the bishop of Turku held considerable power over secular matters as well.

In a wider European perspective, Finland was Christianized late; the transformation only took place gradually, starting in the 11th century. Changes in burial practices testify to a peaceful cultural change, but traditionally what is referred to as the First Crusade, in the mid-12th century, has been seen as a major turning point. Its leading figure, Henry – considered the first bishop of Turku – was, according to legend, martyred during the expedition; he was subsequently referred to as the apostle of the Finns. He was the only indigenous medieval saint venerated in Finland. Later, both the First Crusade and Henry became crucial elements of Finland's national history and in nationalist discourse around the Finnish past and national identity.[3] During the Middle Ages, Henry was one of the most popu-

3 Saint Henry and the First Crusade have been an enduring topic within Finnish historical research. Most recently, see Tuomas Heikkilä, *Pyhän Henrikin legenda* (Helsinki: The Finnish Literature Society, 2005); for the research tradition, 38–46. Finnish historical consciousness is also analysed in the article by Anna Ripatti in this volume.

lar saints in Finland, but he was only one among many. The Virgin Mary was popular in Finland, as were various biblical and early Christian saintly figures. It was within this context that the cult of Saint Birgitta was introduced and consolidated from the 1370s on.

The cult of Birgitta took hold in Finland early on. There are Finnish cases registered in her canonization process (1374–1380),[4] and Finnish pilgrims travelled to Vadstena Abbey (in Southern Sweden), the main monastery of the Birgittine order, to Birgitta's shrine all through the medieval period. A major hub of Birgittine devotion in Finland was Naantali (Nådendal) monastery (*Vallis Gratiae*) in southwestern Finland, established in 1438. It was an important learning centre in Finland, and preaching was listed as a major reason for founding it.[5] Both church dedications and medieval calendars provide evidence of the importance of the cult of Birgitta in Finland.[6]

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4 Isak Collijn, ed., *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte* (Uppsala: Svenska fornskriftsällskapet, 1924–31). On the medieval cult and Birgitta's miracles: Christian Krötzl, *Pilger, Mirakel und Alltag: Formen des Verhaltens im skandinavischen Mittelalter (12.–15. Jahrhundert)* (Helsinki: SHS, 1994); Anders Fröjmark, *Mirakler och helgonkult. Linköpings biskopsdöme under senmedeltiden* (Uppsala: Uppsala universitet, 1992); Janken Myrdal and Göran Bäärnhielm, *Kvinnor, barn & fester i medeltida mirakelberättelser* (Skara: Skaraborgs länsmuseum, 1994); Cordelia Heβ, *Heilige machen im spätmittelalterlichen Ostseeraum. Die Kanonisationsprozesse von Birgitta von Schweden, Nikolaus von Linköping und Dorothea von Montau* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2008); Sari Katajala-Peltomaa, "Devotional strategies in everyday life: Laity's interaction with saints in the North in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries," in *Lived Religion and the Long Reformation in Northern Europe c. 1300–1700*, ed. Sari Katajala-Peltomaa and Raisa Maria Toivo (Leiden: Brill, 2017): 21–45; Sari Katajala-Peltomaa, "Arki, hoiva ja pyhiinvaellukset," in *Suomalaisten Pyhiinvaellukset keskiajalla. Kun maailma aukeni*, ed. Sari Katajala-Peltomaa, Christian Krötzl, and Marjo Meriluoto-Jaakkola (Helsinki: The Finnish Literature Society, 2014): 163–79; Sari Katajala-Peltomaa, "Fatherhood, masculinity and lived religion in late medieval Sweden," *Scandinavian Journal of History* 38, no. 2 (2013): 223–44.

5 DF #2265. Birgit Klockars, *I Nådens dal: klosterfolk och andra c. 1440–1590* (Helsingfors: Svenska Litteratursällskapet i Finland, 1980). The importance and popularity of Naantali monastery is evident in donations made by Finnish lay people; see Anna-Stina Hägglund, "Birgittine Sites of Memory. Memorial Services as Expressions of Lived Religion in Testamentary Bequests to St Birgitta's Monasteries in the 15th Century Baltic Sea Region," in *Birgittine Acts of Memory. Remembering Birgitta of Sweden*, ed. David Carrillo-Rangel and Helen Leslie (London: Routledge, 2024, forthcoming); Anna-Stina Hägglund, *Birgittine Landscapes. Three Monasteries in Their Local and Regional Environment Across the Baltic Sea Region c. 1410–1530* (Turku: Åbo Akademi University Press, 2022), 163–213.

6 Circa ten churches were dedicated to Birgitta in Finland, and her major feast day, the feast of canonization, was usually celebrated as *duplex* or *totum duplex* in Finnish churches. Aarno Malin, *Der Heiligenkalender Finnland: Seine Zusammensetzung und Entwicklung* (Helsinki: Suomen Kirkkohistoriallinen Seura, 1925), 227–28; Kati Kallio, Tuomas M. S. Lehtonen, Senni Timo-

Besides the official liturgy, interaction with saints took many forms. The saint's powers were called upon amidst daily troubles; they helped and protected devotees, and in an agricultural society feast days functioned as signposts marking the rhythm of the year. We do not have a lot of hagiographic material from medieval Finland, and many of the practices and local nuances remain unclear. Everything we know, however, indicates that saints held similar positions on the Finnish side of the realm as in Sweden.[7] Even if saints were not credited with intercessory powers in Lutheranism, their pious lives could be admired. The everyday need for saints' intercessory powers or the role of feasts as markers of collective identity did not disappear with the Reformation, as the post-Reformation vernacular tradition testifies.

Birgitta and Other Celestial Helpers in Early Modern Finland

Scholars have pointed out the conservative nature of early Lutheranism and have shown that old practices were firmly adhered to long after the Reformation. Only in 1571, with the introduction of the Lutheran liturgical order, were most saints' days removed from the church calendar of holy days. Among the days abolished was the feast of Birgitta; *Biritmässa* (October 7) continued to be part of the secular calendar, but it was not among the holy celebrations.[8]

In agricultural societies like Finland, interaction with saints was to a considerable extent motivated by the desire to protect cattle; saints' feast days also

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nen, Irma-Riitta Järvinen, and Ilkka Leskelä, *Laulut ja kirjoitukset. Suullinen ja kirjallinen kulttuuri uuden ajan alun Suomessa* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2017), 130.

7 Krötzl, *Pilger, Mirakel und Alltag*; Fröjmark, *Mirakler och helgonkult*; Katajala-Peltomaa, "Arki, hoiva ja pyhiinvaellukset," 163–79.

8 Raisa Toivo, *Faith and Magic in Early Modern Finland* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan 2016), 9 et passim; Kallio et al., *Laulut ja kirjoitukset*, 131–32. See also Kaarlo Arffman, "Resistance to the Reformation in 16th-Century Finland," in *Lived Religion and the Long Reformation*, 255–73; Jason Lavery, "Mikael Agricola: Father of the Finnish language, builder of the Swedish state," in *Lived Religion and the Long Reformation*, 207–29. On peasants' religion in early modern Sweden as "traditionalism," see esp.: Göran Malmstedt, *Bondetro och kyrkoro: Religiös mentalitet i stormaktstidens Sverige* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2002). For the Finnish side of the realm during the Reformation era, see Toivo, "Protestantism, Modernity and the Power of Penetration: Saints and Sacrifice in 17th Century Lutheran Finland," in *Lived Religion and the Long Reformation*, 75–103; Miia Kuha, *Pyhänpäivien vietto varhaismodernin ajan Savossa (vuoteen 1710)* (Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä, 2016), https://jyx.jyu.fi/handle/123456789/49350.

served as markers throughout the agricultural year, giving structure to the yearly rhythm and a sense of control over the surrounding world. At first glance, Birgitta's cult seems to be particularly well suited to agricultural needs. She was celebrated by three different feasts (*dies translacionis*, May 28; *dies natalis*, July 23; *dies canonizacionis*, October 7). The feast of translation at the end of May and the feast of canonization in early October match the timing of many practices in the northern agricultural year.[9] Mentions of Birgitta in protection rituals or practices linked to the agricultural year are not, however, easy to find.

A major problem for the study of the Reformation era in Finland is the scarcity of sources, especially for the 16th century. Obviously, invocations, votive offerings, or pilgrimages – not to mention miracles – were no longer reported or recorded after the Reformation. During later centuries, evidence of interaction with saints can be found in court records, antiquarian collections, and folkloric material.[10] The early modern secular court records form an extensive set of data, and they are regularly used for the study of religious practices in Finland. In this material, mentions of unofficial holy days or unofficial ritual celebrations can be found; these often take place in the transitional stages of the agricultural year. Birgitta's feasts, however, do not feature among these cases.

Instead of Birgitta, saints like George, Olaf, and Catherine (of Alexandria) appear in the preserved material. All three saints share in common having a feast day that is conveniently located to mark changes in the agricultural year. Furthermore, they all belong to the first cultural layers of Christianization in Finland. St George's day (April 23) was the traditional occasion for letting the cattle out for the summer. This was often done in a ritualistic manner, with the cattle passing through a gate or arch

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9 On Birgitta's feast days, see Roger Andersson and Stephan Borgehammar, "The Preaching of the Birgittine Friars at Vadstena Abbey," *Revue Mabillon* 8, no. 69 (1997): 209–36. For the schedule of milestones in the agricultural year, see Kustaa Vilkuna, *Vuotuinen ajantieto. Vanhoista merkkipäivistä sekä kansanomaisesta talous- ja sääkalenterista enteineen* (Helsinki: Otava, 1983).

10 One example of an antiquarian collection is Christfrid Ganander, *Mythologia fennica, eller förklaring öfver De Nomina Propria, Deastrorum, Idolorum, Locorum, virorum Etc.* (Åbo: Frenckellska Boktryckeriet, 1789). The oral folkloric tradition, Old Finnish poems, and *Suomen kansan vanhat runot* (SKVR) are accessible in an open searchable database hosted by the Finnish Literature Society: https://skvr.fi/. This database is based on publications which include nearly all Kalevala-type poems found in archives and literary sources. The secular court records from early modern Finland form a considerable corpus – to such an extent that it is impossible to go through them all for one article. I have utilized the "Tuokko" register, a 20th-century catalogue of the 17th-century rural district court records, which lists the cases by keywords. It was originally written by hand on card files and housed in the National Archives of Finland, but it has since been digitized: https://digihakemisto.net/haku. See also Toivo, "Protestantism, Modernity and the Power of Penetration," 83.

of birch or rowan tree. The occasion included an invocation of Saint George or a charm-like chant, urging him to bring the cattle safely back from the woods where they were to pasture during the summer. Saint Catherine's day (November 25) marked the other end of the agricultural year. On that day a special porridge was to be prepared and taken to the cattle shed; rituals also included a special beer and toasts, as well as charm-like songs or invocations. Saint Olaf's day (July 29), in turn, marked the end of hay season. Traditionally, Olaf was considered a protector of lambs, particularly associated with protecting them from bears. The feast day celebrations included a specially prepared meal of lamb as a ritual of protection.[11]

Feast days had multiple functions, including but not limited to their strictly religious meanings. The dates of these activities, when sending cattle to pasture and at the end of summer harvest and the end of harvest season, do not fall too far from the feasts of Birgitta. Her name does not come up in the context of such festivities, though. While Birgitta had enjoyed popularity in medieval Finland, I have not been able to track down references to her feast day celebrations in early modern court records. As feast day celebrations and other ritual practices involving saints can be categorized under various headings in the registers of court records, it is possible that one or more references to Birgitta may have gone unnoticed.[12] Yet this would not change the big picture: interaction with Birgitta was not a significant factor when ritual activity with saints or feast day celebrations ended up in court in post-Reformation Finland.

The court material illuminates only a small minority of the lay rituals that involved ongoing interaction with saints. Saint's day rituals became hidden practices when they were no longer reinforced, shared, or tolerated on the parish level. As Raisa Maria Toivo argues, saint's day celebrations were adapted to the new context after the Reformation; they were not merely remnants of older traditions.[13] They were integral to the way people lived their religion and sought protection and tried to secure their livelihoods – the Reformation did not lessen these needs.

11 Ganander, *Mythologia fennica,* 32–34, 65, 92–93, 110; SKVR IX3, 1111, 1129, 1178; SKVR XI, 2063. Kallio et al., *Laulut ja kirjoitukset*, 97, 132–33, 138, 199–210. For court cases involving feast day celebrations, see Toivo, *Faith and Magic*, 92, 98–99; Miia Kuha, "Extended families as communities of religious experience in late 17th-century eastern Finland," in *Histories of Experience in the World of Lived Religion*, ed. Sari Katajala-Peltomaa and Raisa Toivo (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2022), 139–61.

12 I have gone through the "Tuokko" register with search words relating to church and clergy, religion and superstition, and remnants of the Catholic faith.

13 Toivo, "Protestantism, Modernity and the Power of Penetration."

Communication is at the core of rituals; they are also a way to create, integrate, and disintegrate communities. In medieval Finland, rituals and official celebrations constructed identity and created coherence for the family, parish, and diocese, creating a devotional community that shared in the experience of Birgitta's intercession and protection. The communicative nature of interaction rituals continued in an evolving religious context – the message being conveyed was altered, as was the community of experience created by the practice.[14]

The ongoing presence of Birgitta within the Finnish mental landscape is confirmed by other source material. The oral tradition shows that Birgitta remained a tool to think with after the Reformation; she was a tool for managing the everyday and for creating identity. References to saints and saint's day celebrations are a commonplace in folkloric material. The verses, charms, and invocations of saints found in the SKVR collection of old Finnish poems form a syncretic whole, where several cultural layers are visible in an intertwined form. In other words, material collected and recorded during the 19th and 20th centuries also bears evidence of earlier practice.[15] In these oral verses, Birgitta often appears with the vernacular variant of her name: Pirjo or Pirkko.[16]

In the folkloric material, Pirkko was associated with the ladybug, *Coccinella septempunctata*. Nowadays, the charm-like saying "Lennä, lennä leppäpirkko – Fly, fly ladybug" is a children's rhyme, but the oral tradition indicates that it used to be employed to predict the future. In the vernacular tradition, ladybugs were associated with many other female saints as well.[17] The graceful flying insect was likely considered to be a messenger, and was often associated with female heavenly intercessors.

14 For early modern saint's day celebrations and community of experience, see Kuha, "Extended families as communities of religious experience."

15 Anna-Leena Siikala, *Itämerensuomalainen mytologia* (Helsinki: The Finnish Literature Society, 2012). The oral tradition was undergoing rapid change at the time the verses were collected, and there were considerable local and temporal variations. On the timing and variation of this material, see Kallio et al, *Laulut ja kirjoitukset*, 45–51.

16 I have used as search words "Pirkko" (41 hits), "Pirjo" (3 hits), "Pirjotar" (1 hit), and "leppäpirkko" (19 hits). In the Swedish folkloric material collected and preserved by Svenska Litteratursällskapet i Finland, no references to Birgitta can be found. The material is vast and some remark(s) may have escaped notice. I thank the archival staff of Svenska Litteratursällskapet i Finland for help in searching for potential mentions. Translations of poems and later journal texts are my own.

17 On verses, see, for example, SKVR VI1, 2200; SKVR VI2, 7015; Kallio et al., *Laulut ja kirjoitukset*, 209. *Leppäkerttu* – Gertrud; *leppätriinu* – Catherine; in Swedish *Nyckelpiga* – the Virgin Mary. Eugène Louis Backman, *Jungfru Maria Nyckelpiga* (Stockholm: Kungliga Boktryckeriet, P.A. Norstedt, 1947).

In the folkloric material, Birgitta is not directly connected with invocations or charms of healing or to protect cattle, unlike many other saints, but there are signs implying such a role. Important evidence of Birgitta's position as a protector can be found in an oral poem or charm recorded in 1830 in Kaavi, in Eastern Finland. The poem links Birgitta to the birth of the bear; in other versions of this poem the saint in question is the Virgin Mary, St George, or in some versions the pre-Christian Finnish god, Ukko. To summarize, the poem states that Pirjo(tar), the Finnish version of Birgitta, was a short-tempered wife who did not want to or care to spin or sow. She became agitated and threw the wool into a river; a fierce wind gathered the wool and eventually out of it the bear was born.[18]

The birth of the bear is a significant event, as the bear was not just a fearful beast that threatened humans and cattle pasturing in the woods. In the Finno-Ugric polytheistic tradition, the bear was a sacred entity and an important symbol. It was a source of animistic power, and many rituals guided the hunt as well as the feast after the killing. Traces of these customs and of the collective memory of the bear's importance in the supernatural landscape survived in Finland well into the early modern era.[19] The syncretism of the folkloric tradition is clearly visible in this case. In the Finno-Ugric tradition, to know the birth of someone or something gave one power over them. Thus, following this logic, as Birgitta was responsible for the birth of the bear she also held power over it. In an agricultural society with dense forests and wildlife that threatened cattle and survival, this would have been an important attribute for an effective protector.

Several scholars have suggested that the idea of Birgitta not wanting to spin or sow comes from her *vita*. There we can find an account of twelve-year-old Birgitta struggling to do her needlework when the Virgin Mary comes to her assistance, producing an obviously remarkable work. For the lay audience, this scene may have been interpreted in relation to Birgitta's position as a noblewoman not wanting to do handicrafts and having a temper. In a similar vein, in Finnish, *Lankapirkko* is an insect that tangles up yarn, and *Äkäpirkko* is a nickname for a

18 SKVR VII5, 3936: "Pirjotar pikainen vaimo/ Jok ei keträtä kehahna/ Eikä ommella osanut/ Visko villasa vesillen."

19 On the cult of the bear in Finnish and Sami folklore, see Matti Sarmela, "Karhu ihmisen ympäristössä," in *Kolme on kovaa sanaa. Kirjoituksia kansanperinteestä*, ed. Pekka Laaksonen and Sirkka-Liisa Mettomäki (Helsinki: The Finnish Literature Society, 1991): 209–50. For a comparison between the Finno-Ugric and Scandinavian traditions, see Thomas A. DuBois, "Diet and Deities: Contrastive Livelihoods and Animal Symbolism in Nordic Pre-Christian Religions," in *More Than Mythology: Narratives, Ritual Practices, and Regional Distribution in Pre-Christian Scandinavian Religions*, ed. Catharina Raudvere and Peter Schjødt (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2012): 65–96; for bears, 86–90.

short-tempered female.[20] Interestingly enough, this folkloric connotation of Birgitta is not too far from the image of Birgitta as a saint: in her *vita* and *Revelaciones*, there are several episodes where Birgitta chastises those in power with harsh words. Correspondingly, in the miracles of her canonization process, she was essentially a saint who punished people for their sinful and disrespectful behaviour – in some cases, by letting demons torment them.[21]

It has been suggested that this episode might have been transmitted from the Latin *vita* to the Finnish folkloric tradition via images in an altarpiece of Vadstena Abbey, where Birgitta is depicted doing her needlework and later struggling with a demon. The demon, according to this theory, would have been mistaken for a bear.[22] There are, however, other, more plausible paths of transmission. Birgitta's *vita* and her *Revelaciones* were both often used as sources for Birgittine priest brothers' sermons. Preaching – including to a lay audience – was a crucial part of the Birgittine monastic idea and, in addition to images, the preaching of Birgittine priest brothers was a key factor in spreading the *fama sanctitatis* of Birgitta.[23] Vadstena Abbey was an important place of pilgrimage for Finnish pilgrims, but some of the active preachers also visited Naantali monastery. One of these was Johannes Borquardi. He entered Vadstena Abbey in 1428 and died in 1447 after having come down with fever while travelling to settle some of Naantali monastery's administrative affairs in Finland. Johannes was a well-known and productive preacher; besides commenting on other brothers' texts, he also compiled three large collections himself.[24] Among his sermons on Birgitta there is one he delivered on the day of canonization with a reference to the *vita*, to the incident where the Virgin Mary helped Birgitta do her needlework.[25] We do not know whether this sermon was preached in Naantali, but it is quite possible. In my view, sermons constitute a more likely mode of transmitting the idea of Birgitta

20 Kallio et al., *Laulut ja kirjoitukset*, 208. Vilkuna, *Vuotuinen ajantieto*.

21 On the image of Birgitta as a thaumaturge doing battle against demons and sinful people, see Heß, *Heilige machen im spätmittelalterlichen Ostseeraum*, 201–4. On the role of demonic presence in constructing Birgitta's saintly powers, see Sari Katajala-Peltomaa, *Demonic Possession and Lived Religion in Later Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 145–48. On the relationship between Birgitta and her political adversaries, see Salmesvuori, *Power and Sainthood,* 115–18.

22 Kallio et al., *Laulut ja kirjoitukset*, 139–40.

23 Andersson and Borgehammar, "The Preaching of the Birgittine Friars," 209–36; Roger Andersson, *De birgittinska ordenprästerna som traditionsförmedlare och folkfostare* (Stockholm: Runica et Medievalia, 2001). Ca. 120 of Birgitta's feast day sermons are preserved in the remarkable collection of Vadstena sermons, which is currently housed by Uppsala University Library.

24 Andersson, *De birgittinska ordenprästerna*, 207–10.

25 Uppsala Universitetsbibliotek, C-sammlung 331 f. 142r.

sowing – even if not very successfully – to the Finnish side of the realm and to the Finnish oral tradition.

Antiquarian Interest as Identity-Building

In the early modern era, the earlier cultural tradition, including saints, was not only a question of religion; it soon became an element in an identity-building process and started to be of interest to more learned circles, for whom it represented a form of cultural heritage. In Sweden, this was connected with establishing the identity of the Swedish realm as a great power and a great nation. In 1666 a decree was issued instructing the parish clergy to collect and report information on historical matters in their parishes, including information on worship and saints from the Catholic period. Finnish clergy also participated in this endeavour, but in a rather haphazard manner. In reports from the Finnish parishes, one finds no references to cultic practices of Birgitta; instead, natural formations connected with pre-Christian traditions were listed.[26]

Naantali monastery, as a material token of the past, was of major interest early on; already, in 1700, the monastery's remains were discussed in an academic thesis by Daniel Juslenius (1676–1752), and others followed his lead.[27] A more thorough antiquarian work was carried out by Christfried Ganander (1741–1790), who published *Mythologia Fennica* in 1789, listing places, rituals, and entities. Among its 430 entries (in alphabetical order), several references to saints and saint's day rituals can be found. The only reference to Birgitta occurs in an inventory of Salo church: Ganander mentions that it was the oldest church in Ostrobothnia and had, among other things in its possession, a parchment copy of Birgitta's *Revelaciones* and an artefact of fine workmanship, likely an altarpiece,

26 The actual results of the antiquity collection are included in Nils-Gustaf Stahre and Carl Ivar Ståhle, *Rannsakningar efter antikviteter I* (Stockholm: Kungliga vitterhets-, historie-, och antikvitets akademi, 1960). During the 17th century the first version of the oral ballad of Saint Henry, “Pyhän Henrikin legenda,” was also recorded. Heikkilä, *Pyhän Henrikin legenda*, 246–56; Kallio et al., *Laulut ja kirjoitukset*, 447–92.

27 Eva Ahl-Waris, *Historiebruk kring Nådendal: och den kommemorativa anatomin av klostrets minnesplats* (Helsinki: Helsingin yliopisto, 2010). Juslenius, like other intellectuals of the time, argued strongly for the importance and benefits of Finland being part of the Swedish – that is to say, Western – cultural sphere, even if this had required a crusading war. Pertti Haapala, Mervi Kaarninen, Katja-Maria Miettunen, Ilona Pikkanen, Nils Erik Villstrand, and Johanna Wassholm, “Kertomus Suomen historiasta,” in *Suomalaisen yhteiskunnan historia 1400–2000*, ed. Pirjo Markkola, Marjaana Niemi, and Pertti Haapala (Tampere: Vastapaino, 2021): 475–528, esp. 482–83.

depicting Birgitta.[28] No explanation was offered as to why a Latin text dealing with a medieval saint remained preserved centuries after the Reformation. Even if this is only a minor detail, it is noteworthy since the majority of Finnish parchment manuscripts were transformed (after being torn to pieces) into covers of tax rolls and administrative reports during the Reformation era.

The interest in uncovering and identifying a glorious past was not limited to the national level, but could also be reflected in the construction of family identity. After the re-organization of state power and administrative changes that were consolidated by the end of 16th century, it became important for elite families to be able to trace a patrilineal genealogy showing noble descent. In this, Birgitta featured prominently, as she was of royal lineage on her mother's side. In this new context of state building and of the institutionalization of the nobility as an estate, she served, not as a holy intercessor, but as an ancestor to be called upon to certify the noble lineage of several families. One of these was the Brahe family, which was active in Finland. Clearly, in many instances, this kind of genealogical rhetoric – linking the family to Saint Birgitta – would not stand up to modern critical scrutiny, but it was a response to the demands of the time: a nobleman in a high position serving the crown needed to have a noble family background.[29] Birgitta not only united the different families but also offered an instrument for identity work in an era of diminishing kin power and emerging state control.

Interest in the medieval past increased during the era of National Romanticism in Finland, just as it did in the rest of Europe. The Middle Ages were considered to be the era in which the ground had been laid for the nation's roots. In Finland, *Boken om Vårt Land*/ *Maamme kirja*, the history of Finland published by Zachris Topelius (1818–1898) in 1875, was emblematic of this interest. The book covered the entire history of the country from the imagined pre-Christian past to the time of its writing. The book was very popular and was used in schools in various revised editions until the 1950s.

The fourth chapter of the book was dedicated to the Catholic era; Saints Erik and Henry feature prominently in the text, as do later bishops of Turku. The Lutheran tone of the text is, however, clear: Henry is mentioned as a bishop, not as a saint, and the miracles listed in his legend are referred to as folktales or fairy tales. As for Birgitta, Naantali monastery is considered an important sign of the nation's past, a symbol of identity worthy of greater attention. In the section de-

28 Ganander, *Mythologia fennica*, for references of saints' day customs, 28, 32–34, 37, 55, 65, 69, 92–93, 110; for Salo church and Birgitta, 83. Actually, Salo is located in Finland Proper.

29 Tiina Miettinen, *Juuria ja juurettomia. Suomalaiset ja suku keskiajalta 2000-luvulle* (Jyväskylä: Atena, 2019), 82–99.

voted to Naantali monastery, the general tone is quite positive: the monastery was an asylum and a centre for learning and healing. Even if the glory days of the monastery were long past, Birgitta herself was still present protecting her own: the monastery burnt down 1862 because of the hunting of a jackdaw. According to Topelius, the actual reason was that a projectile set the roof on fire, but people explained the incident as Birgitta's punishment – all living things at the monastery were under her protection, and the hunting of the jackdaw violated this rule.[30]

This case is part of the process of remembering Birgitta and simultaneously reiterates her essential characteristics: Birgitta was a noblewoman who demanded respect and was able and willing to punish those found lacking in this regard – just like in her hagiography. Even though Topelius claims that belief in her ongoing presence was limited to the credulous, the collective memory of Birgitta hovers in the background of this kind of shared understanding of Birgitta's character.

Birgitta and European Connections in Constructing Finnish Identity

Birgitta was already a symbol of identity during the Middle Ages. She was a patron of the realm in Sweden and her cult was utilized in power struggles by both the nobility and Vadstena Abbey.[31] All throughout medieval Europe, saints and their cults were connected with political power, and Finland was no exception. When Birgitta was stripped of her intercessory powers during the Reformation, her role in constructing power alliances was altered but did not end. Birgitta as a rhetorical tool was adapted to changing contexts.

The year 1809 was a major turning point in Finnish history. After what is known as the Finnish War (part of the Napoleonic Wars), fought between Russia and Sweden, Finland was annexed by the Russian Empire. Thus, Finland was no longer the eastern part of the Swedish kingdom but became an autonomous Grand Duchy within the Russian Empire. After their long common history with Sweden was severed, the Finns were forced to think of their identity and its links

30 Zachris Topelius, *Boken om vårt land: läsebok för de lägsta läroverken i Finland* (Helsingfors: Söderström, 1937), 254–56. For a Church historical perspective on the text, see Erika Boije, "Kyrkohistoriskt historiebruk som menings- och identitetsskapande narrativ praktik i Boken om vårt land," *Ennen ja Nyt* 16, no. 5 (2016), https://journal.fi/ennenjanyt/article/view/108762/63759.

31 Louise Berglund, *Guds stat och maktens villkor. Politiska ideal i Vadstena kloster, ca 1370–1470* (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 2003).

to language and religion from a new perspective. Being annexed by an Orthodox empire obviously disrupted the balance of power and placed new weight on identity construction via religion, as Lutheranism was one of the elements distinguishing the Finns from the Russians. As the Russian Empire was a multi-ethnic complex with different religions, Finns were allowed to remain Lutheran. The Finnish Church, as an entity separate from Sweden's, was born in the 19th century; the milestones in this process were the 300th anniversary of the Reformation in 1817 and the new Church law of 1870.[32] Religion had already been a clear identity marker in the Baltic Sea region during the Middle Ages: in religious rhetoric, the Orthodox had been labelled schismatics, and Birgitta herself had been eager to promote a "crusade" against them.[33] Their Catholic past clearly separated the Finns from the Russians, yet saints were also a central aspect of the Orthodox faith and tradition.

It was within this context that national history was born – or invented – in Finland by a group of nationally minded intellectuals who drew upon the ideas of contemporary European philosophers and historians, especially those of the German Romantic tradition. As Pertti Haapala argues, the historical dimension was crucial to national identity: "the nation's past, present, and future were logically contingent and tied to each other as narrative structure." Continuity was important, and the Middle Ages were recognized as holding great potential for the narrative of the national past.[34] In Finland, national history was an invention of academic writers who constructed Finland as a single unit; Finland's emergence as a nation among other nations was the main theme of the narrative. The past and various historical actors were evaluated from a modern-day perspective: actors and deeds that enhanced the unity of the country and the autonomous position of Finland, whether through an increase in taxes or war, were evaluated positively. Within this context, medieval Finland was sometimes presented as a

32 Sari Katajala-Peltomaa, Raisa Maria Toivo, Miia Kuha, Nils Erik Villstrand, and Pirjo Markkola, "Uskonto erontekona keskiajalta 2000-luvulle," in *Suomalaisen yhteiskunnan historia 1400–2000*: 205–39, esp. 220–23, 232.

33 On Birgitta's relation to the royal couple, see Salmesvuori, *Power and Sainthood,* 145–58.

34 Pertti Haapala, "Lived Historiography: National History as a Script to the Past," in *Lived Nation as the History of Experiences and Emotions in Finland, 1800–2000,* ed. Ville Kivimäki, Sami Suodenjoki, and Tanja Vahtikari (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2021): 29–57, quotation at 36; Monika Baár, "Heretics into National Heroes: Jules Michelet's Joan of Arc and František Palacký's John Hus," in *Nationalizing the Past. Historians as Nation Builders in Modern Europe,* ed. Stefan Berger and Chris Lorenz (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010): 128–48.

(quasi-)autonomous country, under the rule and jurisdiction of the bishop of Turku.[35]

On a European level, the “nationalization of religious heroes” was typical in nationalistic history writing; this meant that saints, heretics, and other religious figures were turned into national heroes, forerunners of the Reformation, or figures whose actions were early manifestations of class consciousness.[36] Medieval saints found their way into national identity construction via history writing in Lutheran Finland, too. In Finland, the most prominent figure was Saint Henry. He did not, however, appear as a saint but as the first bishop of Turku. The First Crusade and Henry’s role in Christianizing Finland became a major part of the identity construction: even if they left Finland under the rule of the Catholic Church and Sweden, they simultaneously tied Finland to the Western cultural sphere and sowed the seeds for its birth as a nation. Birgitta was only mentioned in relation to Hemming, the bishop of Turku and her close friend, who was seen as one of the main protagonists.[37]

In Sweden, Birgitta played an important role in the nationalist narrative; she was seen as an essential part of national history, as a counterweight to the kings and wars. She continued to be a political figure in early 20th-century Sweden; Birgitta was used as a rhetorical tool, especially by liberal movements and right-wing actors. Birgitta was already being linked to anti-Russian positions by the end of the 19th century, and this view later found a place in an anti-communist agenda.[38]

By the turn of the 20th century, the same actors were active in both Sweden and Finland “using” and re-inventing Birgitta in collective memory. These were researchers and their close contacts active in the high church movement; many of them had Catholic sympathies, and some even converted to Catholicism. They par-

35 Pertti Haapala et al.,“Kertomus Suomen historiasta.” The national paradigm continued well into the 20th century. On Finland as a quasi-autonomous area, see Jalmari Jaakkola, *Suomen historia IV: Suomen sydänkeskiaika. Itämaan synty ja vakiintuminen* (Porvoo: Werner Söderström Oy, 1944); Jalmari Jaakkola, *Suomen historia V: Suomen myöhäiskeskiaika I: Unionin alkukausi* (Porvoo: Werner Söderström Oy, 1950).

36 Baár, “Heretics into National Heroes,” 129–30.

37 Yrjö Koskinen, *Oppikirja Suomen Kansan historiasta* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen kirjallisuuden Seura, 1869), 51; Magnus Gottfrid Schybergson, *Finlands Historia. Förra delen* (Helsingfors: G.W. Edlund, 1887), 81.

38 Ingemar Lindaräng, *Helgonbruk i moderniseringstider. Bruket av Birgitta- och Olavstraditionerna i samband med minnesfiranden i Sverige och Norge 1891–2005* (Linköping: Linköpings universitet, 2007); Eva Ahl-Waris, “Birgittakorset: intresset för Heliga Birgitta och två forskares tankar kring grundandet av en ‘S:ta Birgittas orden’,” *Ennen ja Nyt* 16, no. 5 (2016), https://journal.fi/ennenjanyt/article/view/108771/63768.

ticipated in nation-building and emphasized Finland's Western heritage, which had clear religious connotations.[39] In order to highlight this historical heritage, the *Societas Sanctae Birgittae* (SSB) was established in Sweden in 1920; one of its aims was to restore Vadstena Abbey, which combined both material and immaterial elements of cultural heritage. Interest in Birgitta was manifested in various ways; for example, by once again celebrating her feast days.

A similar movement took place around Naantali monastery in Finland; the area surrounding the monastery was excavated and memorial monuments were erected. The interest in material heritage can be seen as a continuation of the earlier antiquarian interest, but in this new context it was also a rhetorical tool: Naantali monastery was a place of memory – part of the cultural heritage, a part of the nation's past, and, as such, part of the nation-building process.[40]

The Catholic past, medieval monuments, and Birgitta as a person were all intertwined in these discussions. As part of creating Naantali as a place of memory, Birgitta's feast was celebrated by holding vespers at the monastery on her death day (July 23).[41] The first vespers in Naantali took place in 1921, before the Act on the Freedom of Religion came into force in 1923. The event was widely reported in the newspapers. While some newspapers described this traditional Catholic service as a legitimate Lutheran event, in other papers the main organizers were fiercely criticized. Questions were raised as to their religious convictions (were they Lutheran or Catholic?), and they were mocked for believing in saints and in particular for having Saint Birgitta as their patron saint (whereas a decent Lutheran believed only in God).[42] Despite the 1919 constitution having severed the connection between the state and the Church, Lutheranism was still seen as a major element of Finnish identity.

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39 Ahl-Waris, "Birgittakorset."

40 Ahl-Waris, *Historiebruk kring Nådendal*.

41 Ahl-Waris, *Historiebruk kring Nådendal*, 152–67.

42 *Hufvudstadsbladet*, August 8, 1923. "Tämäniltaisessa Vesperjuhlassa luetaan seuraava kaunis, aitoprotestanttista henkeä uhkuva kohta ilmestysten II:n kirjan 15 luku lat. teksti, 7 luku ruots. teksti," *Turun Sanomat*, July 23, 1922. One of the criticisms of Amos Andersson, who was one of the key figures in the rehabilitation of Naantali monastery and the organizing of the vespers: "Här nämnes herr Amos Andersson. Det kan förtjäna antecknas, att man just nu i hela den svenska landsortpressen får läsa artiklar, som sysselsätter sig med ett så skört och ömtåligt ämne som frågan om herr Anderssons själ. Är han lutheran eller är han katolik? Toro hon bara på den treenige guden eller tror han därjämte på jungfru Maria, Sankt Petrus, Sankt Henrik, Sankt Erik och de övriga sankterna. Icke att förglömma Sankta Birgitta, som man på goda skäl gissar att han valt till sitt privata skyddshelgon." *Arbetarbladet*, August 31, 1923. Andersson had already felt obliged to explain that vespers were not a typical mass. *Åbo Underrättelser*, July 23, 1921.

In addition to vespers at Naantali, Birgitta herself appeared surprisingly often in Finnish newspapers in the early 20th century.[43] Even if Sweden and Finland had a close shared history, it was by no means self-evident that a Swedish figure might function as a rhetorical tool in a Finnish nationalist context. Newspapers were an important tool to produce and disseminate public discourse on cultural heritage. They reflected and influenced the values, beliefs, and ideologies of their intended audience; in this case, they helped reinforce the collective memory of Birgitta. It would appear that Birgitta was a known figure and that her life resonated well with the disseminated values, for it was discussed in a variety of newspapers and journals, both in Finnish and in Swedish and with both left-wing and right-wing readerships.[44] Birgitta was used in religious rhetoric, in the arguments of the feminist movement, and in women's magazines; she even found her way into children's magazines.

In these newspapers and magazines, Birgitta does not appear as a saint but as an exceptional figure. As religious rhetoric experienced a comeback, she was also used in anti-Catholic accounts: Birgitta was depicted as denouncing Rome as a nest of snakes and the pope as worse than Judas, more deceitful than Pilate, even on a par with Lucifer himself.[45] Notwithstanding the fact that Birgitta was a Catholic saint, she fortified Finnish Lutheran identity. A minor trend seems to be the attempts to depict Birgitta as a wise woman, albeit one constrained by her participation in the Catholic faith; all she could do was to make it more spiritual[46] while more daring challenges were still taking form. In this kind of rhetoric, the medieval mystic became a forerunner of the Reformation. Her most important merits were her enthusiasm to translate the Bible into the vernacular and to edu-

43 I have used the digitized collection at the National Library of Finland (https://digi.kansalliskirjasto.fi) to search through newspapers and journals. I have used the search words "(Pyhä) Birgitta" and "(Heliga) Birgitta" and have then gone through the results separately. Among the results, there were many references to place names (like churches) and several advertisements for a single play. The cases presented are a sample of the most important examples in terms of cultural heritage.

44 For example, *Kansan ystävä*, March 10, 1898; *Hufvudstadsbladet*, July 25, 1926; *Svenska Pressen*, June 12, 1929; *Kodin Viikkolehti*, nos. 51–52 (1931).

45 "Ja Roomalle hän lausuu säkenöiden pyhää vihaa: muurisi ovat raunioina, niiden sijassa kasvaa vain ohdakkeita ja vilisee käärmeitä. Lain kymmenen käskyä olet muuttanut yhdeksi ainoaksi: tänne rahaa. [. . .] Pyhällä istuimella hän näki istuvan pimeyden ruhtinaan Luciferin. [. . .] Paavia hän nimittää sielujen tappajaksi, joka oli Juudastakin häijympi ja Pilatustakin kunnottomampi." *Haminan Sanomat*, August 18, 1898. See also *Kansan ystävä*, March 17, 1898.

46 *Koti ja yhteiskunta*, no. 12 (1902); *Haminan Sanomat*, August 18, 1898; *Kansan ystävä*, March 17, 1898.

cate the laity.[47] She was a voice calling in the wilderness, seeking to awaken the medieval church; she became the prophet and pioneer of the Reformation.[48]

Notable religious figures were frequently used in the nationalist history writing of the time, but Birgitta's role in Finland was particularly complex: she was not just a local hero, she was proclaimed to be a saint by the authority of the pope and was venerated as such by the whole Catholic Church at the same time as these texts were being published. In addition to testifying to the importance of Lutheranism, the newspapers simultaneously provide evidence of Birgitta's familiarity. She was known and remembered enough by the audience for this kind of rhetoric to be useful.

In Sweden, Birgitta was a multifaceted political symbol; she was used as a symbol for women's emancipation by the women's suffrage movement. By the turn of the 20th century, several biographies of Saint Birgitta had been written by educated women – all in a praising tone. Their work was influenced by the contemporary fight for women's rights. A dissenting note was struck by history professor Henrik Schück (1855–1947), who portrayed Birgitta as a power-hungry woman – further commentary on the political situation at the time. In Sweden, women won the right to vote in 1921,[49] but in Finland the situation was different: women had already received the right to vote in 1906. This did not mean, however, that there was no need for feminist rhetoric, and Birgitta served as a handy tool for this purpose in Finland, as well.

Biographies of Birgitta were published in Finnish women's journals.[50] Both right-wing and socialist journals discussed Birgitta and her role as an exemplary woman, towards whom the current generation should be grateful. *Koti ja yhteis-*

47 "Rohkeutta tuollaisiin lauseisiin oli Birgitta saanut p. raamatusta jota hän tahtoi käännettävän kansan kielelle ja jo aikoja ennen Lutheria panee siis arvoa äidinkielelle ja kansanvalistukselle." *Haminan Sanomat*, August 18, 1898; *Kansan ystävä*, March 17, 1898.

48 *Joulutähti*, December 1, 1908; *Kansan ystävä*, March 17, 1898; *Toveritar*, nos. 22–24 (1939).

49 Elisabeth Hallgren, "Birgitta's Character. A Debate around 1900," in *Saint Birgitta, Syon and Vadstena. Papers from a Symposium in Stockholm 4–6 October 2007*, ed. Claes Gejrot, Sara Risberg, and Mia Åkestam (Stockholm: Kungliga Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets akademien, 2010): 268–75.

50 See, for example, *Naisten ääni*, nos. 7 and 16 (1922). *Naisten Ääni* was established by the Naisasialiitto Unioni (today the Finnish Women's Association Unioni); it was published from 1905 to 1949 and was connected with liberal political parties, at first Nuorsuomalainen Puolue and then Kansallinen Edistyspuolue. Arja Turunen, "Naistenlehdet Suomessa 1880-luvulta 1930-luvulle," *Media & viestintä* 37, no. 2 (2014): 38–56. Several of the women's journals were associated with societies and organizations that played an important role in building civil society in Finland; see Irma Sulkunen, "Naisten järjestäytyminen ja kaksijakoinen kansalaisuus," in *Kansa liikkeessä*, ed. Risto Alapuro, Ilkka Liikanen, Kerstin Smeds, and Henrik Stenius (Helsinki: Kirjayhtymä, 1987): 157–72.

kunta, the journal of Suomen Naisyhdistys, described Birgitta as enabling and strengthening the interaction between Sweden and the rest of Europe. It is easy to agree with this argument, but the claim that Birgitta was the most noteworthy woman in Sweden – having more influence in her own time and after than any other Swedish woman, ever – is more open to debate.[51] *Toveritar*, the journal of the Social Democrat party, argued that "we, the women of posterity, should thank Birgitta."[52] On the other hand, *Suomen Nainen*, the women's journal of the Finland's conservative party (Suomalainen puolue; after 1918, Kokoomus), took a more clearly feminist approach: it, too, described Birgitta as a proto-reformer while simultaneously criticizing the Lutheran Church for its masculine culture. The journal claimed that one of the biggest shortcomings of Protestantism was its failure to adequately utilize women's help.[53] As such, Birgitta could embody various elements of immaterial cultural heritage, depending on the needs of the present.

Perhaps the most important evidence of Birgitta's lasting presence in Finnish culture comes from a children's magazine. Birgitta was a suitable figure – extraordinary, yet familiar enough – to be represented in various kinds of texts. Apparently, she was to be well known in the future, too, since it was deemed important to familiarize new generations with her. In children's magazines, Birgitta's life was transformed into an educational tale dressed up in a fairy tale–like tone. Such texts were not just made up but were taken from Birgitta's *vita*, which had been translated into Swedish. The stories of Birgitta were spiced up with some vivid details; thus, the story in *Pääskynen* begins with a shipwreck that Birgitta's mother was in when she was pregnant with Birgitta. The setting is described in detail: "It was the summer of 1303. On the eastern side of Öland Island, a gorgeous, gold-plated ship cut through the foamy waves. Its sails bulged in the wind and the statue of a saint on the stern got a splash of water on its face from

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51 *Koti ja yhteiskunta*, no. 12 (1902). Suomen Naisyhdistys (Swedish: Finsk Kvinnoförening; the Finnish Women's Association) was established in 1884 and published *Koti ja yhteiskunta* journal from 1889 to 1911. It contained a mixture of the typical contents of women's magazines, like fashion tips and articles dealing with family issues, with those of a general journal, in addition to texts about women's position and role in society. Its agenda was the legal, moral, and economic uplift of women. Turunen, "Naistenlehdet Suomessa," 38–56.

52 *Toveritar*, nos. 22–24 (1939). In the 1930s, *Toveritar* was the only journal aimed at working-class women.

53 *Suomen nainen*, nos. 22–23 (1920): "Ruotsin Birgitta on loistava esimerkki sen ajan nunnista, jotka olivat erinomaisen kaunopuheisia; he asettivat korkealle kirkko-ihanteen taistellen sen puhtauden puolesta ja jättäen jälkimaailmalle lukusia, Lutherin käytäntöön soveltamia julistuksia. Yksi protestantismin suurimpia erehdyksiä on ollut, että se meidän päiviimme saakka on ollut niin täydellisesti maskuliininen, ettei se ole käyttänyt naisten apua edes hyväntekeväisyydessä."

time to time." According to *Pääskynen*, Birgitta was of most noble background and was a special child – enjoying, "with shining eyes," stories about pilgrimages, martyrs, and saints.[54]

Pääskynen does not limit itself to tales of her childhood, however, but covers Birgitta's whole life, ending with her death and her role as harbinger of the Reformation. Centuries have passed, it is true, but Birgitta remains an important figure: "We inhabitants of the Protestant North have healthy religious habits and do not venerate Birgitta as a saint. But we, too, see in her a noble and uplifted soul, a great spirit who reached from the dust of the earth towards the glory of God."[55]

Clearly, this narrative was meant to be part of a religious upbringing, combining both morality and Finnishness. Media and journals provided a means to socialize children into the norms and values of the surrounding community. Birgitta's life encapsulated such norms, which enabled her to function as an emblem of cultural heritage; she, as a historical figure, was malleable enough to find a place in discourses of moral uplift and in political rhetoric.

Conclusion

Saints were and are potent symbols, used to manifest patriotic pride and identity. Saints hold an enduring position within the mental landscape. Birgitta and the memory of her life possessed elements that fit into the demands of the changing society of post-Reformation Finland; she was an interpretative frame who could serve various needs. Birgitta created an emotional tie to the past, bridging the past and the present: she enabled the participation of various groups in the creation of a collective memory and collective identity.

Cultural heritage was an active process, formed at the intersection of material objects and spaces – in Birgitta's case, Naantali monastery and churches dedicated to her – as well as practices, like poems, charms, and lore, and narratives that in the 20th century were employed in journals and newspapers. Many of the details of which corroborate the understanding of cultural heritage as being formed in the present but reflecting concerns about the past. Birgitta served as an element of collective identity for various communities – families, societies, and localities – for whom she bestowed and transmitted meaning. The Finnish nation

54 *Pääskynen*, nos. 9–10 (1926). *Pääskynen* was a children's journal written, edited, and illustrated by well-known Finnish authors and artists. It was published by the Otava Publishing Company from 1906–1935.

55 *Pääskynen*, nos. 9–10 (1926).

and its identity – be it religious, that is the proper Lutheran faith, or else its belonging to the Western cultural sphere – was an important framework, which gave shape to the needs of the present and in which Birgitta was a useful reference point.

In the early 20th century, with the renewed interest in Birgitta and the new religious rhetoric about her, Birgitta continued to be a tool to think with, as she had been for centuries. Saints' symbolic power is manifest in their enduring presence: they have managed to find their way into modern Lutheran nation-states. Birgitta enabled "doing memory" of the national past for the national present. She served as a national symbol in Sweden, but in Finland Birgitta was used as a symbol for smaller groups – families, religious subgroups, and feminist movements – within nation-building and identity-creating discussions. Concerning Birgitta's position in Finland, we may conclude with the words of *Arbertarbladet*, the journal of Swedish-speaking social democrats in Finland, from 1943: Birgitta may be out of work, like the other saints, but she is ours – "fixed in our historical consciousness."[56]

56 "eller vår egen Birgitta vilka dock är fixerade i vårt historiska medvetande." *Arbetarbladet*, December 27, 1943.

Kristina Jõekalda

Mothers of the Land: Baltic German and Estonian Personifications from the Virgin Mary to the Epic Linda

Personified nations inhabit countless squares and buildings in Europe and beyond, most often in the form of statues, reliefs, paintings, and caricatures of allegorical women.[1] In addition to representing ethnic groups, they have sometimes become symbols of a wider regional or imperial identity.[2] The national movements of the 19th century lent this phenomenon new vigour. But Estonia never developed a straightforward tradition of having a single personification for itself, at least not on the same scale as Germania, Rossija, the Finnish Suomi-neito (Suometar), the French Marianne, or the American Lady Liberty – which is not to say that significant examples do not exist in the Baltic region.

Two in particular stand out. First, the Virgin Mary, whose blessing was used as the key to successfully Christianizing the Baltic peoples in the 13th century – a *Terra Mariana*. Second, Linda, the mythical mother figure from the Estonian epic *Kalevipoeg* (Kalev's son), who has featured prominently in local culture ever since the Estonian "national awakening" in the mid-19th century.

My first aim is to establish that both Mary and Linda could, depending on circumstances, be interpreted as a personification of the land. My perspective is that of art history: the central axis will be their late 19th and early 20th-century imagery and functions in collective memory.[3] Even if the legendary Virgin Mary lived several centuries earlier, it was the medieval interpretations that became

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1 I would like to thank Yale University and the Väinö Tanner Foundation for providing me with the opportunity to work on this manuscript in inspiring environments. I am grateful to Gustavs Strenga and Linda Kaljundi for their comments, and to Miri Rubin and Katrin Kivimaa for a couple of references. Part of this chapter is based on Kristina Jõekalda, "Leinav Linda kui eesti rahvuse kehastus: Ajaloolisi ja stiililoolisi tähelepanekuid" [Mourning Linda Personifying the Estonian Nation: Historical and Style Historical Observations], *Vikerkaar* 7–8 (2022): 110–19.

2 See Marina Warner, *Monuments and Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1985).

3 There are other female figures in the art of that period who have been interpreted in a national key or as archetypes. See Linda Kaljundi and Tiina-Mall Kreem, *Ajalugu pildis – pilt ajaloos. Rahvuslik ja rahvusülene minevik eesti kunstis* (Tallinn: Eesti Kunstimuuseum, 2018): 70–71; Linda Kaljundi, "Symbolism, Gender and Nation Building: Transnational Imageries in the Early Twentieth-Century Estonia," *Muzeja raksti* 7 (2019): 71–83; Ene Lamp, "Noor-Eesti kunst," in *Eesti kunsti ajalugu*, vol. 5, ed. Mart Kalm (Tallinn: Eesti Kunstiakadeemia, Kultuurileht, 2010): 176–77.

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central to her later imagery. Although some elements of Linda's story are pre-Christian, the actual character in the epic was created almost from scratch in the 19th century, in the framework of the international rise of nationalism. They stand far apart – one belongs to the Christian world, while the other originates in pagan folklore – but even a quick comparison reveals remarkable similarities. Rather than arguing that they are two equal partners, in this chapter Mary's role – as the "mother" of all female personifications – is mainly to provide the context for the analysis of Linda.

As we know, in the past the gender aspect was often discounted, with the argument that "serious" things like war and high politics have had little to do with women historically. Yet, upon closer examination, it has been precisely this kind of female personification that has helped to define the future in moments of (national) crisis.[4] The French Marianne, this allegory of Liberty, for example, rose to prominence in an era of rapid secularization during the French Revolution (but was nevertheless associated in the minds of many with the Virgin Mary).[5] Still, nationalism scholars have seldom touched upon the intersections of national and gender identity. As feminist art historian Katrin Kivimaa has pointed out, the selection of "the female figure has been arbitrary in the service of the nation: it has often been used to articulate ideas that appear to have no connection whatsoever with the construction of femininity."[6]

In the cases I am examining, this connection is perhaps more evident – my second aim is to provide insight into the application of precisely such universal motherly figures to a specific region, nation, or state. The fact of giving birth is clearly not the sole prerequisite of femininity, but it is worth noting that both Mary and Linda are not only the symbolic mothers of the nation, but actual mothers of their heroic sons – Jesus and Kalevipoeg, respectively. Is this part of what is emphasized in their representation as personifications, though? Furthermore, how are the visual images about them related? As we know, imagery of real and symbolic motherhood – and of Mother Nature – dates back to pre-classical antiquity,[7] providing a link between the Christian and pagan traditions.

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4 Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* 91 (1986): 1057.

5 Miri Rubin, *Mother of God: A History of the Virgin Mary* (New Haven Yale University Press, 2009): 413.

6 Katrin Kivimaa, "Naine rahvusliku mõtte ja tunde kujundina 19. sajandi teise poole eesti kunstis," *Ariadne Lõng* 1–2 (2001): 61. All translations are my own, if not indicated otherwise.

7 For example: Giulia Pedrucci, "Kourotrophia and 'Mothering' Figures: Conceiving and Raising an Infant as a Collective Process in the Greek, Etruscan, and Roman Worlds. Some Religious Evidences in Narratives and Art," *Open Theology* 6, no. 1 (2020): 145–66; Claudia D. Bergmann, "Moth-

In the context of this book, drawing a boundary between their representations as holy figures vs as heroines is not straightforward. We might go so far as to say that these are two sides of the same coin, functioning in a similar manner as religion vs folklore, or science vs (pseudo-)mythology – even as text vs image. All relate to one another in a vaguely similar way, having their significant differences but also their likenesses. In order to be effective, a personification has to possess a clear meaning, all while remaining flexible. Whereas the allegorical female figures depend on both national and gender ideology, a convincing representation of such figures often hides, to a certain extent, "the actually existing differences and contradictions within the homogeneously presented national body"[8] – *body* in both senses of the word. As such, I want to argue that it is essential not only to look at Christian saints in the Baltic and their representations in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but also to see their intermingling with mythological figures. While the tradition of female personifications goes back to the Latin names given to the Roman provinces (Britannia, Polonia, etc.), all of which were feminative, Kivimaa has suggested that the gender neutrality of Finno-Ugric languages was one of the reasons why the tradition of such personifications never really took hold in Estonian culture.[9]

Thirdly, how is it that both Mary and Linda have risen to prominence at so many critical moments of Baltic identity formation:[10] the early 13th century, the mid-19th century, the First World War, as well as the "national re-awakening" of the 1980s, often in parallel? Yet neither Mary nor Linda has been exclusively and explicitly perceived as a personification in previous historiography. Furthermore, while studies have been published about both, the pictorial aspects have received considerably less attention than the text analysis. The wider history of depicting

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ers of a Nation: How Motherhood and Religion Intermingle in the Hebrew Bible," *Open Theology* 6, no. 1 (2020): 132–44. Cf. Rubin, *Mother of God*, 40–42, 64.

8 Katrin Kivimaa, *Rahvuslik ja modernne naiselikkus eesti kunstis, 1850–2000* (Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, 2009): 39.

9 To this day, there are very few public monuments to female intellectuals, politicians, etc. in Estonia. Anu Mänd, "Frauen, Memoria und Sakralräume im spätmittelalterlichen Livland," *Forschungen zur baltischen Geschichte* 8 (2013): 11–39; Elo Kiivet, "Kivist naised on nähtamatud," Sirp (online), June 19, 2020, https://sirp.ee/s1-artiklid/arhitektuur/kivist-naised-on-nahtamatud/. Cf. Katrin Kivimaa, "Koidula pildis: ajaloolisest isikust rahvuslikuks sümboliks," *Ariadne Lõng* 1–2 (2004): 3–12.

10 Cf. François Hartog, "Temps et histoire. 'Comment écrire l'histoire de France?'," *Annales: Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations* 50, no. 6 (1995): 1222, 1229, 1233; Diana Mishkova, Balázs Trencsényi, and Marja Jalava, "Introduction," in *"Regimes of Historicity" in Southeastern and Northern Europe, 1890–1945: Discourses of Identity and Temporality*, ed. Diana Mishkova, Balázs Trencsényi, and Marja Jalava (Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014): 3–4.

the Virgin Mary is of course vast, as is the more general history of Livonian (covering today's Estonia and Latvia) medieval art and veneration of saints.[11] Although her presence in Baltic art has been touched upon, this has hardly ever been from the perspective that interests me here.[12] The imagery of Linda has received even less attention, although the Estonian mythical past in general,[13] as well as historical and mythological material in visual art, have begun to be studied,[14] including in terms of personifications.[15] In order to draft a historiographical arch over these cases, I am primarily drawing on the work of Linda Kaljundi,[16] Juhan Kreem,[17] Merike Kurisoo,[18] Anu Mänd,[19] Katrin Kivimaa,[20] and Marju Kõivupuu.[21] Bringing together the plethora of disciplines – history, art history, visual studies, folklore studies, history of religion – that have addressed these questions (something that has been done surprisingly rarely in these particular cases), I

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11 For example: Anu Mänd and Marek Tamm, eds, *Making Livonia: Actors and Networks in the Medieval and Early Modern Baltic Sea Region* (London, New York: Routledge, 2020); Merike Kurisoo, "*Sancta Anna ora pro nobis*. Images and Veneration of St Anne in Medieval Livonia," *Acta Historiae Artium Balticae* 2 (2007): 18–34; Anneli Randla and Anu Mänd, "Keskaja visuaalkultuuri uurimisseisust Eestis ja Lätis," *Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi / Studies on Art and Architecture* 25, nos. 1–2 (2016): 7–19.

12 This recent book on Estonian and Livonian works of art only mentions the Land of Mary in its foreword: Merike Kurisoo, *The Virgin Mary. Woman, Mother, Queen | Neitsi Maarja. Naine, ema, kuninganna* (Tallinn: Eesti Kunstimuuseum, 2022).

13 Aivar Põldvee, "Vanemuise sünd. Lisandusi eesti pseudomütoloogia ajaloole," *Tuna. Ajalookultuuri Ajakiri* (2013): 10–31; Tõnno Jonuks, *Eesti muinasusundid* (Tallinn: Postimees Kirjastus, 2022).

14 Kaljundi and Kreem, *Ajalugu pildis*.

15 Kivimaa, *Rahvuslik*, 39–45.

16 Linda Kaljundi, "Livonia as a Mariological Periphery: A Comparative Look at Henry of Livonia's Representations of the Mother of God," in *Livland – eine Region am Ende der Welt? Forschungen zum Verhältnis zwischen Zentrum und Peripherie im späten Mittelalter / Livonia – A Region at the End of the World? Studies on the Relations between Centre and Periphery in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. Anti Selart and Matthias Thumser (Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau, 2017): 431–60.

17 Juhan Kreem, *Ordu sügis. Saksa ordu 16. sajandi Liivimaal* (Tallinn: Tallinna Linnaarhiiv, 2022).

18 Merike Kurisoo, "Virgin Marys of Medieval Livonia. Exhibition 'The Virgin Mary: Woman, Mother, Queen' in the Art Museum of Estonia – Niguliste Museum," *Mākslas Vēsture un Teorija / Art History and Theory* 24 (2020): 76–80.

19 Anu Mänd, "Saints' Cults in Medieval Livonia," in *The Clash of Cultures on the Medieval Baltic Frontier*, ed. Alan V. Murray (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009): 191–223.

20 Kivimaa, "Naine," 59–69.

21 Marju Kõivupuu, "Maarja ja Maarjamaa – ambivalentne diskursus Eesti kultuuriruumis," *Usuteaduslik Ajakiri* 76, no. 3 (2019): 5–28.

thus intend to paint a general picture of the phenomenon of female personifications through comparison (something that has not been done at all).

The Baltic Terra Mariana

In the long term, the Virgin Mary has undoubtedly been the most obvious personification of this land. Among the best-known examples is the album *Terra Mariana*, prepared in Riga in 1888.[22] But how did the Old Livonian concept of the Land of Mary – and the imagery that testifies to this – first originate? Furthermore, this religious identity has acquired a much broader meaning over time. In Estonia, it is a common metaphor even today.[23] The Estonian Council of Churches celebrated the year 2015, for instance, with the nation-wide theme of "Eight Centuries of Terra Mariana" (Figure 1), accompanied by polemical discussions, including within religious circles[24] (it was even dubbed a celebration of the historical misuse of Mary's name).[25]

Although the idea of dedicating this territory to Mary can be dated to the 1180s, its best-known propagator – and source – is *the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia*, written in Latin in the mid-1220s.[26] There, both the Germans and the baptized

22 Original manuscript in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana. Reduced-size facsimiles: Baron Gustav von Manteuffel, ed., *Terra Mariana. 1186–1888. Reproductionen des von den röm. Katholiken hiesiger Provinzen Sr. Heiligkeit Leo XIII zum Jubiläum 1888 dargebrachten Albums*, vols 1–4 (Riga: Grosset, 1903); *Terra Mariana. 1186–1888*, vol. 1 (Rīga: Latvijas Nacionālā bibliotēka, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2013).

23 For example: Silver Loit, ed., *Two Holy Lands – Terra Mariana and Terra Sancta. Texts and Theses on Connections Between Medieval Livonia and Palestine* (Tel Aviv: Embassy of Estonia in Tel Aviv, 2015); Eerik Jõks, ed., *Kuhu lähed Maarjamaa? / Quo vadis Terra Mariana?* (Tallinn: Eesti Kirikute Nõukogu, 2016).

24 Jaan Lahe, "Maarjamaa kahtlane juubel," Postimees, Arvamus (online), September 7, 2014, https://arvamus.postimees.ee/2912259/maarjamaa-kahtlane-juubel; "Hermann Kalmus: vastuoluline Maarjamaa," Postimees, Arvamus (online), September 29, 2014, https://arvamus.postimees.ee/2936977/hermann-kalmus-vastuoluline-maarjamaa.

25 Matthias Burghardt, "'Maarjamaa 800' – kas juubel ja põhjus juubeldamiseks?," Kirik ja Teoloogia (online), May 2, 2014, https://kjt.ee/2014/05/maarjamaa-800-kas-juubel-ja-pohjus-juubeldamiseks.

26 See Marek Tamm, "How to Justify a Crusade? Conquest of Livonia and the New Crusade Rhetoric in the Early Thirteenth Century," *Journal of Medieval History* 39, no. 4 (2013): 445–47; Jüri Kivimäe, "*Servi Beatae Marie Virginis*: Christians and Pagans in Henry's *Chronicle of Livonia*," in *Church and Belief in the Middle Ages: Popes, Saints, and Crusaders*, ed. Kirsi Salonen and Sari Katajala-Peltomaa (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016): 214, 217–23. Cf. Matthias Johann Eisen, *Eesti uuem mütoloogia* (Tallinna: Rahvaülikool, 1920): 69–70.

natives were seen as servants of Mary. Also the new cathedrals in Riga and Tallinn (Reval) were dedicated to her in the early 13th century. Yet, it is difficult to assess how widely the idea was actually recognized in the Baltic region. No confirmation has been found that this special connection received official support from Pope Innocent III.[27]

The Virgin Mary was undoubtedly the most popular saint in medieval Livonia. In fact, the 12th and 13th centuries were the height of her Europe-wide cult.[28] As Miri Rubin has written, “Mary rose to the prominence we now associate with her” at the time when the modern understanding of “Europe itself was born.”[29] Furthermore, during the late Middle Ages, the growing role of female saints provides grounds to speak of “the feminisation of holiness.”[30]

Mary was the patron of about a dozen Livonian churches and three castles – all notably close to the border with the Russian lands, where one supposedly needed her protection the most.[31] In Henry’s chronicle, her help is repeatedly sought in battles, bringing together her “maternal and martial traits.” Mary was also sometimes represented metaphorically in the form of a fortification.[32] Henry’s rhetoric naturally favoured the Teutonic crusaders, and involving Mary seems to

27 Kaljundi, “Livonia,” 431–32, see also 441–43; Mänd, “Saints’ Cults,” 194–96; Henrihs Soms, “Albums ‘Terra Mariana’ (1888.g.) Latgales historiogrāfijas skatījumā,” *Daugavpils Universitātes Humanitārās fakultātes XII Zinātnisko lasījumu materiāli. Vēsture* 6, no. 2 (2003): 47. Cf. Anti Selart, *Livonia, Rus’ and the Baltic Crusades in the Thirteenth Century*, trans. Fiona Robb (Leiden: Brill, 2015 [2007]): 27, 34, 42–44, 55–58. It has been suggested that Henry specifically associated Livonia with this concept, while the northern parts of Estonia came to be included within it in the mid-14th century. Jüri Kivimäe, “Henrik, Neitsi Maarja ja tema sulased. Üks äraspidine arutlus,” *Tuna. Ajalookultuuri Ajakiri* 4 (2014): 9, 12.

28 Anti Selart and Anu Mänd, “Livonia – A Region without Local Saints,” in *Symbolic Identity and the Cultural Memory of Saints*, ed. Nils Holger Petersen, Anu Mänd, Sebastián Salvadó, and Tracey R. Sands (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2018): 94; Mänd, “Frauen,” 28–35.

29 Rubin, *Mother of God*, xiv.

30 Kurisoo, “*Sancta Anna*,” 19, see also 22–25.

31 See Mänd, “Saints’ Cults,” 196–99; Kaljundi, “Livonia,” 437, 441–42. I.e., the castles of Marienburg (Alūksne) and Marienhausen (Viļaka) in Latvia and Neuhausen (Vastseliina) in Estonia. The latter became an important pilgrimage destination after a healing miracle of the White Cross by the Virgin Mary was reported in its chapel in 1353. Paul Johansen, “Das Wunder von Neuhausen in Estland,” *Zeitschrift für Ostforschung* 3, no. 3 (1954): 416–22.

32 Kaljundi, “Livonia,” 442, see also 434–37, 445–48. See Amy Remensnyder, *La Conquistadora: The Virgin Mary at War and Peace in the Old and New Worlds* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014): 55–56; Kurt Villads Jensen, “Saints at War in the Baltic Region,” in *Saints and Sainthood around the Baltic Sea: Identity, Literacy, and Communication in the Middle Ages*, ed. Carsten Selch Jensen, Tracey R. Sands, Nils Holger Petersen, Kurt Villads Jensen, and Tuomas M. S. Lehtonen (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2018): 263–65.

be mainly directed against other Christian contenders hoping to claim this land – the princes of the Rus', the Livonian Brothers of the Sword, the Swedes, the Danes – rather than the Estonian or Latvian pagans.[33] Considering the colonial allusions, it is worth noting that the chronicle also uses sophisticated metaphors of motherhood outside the immediate context of Mary, evoking the analogy of maternal care over "childish" subjects – both in the sense of nurturing and reproduction.[34] Based on her dual nature as a gentle mother and a symbol of militancy – indeed, a religious knight's object of affection[35] – Mary's very appeal is built on a combination of opposites. The example of Linda will later likewise serve to suggest that diversity and flexibility were key features in the successful implementation of personifications.[36]

Despite a great many martyrs, no local saints were canonized in medieval Livonia. We have no clear sources about any unauthorized cults, although the first two bishops do seem to have been locally venerated as saints to a certain extent.[37] Several North European bishops and kings had been canonized by that time, but considering the above, it is not all that strange, as Linda Kaljundi has put it, that "In the Eastern Baltic region and Prussia, but also Iberia, it was that least localizable of all the saints, Mary, who was adopted as patron of the newly converted and colonised lands."[38] In other words, it was precisely Mary's universal character that made her appealing, even if her assistance was ambivalent: the Virgin Mary's role, as a saint from many centuries past, is relatively passive in the Livonian Terra Mariana – no grand miracles relating to her are described by Henry. Christopher Tyerman has similarly proposed that it might have been the "extreme incongruity" of the concept of the Land of Mary that eventually made it credible.[39]

As it happens, the Land of Mary was also a metaphor used for Prussia. Mary was a patron saint of the Teutonic Order,[40] and as such, the idea of a Livonian

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33 Kaljundi, "Livonia," 448–49.

34 See Ulrike Plath, *Esten und Deutsche in den baltischen Provinzen Russlands: Fremdheitskonstruktionen, Lebenswelten, Kolonialphantasien, 1750–1850* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2011).

35 Lahe, "Maarjamaa"; Kreem, *Ordu sügis*, 19, 71.

36 See Rubin, *Mother of God*, xxvi, 47, 67, 72, 161–68, 269; Kaljundi, "Livonia," 454–58; Mänd, "Saints' Cults," 195. Cf. Scott, "Gender," 1067–68.

37 Selart and Mänd, "Livonia," 91, 98; Tamm, "How to Justify," 445, 451–52.

38 Kaljundi, "Livonia," 459.

39 Christopher Tyerman, *Fighting for Christendom: Holy War and the Crusades* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004): 176.

40 Kreem, *Ordu sügis*, 71; Udo Arnold, "Maria als Patronin des Deutschen Ordens im Mittelalter," in *Terra Sanctae Mariae. Mittelalterliche Bildwerke der Marienverehrung im Deutschordensland Preußen*, ed. Gerhard Eimer, Ernst Gierlich, Matthias Müller, and Kazimierz Pospieszny (Bonn:

Land of Mary, envisioned as a promised land, became a convenient rhetorical tool in this era of crusades.[41] This was not something that would have been developed to construct a unique identity for Livonia, nor is it likely that such a specifically Livonian identity would have even been sought after at the time – it was more frequently the idea of a common Christian (and later German) self-image and cultural sphere that was predominant. A specifically Livonian regional identity only began to develop in the 15th–16th centuries.[42]

How did the later communities contribute to the longevity of this metaphor? Old Livonia collapsed during the Livonian War (1558–1583), but, as a symbolic notion, this Catholic concept of a Terra Mariana was kept alive. Historian Henrihs Soms has suggested that it was subsequently associated solely with the Catholics in Latgale, but several authors have shown otherwise.[43] Indeed, on top of the ethnic tensions, the Baltic region found itself essentially *between* Catholicism and Protestantism, between Western and Orthodox Christianity, as well as between Christianity and paganism.[44] Already during the late Middle Ages, the Estonian and Latvian peasants are believed to have practiced vernacular extensions of Catholicism.[45] Some saints continued to be worshipped after the Reformation, and this was especially true of Mary. She secured for herself a particularly prominent position in the folklore and beliefs of the Setos, an Orthodox minority with Finnic roots in Southeast Estonia, on the borderlands with Russia, who sometimes even called themselves the "People of Mary."[46]

Over the centuries, the meanings of many church holidays connected with Mary's life became Estonianized and enmeshed in daily agricultural and other tasks, drifting quite far from their original Christian context.[47] The Estonian lan-

Kulturstiftung der Deutschen Vertriebenen, 2009): 55–56; Barbara Dygdala-Klosinska, "Die apokalyptische Gottesmutter als Propagandabild des Deutschen Ordens in Preußen," in *Terra Sanctae Mariae*: 137–54.

41 Tamm, "How to Justify," 447–48.

42 Selart and Mänd, "Livonia," 121. See Matthias Thumser, "Medieval Livonia: Structures of a European Historical Region," in *Das mittelalterliche Livland und sein historisches Erbe / Medieval Livonia and Its Historical Legacy*, ed. Andris Levāns, Ilgvars Misāns, and Gustavs Strenga (Marburg: Herder-Institut, 2022): 11–23.

43 Soms, "Albums," 47–49.

44 Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, "Baltic Reflections," *Baltic Journal of Art History* 9 (2015): 18–19. See Merike Kurisoo and Ulrike Nürnberger, eds, *Indifferent Things? Objects and Images in Post-Reformation Churches in the Baltic Sea Region* (Petersberg: Michael Imhof, 2020).

45 Selart and Mänd, "Livonia," 93; Jonuks, *Eesti*, 15.

46 Eisen, *Eesti uuem mütoloogia*, 70–84; Kurisoo, "*Sancta Anna*," 33–34.

47 Kõivupuu, "Maarja," 6, 19–21. See Marju Kõivupuu, *Meie pühad ja tähtpäevad* (Tallinn: Varrak, 2018): 215–27. Cf. Sari Katajala-Peltomaa's chapter in this volume.

guage has an abundance of plant names that contain "Maarja" (Estonian for Mary) within them. She also "intruded" on the local landscapes (and mindscapes) in folklore: in addition to the castles and churches named in her honour, there are many derivative place names where the etymology and historical connection are more difficult to pinpoint.[48]

Indeed, the very idea of *Maarjamaa* (the Land of Mary) was Estonianized early on by the poets of the Estonian "national awakening," most notably by Lydia Koidula in 1867. Even the national epic mentions Maarja as a sort of allegory for Estonia.[49] This is curious, given that the emerging Estonian national-political narrative interpreted the 13th-century conquest almost exclusively in a negative light. It should be remembered that, even when politicizing – and secularizing – the crusades, the Enlightenment-era texts of Garlieb Merkel (1769–1850), as well as those by Carl Robert Jakobson (1841–1882), Otto von Rutenberg (1802–1864), and Jakob Hurt (1839–1907), were still written from a Protestant perspective, making their interpretations critical towards Catholicism – rather than towards Christianity per se.[50] Renewed interest in Henry of Livonia's source text led to a new German translation in 1867[51] and an Estonian one in 1880s, by historian and archaeologist Jaan Jung (1835–1900).[52] By that time, references to the heroic character of the ancient warriors who fought against the Germans had become a strong typological motif in Estonian historiography. Rather than being an indication of how highly pre-Christian culture was prized, this – as archaeologist Tõnno Jonuks has observed – tells us "in what low regard Lutheran intellectuals held the Catholic crusaders."[53]

Political circumstances continued to affect descriptions of the historical relationship between Germans and Estonians well into the 20th century. Activated in times of significant socio-political change, Maarjamaa became a common poetic toponym for Estonia in word, image, and music.[54] While the multivalence of the

48 See Kõivupuu, "Maarja," 13–19, 22–23; Eisen, *Eesti uuem mütoloogia*, 73–77.

49 Uku hõlmas uinutavad, Maarja rüpessa magavad.

50 Anti Selarts, "'Marijas zeme' un Igaunijas historiogrāfija," in *Terra Mariana. 1186–1888. Albums un komentāri / Album and Comments*, vol. 2, ed. Andris Levāns et al. (Rīga: Latvijas Nacionālā bibliotēka, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2013): 26. Despite its title, this article focuses on the general outlines of Estonian historiography rather than the concept of the Land of Mary.

51 *Heinrich von Lettland, Livländische Chronik. Ein getreuer Bericht, wie das Christenthum und die deutsche Herrschaft sich im Lande der Liven, Letten und Ehsten Bahn gebrochen*, trans. Eduard Pabst (Reval: Gressel, 1867).

52 *Läti Hendriku Liiwi maa kroonika ehk Aja raamat*, vols 1–4, trans. J[aan] Jung (Tartu: Laakmann, 1881–84).

53 Jonuks, *Eesti*, 21.

54 Plath, *Esten*, 284.

Land of Mary made it possible to highlight the intertwining of multiple cultures, the clashes during the Russian Revolution of 1905 and the battles fought during the War of Independence (1918–1920) certainly deepened the ethnic divide.[55] During the war, the popularity of the concept among Estonians can partly be explained by a longing for tradition and the security of Christian values that had been reawakened by the devastation.[56] This was supplemented, some years later, by the fact that the new nation-state welcomed age-old symbols that allowed it to paint its history with a wide brush. The battles of the 13th century came to be treated, especially by historians such as Hans Kruus (1891–1976), as the ultimate moment of resistance – despite their having ended in defeat.[57] As Karsten Brüggemann has shown, the success against the Baltic German *Landeswehr* in the Battle of Cēsis (1919) also facilitated a reinterpretation of earlier history: "what had failed in the 13th century – when the people were lacking national unity – was finally achieved 700 years later."[58]

The concept of Maarjamaa acquired an equally prominent position in the "national re-awakening" of the 1980s; for example, in Alo Mattiesen's "fatherland songs" from the years of the "Singing Revolution." Villu Kangur and Tõnis Mägi's song "Prayer" (1988) notably begins with the words "Creator, safeguard the Land of Mary," merging Christian and pagan identities into one.[59] These have developed into the major musical expressions of Estonian nationalism, performed at almost every Song Festival. Not surprisingly, "Maarja," which had been a common first name among Estonians since the 16th century, became particularly popular in the 1980s.[60] Having served as the symbol of their Christianization, Mary thus effectively became "their own," achieving the status of a symbol of independent nationhood as well, curiously serving as a bridge between ancient and contemporary Estonians.

55 See Jörg Hackmann, "Nationalisierung als Strategie gesellschaftlichen Obenbleibens? Die Deutschen Vereine in den Ostseeprovinzen Russlands," in *"Schutzvereine" in Ostmitteleuropa. Vereinswesen, Sprachenkonflikte und Dynamiken nationaler Mobilisierung, 1860–1939*, ed. Peter Haslinger (Marburg: Herder-Institut, 2009): 53–78.

56 Kõivupuu, "Maarja," 9–10, 23–24.

57 Selarts, "Marijas zeme," 26.

58 Karsten Brüggemann, "Võidupüha. Võnnu lahing kui Eesti rahvusliku ajaloo kulminatsioon," *Vikerkaar* 10–11 (2003): 140–41.

59 Kõivupuu, "Maarja," 6, 11; Guntis Šmidchens, *The Power of Song: Nonviolent National Culture in the Baltic Singing Revolution* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2014): 253–54. My translation – various English versions of the lyrics exist.

60 Mari and Maria are even more common as names, and there are many other derivations. See Eisen, *Eesti uuem mütoloogia*, 70–72; Kõivupuu, "Maarja," 12–13.

The Virgin Mary in Baltic Medieval and Early Modern Art

What about the visual imagery that testifies to this? According to Henry's chronicle, a banner or flag depicting Mary was carried during all the major sieges, expressing the spatial legitimation of power that lay at the heart of the crusades. All the more so, because she also appeared on the main flag of the Teutonic Order (its earliest known depiction dates to 1431).[61] There are no surviving medieval visualizations of crusaders' banners in Baltic art.[62] Even if art historian Ojārs Spārītis has named her "the most exploited iconographic image associated with the Christianization of the lands and peoples on the Baltic Sea,"[63] there is surprisingly little to confirm Mary's special place in the art of medieval Livonia[64] outside of the immediate religious context.

Which among the many religious images of the Virgin Mary speak to the concept of the Land of Mary? Firstly, Mariological symbols occur on a number of official seals and images related to the Livonian branch of the Teutonic Order,[65] as well as on pilgrim's badges, bearing witness that the consecration of Livonia had been effective – a crusade essentially being an "armed pilgrimage" (Figure 2).[66]

Secondly, there are the religious works of art where Mary is depicted together with local donors, which denotes some level of connection with the land, even if not specifically the idea of Terra Mariana. Among these is the late 15th-century Altarpiece of the Virgin Mary of the Brotherhood of the Black Heads, by

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61 See Kivimäe, "*Servi Beatae*," 212–14; Kaljundi, "Livonia," 445–46, 452; Kreem, *Ordu sügis*, 73.
62 Cf. Jonathan Riley-Smith, ed., *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Crusades* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995): 52, 340–41; see also 29, 43, 148–50.
63 Ojārs Spārītis, "Evidence of the Reformation and Confessionalization Period in Livonian Art," *Baltic Journal of Art History* 9 (2015): 27; see also 34–35, 56.
64 See Mänd, "Saints' Cults," 191–95; Madara Rasiņa et al., "The Recent Discovery, Research, and Restoration of Medieval and Renaissance Frescoes in Riga Castle – A Treasure to the Baltic Region," *Heritage* 6, no. 3 (2023): 2445–50.
65 Kreem, *Ordu sügis*, 25, 71–75, 86, 273, 398. See Juhan Kreem, "Einige Bemerkungen über die Siegel der Gebietiger des Deutschen Ordens in Livland," in *Selbstbild und Selbstverständnis der Geistlichen Ritterorden*, ed. Roman Czaja and Jürgen Sarnowsky (Toruń: Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2003): 213–18; Ivar Leimus, "Zur Geschichte der Revaler (Tallinner) Wappen und Siegel," in *Denmark and Estonia, 1219–2019: Selected Studies on Common Relations*, ed. Jens E. Olesen (Greifswald: University of Greifswald, 2019): 73–80.
66 Daniel Zwick, *Maritime Logistics in the Age of the Northern Crusades* (Kiel: Universitätsbibliothek Kiel, 2017): 8–9. Cf. Ieva Ose, "Dažas liecības par viduslaiku svētceļojumiem un svētceļnieku zīmēm Rīgā un citur Livonijā," *Senā Rīga. Pētijumi pilsētas arheloģijā un vēsturē* 8 (2015): 62–91. Both the badge unearthed in Lübeck and a similar one from Gamla Lödöse (Sweden) bear similarities to a French pilgrim's badge found in Tallinn (dating from c. 1312). Paul Johansen, "Rocamadour et la Livonie," *Annales du Midi: revue archéologique, historique et philologique de la France méridionale* 73, no. 54 (1961): 231; Selart and Mänd, "Livonia," 97.

the Master of the Legend of St Lucy from Bruges.[67] Mary also appeared on a decorative stone relief (1522) beside the door to the Brotherhood's Riga house, which was paired with a second slab depicting St Maurice. While venerated by the brotherhood, she was not their patron saint.[68] St Maurice and Mary likewise appear in a mural in the southern aisle of Lübeck Cathedral, which one can indirectly interpret as a Teutonic crusader receiving a blessing from Mary before embarking on the expedition.[69]

Thirdly, visualizations of the Land of Mary occur in the form of significant juxtapositions with political figures. The most straightforward example is a limestone relief of the Virgin Mary above the inner gate of Riga Castle, bearing the inscription "1515," its year of construction. She is wearing a crown, standing in the middle of a radiant halo, as the Woman of the Apocalypse, holding baby Jesus; at her feet is a crescent moon. The aspect of Terra Mariana is suggested by her being placed alongside the Master of the Livonian branch of the Teutonic Order, Wolter von Plettenberg,[70] who "secured the independence of his *Heimat* against the Russians."[71] Chronicles tell us that he had a vision of Mary before the battle. This dynamic duo was coined in von Plettenberg's lifetime – also literally, as it occurs on the two sides of a golden thaler that he minted in 1525. It enjoyed a centuries-long afterlife in art, especially in Westphalia.[72]

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67 Originally at the Dominican Church of St Catherine in Tallinn, now in the Niguliste Museum. Anu Mänd, "The Altarpiece of the Virgin Mary of the Brotherhood of the Black Heads in Tallinn: Dating, Donors, and the Double Intercession," *Acta Historiae Artium Balticae* 2 (2007): 35–53; Kerttu Palginõmm, *Pracht und Luxus zwischen Brügge und Reval. Das Retabel des Marienaltares der Bruderschaft der Revaler Schwarzenhäupter des Meisters der Legende der Hl. Lucia* (Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, 2020).

68 Now both in the Riga Cathedral. See Spārītis, "Evidence," 34–35; Anu Mänd, "Church Art, Commemoration of the Dead and the Saints' Cult: Constructing Individual and Corporate Memoria in Late Medieval Tallinn," *Acta Historica Tallinnensia* 16 (2011): 9–10; Kurisoo, *The Virgin Mary*, 125.

69 Ane L. Bysted, Carsten Selch Jensen, Kurt Villads Jensen, and John H. Lind, *Jerusalem in the North: Denmark and the Baltic Crusades, 1100–1522*, trans. Sarah Pedersen et al. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012 [2004]): 211–13. See Kreem, *Ordu sügis*, 74–77, 105.

70 Having been moved to the collection of the National History Museum of Latvia, a painted reconstruction was placed on its original location. "The Central Portal of the Riga Castle Yard Gate is Again Decorated with Reliefs of Madonna and Plettenberg," RERE GRUPA (online), June 16, 2016, https://www.reregrupa.lv/en/news-/the-central-portal-of-the-riga-castle-yard-gate-is-again-decorated-with-reliefs-of-madonna-and-plett/.

71 This is already the rhetoric of the First World War. *Kleiner Führer durch die Livland-Estland-Ausstellung 1918* (Hamburg: Hartung, 1918): 7. Cf. Kurisoo, *The Virgin Mary*, 120.

72 Kreem, *Ordu sügis*, 72–75, 91, 94–96, 276; Juhan Kreem and Tiina-Mall Kreem, "Von Livland über Westfalen nach Bayern und zurück. Die Wege der Porträts Wolters von Plettenberg," in *Deutschordensgeschichte aus Internationaler Perspektive. Festschrift für Udo Arnold zum 80. Geburtstag*, ed. Roman Czaja and Hubert Houben (Ilmtal-Weinstraße: VDG, 2020): 151–66.

Nevertheless, it is not possible to clearly distinguish the medieval and early modern religious representations from those of her as the epitome of Terra Mariana. The latter aspect is evidenced mostly by inscriptions on the image, coats of arms, or the title, but with topics such as these there is both the danger of oversimplifying and of over-complicating iconographical interpretations.[73] Curiously, painting a background with a local, Livonian landscape or monuments was hardly ever used to communicate the special connection between Mary and the Baltic lands in those times. The more outstanding medieval and early modern altarpieces were commissioned from leading art centres, such as Lübeck or Bruges, whose masters would not have visited the Baltic town- and landscapes in person, and the "local" was not particularly privileged in this pre-nationalist era.

After the Reformation, Mary's importance greatly decreased in religious art: she appeared mainly in scenes depicting the life of Jesus (especially the crucifixion).[74] She did maintain her visibility in the small Catholic community, though.[75]

The Virgin Mary Personifying the Baltic Lands in the 19th and 20th Centuries

The idea of the Livonian Terra Mariana gained popularity in these largely Protestant lands in 19th-century art, by which time the stories about medieval saints had often been secularized. In terms of mothers of the land, this is indeed when the flourishing of such imagery really began.

The above-mentioned crusading banner with Mary was visualized in 1839 by Friedrich Ludwig von Maydell (1795–1846), who relied heavily on Henry's chronicle in his interpretations of local history, but also on other sources and ethnographic materials (he was involved with the Learned Estonian Society). Textile banners are featured in one image in his series of copper engravings *Fünfzig Bilder aus der Geschichte der deutschen Ostsee-Provinzen Russlands*.[76] Given his

73 See Merike Koppel [Kurisoo], "Tallinna Püha hõimkonna altariretaabel. Algsest pildiprogrammist Madalmaade hiliskeskaegsete Püha Anna legendide taustal," *Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi* 15, no. 3 (2006): 40.

74 See Liisa-Helena Lumberg, "'Prorafaeliidid'. Religioosse kunsti klassikaline ideaal ja teoste toimijapotentsiaal 19. sajandi esimesel poolel Eesti- ja Liivimaal," *Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi* 29, nos 1–2 (2020): 90–120.

75 A copy of Guido Reni's *Assumption of the Virgin* (c. 1640) was chosen for the altar painting of the new Cathedral of St Peter and St Paul in Tallinn around 1840, probably executed by Baltic German painter Carl Sigismund Walther.

76 Friedrich Ludwig von Maydell, *Fünfzig Bilder aus der Geschichte der deutschen Ostsee-Provinzen Russlands nebst erklärendem Text*, vols 1–2 (Dorpat: Kluge, 1839, 1842). See Linda Kal-

close reading of the source text, it is worth noting that Maydell did not choose to "insert" Mary into a battle scene. Instead, we can see her in the print *Bishop Albert Lays the Foundation Stone for the Town of Riga. Anno 1200* (Figure 3). The banner appears to show her standing on a crescent moon, giving a blessing with one hand, baby Jesus on the other arm, with no inscriptions. It is being held by a monk, while another banner – depicting a grown-up Jesus, drawn with even more rudimentary lines – seems to be held by a knight, possibly referring to the dual nature of the act of conquering these lands.[77]

Maydell was to become instrumental in creating the myth of the Land of Mary,[78] taking advantage of her image as protector of conquests and colonialism.[79] Religion is central to his argument: this far-away German colony persisted through the centuries only by the mercy of God. Tiny reliefs of Mary can also be found on the print *A Biblical Play in Riga. Anno 1204*. His album was a product of German Romanticism, drawing parallels with *The Song of the Nibelungs*. Perhaps not by chance, the crescent moon almost looks like a stylized boat – the play on words between the Latin terms for sea- (*marina*) and Mary-related (*Mariana*) should not be seen as insignificant here. Maydell's accompanying text made explicit that it was the western colonizers who wrote these lands into history when the Germans replaced the wild native elders as guardians of Livonia, for culture in his view had an obligation to fight and destroy barbarity, which he described as a consequence of sin and a blasphemy.[80]

The most unambivalent tribute to this concept is the luxuriously illustrated album *Terra Mariana. 1186–1888*, prepared as a gift to Pope Leo XIII on the initiative of the Polish historian Gustaw von Manteuffel (1832–1916), who had studied at the University of Tartu (Dorpat). As a strongly religious endeavour, it sought to confirm the stability of Catholic traditions in the Baltic provinces,[81] while expressing the continuing position of the German Polish aristocracy in the region, often

jundi, "The Workings of Cultural Memory and Colonialism. Friedrich Ludwig von Maydell's Baltic History in Images," *Eesti Kunstimuuseumi Toimetised / Proceedings of the Art Museum of Estonia* 5 (2015): 233–67.

77 Linda Kaljundi et al., "Piltide nr. 1–10 kommentaarid," in *Friedrich Ludwig von Maydelli pildid Baltimaade ajaloost / Friedrich Ludwig von Maydell's Baltic History in Images*, ed. Linda Kaljundi and Tiina-Mall Kreem (Tallinn: Eesti Kunstimuuseum, 2013): 113.

78 Linda Kaljundi Tiina-Mall Kreem, Juhan Kreem, Ain Mäesalu, and Inna Põltsam-Jürjo, "Sissejuhatus," in *Friedrich Ludwig von Maydelli pildid*: 22–24, 31, 39, 42, 46.

79 See Rubin, *Mother of God*, xxv, 390, 420.

80 Maydell, *Fünfzig* 1, 1–2.

81 Soms, "Albums," 46–47; Rūta Kaminska, "An Art Historian's Look at the Album *Terra Mariana. 1186–1888*," *Eesti Kunstimuuseumi Toimetised* 5 (2015): 486–88.

with an exaggerated rhetoric of political self-assertion.[82] A team of artists – of different ethnicities, including Latvians, most based in Riga – executed seventy sheets, covered in drawings, prints, watercolours, and gilding, about the history and cultural heritage of the territory of the Baltic provinces of Russia, looking back at their different political and ecclesiastical powers through time. Especially instrumental were the painters Bernhard Borchert (1863–1945) and Artūrs Baumanis (1867–1904) and the architect Oskar Felsko (1848–1921; Figure 4). Here, too, the Virgin Mary mostly makes her entrance on picturesque crusading banners, which appear on many pages. Furthermore, this album is among the few examples that actually did place her in a recognizably Baltic setting. Surprisingly, the album devotes considerable attention to the churches, castles, palaces, and manors of the "post-Livonian" – and largely post-Catholic – 17th–19th centuries,[83] some more romanticized than others, reusing many previous prints by other Baltic artists. In true Revival-style manner, the album's design also sought to include references to all the major historical artistic and architectural styles.[84]

This Catholic undertaking might have remained marginal in the dominantly Protestant society. But this was the high tide of not just Baltic German, but also Estonian and Latvian nationalism. Their essentially intertwined nature is perfectly demonstrated by Baumanis, whose paintings curiously followed Maydell's visual example to instead promote Latvian nationalism, in spite of revisiting Maydell's aggressively colonial rhetoric and the value judgments associated with the depicted events. In c. 1884, Jānis Staņislavs Roze (1823–1897) even produced oil paintings of three of Maydell's black-and-white prints, including the one with the banner of Mary.[85] This creative re-use testifies to how well those early narratives established themselves:[86] one ended up reproducing them even when placing oneself in contradiction to them.

82 The project was funded by Countess Maria Przeździecka. Andris Levāns, "The Album *Terra Mariana. 1186–1888*. Aspects of the Search for a Baltic Catholic Identity: Characterisation and Appraisal of the Work: Summary of Introductory Articles," in *Terra Mariana* 2: 40–43; Kristīne Ante and Reinis Norkārkls, "Terra Mariana 1186–1888. Albums un komentāri," *Forschungen zur Baltischen Geschichte* 10 (2015): 376, 379.

83 Soms, "Albums," 47–48.

84 Kaminska, "Art Historian's Look," 485–93.

85 I.e. *First Landing of the Bremen Merchants at the Mouth of the River Daugava. 1156, First Baptism of the Pagans in Iksķile Church near Riga. 1186, and Bishop Albert Lays the Foundation Stone for the Town of Riga. 1200* (actually 1201), all in the Latvian National Museum of Art, Riga.

86 See Kaljundi et al., "Sissejuhatus," 47–58; Toms Ķencis, "The Role of Folklore in the Formation of Latvian Visual Art," *Folklore: Electronic Journal of Folklore* 62 (2015): 55–80; Anda Bērziņa, "Pirmie Latvijas senatnes un mitoloģijas attēlojumi mākslinieku darbos un to saikne ar arheoloģisko materiālu," *Mākslas Vēsture un Teorija* 20 (2017): 16–35.

Mary also featured prominently in German ideological rhetoric during the First World War, when some Baltic Germans sought to establish their own state under the auspices of Germany, the United Baltic Duchy (*Vereinigtes Baltisches Herzogtum*).[87] Its newly minted flag – a black cross on a white background – was identical to that of the medieval *Deutschordensstaat* (dissolved in 1561). In an effort to express both the history and future of this region being closely connected to Germany, increasing advantage was taken of the concept of *Marienland* as a common metaphor for their Baltic *Heimat*.[88] The previously mentioned relief of Mary from Riga Castle was considered ideologically valuable enough to take a plaster copy of it (probably the one requested by Wilhelm Neumann in the late 19th century) to Germany in the middle of the war, along with roughly three hundred other items (including original art works and archival documents), for a travelling propaganda show, the *Livland-Estland-Ausstellung* (Figure 5).[89] Indeed, this relief from 1515, as Spārītis has aptly put it, effectively had "the ideological impact of a political poster."[90]

While the religious aspect of her popularity, too, rose during the war – as consoler of both the soldiers and those left behind[91] – there is, again, reason to speak of the militarization of Mary.[92] The war opened completely new – and more tangible – prospects for those intellectual mind games that historian Ron Hellfritzsch calls "political Catholicism:" since 1915, the German Catholic nobility had taken the initiative to re-colonize Courland and Lithuania with new settlements of (mainly German) Catholics. Through this "peaceful conquest" in the name of the Virgin Mary, the aim was to produce nothing less than a "monument" worthy of the heroic deeds of the Baltic Germans' medieval ancestors.[93] As of

87 Cf. Mart Kuldkepp, "Hegemony and Liberation in World War I: The Plans for New Mare Nostrum Balticum," *Ajalooline Ajakiri / The Estonian Historical Journal* 153, no. 3 (2015): 249–84.

88 See Ulrike Plath, "*Heimat:* Rethinking Baltic German Spaces of Belonging," *Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi* 23, nos 3–4 (2014): 55–78; Kristina Jõekalda, *German Monuments in the Baltic Heimat? A Historiography of Heritage in the "Long Nineteenth Century"* (Tallinn: Estonian Academy of Arts, 2020); Ingo Wiwjorra, "Der völkische Germanenmythos als Konsequenz deutscher Altertumsforschung des 19. Jahrhunderts," in *Politische Mythen im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert in Mittel- und Osteuropa*, ed. Heidi Hein-Kircher and Hans Henning Hahn (Marburg: Herder-Institut, 2006): 157–66.

89 *Kleiner Führer*, 7. See Kristina Jõekalda, "*Livland-Estland-Ausstellung* of 1918: Baltic German Identity-Building and German Propaganda Side by Side," *kunsttexte.de/ostblick* 4 (2023): 1–17.

90 Spārītis, "Evidence," 27.

91 Rubin, *Mother of God*, 416–17.

92 Cf. Liliya Berezhnaya, ed., *Die Militarisierung der Heiligen in Vormoderne und Moderne* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2020).

93 Ron Hellfritzsch, "Die Wiedergewinnung der alten 'Terra Mariana'. Clemens August von Galens baltischer Siedlungsplan, 1916–1919," in *Das Bistum Münster im Ersten Weltkrieg. Forschungen – Quellen*, ed. Peter Bürger and Ron Hellfritzsch (Düsseldorf: s.n., 2022): 80–81, 90–91, 96.

1918, the same idea was extended to Northern Latvia and Estonia, which were by that time under German rule as well.[94]

Curiously, these were the same years that the Estonian concept of Maarjamaa began its rise to prominence, through the quite opposing rhetoric of a romantic (primarily rural) idyllic past. It continued to present an ambivalent case of "cultural and religious syncretism" throughout the rest of the 20th century – exemplary of the very idea of "shared heritage." Estonians tend to consider themselves non-religious and are statistically among the least religious countries in the world, yet essential aspects of the state's identity are still constructed with reference to Mary.[95]

The most remarkable among them is a tradition invented in 1995 by President Lennart Meri, as a new symbol for the re-established nation-state: the highest-ranking national badge of honour, the Order of the Cross of Terra Mariana, which is awarded to foreigners for special services to the country and to each president of Estonia. The badge makes no visual reference to Mary. Instead, it depicts a cross – referring, perhaps even more interestingly, to the insignia of the medieval Livonian Brothers of the Sword – along with the Estonian national colours and coat of arms. The tricolour itself is, according to the designer of the badge, Priit Herodes, directly associated with Mary, though: "blue denotes her as the Queen of Heaven; black as Our Lady of Sorrows; and white as the Blessed Virgin."[96] Hence, one could say that this national badge of honour of independent Estonia (and its international allies) is constructed with direct reference to the history of foreign oppression and *Kulturträgertum*. Despite fierce debate,[97] the tradition remains – as "proof" of Estonia's belonging to Western civilization.

Linda – Personification of the Estonian Nation?

I will now turn to a parallel world. Although the centrality of mother figures in Finno-Ugric mythology is a prehistoric phenomenon, the construction of the mother

94 "Geheim: Ergebnisse der Reise von Vertretern des Deutschen Landwirtschaftsrats durch Kurland, Livland und Estland vom 10. bis 24. Juli 1918." Dokumentesammlung, Herder-Institut, Marburg, DSHI 190 Livland 33, 11, 5_76. See Silvio Broedrich-Kurmahlen, *Das Neue Ostland* (Berlin: Ostlandverlag, 1915).

95 Kõivupuu, "Maarja," 5, 22.

96 *The Order of the Cross of Terra Mariana: 20 Years* (Tallinn: Office of the President of the Republic of Estonia, 2016): 5, https://vp2006-2016.president.ee/et/vabariik/teenetemargid/images/maarjamaa_rist_20_en.pdf.

97 See Łukasz Sommer, "Echoes of Invented Pasts: Ethnic Self-Images in Estonian Culture," in *Ethnic Resonances in Performance, Literature, and Identity*, ed. Yiorgos Kalogeras and Cathy C. Waegner (New York: Routledge, 2019): 204–5; Selarts, "Marijas zeme," 27.

of Kalevipoeg into the Linda of the national epic is entirely a product of the Romantic era. The first outline of *Kalevipoeg* was prepared by Friedrich Robert Faehlmann (1798–1850) in the 1830s. Following his death, Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald (1803–1882) expanded this outline into the Estonian epic, with significant embellishment, in line with the "best practices" of nation-building. Attempting to provide a "mythical pseudo-history of Estonia," it was largely based on the pantheon developed by the first-generation Estonian poet Kristjan Jaak Peterson (1801–1822), with parallels from Finnish folklore. Although the context for creating the (national) symbols of Baltic German and Estonian identity-making was hardly similar, as we have seen, this pantheon was first visualized by the same Friedrich Ludwig von Maydell. Despite being an ethnic Estonian with quite a different agenda, Kreutzwald was known to admire Maydell's aforementioned album, giving further testimony to the intermingled nature of Baltic German and early Estonian intellectual life.[98] The epic was first published in 1857–1861,[99] its protagonists becoming common figures in Estonian patriotic poetry.

Much of the epic's storyline relies on universal motifs that go back to Homer. Tracing the roots back to the Greeks – or the other way around[100] – might seem an overstatement, but Greece was unquestionably seen as the "cradle" of European culture. For 18th and 19th-century scholars, local beliefs could only be explained through parallels with Classical mythology.[101] In 1839, Georg Julius von Schultz-Bertram (1808–1875), a Baltic German Estophile, tried to convince the Learned Estonian Society of the value of gathering Kalevipoeg-related folklore, explicitly using the argument that he was "the Hercules, Odysseus, Siegfried, etc. of the European peoples."[102] Jakob Hurt, the father figure of the Estonian "national awakening," similarly wrote that ancient pre-Christian Estonians "stood –

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98 Kaljundi et al., "Sissejuhatus," 52–55; Madis Arukask, "The Estonian National Epic, *Kalevipoeg*: Its Sources and Inception," in *The Voice of the People: Writing the European Folk Revival, 1760–1914*, ed. Matthew Campbell and Michael Perraudin (London: Anthem Press, 2012): 126–28. Cf. Marjatta Jauhiainen, *The Type and Motif Index of Finnish Belief Legends and Memorates. Revised and Enlarged Edition of Lauri Simonsuuri's Typen- und Motivverzeichnis der finnischen mythischen Sagen*, trans. Laura Stark-Arola (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1998).

99 New translation: Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald, *Kalevipoeg: The Estonian National Epic / Eesti rahvuseepos*, trans. Triinu Kartus (Tartu: Eesti Kirjandusmuuseum, 2011).

100 This has also been proposed, intriguingly, via a meteorological perspective: Felice Vinci, *The Baltic Origins of Homer's Epic Tales: The* Iliad*, the* Odyssey*, and the Migration of Myth* (Rochester: Inner Traditions, 2006 [1995]).

101 Jonuks, *Eesti*, 21–22.

102 Fr[iedrich] R[einhold] Kreutzwald, *Kalevipoeg. Tekstikriitiline väljaanne ühes kommentaaride ja muude lisadega*, vol. 2, ed. A[ugust] Annist et al. (Tallinn: Eesti Riiklik Kirjastus, 1953), 134–35.

in terms of their warrior spirit and love of fatherland – in no way behind the ancient Greeks and Romans."[103]

Linda is the epic's female lead character. Having rejected proposals by the sun and the moon, the water and the wind, she married the ancient hero Kalev, a giant, and gave birth to many children, the last of whom was the epic's namesake. Linda's more active role begins with Kalev's death. Whereas female allegories and personifications generally tend to be relatively passive, it is the storyline connected with her that activates all the main events of the epic. Although we rarely hear Linda's voice, already the fact that she made her own choice in the matter of suitors denotes significant agency. Her connection with Mother Nature relates to Finno-Ugric mythology, which generally gives a visible role to women and mothers.[104] The metred verse (*regilaul* verse) source text itself was historically a primarily female form of expression.[105]

Moreover, Linda is attributed with playing a crucial role in founding several of Tallinn's landmarks in the epic: after having carried massive stones to build a burial mound for her husband – i.e., the hill that would be known as Toompea (Domberg) – she sat down on a rock and cried until Lake Ülemiste was formed. Although there have been questions as to whether the formation of the lake from her tears is a motif from the actual folklore or an addition by Kreutzwald,[106] links such as these undoubtedly contributed to securing a decent ancient past for a young nation. The rocky ground and the erratic boulders were employed in the identity construction of both the Baltic Germans and the Estonians.[107] Through

103 Quoted in Anti Selart, "Muistne vabadusvõitlus," *Vikerkaar* 10–11 (2003): 110.

104 Nina Jurtšenkova, "Naisjumalatest soome-ugri rahvaste mütoloogias," *Mäetagused* 47 (2011): 119–24, https://www.folklore.ee/tagused/nr47/jurtshenkova.pdf.

105 This was particularly the case among the Setos, who "de-masculinized" the centrality of the male protagonists' heroic deeds – only to have them be reintroduced by Kreutzwald. Maris Mägi, *Naistegelaskujude roll "Kalevipojas."* BA thesis (Tartu: University of Tartu, 2017): 4–7, 16–21, 40; Madis Arukask, "Runo Songs, *Kalevipoeg*, and *Peko* in the Question of National Identity," in *The Kalevala and the World's Traditional Epics*, ed. Lauri Honko (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2002): 422–25, 429–31.

106 Eduard Roos, "'Kalevipoja' Linda," *Keel ja Kirjandus* 8 (1963): 464–73.

107 See Robert W. Smurr, "Monuments of Nature as Monuments of Nation: The Meaning of Estonia's Glacial Erratic Boulders," *kunst.ee* 1 (2001): 49; Ulrike Plath, "Rändrahnud ja majaisandad. Baltisakslaste suhe maaga ja kodutunde teke 19. sajandil," *Vikerkaar* 7–8 (2008): 113–14; Bart Pushaw, "Living Stones and Other Beings: Earthen Ecologies within Baltic Visual Culture, 1860–1915," *Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi* 27, nos 1–3 (2018): 107–29; Lauri Lenk, "Baltisaksa maastikumaalija August Matthias Hageni jäljed Põhja-Eesti rannikul," KUMU blogi (online), January 20, 2023, https://kumublogi.ekm.ee/2023/01/20/baltisaksa-maastikumaalija-august-matthias-hageni-jaljed-pohja-eesti-rannikul/.

these steps Linda thus made, in Kivimaa's words, "a very important productive – not just reproductive – contribution to the nation's mythological history."[108]

It was probably in Kreutzwald's interpretation of the folktales that Kalev's wife actually obtained the name Linda. The name occurs only once in the original materials gathered by Faehlmann. Kreutzwald was already being criticized in the 1850s because of that, as Linda's name was seen as a foreign acquisition (though it definitely became a popular name ever since). Early occurrences of Linda's name have, again, been particularly associated with folklore gathered from the Setos (although it has been interpreted as a possible misunderstanding due to its similarity to the word "to fly" – *lendama*),[109] the same community we previously saw holding the Virgin Mary in high esteem. According to this interpretation, Linda's name might have derived from "bird" (*lind*). All the more so, because she was born from a black grouse's egg – a bird that served as a synonym for maidens in Estonian folklore.[110]

As these prehistoric events supposedly long predate the arrival of the Christian conquerors in the 13th century under the banner of Mary, the introduction of Linda's name also helped to further stress that Toompea hill was essentially Estonian *before* it became Danish or German. There was indeed an older fortress of Lindanise (Lyndanise) on the hill, mentioned as such in Henry's chronicle. Archaeological material supports the idea of dating it to the 9th–11th centuries.[111] The ancient Estonians fought the Battle of Lindanise against the Danes there in 1219 (when the Dannebrog fell from the sky). The symbolism is evident: it has been the seat of power of this land ever since. Writing in 1919, Estonian folklorist Matthias Johann Eisen (1857–1934) saw the naming of the female protagonist Linda as a decisive attempt to create exactly such a connection.[112] The origins of her name have also been associated with the Estonian words for "town" (*linn*) or "fortress" (*linnus*), in fact, and – as in the case of Mary – derivations of Linda's name occur in many place names across the country.[113]

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108 Kivimaa, "Naine," 66. See Kivimaa, *Rahvuslik*, 56.

109 Roos, "'Kalevipoja' Linda," 464–65. Cf. Kreutzwald, *Kalevipoeg. Tekstikriitiline*, 68–69, 135, 308–9. The idea of a Finno-Ugric shorthand with the bird species gained ground in the national self-perception with Lennart Meri's documentaries in the 1970s. Ants Viires, "Soome-ugri rahvad kinolinal," *Keel ja Kirjandus* 9 (1971): 542–45; Sommer, "Echoes."

110 Mall Hiiemäe, "Nelikümmend lindu eesti rahvausundis IV," *Mäetagused* 5 (1997): 4, http://www.folklore.ee/tagused/nr5/pdf/linnud4.pdf; August Annist, *Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwaldi "Kalevipoeg"*, ed. Ülo Tedre (Tallinn: Eesti Keele Sihtasutus, 2005): 769. See Jonuks, *Eesti*, 87–141, 252–350.

111 Rein Zobel, *Tallinn (Reval). Keskaegsed kindlustused* (Tallinn: Eesti Kunstiakadeemia, 2011): 28–31.

112 Matthias Johann Eisen, *Eesti mütoloogia* (Tartu: s.n., 1919): 228–31.

113 [Friedrich Reinhold] Kreutzwald, "Reval's ältester Estnischer Name Lindanisse, vom Estnischen Standpunkte beleuchtet," in *Verhandlungen der Gelehrten Estnischen Gesellschaft* 3, no. 1 (1854): 46–47. Cf. Roos, "'Kalevipoja' Linda," 464–73.

It has even been suggested that Kreutzwald intentionally modified the content of the much older (supposedly pre-Christian) folktales, giving them a setting that would resemble the 13th-century power struggles, with the protagonists not only heroic but also identifiably human, providing the mythological events with an illusion of authenticity. Through these parallels the ground was prepared for the contemporary "national awakening" and, ultimately, for standing up against the foreign landlords[114] – the years in which the epic was first published indeed mark a turning point from the "country folk" (*maarahvas*) mentality to a more articulate Estonian nationalism.

Regardless of all that, prior to the late 19th century, there were very few images produced depicting details from the national epic. Much more often, the first material or visual objects related to the epic took advantage of pre-existing natural or landscape phenomena. Later in the epic, Linda was kidnapped by a Finnish sorcerer, Tuuslar, and was, while escaping him, literally petrified – turned into a stone statue. Kreutzwald combined this with an actual standing stone that resembled a woman, situated on a hill in Iru, near Tallinn, as a symbolic landmark on the road towards the east. This rock, associated with pagan beliefs, was known as "Iru Ämm" (*ämm* means mother-in-law) in folklore. An extra layer of symbolic significance derived from the fact that shortly before the epic was first published *Iru Ämm* was destroyed during a traditional summer solstice bonfire.[115]

Another interesting example is Linda's stone in Lake Ülemiste, which was either thrown there by Kalev or else carried by Linda herself – curiously, in later folklore, these names have sometimes become enmeshed with Jesus and Mary.[116] Indeed, rather than any kind of purely preserved pre-historic pagan tradition, it was a combination of Christian features and their pagan (mis)interpretations that gradually developed into what scholars since the 18th century have identified as the Estonian national mythology. Based on archaeological findings, in his recent work Tõnno Jonuks has sought to prove that there is no basis on which to even speak of a single pre-Christian belief system in these lands, nor to assume that any kind of ancient paganism would have continued to exist long into the Middle Ages or later times. But the above-mentioned scholars of the 18th–20th centuries could not have known – or chose not to know – that, and actively attempted to reconstruct a folkloric Estonian mythology, with the help of elements borrowed from the preserved traditions of other Finno-Ugric peoples.[117]

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114 Arukask, "The Estonian," 132–37.

115 The broken pieces were later used for road construction. A new *Iru Ämm* was erected in 1970, sculpted by Juhan Raudsepp.

116 Mari-Ann Remmel, "Iru Ämm ja Linda kivi," *Eesti Loodus* 6 (2005): 38–40.

117 Jonuks, *Eesti*, 15, 18, 23, 31, 34, 299, 359–61.

In the early 20th century, Linda became a popular subject among local artists, leaving the imagery relating to the Land of Mary far behind. The many Lindas depicted by artists of different generations, applying various styles, using differing media, techniques, and genres, evince a constant modernization of form but nevertheless send a similar message, it would seem. Let us take a detailed look at three cases of such nation-building, from before Estonia became independent in 1918.

Idealized Academicist Linda

August Weizenberg (1837–1921) sculpted a monumental *Linda* in the tradition of Academic art in 1880, commissioned by the Provincial Museum (itself originating from the Estonian Literary Society), as part of his series of white marble figures inspired by national mythology. Weizenberg was a first-generation professional Estonian artist; a man of the world, he had studied and worked in Berlin, Munich, St Petersburg, and Rome.

Stylistically, there is little about his *Linda* that could be associated with specifically Estonian traits. Despite illustrating the mythology of a "new" nation, Weizenberg's statue represents the Classicist ideal, a universal model based on Greek and Roman examples – which is less surprising if we keep in mind that this was something that all mythologies were thought to refer back to. The connection with Estonia is made with motifs, such as the wolf skin around her shoulders, a somewhat rustic necklace, and a garland of local pine and oak branches.

Curiously, the national specificities were thus communicated via universalism – as was the case with most female personifications internationally, as we saw above.[118] Even the same artist's *Rossija* – apart from the few patterns indicating a Russian national costume – is relatively similar-looking, albeit with a sword in hand. The Estonian national project was a side issue for Weizenberg, whose income mainly came from Russian imperial commissions.[119] This certainly did

118 Cf. Katrin Kivimaa, "Naisekuju nõukogude ja eesti identiteedi kandjana sotsrealistliku maalikunsti ja graafika näitel," *Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi* 16, no. 3 (2007): 9–45.

119 As did that of the other leading sculptor, Amandus Adamson, who also portrayed Rossija. See Mai Levin, *Alguses olid . . . Köler ja Weizenberg* (Tallinn: Eesti Kunstimuuseum, 2018); Johannes Saar and Mart Kalm, "Akademismi viimased kantsid: Amandus Adamson ja Aleksandr Wladovsky," in *Eesti kunsti ajalugu* 5: 83, 87–89. Cf. Jaan Pert, *August Weizenberg. Eestilise visaduse kehastus* (Tallinn: Kooperatiiv, 1935).

not appeal to Estonian art historians. Voldemar Vaga, for instance, called his *Rossija* “unbearably tasteless and vulgar.”[120]

It was much too early in 1880 to expect a national topic to bring about a search for a characteristic Estonian form or style, but the fact that Weizenberg was putting forth an absolute principle of beauty (with the help of an Italian sitter!) was already being criticized by his contemporaries.[121] This is especially evident in the decision to portray Linda in a manner resembling a maiden. Her youth is stressed by the revealing dress, taking into account the infamous instructions by Kreutzwald himself: “Linda as the wife of a hero should probably not show [signs of] decay like our mortal women,” and hence there should be no reason to cover her arms and breasts with clothes.[122] As feminist scholar Joan W. Scott has put it, “If reproduction was the key to patriarchy for some, sexuality itself was the answer for others.”[123]

Also, politically, monuments and pictures are by no means “innocent” or “neutral.”[124] What makes Weizenberg’s *Linda* so intriguing is that in 1920, forty years later, this sculpture was erected as a bronze statue in Tallinn public space. She was placed on one side of the same Toompea hill that Linda herself had supposedly created, near the site of the ancient Lindanise fortress – on top of a former 17th-century defensive bastion from the Swedish era[125] that was soon to inherit its name from the statue, Lindamägi (Figure 6).

By that time, Weizenberg’s *Linda* must have seemed to refer to a bygone era, stylistically. Yet the very idea of nationalism presupposes a certain amount of traditionalism in order to demonstrate the nation’s deep roots and persistence. The moment chosen was politically significant: the war – the constant presence of death – lent added impetus to realizing it as a public monument. It was unveiled a few months after the Tartu Peace Treaty ended the Estonian War of Indepen-

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120 Voldemar Vaga, *Eesti kunst. Kunstide ajalugu Eestis keskajast meie päevini* (Tartu: Loodus, 1940–41): 118–19. See Kristina Jõekalda, “German Medievalism and Estonian Contemporaneity: Centre, Periphery and Periodization in the Histories of Baltic and Estonian Art, 1880s–1930s,” in *Periodization in the Art Historiographies of Central and Eastern Europe*, ed. Shona Kallestrup, Magdalena Kunińska, Mihnea Alexandru Mihail, Anna Adashinskaya, and Cosmin Minea (London: Routledge, 2022): 131–34.

121 See Kivimaa, *Rahvuslik*, 58.

122 A letter from Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald to August Weizenberg, November 3–15, 1879. Quoted in Heini Paas, *August Weizenberg, 1837–1921* (Tallinn: Kunst, 1999): 74.

123 Scott, “Gender,” 1058.

124 Peter Burke, *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence* (London: Reaktion Books, 2001): 64, 188.

125 “‘Linda’ kuju aluspaigale pandud,” Kaja, May 27, 1920; “‘Linda’ kuju Rootsi kantsile üles pandud,” Päevaleht, June 7, 1920.

dence. As such, it was one of the first signifiers of Estonianness on Toompea – and was thus an essential symbolic step, no matter the actual appearance of the statue. And this was not merely a statement about German, Danish, Swedish, or Polish rule: this most visible spot in the city had recently been "Russified" with the construction of an imposing onion-domed Russian Orthodox church dedicated to their own crusades-era hero, Alexander Nevsky (architect Mikhail Preobrazhensky, built 1894–1900). Therefore, the statue of Linda symbolically brought together the ancient past, the "national awakening," and the independent state – "all the essential periods in the imaginary and real history of the Estonian nation." In the 1980s, the surrounding Lindamägi became one of the most important sites for Estonian protests, as they worked their way towards regaining independence from Soviet rule[126] – and thus in part merged with the concept of the Land of Mary.

Primal Art Nouveau Linda

In 1903, in a journal also entitled *Linda*, the writer Gustav Suits (1883–1956) made a call for donations to publish an illustrated version of the epic, to finally create an Estonian style. The first attempts were to remain unsuccessful. The plan for an illustrated edition was taken up again in 1911 by the Estonian Literary Society. The best-known artist to visualize the epic, Kristjan Raud (1865–1943), started in those years, though his work only reached full fruition in the 1930s.[127]

Suits argued that Weizenberg's series of nationally inspired sculptures failed to present a harmony of form and content, albeit reasoning that "if the Estonian nation did not exist, Estonian literature and art" could not have existed either, for these "only arise when the people have reached self-awareness."[128] Whereas in 1880 it was precisely the universalism of its artistic idiom that gave Weizenberg's *Linda* power as a national personification – a small pagan culture's mythic figure represented in the style of the grand European heroines – by the turn of the century a shift had occurred. Suits asked polemically: "Would we wish that our *Kale-*

126 Kivimaa, *Rahvuslik*, 59.
127 Ervin Pütsep, *Kunstielu Eestimaal*, vol. 1 (Stockholm: Centre for Baltic Studies at the University of Stockholm, 1991): 287; Mai Levin, *Kristjan Raud, 1865–1943. Suur kunstnik ja rahvuskultuuri ehitaja* (Tallinn: Eesti Kunstimuuseum, 2021); Kädi Talvoja, "(Re)nationalizing Estonian Art During the Thaw: Lively Legacy of Kristjan Raud," in *A Socialist Realist History? Writing Art History in the Post-War Decades*, ed. Krista Kodres, Kristina Jõekalda, and Michaela Marek (Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau, 2018): 170–99. As both the brothers Raud have received considerable attention in previous scholarship, I will not focus on their work here.
128 K. Wahur [Gustav Suits], "'Kujutavast kunstist' Eestis ja Kalevipoja piltidest," *Linda* 52 (1903): 918–19.

vipoeg contained only this, which is beautiful in the general sense, which we could be proud of like the Iliad and Odyssey, but which would not affect us, Estonians, more than anyone else?"[129]

How well did the small, little-known drawing in Indian ink by Ado Vabbe (1892–1961) from c. 1913–1916 (Figure 7) succeed in this regard? The black-and-white *Linda's Rock* (*Linda Crying on the Rock*) shows not a young and seductive maiden, but an old woman in tears – not at all a typical choice for a personification of a nation (if it was intended as such, of course).[130] The stylized curls are composed of shapes resembling stars and tiny crescent moons. With her hunched position and long fingers, which seem to be playing an invisible musical instrument, she makes a mythological, witch-like, even neurotic or grotesque impression.[131]

The work is one of the few in which Vabbe is trying out Art Nouveau, with a Symbolist twist. It might seem like an attempt to modernize and create a different visual identity for the young nation – to rethink Weizenberg's *Linda*. Given that an expensive public monument has to please various parties (including those with conservative tastes), innovation is clearly easier to achieve in media such as drawing. Although Art Nouveau was certainly not novel by the 1910s internationally, in Estonian art its significance resulted from its acquiring National Romantic traits. This stylistic choice is by no means typical of Vabbe in those years – having developed as an artist in Riga, Munich, Italy, and Helsinki, he was mostly known for outrageously avant-garde abstract art and for his personal contacts with Wassily Kandinsky.[132] In fact, it has been called his most old-fashioned work,[133] resembling the 19th-century prints by the popular Aubrey Beardsley.[134]

Vabbe surprised viewers with "a synthesis of contemporaneity and radical experimentation" as much as he surprised them with interpretations of "ancient artistic heritage," wrote art historian (and artist) Rudolf Paris in the 1930s. Vabbe's attempt at modernizing how mythological heroes were supposed to look was thus highlighted as being among his primary achievements: Vabbe was "leading the

129 Wahur, "Kujutavast kunstist," 920.

130 See Kivimaa, *Rahvuslik*, 55.

131 Eha Komissarov, "Avargardistlik narratiiv Ado Vabbe loomingus 1913–25," in *Eesti kunsti ajalugu* 5: 221; Ene Lamp, *Ekspressionism Eesti kujutavas kunstis* (Tallinn: Eesti Kunstiakadeemia, 2004): 72–73.

132 Helmi Üprus, *Päikesemängud* (Tallinn: Kunst, 1976): 61–62, 93–94, 111–112; Tiiu Talvistu, *Ado Vabbe. Wunderbar*, ed. Mary-Ann Talvistu (Tallinn: Eesti Kunstimuuseum, Kumu, 2020): 44–58, 350, 353.

133 Komissarov, "Avargardistlik," 221. Cf. Virve Sarapik, "Anti-Futurism of Young Estonia Literary Movement," *Interlitteraria* 14, no. 1 (2009): 142–61.

134 Reet Varblane, "Avangardism ja traditsionaalsus Ado Vabbe loomingus," *Looming* 10 (1994): 1403–19.

way to solving the basic problems of art in Estonian society," especially when compared to the backward-looking works of the likes of Weizenberg.[135]

Strong National Romantic Linda

A representative oil painting, *Linda Carrying a Rock* (1917), by another prolific artist, Oskar Kallis (1892–1918), was indeed motivated by the search for an Estonian style (Figure 8). His thorough reading of the epic led Kallis to pick out scenes that had never been visualized before, and he made lengthy attempts to find the best composition for each. Several preparatory drawings and prints for this painting have also survived. Having studied in Helsinki, St Petersburg, and Moscow, his oeuvre falls primarily under National Romanticism – making his ambitious endeavours in many ways more traditional than those of Vabbe. This work, too, was ethnographically inspired, to the extent that he tried – based on his artistic research and travels throughout the countryside – to meticulously reconstruct the actual patterns, jewellery, and costumes seen in farms or in the recently established Estonian National Museum (1909). It was this museum that invited Kallis to illustrate the epic in 1914.[136]

Linda is depicted as an elderly but tough woman, who could easily be a mother of three (some sources even suggest twelve children).[137] Following the lead of Finnish artists, Suits had concluded in 1903 that only a new artistic style could make this locally valued mythological material interesting for an international gaze and that realism should not be the answer – instead, the fantastic and magical would need to be stressed, combined with a careful study of ancient history and folk poems: "It would be a great mistake" to depict Kalevipoeg or Linda as simple farmers, as the folklore itself is full of "gold, jewels, pearls, etc."[138] Although this Linda does seem to correspond to an imagined peasant woman, the rest is well in line with what Kallis sought to achieve. The shiny garment, albeit torn by the massive effort, and the blond hair in the wind seem unrealistically romanticized. The stylized ancient landscape and the bright colours of the sunset have elicited parallels with Edvard Munch. The glowing sun that Kallis kept repeating in his works has been interpreted as "emblematic of the northern geographical

135 Rudolf Paris, "Ado Vabbe," *Varamu* 6 (1939): 648–53.

136 Reet Mark, *Noorte Kujurite Ühing Vikerla, 1917–1918* (Tartu: Tartu Kunstimuuseum, 2008): 15–16; Mai Levin, "Rahvusromantism eesti kunstis," in *Eesti kunsti ajalugu* 5: 117, 121.

137 Cf. Annist, *Friedrich*, 768–72.

138 Wahur, "Kujutavast kunstist," 923.

space," representing a sort of dialogue between the cosmic and earthly worlds[139] – all of which further testifies to the willingness of later historiography to take such National Romantic interpretations as embodiments of the Estonian nation.

The effect of the world war is especially relevant in the context of Kallis, who suffered from tuberculosis and died young.[140] He had pictured death on many occasions before. He belonged to the artists' grouping Noorte Kujurite Ühing Vikerla (Society of Young Sculptors Vikerla), whose roughly ten members – half of whom lost their lives during the war – were all associated with the National Romantic movement. Furthermore, Kallis's daily work also connected him with the war effort: he earned his wages making measurements and drawings for a military fortification, Peter the Great's Naval Fortress in and around Tallinn, a grand imperial Russian project of 1910s.[141]

It is curious that although we know from the epic that Linda must have been carrying her youngest son, Kalevipoeg, at the time she buried her husband, none of the works of art show her pregnancy. Perhaps the thin band around the rock – wrapped around her fists, but still resembling a fragile silk ribbon – was supposed to indicate this physical difficulty in her labour? Art historian Bart Pushaw has pointed out that the motherhood narrative is reflected in the painting in the way in which she embraces the rock like a baby in her arms.[142] The band she uses to better grasp the rock could also signify Linda's creativity and persistence, allowing her to disregard her grief and continue onward. She is clearly not passive: unlike the classic example of a mourning woman, the Virgin Mary in the *Pietà*, this Linda is strong, even masculine, and continues on without complaint.

Whereas Weizenberg produced an idealized Linda whose criterion was beauty, Kallis seems to present something of an idealized inner strength, commonly perceived to be a (peasant) Estonian characteristic. The woman is not overtly aestheticized; instead, she brings to mind those militant female figures from the international imagery of nationalism, who might be wearing a revealing see-through outfit but who are also armed with shields and swords, in line with the iconography of the war goddess Athena. Like the defiant militant image of the Virgin Mary, a female personification need not represent helplessness and victimhood, but can represent capability and resistance instead.

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139 Rodolphe Rapetti, "Terra incognita," in *Wild Souls: Symbolism in the Art of the Baltic States / Vabad hinged. Sümbolism Baltimaade kunstis*, ed. Liis Pählapuu (Tallinn: Eesti Kunstimuuseum, 2018): 34.

140 Lola Annabel Kass, "Oskar Kallis," in *Wild Souls*: 172–74.

141 Mark, *Noorte Kujurite Ühing*, 8, 15.

142 Bart Pushaw, "Oskar Kallis," in *Wild Souls*: 246–48.

Kallis might not have intended it this way, but the colour of Linda's shirt is in fact akin to Mary's attribute blue. The same colour occurs in his pastel drawing *Linda Mourning Kalev* (Figure 9): she is leaning over her dead husband, in tears and in grief, lovingly caressing his head, preparing to wash his body. While Kalev is an old man with his long grey hair, Linda is a young maiden, her hair loose; both are in fine ethnographically inspired attire. The deep blue occurs both as the reflecting light and as background (the sea, Lake Ülemiste or simply evening light). Attributing relevance to this choice of colour might seem far-fetched, were it not for additional examples, such as *Linda Mourning* by Paul Raud (1865–1930; Figure 10), where she is youthful, fair-haired and barefoot, contemplative, and dressed in a similar deep blue.

Crisis of National Style: From Allegory to Allergy

By the early 20th century, there were already many artists who were trying to find unique, modern, and thoroughly Estonian ways to depict national mythology. But this did not immediately bring about a modernist form. Obviously, every culture looks to both the past and future from their present.[143] The internationalism of the stylistic options available to the artists – the visual language of nationalism – posed a significant difficulty for small "awakening" nations in their attempts to claim a unique artistic appearance for their national spirit. What was the truly Estonian style in the midst of these various attempts? And how did Linda contribute to finding one?

Kivimaa has proposed that in 19th-century Estonian art the *Linda* by Weizenberg is "one of the best examples of using a female image to symbolise abstract ideas, the territory and national collective."[144] I would argue that this applies to the character of Linda more generally. The above cases touched upon a plethora of topics in the history of art, both from the perspective of national personifications and the history of style, perfectly demonstrating how ambiguous stylistic categories and temporal boundaries can be. Although these few examples do not do justice to Linda's full potential as personification of the Estonian people, Weizenberg's monument clearly speaks to that aspect most directly. This brings to light some of the paradoxes of art history: his public statue – this most old-fashioned of the examples, representing 19th-century Academicism – was in fact the latest of the three. Whereas its stylistic categorization is relatively straightforward, Vabbe and Kallis

143 See Aleida Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization: Functions, Media, Archives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011): 127–29.

144 Kivimaa, *Rahvuslik*, 59.

(who were both a half-century Weizenberg's junior) have been associated with an array of artistic movements, from Symbolism to Expressionism and decadence.

One might think that a mourning Linda is not all that suitable as a national symbol. The death of an ancient elder is not the kind of happy memory upon which to build one's identity. But her ability to overcome her grief could be seen as yet another parallel to overcoming the 700 years of suffering under foreign rule, to the development of a self-aware Estonianness – as the personification of the whole people's grief over all those wasted lifetimes.[145] All the more so during the war, when the deaths of thousands of young men gave the folktale a new layer of meaning. In addition to mourning, Linda thus symbolized the new growth – giving birth to a new nation and culture.

In the interwar era the course of history allowed such narratives to flourish, interpreting the victorious War of Independence as the culmination of a constant centuries-long struggle. The fact that both Weizenberg and Kallis died within a year of completing their works has lent additional weight to their emotional value. Yet, even during the bitter war years, when one might have expected a resurgence of nationalist pathos, strong criticisms of this kind of nationalist imagery appeared.[146] Following a national art competition in 1928, critic Rasmus Kangro-Pool (1890–1963) labelled those attempts naive and pathetic, while conceding that depicting the local past had proven difficult for Estonian artists: "to date one has not been able to find a national artistic appearance that would be worthy of our heroes."[147]

Male artists depicting an idealized – and often objectified – female body is in itself a topic that raises many issues. But do the works analysed represent an uncritical acceptance of such a canon? Western gendered traditions of artistic depiction and their differentiation between male and female representative roles had clearly been fixed long before Estonian professional art was even born.[148] Yet, the way Linda has been presented in the examples above does not fully conform to these. Artistic conventions of personifications in the 19th century favoured youthful and idealized depictions, but after Weizenberg we have not really seen attempts to eroticize Linda – more frequently a mature sad widow is depicted, full of determination. Mourning and memorializing Kalev are indeed the primary moments in Linda's iconography. And she is almost never depicted without a rock, which can be considered her attribute. Very curiously, Linda's motherly nature – which seems to be her es-

145 See Kivimaa, *Rahvuslik*, 57.

146 For example: P[aul?] Sepp, "Nõndanimetatud 'Eesti kunstinäitus'," Tallinna Teataja, December 7, 1918; Karl August Hindrey, "Kunstinäitus," Päevaleht, December 9, 1918.

147 Rasmus Kangro-Pool, "Kunstide Sihtkapitali võistluse tulemusist," *Taie* 2 (1928): 57.

148 Kivimaa, *Rahvuslik*, 38.

sence – receives hardly any visualization: unlike Mary, Linda is rarely depicted together with her children, nor do we see much of the young Kalevipoeg growing up. Drawing parallels with the new-born nation makes the failure to depict these scenes all the more striking. Linda is the mother of grown, independent men.

Conclusion: Competing Mothers of the Land

The late 19th century marks the heyday for both the Virgin Mary and Linda in the Baltic space. The first was an old Livonian *regional* symbol, at least initially; the second, an Estonian *national* symbol. While Mary has a vast existence outside the scope of the Livonian-Estonian Terra Mariana, I would argue that Linda's primary identity is that of an Estonian personification – although largely disregarded as such in public art works.

At first glance they have close to nothing in common, apart from their longevity: their origins are different, representing opposing religious as well as ethnic communities. Indeed, Mary lent a helping hand to the Christian conquerors of Estonia, while Toompea as its seat of power was the very hill that the mythological Linda, representing pagan culture, had created. Mary was made to serve the interests of not only religious but also political narratives of the region's Germanness and its colonial character. Linda's symbolic nature is perhaps best captured by the fact that through her act of gathering those rocks for Toompea, her representation in the epic sought to renounce and override – even symbolically defeat – the narratives building on Henry of Livonia. Mythologically speaking, Linda (or the nameless heroine of the folktales) thus played a part in making those very territories appealing and naturally well suited to the foreign landlords in the first place. Rather than the pre-Christian reality, this tells us a great deal about the 19th-century construction of national narratives, for which the Estonian Lindanise fortress set the perfect stage. The painting by Kallis shows long hay growing between the rocks – on the hill that she is supposed to have carried only moments earlier. Was Kallis, too, seeking to connect Linda and Lindanise in this way?

The way in which Estonian national culture has integrated both Mary and Linda – as symbolic mother figures personifying this land – and has given them new meanings nevertheless does suggest interesting parallels. They are obviously both mothers of grown-up sons, both often shown in mourning, and yet forever young – beautiful and strong. While Mary is nearly always de-eroticized, the early imagery of Linda was intentionally sensual, as were many other personifications internationally. Both are extraordinary, powerful women with militant

traits and mystical connotations. The moon is an important attribute to both. We know both of them through stories representing their entire lifetimes, of which only select moments are typically visualized. The scene of Linda's miraculous birth from an egg, for instance, rarely occurs in art works (if at all).

As such, both play a great deal with much older and more universal symbols of heroic femininity. Although Linda has her own particular traits, we could to a certain extent even speak of Linda *as* the Virgin Mary: the latter has definitely affected the depiction of all mothers in art, both as young mothers holding babies and as mourning their loved ones – as consolers as well as empowerers. Both are specifically connected with the land, and with Mother Nature, in a patriotic key – as a personification should be.[149] It would be an exaggeration to say that Linda continued directly from where the Virgin Mary left off. One could say, though, that the position of Mary as patron of Livonia and Estonia gave a boost to the rise of Linda, due to their similarities. But not to the point of allowing Linda to become an outright national personification, it seems: on the contrary, the position of Mary as the patron of both Latvia and Estonia might have hindered Linda's chances in this respect.

The potential of either one as a personification was by no means exhausted by Romantic and nationalist artists of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Rather than a deliberate choice, the fact that Estonia did not develop a tradition of erecting statues of them all over the place – did not set either of them in stone as a personification – might have to do with the many historical ruptures, the limited capacity of the small community of artists, and perhaps also the passivity and relative poverty of potential patrons at the time. There remains the possibility that the opportunity for their grand narrativization was simply missed, due to the many hybridities.

Be that as it may, the two share remarkable similarities. As we have seen, the idea of a Terra Mariana, that was for a long time seen as symbolizing the Christianness and Germanness of these lands, gradually came to be interpreted in the Estonian national key as well, even if Mary was militarized once again in the service of German political aims during the First World War. And despite their seemingly opposing roots, both the Virgin Mary and the mythical Linda have paradoxically been strongly connected with the 1980s Estonian moment of "national re-awakening."

Balancing between different kinds of artistic language – which can itself oscillate between traditional and avant-garde styles, as well as between local and universal aesthetics (not to mention differing stylistic interpretations of each) – adds another layer of confusion. But it is the ability to effectively keep all these various appearances to-

149 What we cannot find much of in either case are connections to the fertility of the earth itself.

gether that is the ultimate test as to whether a figure is actually functioning as a personification. It becomes evident that these often almost-identical female personifications are a perfect testament to the fact that nationalism itself is a very international phenomenon, albeit with local specificities.[150] Both the Virgin Mary and the epic Linda bring together many different traits, interpretations, identities, and audiences – which is the very feature that allows them to function as symbols over long stretches of time.

Figures

Figure 1: Emblem for celebrating the Estonian "Land of Mary 800" in 2015, by the productive Estonian heraldist Priit Herodes (courtesy of the designer).

150 See Joep Leerssen, "Nationalism and the Cultivation of Culture," *Nations and Nationalism* 12, no. 4 (2006): 572.

Figure 2: This 13th–14th-century pilgrim's badge with the inverted circumscription "Signum S. Marie in Livonia remissionis peccatorum," unearthed in Lübeck, is one of the earliest visual signifiers of the Livonian Land of Mary, granting the crusaders the remission of their sins. Iron, 6.5 × 4 cm (St. Annen-Museum, Fotoarchiv der Hansestadt Lübeck).

Figure 3: The crusading banner with the Virgin Mary, as imagined in the 19th century. Print *Bishop Albert Lays the Foundation Stone for the Town of Riga. Anno 1200* (actually 1201) from the album by Baltic German artist Friedrich Ludwig von Maydell (*Fünfzig Bilder aus der Geschichte der deutschen Ostsee-Provinzen Russlands nebst erklärendem Text*, vol. 1. Dorpat: Kluge, 1839). Copper engraving, 25.7 × 36.7 cm (Art Museum of Estonia, Tallinn).

Figure 4: Pilgrim's badges and banners with Mary in the 1888 manuscript prepared as a gift to the pope. This page executed by Latvian architect Oskar Felsko, combining watercolours and prints, originally 60 × 48 cm (reproduction from the facsimile edition: *Terra Mariana. 1186–1888*, vol. 1. Rīga: Latvijas Nacionālā bibliotēka, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2013).

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Die Livland—Estland-Ausstellung in Berlin. — Vor kurzem ist in den Räumen der Akademie der Künste am Pariser Platz die Livland—Estland-Ausstellung eröffnet worden. ...

Mutter Gottes
mit dem Wappen des livländischen
Ordensmeisters Plettenberg.

Bänerliche Schönheit.

kannt werden, daß diese schwere Aufgabe im ganzen dank der unermüdlichen Hingabe der mitwirkenden deutsch-baltischen Kreise, insbesondere Rigas und Revals überraschend glücklich gelöst ist. Die Ausstellung bietet in übersichtlicher und geschmackvoller Anordnung tatsächlich ein Gesamtbild, das auch der liebevollen Durchführung in reizvollen Einzelheiten nicht ermangelt. Ihr Zweck ist ein ausgesprochen national-erzieherischer. Sie will eine dreifache Erkenntnis erreichen: daß in den baltischen Ländern, auf deren Boden eine große geschichtliche Vergangenheit, eine reiche Kultur erwuchs, — daß sich in ihnen ein blühendes Wirt-

Standbild des heiligen Georg
mit dem Wappen des heiligen Mauritius,
dem Wappen der Schwarzhäupter.

Figure 5: Beautified late-19th-century plaster copy of the limestone relief of the Virgin Mary (1515) above the inner gate of Riga Castle, almost 2 m high. Next to her, a photograph of a Seto woman in traditional attire. Reproduction from a First World War propaganda album (Alfr[ed] Geiser, "Die Livland–Estland-Ausstellung in Berlin," in *Der Weltkrieg. Illustrierte Kriegs-Chronik des Daheim*, vol. 9. Bielefeld, Leipzig: Velhagen & Klasing, 1918, 171).

Figure 6: August Weizenberg's sculpture *Linda* next to Toompea Castle's Tall Hermann tower in Tallinn (which traditionally holds the state flag – scratched out here). Original marble version from 1880 (121 × 54.5 × 62.5 cm), erected as a monument cast in bronze in 1920. Photo: Karl Akel, 1920s (Estonian History Museum, Tallinn).

Figure 7: *Linda's Rock* (1913–1916) by Ado Vabbe offers a Symbolist interpretation of the mother figure in the Estonian national epic *Kalevipoeg*. Indian ink on paper, 28.8 × 21.7 cm (private collection. Photo reproduction: Art Museum of Estonia, Tallinn).

Figure 8: *Linda Carrying a Rock* (1917) by Oskar Kallis is one of the most well-known National Romanticist visualizations of her. Oil on canvas, 83 × 86.2 cm (Art Museum of Estonia, Tallinn).

Figure 9: *Linda Mourning Kalev* (1917) by Oskar Kallis gives the sombre atmosphere with deep blue. Pastels on paper, 20.5 × 36 cm (Tartu Art Museum).

Figure 10: Paul Raud visualized scenes from the national epic on several occasions. This is a draft for the painting *Linda Mourning* from 1913. Tempera and pencil on paper, 26 × 35.4 cm (Art Museum of Estonia, Tallinn).

Gustavs Strenga

From Bishop-Killer to Latvian National Hero: Imanta's Transformations from the Middle Ages to Nation-Building

Three nations living on the Eastern shores of the Baltic Sea – the Finns, Latvians, and Estonians – experienced a "national awakening" during the late 19th century; yet at the time that their nation-building began, none of them had "their own" history.[1] For centuries, the descendants of the Baltic and Finno-Ugric peoples, who had been subjugated by Northern German and Scandinavian immigrants in the 13th century, did not have their own elites; as a consequence, their past was narrated by the conquerors and their descendants. Though we must distinguish between medieval chroniclers, who belonged to the religious communities of the High Middle Ages, and modern-day Baltic Germans or Swedes, the elites of the latter two had appropriated the medieval narratives as their own. In the Baltic provinces of the Russian Empire, the Middle Ages lay at the core of the identities of those who identified with the conquerors – the Baltic Germans – as it did for those who identified with the conquered – the Latvians and Estonians.

There were two main sources about Livonia's medieval past, *the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia* (c. 1227) and the *Livonian Rhymed Chronicle* (c. 1290) – these were products of the crusading age written by a Catholic clergyman and a member of the Teutonic Order, respectively; both represented a "colonial view" of events.[2] However, sources on the indigenous Livonians of the 13th century were scarce; in the late 19th century, the two chronicles were the only medieval texts that Latvian and Estonian poets, authors, and historians could refer to when seeking out their nations' past.[3] In the modern period, *The Chronicle of Henry of Livonia* was the more widely used of the two.

1 Gratitude must be expressed to my friends and colleagues who gave me advice and guided me through the turbulent seas of Latvian literary history: Pauls Daija, Mārtiņš Mintaurs, Ojārs Lāms, Māra Grudule, and Ieva Lešinska-Geibere.

2 James A. Brundage, "Introduction: Henry of Livonia, The Writer and His Chronicle," in *Crusading and Chronicle Writing on the Medieval Baltic Frontier: A Companion to the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia*, ed. Marek Tamm, Linda Kaljundi, and Carsten Selch Jensen (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011): 1–22; Alan V. Murray, "The Structure, Genre and Intended Audience of the Livonian Rhymed Chronicle," in *Crusade and Conversion on the Baltic Frontier, 1150–1500*, ed. Alan V. Murray (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001): 235–51.

3 Linda Kaljundi and Kaspars Kļaviņš, "The Chronicler and the Modern World: Henry of Livonia and the Baltic Crusades in the Enlightenment and National Traditions," in *Crusading and Chroni-*

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During the "awakening," it was not only the nation's past that was relevant; heroic figures who symbolized experiences of the past also took on greater significance. These played important roles in the creation of national histories and identities. In the 19th century, emerging nations referred to real or fictional medieval heroic figures, like St Wenceslas (d. 935) or Jan Hus (1369–1415) in the Czech case, to construct their identities or gain self-consciousness.[4] Latvian intellectuals had to find or appropriate a medieval hero for their emerging nation, a person who had undertaken heroic and symbolic actions. The most obvious candidate for that job was the Liv warrior Imanta (also Ymaut, Imauts, Imants).[5] Though as a hero Imanta had medieval roots, in the contemporary sources Imanta is mentioned just once. Henry in his chronicle narrates the tragic fate of the second Livonian bishop, Berthold, the former Cistercian abbot of Loccum. Shortly after their arrival in the Lower Düna (Daugava) region, Berthold and his company of crusaders were engaged in a battle with pagan Livs on July 24, 1198, at the site where the city of Riga would later be built. During the battle, "the bishop, restraining his horse badly, was carried by its speed into the midst of the fugitives. Two of the Livonians seized him, a third, Ymaut by name, pierced him from the back with a lance, and the others tor him to pieces, limb from limb."[6] The story of Berthold's killing also appears in *The Chronicle of Arnold of Lübeck* (before 1214), yet according to Arnold's account, the new bishop was slain by two anonymous impious pagans. Arnold recounts how the bishop's body remained intact and did not decay in the summer heat, unlike the bodies of the others killed, thus imply-

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cle Writing on the Medieval Baltic Frontier: 409–56; Linda Kaljundi, "Challenging Expansions: Estonian Viking Novels and the Politics of Memory in the 1930s," in *Novels, Histories, Novel Nations: Historical Fiction and Cultural Memory in Finland and Estonia*, ed. Linda Kaljundi, Eneken Laanes, and Ilona Pikkanen (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2015): 182–207, 123.

4 František Šmahel, "'Old Czechs Were Hefty Heroes': The Construction and Reconstruction of Czech National History in Its Relationship to the 'Great' Medieval Past," in *The Uses of the Middle Ages in Modern European States: History, Nationhood and the Search for Origins*, ed. R. J. W. Evans and Guy P. Marchal (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011): 245–58.

5 Livs were a Finno-Ugric ethnicity; because all inhabitants of medieval Livonia have been called Livonians, I will use the term Liv instead of Livonian throughout this article. Imanta's name was mistakenly transcribed as Ymant instead of Ymaut by Johann Daniel Gruber in his edition of *The Chronicle of Henry of Livonia. Origines Livoniae sacrae et civilis, seu chronicon Livonicum vetus*, ed. Johann Daniel Gruber (Frankfurt: [s.n.], 1740), 13.

6 "Episcopus equi ab eo male detenti velocitate inmiscetur fugientibus. Quem duobus complectentibus tercius, Ymaut nomine, a tergo lancea perfodit, quem et alii membratim dilacerant." *Heinrichs Livländische Chronik*, ed. Leonid Arbusow and Albert Bauer (Hannover: Hahn, 1955), II, 6, p. 10; translation from *The Chronicle of Henry of Livonia*, trans. James A. Brundage (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 33.

ing a miracle and Berthold's holiness.[7] There has been some debate as to whether Berthold was venerated as a saint in the Middle Ages, but he was reinterred at Riga cathedral – his body had initially been buried at the first Livonian church in Üxkull (Latvian, Ikšķile) – and his martyrdom was commemorated not only in Riga but also in the abbey of Loccum. Furthermore, he appears in all Livonian medieval historiographical texts.[8] However, there is no mention of Imanta in any other medieval sources. He was not a part of any community's collective memory prior to the modern era.

As this chapter will show, Imanta emerged as a hero during the Enlightenment because of theatre plays and literary works written by Baltic German intellectuals and subsequently appropriated by the Latvian national movement. However, Imanta as a phenomenon was not unique. He had a Northern European counterpart: the Finnish bishop-killer Lalli, who also became a national hero. In 1156, during the First Swedish Crusade, a peasant on a frozen lake allegedly killed Henry, bishop of Uppsala, who had come to Finland together with King Erik Jedvardsson (c. 1120–c. 1160) and who, like Henry, later became a saint.[9] Though the bishop's killer appears

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7 Joann Martin Lappenberg and Georg Heinrich Pertz, eds, *Arnoldi chronica Slavorum* (Hannover: Hahn, 1868), 215; Anti Selart, "Meinhard, Berthold, Bernhard – kein Heiliger für Livland," in *Credo – Christianisierung Europas im Mittelalter*, ed. Hanne Lovise Aannestad, Christoph Stiegemann, Martin Kroker, and Wolfgang Walter (Petersberg: Michael Imhof Verlag, 2013): 434–40, 436; Marek Tamm, "How to Justify a Crusade? The Conquest of Livonia and New Crusade Rhetoric in the Early Thirteenth Century," *Journal of Medieval History* 39, no. 4 (2013): 431–55, 448.

8 Hermann von Bruiningk, *Messe und kanonisches Stundengebet nach dem Brauche der Rigaschen Kirche im späteren Mittelalter* (Riga: Kymmel, 1904), 373–74; Bernd Ulrich Hucker, "Der Zisterzienserabt Bertold, Bischof von Livland, und der Erste Livlandkreuzzug," in *Die Anfänge Christlicher Mission in den Baltischen Ländern*, ed. Manfred Hellmann (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1989): 39–64, 42; Selart, "Meinhard, Berthold, Bernhard – kein Heiliger für Livland," 436; Anu Mänd and Anti Selart, "Livonia – A Region without Local Saints?," in *Symbolic Identity and the Cultural Memory of Saints*, ed. Nils Holger Petersen, Anu Mänd, Sebastián Salvadó, and Tracey R. Sands (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2018): 91–122, 102–06; Sini Kangas, "The Image of 'Warrior-Bishops' in the Northern Tradition of the Crusades," in *Christianity and War in Medieval East Central Europe and Scandinavia*, ed. Carsten Selch Jensen, Stephen Bennett, and Radosław Kotecki (Amsterdam: ARC, Amsterdam University Press, 2021): 57–74; Gregory Leighton, *Ideology and Holy Landscape in the Baltic Crusades* (Leeds: Arc Humanities Press, 2022): 70–71; Gustavs Strenga, *Remembering the Dead: Collective Memory and Commemoration in Late Medieval Livonia* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2023): 45–47.

9 Miikka Tamminen, "The Axe of Lalli and the Cap of St. Henry – a View from Finland," in *Controversial Histories – Current Views on the Crusades*, ed. Felix Hinz and Johannes Meyer-Hamme (London: Routledge, 2021): 91–93; Tuomas Heikkilä, "An Imaginary Saint for an Imagined Community: St. Henry and the Creation of Christian Identity in Finland, Thirteenth – Fifteenth Centuries," in *Imagined Communities on the Baltic Rim, from the Eleventh to Fifteenth Centuries*, ed. Wojtek Jezierski and Lars Hermanson (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016): 223–52.

in the 13th-century *Legenda sancti Henrici* (Legend of St Henry), he is only named Lalli in a 17th-century poem.[10] In medieval iconography, Henry's killer was portrayed as a villain lying under the bishop's feet. Like Imanta, however, during the 19th century Lalli was transformed from a villain into a national hero.[11] Lalli was "an example for the Finnish fight for independence," being a man who preferred to die rather than submit to foreign lords.[12] As I will show in this chapter, Imanta similarly embodied the Latvians' struggle for freedom in the Middle Ages and symbolized resistance against foreign conquest.

This chapter aims to look at how Imanta became a "figure of memory"[13] for the Latvian nation and how his memory was "done": created, practised, and applied as part of the nation-building process. It will show the origins and transformations of Imanta as a hero figure, the ways in which he was made part of Latvian cultural memory, and how he was marginalized when he became unfashionable. The chapter focuses on the career of Imanta as a hero, between the age of the Enlightenment and the Second World War. I approached Imanta's heroic career with the following research questions in mind: How was Imanta constructed as a hero during the Enlightenment? How was he appropriated by Latvian intellectuals during the national awakening in the late 19th century? What role did the performing arts play in developing Imanta as the Latvian national hero? Why did Imanta lose appeal as a national hero in the 1920s, to be replaced by other medieval men?

10 Scholars have questioned the historicity of the First Swedish Crusade. Tuomas M. S. Lehtonen, "Spoken, Written, and Performed in Latin and Vernacular Cultures from the Middle Ages to the Early Seventeenth Century: Ramus Virens Oliuarum," in *The Performance of Christian and Pagan Storyworlds*, ed. Lars Boje Mortensen and Tuomas M. S. Lehtonen (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013): 109–39.

11 On national heroes, see Linas Eriksonas, *National Heroes and National Identities: Scotland, Norway and Lithuania* (Frankfurt: Lang, 2004); Stefan Berger, "The Power of National Pasts: Writing National History in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Europe," in *Writing the Nation: A Global Perspective*, ed. Stefan Berger (London: Palgrave, 2016): 30–62.

12 Sini Kangas, "The Murder of Saint Henry, Crusader Bishop of Finland," in *Les Élites Nordiques de l'Europe Occidentale (Xiie-Xve Siècle)*, ed. Tuomas M. S. Lehtonen and Élisabeth Mornet (Paris: Éditions de la Sorbonne, 2019): 189–96, 192; Kangas, "The Image of 'Warrior-Bishops' in the Northern Tradition of the Crusades," 70; Heidi Henriikka Mäkelä, "The Desired Darkness of the Ancient: Kalevalaicity, Medievalism, and Cultural Memory in the Books Niemi and Viiden Meren Kansa," *Mirator* 21, no. 1 (2021): 24–49, 40–3; Tuomas Heikkilä, *Lalli: Kansallismurhaajan muotokuva* (Helsinki: Tammi, 2022).

13 Jan Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 24.

The Birth of Imanta, a National Hero without a Nation

Imanta's emergence as a hero occurred due to the efforts of the Baltic German author and journalist Garlieb Helwig Merkel (1769–1850), decades before the nation-building process began.[14] In Merkel's time, Latvians were a class-bound ethnic group; they were peasants living in the Baltic provinces of the Russian Empire, an ethnic community but not yet a nation. It would be an overstatement to claim that Merkel and his texts created the Latvians. Yet the literary narratives he created were used during the nation-building process and were cornerstones for the construction of the discourses regarding the young nation's past and identity. As Julija Boguna states, Latvians in the 19th century were a "translated nation"; Merkel played a central role in this process, by "writing Latvians."[15] Merkel wrote in German for German readers; he drew attention to the condition of Latvian peasants and argued for the abolition of serfdom by applying to them the concept of *bon sauvage*, which was more commonly used in a non-European context.[16] After writing his polemical work *Die Letten, vorzüglich in Liefland, am Ende des philosophischen Jahrhunderts* (1796), which criticized serfdom while vividly portraying the Latvians, Merkel's intention was to write a poetic text about the Latvian past.[17] Merkel had previously published a history of the pre-crusades Latvians, *Die Vorzeit Lieflands. Ein Denkmal des Pfaffen- und Rittergeistes* (1798, 1799).[18] In his texts, Merkel, like other representatives of the Baltic Enlightenment, argued that in the past the Latvians and Estonians had been free and that it was only the medieval conquest of Livonia and the colonization conducted by the Germans – crusaders, missionaries, burghers, merchants, and knights of the Teutonic Order – that had

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14 Andrew James Blumbergs, *The Nationalization of Latvians and the Issue of Serfdom: The Baltic German Literary Contribution in the 1780s and 1790s* (Amherst: Cambria Press, 2008), 167–70.

15 Julija Boguna, *Lettland als übersetzte Nation: Garlieb Merkels 'Die Letten' und ihre Rezeption im 19. Jahrhundert in Livland* (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2014), 178–79; Julija Boguna, "Translation and Nation Building: Garlieb Merkel's 'Volk' and Its Canonization in Herrnhutian and Young Latvian Writings," *Letonica* 37 (2018): 21–37.

16 Kaspars Kļaviņš, "The Baltic Enlightenment and Perceptions of Medieval Latvian History," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 29, no. 3 (1998): 213–24, 213–15; Boguna, "Translation and Nation Building," 22.

17 Aleksandrs Jansons, "Piezīmes par Garlība Merķeļa 'Vanema Imantas' avotiem," *Latvijas PSR Zinātņu akadēmijas Vēstis* 10 (1972): 119–30, 120.

18 Garlieb Helwig Merkel, *Die Vorzeit Lieflands : Ein Denkmahl des Pfaffen- und Rittergeistes* (Berlin: Vossische Buchhandlung, 1798); it is assumed that Merkel first wrote *Wanem Ymanta* and then and *Die Vorzeit Lieflands*, yet it was the latter that was published first (1798/1799). Boguna, *Lettland als übersetzte Nation*, 171.

hindered their development.[19] Together with two other authors of the Baltic Enlightenment, August Wilhelm Hupel (1737–1819) and Heinrich Johann von Jannau (1753–1821), Merkel created the negative image of the Livonian Middle Ages by portraying Latvians and Estonians as being oppressed; the texts written by these men would later be very influential on Estonian and Latvian national history writing.[20]

For an epic story of the Latvians' past, Merkel needed a hero. The epos-like *Wanem Ymanta* was published in 1802.[21] This text concluded a cycle of Merkel's texts on Latvians, and it had a political aspect as well – he dedicated *Wanem Ymanta* to the Russian Emperor Alexander I (r. 1801–1825), who later abolished serfdom in the Baltic provinces (1816–1819). If *Die Letten* was a polemical text and *Die Vorzeit Lieflands* was meant to recount Latvian history, *Wanem Ymanta* was a poetic story about the Latvian past. *Wanem Ymanta* was not based on historical facts, not even regarding its main protagonist; it created a poetic, mythical landscape. The four-part story is set at the turn of the 12th and 13th centuries, at a time when the ancient Latvians were living according to the customs and religion of their pagan ancestors. In Merkel's text, Imanta lost all his historical features – he was not a Liv warrior but a Latvian elder, and in this story, he did not kill Bishop Berthold. Merkel's Imanta had a spouse named Aijta and a young friend Caupo, and was accompanied by three Livonian bishops, the Cistercian monk Dietrich, and some fictional German knights. Imanta was confronted by the threat posed by German missionaries and crusaders, who had arrived in the Baltic and had already conquered Livs. In a battle, his friend Caupo kills Bishop Berthold, but Caupo then turns from being a friend into a traitor. The story ends with a duel between Imanta and Caupo in front of the Riga city gates, after Imanta has joined the Livs in their struggle against the Germans. Both protagonists die: Imanta kills Caupo, but Imanta also dies because he was injured by Caupo's sword, which was poisoned. The story is a complete fiction; however, as we will see later in this article, Merkel's version of Imanta had a great influence on his subsequent incarnations, sometimes blending with the historical account from Henry's chronicle.

Merkel shaped Imanta away from being a killer who was mentioned briefly in a medieval chronicle, turning him into a literary hero, a symbol of freedom and awakening. Yet Imanta and his relationships were not Merkel's invention. *Wanem Ymanta* was a local product inspired by texts written in Riga decades or even centuries before, which were part of the local historical memory and textual culture. The most obvious source of *Wanem Ymanta* was more detailed and had its roots in

19 Kļaviņš, "The Baltic Enlightenment and Perceptions of Medieval Latvian History," 215.

20 Kaljundi and Kļaviņš, "The Chronicler and the Modern World," 412.

21 Garlieb Helwig Merkel, *Wannem Ymanta: eine Lettische Sage* (Leipzig: Hartknoch, 1802).

the Riga Cathedral School (*Domschule*), Merkel's alma mater which he never finished.[22] Merkel borrowed many elements and details from the "school drama" (*Schuldrama*) by Johann Gotthelf Lindner (1729–1776), *Albert, oder die Gründung Rigas* (Albert, or the Foundation of Riga, 1760), which was dedicated to the city's foundation in 1201.[23] Linder was a teacher and rector of the Riga Cathedral School (1753–1765) and the author of numerous "school dramas" that were popular at the time in Riga.[24] Lindner used *The Chronicle of Henry of Livonia* as a source for the depiction of the events around the time Bishop Albert founded the city; Johann Daniel Gruber's (1688–1748) edition of the chronicle from 1740 and its German translation by Johann Gottfried Arndt (1713–1767) from 1747 were both available.[25] Lindner's play features individuals mentioned in the chronicle: Bishop Albert, the Cistercian monk Dietrich (*Theodericus*), the Liv chieftain Caupo, his fellow chieftain Aco, and also Imanta.[26] Jansons claims that Lindner may have been inspired to write his play by a Latin poem compiled by the vice-rector of the Riga Cathedral School, Christoph Schaller's *Encomium Rigae totius Livoniae metropoleos celeberrimae* (1640), which Lindner translated into German and included in the programme of the Cathedral School.[27] For Merkel, Lindner's play was not just a cultural relic. It had been performed by the Cathedral School's students in 1760, and Merkel had most likely read it or seen it performed when he studied there a decade later.[28]

Contemporary historical poetry written in the Baltic also influenced *Wanem Ymanta*. The poem dedicated to Caupo (*Kaupe, der edle Live von Thoreida*) in the history-themed poetry cycle *Kuronia* (1791), written by Görlitz-born Karl August Küttner (1748–1800), a teacher in Mitau (Jelgava), served as a source of inspiration for Merkel.[29] From Küttner's poem, Merkel borrowed the mythical Blue Mountain

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22 Pauls Daija, "Garlībs Merķelis," *Nacionālā Enciklopēdija* (online), https://enciklopedija.lv/skirklis/11220

23 Johann Gotthelf Lindner, *Albert, oder, Die Gründung der Stadt Riga: ein Schuldrama* (Riga: Frölich, 1760).

24 Mārtiņš Laizāns and Ieva Kalniņa, "Johann Gotthelf Lindner and Riga Dome School," *Letonica* 30 (2015): 94–109, 104.

25 *Origines Livoniae sacrae et civilis*; *Der liefländischen Chronik erster Theil*, trans. Johann Gottfried Arndt (Halle: J. J. Gebauer, 1747); Stefan Donecker, "The Chronicon Livoniae in Early Modern Scholarship: From Humanist Receptions to the Gruber Edition of 1740," in *Crusading and Chronicle Writing on the Medieval Baltic Frontier*, 363–84.

26 Lindner, *Albert,* 14–15.

27 Jansons, "Piezīmes par Garlība Merķeļa 'Vanema Imantas' avotiem," 122; Christoph Schaller, *Encomium Rigae totius Livoniae metropoleos celeberrimae* (Riga: Gerhard Schröder, 1641); Laizāns and Kalniņa, "Johann Gotthelf Lindner and Riga Dome School," 103–4.

28 Lindner, *Albert,* 14–15.

29 Karl August Kütner, *Kuronia: Oder: Dichtungen und Gemälde aus den ältesten kurländischen Zeiten*, vol. 1 (Mitau: Steffenhagen, 1791), 46–55.

(Ger. *Blauberg*, Latv. *Zilais kalns*), which later became one of the key elements of Imanta's story.[30]

The *Chronicle of Henry of Livonia* is not considered by the research tradition to be an important source of information or inspiration for Merkel's text.[31] No wonder, as Imanta appears only once in the chronicle, in the battle between the Livs and the crusaders led by the second Livonian bishop, Berthold.[32] Prior to writing *Wanem Ymanta*, Merkel had most likely read 13th-century texts and documents on Livonian and Prussian history, whereas Gruber's edition and Arndt's translation of Henry's chronicle were available to Lindner.[33]

As a "pseudohistorical account,"[34] *Wanem Ymanta* was a combination of Merkel's childhood memories, the oral tradition, other historical plays, and random facts, all mixed together by the author's imagination. Why did Merkel choose Imanta to be the hero of his story? It is difficult to reconstruct the factors behind Merkel's choice. The *Chronicle of Henry of Livonia* also features other indigenous leaders who encountered the crusaders and missionaries early on; for instance, the Semigallian "king" of Mežotne Viesturs (Vesthardus, Viestarts) and the Letgallian "king" of Jersika Visvaldis (Vissewalde, Vsevolod). It is possible that the Enlightenment intellectual found Imanta more suitable because he was not a noble. Merkel portrayed him as a leader, an elder (*vanem*) of his people, but not as a "king." Merkel did not have any great expertise on the history of medieval Livonia; it can therefore be assumed that it was the existing literary works, such as Lindner's *Albert oder die Gründung Rigas*, that had demonstrated that Imanta would be suitable as a central protagonist in a saga. Imanta was also suitable because in the historical narrative he fought against the crusaders in the early stages of the crusade and killed a prominent figure and leader of the "Germans" – Bishop Berthold – on the spot where the city of Riga was later built.

After Merkel's saga, Imanta and the Latvians belonged together. Merkel transformed a Liv warrior into a Latvian freedom fighter and visionary. Imanta as Merkel's creation was a national hero without a nation. In Merkel's text, Imanta was a rhetorical figure symbolizing Latvians, an ethnic group. The narrative

30 Jansons, "Piezīmes par Garlība Merķeļa 'Vanema Imantas' avotiem," 123.

31 Jansons, "Piezīmes par Garlība Merķeļa 'Vanema Imantas' avotiem"; Ieva Kalniņa, "Garlība Merķeļa teikas 'Vanems Imanta' vēsturiskie un literārie avoti," in Ieva Kalniņa, *Variācijas par latviešu drāmas vēsturi: teksts un konteksts* (Rīga: Mansards, 2012): 11–22.

32 *Heinrichs Livländische Chronik*, II, 6.

33 Jansons, "Piezīmes par Garlība Merķeļa 'Vanema Imantas' avotiem," 18.

34 Andrejs Plakans, "Peasants, Intellectuals, and Nationalism in the Russian Baltic Provinces, 1820–90," *The Journal of Modern History* 46, no. 3 (1974): 445–75, 472.

was there, but the group that would use it for the formation of its collective memory had not yet formed. Thus, Merkel was not writing a national epos; however, it turned out to be a "proto-epos" for a "pre-nation," or at least functioned as an epos.[35]

Imanta: Ready-Made Hero for the Latvian Nation

Imanta was appropriated as a national hero by the first generation of Latvian intellectuals, the so-called Young Latvians, who were active from the 1850s to the 1870s. The first generation of Young Latvians included some fifty young, university-educated men, who studied and worked in Tartu, St Petersburg, Moscow, and Riga.[36] These were men who consciously decided to be Latvian and to not integrate into the Russian or Baltic German elites, as previous generations of educated Latvians and Estonians had done, though most of them still spoke German at home.[37] Prior to the mid-19th century, there was no Latvian or Estonian history. Their pasts and their nations' histories and cultural memory had to be created, because the Baltic German historiography and historical narratives focused on the past of the conquerors, not the indigenous inhabitants. As Ieva Zaķe has pointed out, they therefore had to "invent" the history of Latvians as an ethnic group, frequently supplementing historical facts with falsifications or exaggerated claims.[38] Marek Tamm has argued that Estonian cultural memory in the nation-building period was formed by "a radical re-writing of history, of writing Estonians into history as a nation."[39] The Middle Ages were the reference point for the 19th-century nationalisms and for nationalist intellectuals who projected their nations onto the distant past.[40] There was a dire need for national history and national heroes as symbols and memory figures. One of their aims was to demonstrate that Latvians, despite being pagan, had been highly developed prior

35 Kārlis Cīrulis, "Singing a Nation: The Latvian Song Festival as an Intercultural Medium for National Identity," *Letonica* 37 (2018): 63–81, 74.

36 Ieva Zake, *Nineteenth-Century Nationalism and Twentieth-Century Anti-Democratic Ideals: The Case of Latvia, 1840s to 1980s* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2008), 31–2.

37 Arveds Švābe, *Latvijas vēsture, 1800–1914* (Stockholm: Daugava, 1958), 363; Ivars Ījabs, *Nepateicīgie: latviešu politiskās domas pirmsākumi Eiropas kontekstos* (Rīga: Jumava, 2023), 160–61.

38 Zake, *Nineteenth-Century Nationalism and Twentieth-Century Anti-Democratic Ideals*, 43.

39 Tamm, "History as Cultural Memory," 503.

40 Patrick J. Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 18.

to the German conquest.[41] If Latvians had once been equal then they also needed heroes, like other nations had. The Middle Ages – more specifically, medieval historiography and texts later produced by the Baltic Germans – served as inspiration for the nation-builders. Those indigenous inhabitants who had confronted the Germans in the early 13th century were the most likely heroes for the emerging nation.

Latvians took advantage of an opportunity to acquire an existing medieval hero. This was in contrast to the Estonians, who had to start developing such heroes on their own; for example, as Lembitu (d. 1217), a Saccalian chieftain, who was featured in The *Chronicle of Henry of Livonia* and fought the crusaders.[42] Though Imanta as a hero was already there, he had to be tailored to meet the needs of an emerging nation. Merkel's *Wanem Ymanta* caught the attention of the first generation of Latvian intellectuals in the 1860s and 1870s, during the most intensive phase of Latvian nation-building. Though the national movement had developed into a popular one, there were almost no Latvian historians.[43] Thus, authors and poets took over the function of writing about heroes and the nation's glorious past, creating a highly fictional narrative.[44]

It would seem that they saw in Merkel's text – and in Imanta as a hero – the potential for a national narrative. *Wanem Ymanta* provided a counter-history, a Latvian version of the past, to counter the Baltic German version.[45] Krišjānis Valdemārs (1825–1891), the most influential Young Latvian, was the first to direct his contemporaries' attention towards Merkel's work, by publishing *Wanem Ymanta* in German in a collection of his own articles (1871).[46] There were several attempts made to translate the text into Latvian before the turn of the century. Two Young

41 Juris Alunāns, *Pirmais latviešu nacionālais ideologs, 13.V 1832–18.IV 1864* (Jelgava: Latvijas Lauksaimniecības kamera, 1938), 5–6.

42 Anti Selart, "Lembitu: A Medieval Warlord in Estonian Culture," *Studia Slavica et Balcanica Petropolitana* 29, no. 1 (2021): 3–14, 5.

43 Ilgvars Misāns, "'Wir waren immer ein Kriegervolk.' Die Darstellung der ostbaltischen Kreuzzüge in der lettischen Geschichtsschreibung," in *Lippe und Livland: Mittelalterliche Herrschaftsbildung in Zeichen der Rose*, ed. Jutta Prieur (Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 2008): 185–207; Jörg Hackmann, "Narrating the Building of a Small Nation: Divergence and Convergence in the Historiography of Estonian 'National Awakening,' 1868–2005," in *Nationalizing the Past: Historians as Nation Builders in Modern Europe*, ed. Stefan Berger and Chris Lorenz (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014): 170–91; Kristi Kukk, "Ein noch schwererer Fall von Amnesie? Die lettische nationale Geschichtsschreibung vom 19. Jahrhundert bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg in vergleichender Perspektive," *Forschungen zur Baltischen Geschichte* 7 (2012): 106–19.

44 Andrejs Plakans, "Kronvalds un latviešu vēsture," *Akadēmiskā dzīve* 31 (1989): 22–27, 23.

45 Kalniņa, "Garlība Merķeļa teikas," 12.

46 Krišjānis Valdemārs, *Vaterländisches und Gemeinnütziges*, 2 vols (Moskva: Kais. Univ.-Buchdr., 1871).

Latvians – Krišjānis Barons (1835–1923), who later led the national project to collect Latvian folk songs, and Fricis Brīvzemnieks (1846–1907) – translated *Wanem Ymanta* into Latvian, yet their translations were never published.[47]

These publications of *Wanem Ymanta* and translation attempts demonstrate Latvian intellectuals' preoccupation with Imanta as a hero figure. Some of them saw him as a symbol of the struggle against the Baltic German elites, under the patronage of the Russian Empire. "Russian hawk gave us freedom and the messenger in those days of happiness was Merkel with his immortal *Wanem Ymanta,*" Vensku Edvarts (1855–1897) wrote in 1878.[48] *Wanem Ymanta* was read as an anticolonial text that helped Latvian elites counter the Baltic Germans and their privileges.

While Merkel's text circulated amongst Latvian intellectuals, Imanta still lacked creative interpretation by Latvians themselves and had yet to reach a wider audience in the Latvian language. It was Andrejs Pumpurs (1841–1902), a Russian imperial army officer, who successfully integrated the hero Imanta into the emerging Latvian literature. Merkel's *Wanem Ymanta* served as an inspiration for Pumpurs's national epos *Lāčplēsis* (Bearslayer) (1888), and Imanta can be seen as a prototype for the epos's main protagonist Lāčplēsis.[49] Meanwhile, the ballad *Imanta* (1874, published in 1889) was directly dedicated to Imanta as a hero.[50] A year before composing the ballad, in an article in the *Baltijas Vēstnesis* newspaper, Pumpurs discussed both Caupo and Imanta and quoted an unknown author: "Woe, to that nation, heroes of which are fallen in this manner."[51] Pumpurs took on the role of the poet who writes the nation's history, retelling Merkel's story about Imanta in the article; to this, the editors felt obliged to add a footnote explaining that, historically, Caupo was not killed by Imanta near Riga but in a battle near Viljandi in 1217. It seems clear that Pumpurs was at that time reflecting on how to use motifs from *Wanem Ymanta* to create a national epos.[52]

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47 Krišjānis Barons, *Krišjāņa Barona raksti. I., Dzejas, stāsti, zobgalības, populārzinātniski un sabiedriski raksti* (Rīga: Krišjāņa Barona Biedrības izdevums, 1928), 109–32; Kārlis Arājs, *Krišjānis Barons un 'Latvju dainas'* (Rīga: Zinātne, 1985), 87; Teodors Zeiferts, *Latviešu rakstniecības vēsture*, vol. 1 (Rīga: Ansis Gulbis, 1927), 175.

48 Vensku Edvarts, "Vēstule iz Pēterburgas," *Balss* 23 (March 21, 1879).

49 Andrejs Pumpurs, *Tēvijā un svešumā: Pumpura raksti* (Rīga: Pūcīšu Ģederta apgāds, 1889), 36.

50 Andrejs Pumpurs, *Bearslayer*, trans. Arthur Cropley (Adelaide: Arthur Cropley, 2007).

51 Unless otherwise noted, all translations are by the author. Andrejs Pumpurs, "Latviešu tautas meitām par tautas dziesmām," *Baltijas Vēstnesis* (August 8, 1873).

52 Oto Čakars, Arvīds Grigulis, and Milda Losberga, *Latviešu literatūras vēsture: no pirmsākumiem līdz XIX gadsimta 80. gadiem* (Rīga: Zvaigzne, 1990), 116; Jāzeps Rudzītis, *Andrejs Pumpurs* (Rīga: Liesma, 1991); Sandra J. Langer, "Vom Einfluss des epischen Helden auf die lettische Nation," *helden. heroes. héros.* 1, no. 1 (2013): 27–39, 30. About this epos in the European context, see

In his ballad, Pumpurs took Merkel's protagonist and composed a story about Imanta by imitating the style of folk songs. The literary critic Teodors Zeiferts wrote that Pumpurs's ballad "has made this hero come to life in the consciousness of the nation and [as a] symbol of its freedom."[53] Far more than a simple poem, it was a ballad for a national hero, parts of which would become slogans for the national movement. Pumpurs's ballad in six stanzas begins with a statement that was repeated by many Latvian authors throughout the nation-building era: "Imanta is not dead / But under a spell instead."[54]

Using the mythical landscape invented by Merkel, the ballad did not explain who Imanta was, instead proceeding with the assumption that he would already be well known to the audience. According to Pumpurs, Imanta lay dormant with a golden sword in a golden castle under a Blue Mountain. Once every century, a small elf ascends from beneath to see if a mist has dispersed.[55] Until the mist is completely lifted, Imanta will remain dormant, but when called he will rise from below.[56] The motif of a hero dormant in an underground castle and other elements were evidently taken from Friedrich Rückert's (1788–1866) poem *Barbar-*

Thomas Taterka, "Die Nation erzählt sich selbst. Zum europäischen Nationalepos des 19. Jahrhunderts," in *Nationalepen zwischen Fakten und Fiktionen*, ed. Heinrich Detering, Torsten Hoffmann, Silke Pasewalck, and Eve Pormeister (Tartu: University of Tartu Press, 2011): 20–72.

53 Zeiferts, *Latviešu rakstniecības vēsture*, 175.

54 Imanta nevaid miris, / Imanta is not dead
Bet tikai apburts kluss, / But under a spell instead.
No darbošanām rimis, / Reposing from his gests
Zem Zilā kalna dus. / Under a Blue Mount he rests.
[. . .]
All stanzas are translated by Ieva Lešinska-Geibere.

55 [. . .]
Par simtiem gadiem reizi / After a hundred years,
Mazs rūķīts augšā nāk / A little elf comes up an peers
Un apskatās, vai migla / To see if the hill-cov'ring mist
Ap kalnu nodzist sāk. / Has begun to slowly lift. [. . .]

56 [. . .]
Bet reizi Pērkoņdēli / Then the sons of Thunder
Tai kalnā lodes spers; / Will split the hill asunder,
Tad bēdzīs visi jodi, / Will scatter evil hordes
Pēc zobina tas ķers. / And he will grab his sword.

Un Saules meitas nācīs / Sun maidens will arrive
Un miglu projām trauks; / And mist away they'll drive,
Un gaismas laika balsis / And these voices of pure light
Imantu ārā sauks! / Will wake Imanta with their might!

ossa (1817), about the Emperor Friedrich Barbarossa (1122–1190).[57] Likewise, the idea of a Blue Mountain was borrowed from Merkel; it was a real hill in the Livonian (Vidzeme) province and it had already been described as a place of pagan worship in *Wanem Ymanta*.[58] Similarly, just as in Rückert's poem the awakened Barbarossa had to restore the might of the medieval Holy Roman German Empire, Imanta had a special mission to fulfil for the Latvians.[59] Imitating European poets in praising national heroes was a pattern among poets involved in the Baltic nation-building projects. For example, Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald (1803–1882), author of the Estonian national epos *Kalevipoeg* (Kalev's Son), adapted Swiss author Joseph Viktor Widmann's (1842–1911) short epic *Buddha* (1869) in an epic poem (published in 1885) celebrating Lembitu.[60]

After Pumpurs, Imanta sleeping under a Blue Mountain became a metaphor for the Latvian nation's spirit that, like Imanta, would one day rise with sword in hand from beneath the mountain. With his short verses, Pumpurs had transformed Imanta into a Latvian hero praised and lauded by Latvians, not only by the Baltic German Merkel.

Imanta's popularity can be seen in the number of his poetic representations. During the 1870s and 1880s, he attracted many Latvian poets. In his poem *Imanta*, Jānis Ruģēns (1817–1876) described an ancient hero who would lead the Latvians in struggle against their conquerors.[61] The "immortal Imanta" appears in a poem by a popular poet, Auseklis (Miķelis Krogzemis, 1850–1879): *Raug tawas tautas likteni!* (See the fate of your nation!, 1888).[62] Sudrabu Edžus (Morics Eduards Zilbers, 1860–1941) wrote the poem *Imanta un Ajta* (Imanta and Ajta, 1884), which follows the storyline created by Merkel and was structured as a dramatic dialogue between Imanta, who was on his way to his final battle, and his wife.[63] Nor did Imanta's poetic influence diminish during the 1890s and early 1900s, when Latvian poets and sympathetic outsiders, like the German author August Linde, contin-

57 Friedrich Rückert, *Gedichte von Friedrich Rückert: Auswahl des Verfassers* (Frankfurt am Main: J. D. Sauerländer, 1872), 104–5; Justyna Prusinowska, "They Are Still Coming Back. Heroes for the Time of Crisis: Vidvuds and Lāčplēsis," *Literatūra un Reliģija* (2018): 66–84, 67.

58 Valters Nollendorfs, "The Demythologization of Latvian Literature," *Books Abroad* 47, no. 4 (1973): 664–74, 667.

59 Tuska Benes, "Transcending Babel in the Cultural Translation of Friedrich Rückert (1788–1866)," *Modern Intellectual History* 8, no. 1 (2011): 61–90, 69.

60 Selart, "Lembitu," 5.

61 Čakars, Grigulis, and Losberga, *Latviešu literatūras vēsture*, 168.

62 Auseklis, *Ausekļa Raksti* (Rīga: J.E.C. Kapteinis, 1888), 12.

63 Sudrabu Edžus, "Imanta un Ajta," *Baltijas Zemkopja pielikums* 7 (February 15, 1884).

ued to use him in their poems and ballads as a symbol for freedom lost and for the dormant national spirit.[64]

During the 1880s, a time when he was clearly in fashion, Imanta also got a face. Vaidelots (Jānis Straume, 1861–1929) had written his story *Imanta pareģojums* (1886); published in the journal *Rota*, it was accompanied by an engraving in which Imanta and Caupo were shown standing at the scene of their final battle (Figure 1).[65] Another portrayal of Imanta appeared in the journal *Rota* one year later, in 1887, when an illustration accompanying an historical article on Bishop Berthold's death was published.[66] The article referred to the narrative of the *Livonian Chronicle of Henry*, but the image was a version of an original created by the Baltic German artist Friedrich Ludwig von Maydell (1795–1846) decades earlier (Figure 2).[67] In Maydell's original, it was Berthold who died a hero's death in an uneven fight with three anonymous indigenous warriors; yet in the journal *Rota*, Imanta appears as the bishop's killer. Those remained two of only a few Imanta depictions, as he never became widely represented in Latvian visual art. During the 1880s and 1890s, the first generation of professional Latvian artists were more interested in the representation of anonymous warriors, less of historical figures, when depicting the nation's medieval history.[68]

The efforts of the Young Latvians, especially Pumpurs's ballad, had granted Imanta a place amongst the nation's heroes, and his presence would be an enduring one. The influence of Merkel's narrative on Latvian authors, in contrast to Baltic German ones, did not diminish. Liina Lukas has pointed out that in the period following the 1880s, Baltic German historical fiction flourished, and "the historical story told by Merkel was pushed aside, forced to the periphery of cultural memory."[69] Latvian poets and playwrights in the early 20th century remained

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64 August Linde was an immigrant from Germany who sympathized with the Latvian national movement; see his: *Imanta und Kaupo: eine lettische Sage in acht Gesängen* (Moskau: Ließner und Romahn, 1891).

65 Vaidelots, "Imanta pareģojums," *Rota* 9 (March 4, 1886). This was an original image sketched by Ansis Legzdiņš (1859–1914); it was commissioned by *Rota* and produced in Warsaw.

66 *Rota* 7 (February 17, 1887).

67 Linda Kaljundi, "The Workings of Cultural Memory and Colonialism. Friedrich Ludwig von Maydell's Baltic History in Images," *Proceedings of the Art Museum of Estonia* 5 [10] (2015): 233–67; Friedrich Ludwig von Maydell, *Fünfzig Bilder aus der Geschichte der deutschen Ostsee-Provinzen Russlands nebst erklärendem Text. Zweite Lieferung* (Dorpat: F. Kluge, 1842), no. 4.

68 Anda Bērziņa, "Pirmie Latvijas senatnes un mitoloģijas attēlojumi mākslinieku darbos un to saikne ar arheoloģisko materiālu," *Mākslas Vēsture un Teorija* 20 (2017): 16–35, 19–25.

69 Liina Lukas, "'Who Holds the Right to the Land?' Narratives of Colonization in Baltic-German and Estonian Literatures," in *Fugitive Knowledge: The Loss and Preservation of Knowledge in Cul-*

under Merkel's spell, however, and further developed his Romantic view of the Latvians' past and his romantically naïve, one-dimensional heroes.

A Hero Performed: Imanta in Choir Songs and Theatre Performances

After the 1880s, when Imanta was featured in numerous poems and literary texts, Imanta's heroism came to surpass the bounds of literature. Theatre and music, alongside the other arts, helped nationalist movements to reconstruct and demonstrate the national character and draw attention to the nation's mythical past. At the turn of the century, Imanta was often being sung and performed.

Choral singing in the Baltic in the mid-19th century, as elsewhere in Europe, became an important element of national awakening and played a crucial role in Latvian and Estonian nation-building.[70] Choir societies and song festivals, adapted from Germany with Baltic Germans as intermediaries, were tools for political mobilization and the construction of national identity.[71] Collective singing was a powerful tool for nationalist mobilization; it involved not only performers but also the audience, and the performances were imbued with symbols and meaning.[72] Imanta found a place in this culture of collective singing and on the stage of the Latvian Song Festivals (Vispārējie latviešu Dziesmu svētki) that were organized after 1873 and that brought together thousands of performances and tens of thousands of listeners.[73] Pumpurs's poem became popular and inspired the first generation of Latvian composers to compose choir songs. Oskars Šepskis (1850–1914) composed a song for a male choir using Pumpurs's lyrics, which won a prize in a competition

tural Contact Zones, ed. Andreas Beer and Gesa Mackenthun (Münster: Waxmann Verlag, 2015): 65–82, 70.

70 John Coakley, *Nationalism, Ethnicity and the State: Making and Breaking Nations* (London: SAGE, 2012), 127–28.

71 Karsten Brüggemann and Andres Kasekamp, "'Singing Oneself into a Nation'? Estonian Song Festivals as Rituals of Political Mobilisation," *Nations and Nationalism* 20, no. 2 (2014): 259–76, 261–63; Kevin C. Karnes, "A Garland of Songs for a Nation of Singers: An Episode in the History of Russia, the Herderian Tradition and the Rise of Baltic Nationalism," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 130, no. 2 (2005): 197–235.

72 Krisztina Lajosi and Andreas Stynen, "Introduction," in *Choral Societies and Nationalism in Europe*, ed. Andreas Stynen and Krisztina Lajosi (Leiden: Brill, 2015): 1–13, 8.

73 Valentīns Bērzkalns, *Latviešu dziesmu svētku vēsture: 1864–1940* (Brooklyn: Grāmatu draugs, 1965), 31–252; Kristine Wohlfart, *Der Rigaer Letten Verein und die lettische Nationalbewegung von 1868 bis 1905* (Marburg: Verlag Herder-Institut, 2006), 161–65, 262–68.

organized by the Riga Latvian Society's Musical Commission in 1890.[74] However, this song never made it onto the programme of the Latvian Song festival.

There was another song with Pumpurs's lyrics that had a very different fate. The song *Imanta* (1903), by Alfrēds Kalniņš (1871–1951), was composed to be performed by Latvian choirs; most likely the composer envisaged it being part of the Latvian Song Festival's programme. However, in 1904 the festival was cancelled because of the Russo-Japanese War and thus for the time being Kalniņš's song was performed at smaller events that Latvian singing societies participated in.[75] It was part of the Fifth Latvian Song Festival's (1910) main programme; the event was smaller in scale than preceding ones because of the political turmoil within Latvian society after the revolution of 1905.[76] At the request of the audience, Kalniņš's *Imanta* was performed twice by more than two thousand singers during the festival's main concert.[77] Coupled with the choir music, Pumpurs's verses gained power and influence. Though the Latvian Song Festival as an event was dominated by conservative circles and was thus criticized by leftists,[78] the verses about a national hero, who was not dead and will rise again, must have taken on some added meaning after the bloody revolution. Becoming a choir song, the poem's text gained influence, and its performance at mass events made it an important cultural product.

Another important step for Imanta was his appearance on stage. The theatre became a medium for this hero at the very beginning of the 20th century. The first dramatization of Merkel's *Wanem Ymanta* was Ādolfs Alunāns's play *Mūsu senči* (Our Ancestors, 1890), in which Imanta and Caupo were the main protagonists.[79] The publication and performance of Alunāns's play was hindered by censorship.[80] It was only performed after 1905, when the tsarist censorship was lifted, yet it subsequently became popular as one of the first Latvian historical plays, and on the eve of the First World War it was being was performed by several theatre companies.[81]

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74 "Rīgas Latviešu Biedrības Mūzikas komisijas paziņojums," *Mājas Viesis* 26 (June 30, 1890).

75 *Dziesmu krājums koncertam: sarīkotam 1907. gada vasarā Rīgas latviešu dziedāšanas biedrībām un koriem piedaloties* (Rīga: Latviešu Biedrības Mūzikas Komisija, 1907).

76 Ilma Grauzdiņa and Oļģerts Grāvītis, *Dziesmu svētki Latvijā: norise, skaitļi, fakti* (Rīga: Latvijas enciklopēdija, 1990), 34–5.

77 The song was performed at the main concert of the Eighth Song Festival in 1933. Bērzkalns, *Latviešu dziesmu svētku vēsture*, 217, 220, 230, 238, 425.

78 Grauzdiņa and Grāvītis, *Dziesmu svētki Latvijā*, 34.

79 Ādolfs Alunāns, *Kas tie tādi, kas dziedāja: lugas (Mūsu senči)* (Rīga: Liesma, 1982), 291–390.

80 Kārlis Pēteris Kundziņš, *Latviešu teātra vēsture: trijos sējumos*, vol. 1 (Rīga: Liesma, 1968), 186.

81 Ligita Bērziņa and Janīna Brance, *Latviešu teātra hronika, 1913–1917* (Rīga: Zvaigzne, 1991), 340.

There was intense interest in Imanta as a dramatic figure around 1900. The first two translations of *Wanem Ymanta* into Latvian were published independently in the year 1905 – the year of the revolution.[82] Though at the beginning of the 20th century the mainstream of Latvian literature was not preoccupied with the heroes of the past but with describing the present,[83] several authors – for instance, the two left-leaning poets and playwrights Rainis (Jānis Pliekšāns, 1861–1929) and Jānis Akuraters (1876–1937) – used the crusading age as a setting for their plays.[84] Akuraters was preoccupied with the medieval past in his creative life, and Imanta as a protagonist was present in the plays he wrote before the war. First, right after the revolution, he wrote *Imantas augšāmcelšanās* (Imanta's Resurrection, 1906).[85] In 1913, his *Kaupo, līvu virsaitis* (Caupo, a Liv Chieftain), in which Imanta was one of the main protagonists, was performed by the Riga Latvian Theatre company.[86] The play itself and its performance were met with harsh reviews and sarcastic commentary.[87] The critics' reactions show that at the beginning of the 20th century, Imanta and other National Romantic heroes were losing their appeal, at least for Latvian intellectuals. Some of the more open-minded writers, like presumably Rūdolfs Blaumanis (1863–1908) in his poem *Tālavas taurētājs* (Trumpeter of Tālava, 1902), were even parodying the National Romantic style that praised ancient heroes.[88] Nonetheless, Akuraters's play remained popular after the war, when it was used for mass open-air performances. On the eve of the First World War, it would seem that Merkel's *Wanem Ymanta* was no longer a narrative capable of inspiring new and appealing creative products in Latvian literature and drama.

Interest in Imanta is also signalled by numerous failed projects in which Imanta had the role of the main protagonist. Composers Andrejs Jurjāns (1856–1922) and Andrejs Stērste (1853–1921), who had written a libretto, started work on the

82 Garlieb Helwig Merkel, *Wanem Imanta: latviešu teika*, trans. Aleksandrs Būmanis (Sankt-Peterburg: Ansis Gulbis, 1905); Garlieb Helwig Merkel, *Wanems Imanta: latviešu teika*, trans. Lizete Erdmane (Cesis: Jānis Ozols, 1905).

83 *20. gadsimta Latvijas vēsture*, vol. 1, ed. Valdis Bērziņš (Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 2000), 315–18.

84 Rainis's interpretation of Pumpurs's national epos *Lāčplēsis* in his play *Uguns un nakts* (The Fire and the Night), published in 1905 and performed in 1911, was perceived as a major event in Latvian theatre history. Benedikts Kalnačs, "Uguns un nakts," *Nacionālā Enciklopēdija* (online), https://enciklopedija.lv/skirklis/96065-"Uguns-un-nakts".

85 Jānis Akuraters, *J. Akuratera Kopoti raksti*, vol. 6 (Rīga: J. Rozes apgādībā, 1924), 21–44.

86 Jānis Akuraters, *J. Akuratera Kopoti raksti*, vol. 8 (Rīga: J. Rozes apgādībā, 1925), 3–128.

87 "Laikraksti par J. Akuratera 'Kaupo'," *Skatuve un Dzīve* 4 (April 1, 1913).

88 See Ieva Kalniņa, ed., *Rūdolfa Blaumaņa kopotie raksti*, 6 vol. (Rīga: Jumava, 1998), 580–81.

opera *Vanem Imanta* around 1878; however, it was never finished.[89] Estonian artists were more successful in this respect. For example, *Lembitu tütar* (The Daughter of Lembitu, 1908) was composed by Artur Lemba (1885–1963); the opera was about another indigenous hero mentioned in Henry's chronicle – the Estonian chieftain Lembitu.[90]

The poet Rainis attempted three times to write a play featuring Imanta as its main protagonist; unfortunately, he failed.[91] Rainis was so convinced of Imanta's dramatic potential as the main protagonist that during the world war he planned a trilogy like that of the *Nibelungenlied*, but dedicated to Imanta.[92] The trilogy, too, was never written; after Rainis's death, his partner Aspazija (1865–1943) tried to revive his ideas in an unsuccessful theatre play she wrote in the 1930s which was never performed.

The late 19th and early 20th centuries were a time when Imanta was fully appropriated by the Latvian cultural and intellectual elites. Through poetry, music, and theatre, Imanta was introduced to large audiences. With the help of these media, each of which reached out to different sections of the public, Imanta came to life and claimed a place in the nation's imagination. The scope of Imanta's influence as a character can also be seen in the numerous attempts to use him as the main protagonist in plays and operas, even though many of these were not successful.

From Imanta to Imauts: The Apogee and Fall of a National Hero

The conflict between history and collective memory, as described by Pierre Nora, revealed itself in Imanta's case in the 1920s; this led to Imanta's demise as a national hero.[93] The Latvian collective memory shaped by Merkel's *Wanem Ymanta* and the works of the Latvian authors who followed him was confronted by history as a scholarly discipline. Historians and other academics were loudly stating that Imanta, whose name was even being spelled wrong, was a fake, not a real hero. How-

89 A fragment of the libretto is published here: Andrejs Stērste, *Stērstu Andreja kopoti raksti*, ed. Elza Stērste (Rīga: Zemnieka domas, 1935), 13, 109–22.

90 Kaljundi and Kļaviņš, "The Chronicler and the Modern World," 440; Selart, "Lembitu," 5.

91 Rainis, *Kopoti raksti. 14. sējums. Nepabeigtās lugas.* (Rīga: Zinātne, 1981), 9–41, 567.

92 *Raiņa un Aspazijas gadagrāmata* (Rīga: Liesma, 1990), 68.

93 Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History. Les Lieux de Mémoire," *Representations* 26 (1989): 7–24, 8.

ever, Imanta's demise was preceded by the peak of his popularity, for during the world war and shortly after it, Imanta was the most visible national hero.

In times of crisis, social groups and nations need symbolic figures to rally around. The First World War fundamentally reshaped Latvia. During it, many Latvians became refugees, since as of 1915 the front between the Russian and German armies cut Latvia's territory in two. When the war ended, despite the German occupation, the Republic of Latvia was founded in November of 1918; a complicated and divisive War of Independence (1918–1920) followed.[94] In these turbulent times, Imanta became a military hero. The Latvian Riflemen, soldiers organized in national regiments of the Russian Imperial Army during the war, formed their own theatre companies; amongst their performances were historical plays featuring Imanta.[95] In late 1919, as civil war raged in Russia, a regiment of the Latvian Riflemen opposing the Bolsheviks in the Russian Far East was named after Imanta (*Imantas pulks*); two years later, the regiment returned as heroes to Latvia.[96] Imanta was a hero used by the Latvian military as it opposed both the Bolsheviks and the Germans.[97]

Ships were already being named after Imanta before the war, but independence provided an opportunity to name a military vessel after the national hero.[98] The Latvian navy named its new mine trawler, built in 1926, *Imanta* – just as the Estonian navy had already named its first vessel *Lembit* in 1918.[99] In the 1920s, those Latvian men who had fought during the First World War and the War of Independence were portrayed as Imanta's successors, those "who after almost seven hundred years of slavery picked up Imanta's old but uncorroded spear again" to fight the intruders.[100] Imanta's spear or sword, as described in Pumpurs's poem,

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94 Andrejs Plakans, *A Concise History of the Baltic States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 285–307; Jānis Šiliņš, "Pirmā pasaules kara nozīme Latvijas valsts tapšanas procesā," in *Varas Latvijā: no Kurzemes hercogistes līdz neatkarīgajai valstij : esejas* (Rīga: LU Akadēmiskais apgāds, 2019): 408–96.

95 Bērziņa and Brance, *Latviešu teātra hronika, 1913–1917*, 340.

96 *Latvijas Brīvības cīņas 1918–1920: enciklopēdija*, ed. Inta Pētersone (Rīga: Preses Nams, 1999), 129.

97 Kļaviņš and Kaljundi wrongly refer to the Imanta Regiment as part of the Red Army; see "The Chronicler and the Modern World," 431. The mistake is repeated in Carsten Selch Jensen, "Appropriating History: Remembering the Crusades in Latvia and Estonia," in *Remembering the Crusades and Crusading*, ed. Megan Cassidy-Welch (London: Routledge, 2017): 231–46, 240.

98 *Latvijas jūrniecības vēsture 1850–1950*, ed. Ilze Bernsone (Rīga: Rīgas vēstures un kuģniecības muzejs, 1998), 174.

99 *Latvijas jūrniecības vēsture 1850–1950*, 174–75; Selart, "Lembitu," 6.

100 "Pirmie Latvijas aizsargi – vecie strēlnieki," *Aizsargs* 1 (January 1, 1924).

was not just a symbolic item as it had been before 1914; in the context of those wars, it represented the real weapons that were to bring freedom to the nation.

Imanta almost became one of the symbols of the Republic of Latvia. In 1920, when the name of the new Latvian currency was being discussed, it was suggested that the main denomination should be named *velta* (after a female name, Velta), but a sub-unit should be named after "Imanta, a historical hero, who fought against the German conquerors."[101] This would have made a statement against the Baltic Germans, who though no longer a ruling class and bereft of all of their previous privileges, still remained an important minority in the new state.[102] However, the decision was made to adopt *lats* and *santims* instead of *veltas* and *imantas*.

A place was found for Imanta in the school curricula and textbooks of the new national state. Shortly after the Republic of Latvia was founded, the new state took on responsibility for primary education in the war-torn country, which had previously been part of the Russian Empire. As early as 1919, the Ministry of Education instructed that all schools – Latvian and ethnic minority ones alike – had to prioritize teaching the Latvian language and the history of Latvia.[103] As such, new school curricula and textbooks that narrated the history of the country from the perspective of the national state, not of the Baltic German elites or imperial bureaucrats, were quickly prepared. Literary texts about the nation's past and their protagonists became part of the new curricula. The history curriculum drafted in 1920 for primary schools stipulated that in the third grade school children were to learn about the "Legends of the struggle for freedom," which included the epos *Lāčplēsis* as well as the story of Imanta and Caupo.[104] In three textbooks printed in 1920, their author Antons Birkerts (1876–1971) included the texts by Merkel and Pumpurs on Imanta, referring to him as a Latvian hero and leader of the Latvians, thus following Merkel's narrative.[105] The subsequent editions of Birkerts's textbooks included illustrations that portrayed Imanta as the

101 Jānis Dāvis, "Latvijas naudas nosaukumu lietā," *Latvijas Sargs* 191 (August 24, 1920).

102 After the First World War, Baltic Germans constituted 3.6 percent of Latvia's population. John W. Hiden, "The Baltic Germans and German Policy towards Latvia after 1918," *The Historical Journal* 13, no. 2 (1970): 295–317.

103 *20. gadsimta Latvijas vēsture*, vol. 2, ed. Valdis Bērziņš (Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 2003), 724.

104 "Latvijas pamatskolu programas," *Izglītības Ministrijas Mēnešraksts* 9 (September 1, 1920), 233.

105 Antons Birkerts, *Mazā Latvijas vēstures chrestomatija: pamatskolu kurss*, vol. 1 (Rīga: A. Gulbis, 1920), 140–41; Antons Birkerts, ed., *Latvijas vēstures hrestomatija. 1. daļa, Aizvēsture: skolām un pašmācībai* (Rīga: Ansis Gulbis, 1920), 237; Antons Birkerts, *Latvijas vēsture* (Riga: Kulturas balss, 1920), 32.

protagonist of *Wanem Ymanta*, standing in front of the gates of Riga together with his antagonist Caupo (Figure 3).

In history textbooks for the later grades of primary school, however, Imanta was not celebrated as a hero, just mentioned as the killer of Bishop Berthold or not at all.[106] The inclusion of the fictional Imanta in the primary school curriculum was not well considered; it shows that in the first years of the national state, a mythological and Romantic narrative of the Latvian past still dominated over a fact-based approach.

In the new state, Imanta was generally performed on stage and at public events by local societies and youth groups. During the opening parade of the First Latvian Youth Festival in Riga in 1922, Imanta, along with other horsemen dressed up as "our ancestor warriors," headed the opening parade that attracted thousands of participants and spectators.[107] Massive open-air performances of the plays featuring Imanta, such as Alunāns's *Mūsu senči* and Akuraters's *Kaupo, līvu virsaitis*, were organized in Riga, in smaller towns, and also in the countryside.[108] These performances were usually conducted by professional theatre directors with some professional actors playing the main roles, supported by numerous local amateur performers. For example, one such regional performance of Alunāns's *Mūsu Senči* was performed in central Latvia in the summer of 1925 by the local drama society and was seen by some two thousand spectators.[109] Two of the last large-scale creative projects inspired by Imanta were the symphonic poems *Imanta* (1923) and *Zilais kalns* (1924), composed by Jānis Mediņš (1890–1966) in the early 1920s and frequently broadcast on state radio during national holidays in the 1930s.[110] Imanta remained popular as a protagonist in the open-air theatre

106 Pēteris Dreimanis, *Vadonis vispārējā un Latvijas vēsturē: pamatskolas kurss* (Rīga: Valters un Rapa, 1922), 151; Alfrēds Ventmalnieks, *Latvijas vēsture: pamatskolas kurss* (Valmiera: Dūnis, 1923), 33; Pēteris Dreimanis, *Vadonis vispārējā un Latvijas vēsturē: pamatskolas kurss* (Rīga: Valters un Rapa, 1924), 58.

107 "Kronika," *Jaunības Tekas* 6 (June 1, 1922).

108 "Izrāde Ķeizarmežā 15. jūlijā 1923. g," *Nedēļa* 29 (July 20, 1923); "Teātris brīvā dabā. 'Mūsu senču' izrāde Ķeizarmežā 15. julijā š. g.," *Ilustrēts Žurnāls* 29 (July 20, 1923).

109 "Biedrības dzīve," *Latvijas Ērgļi* 6 (June 1, 1925).

110 Arnolds Klotiņš, "Jānis Mediņš," *Nacionālā Enciklopēdija* (online), www.enciklopedija.lv/skirklis/88590; "Jāņa Mediņa pusstunda," *Latvijas Radiofons (Radiofona programma)* 319 (January 5, 1936); it was broadcast on November 11 – *Lāčplēša diena* (Bearslayer's Day) – to commemorate the victory of the Latvian Army over Bermondt-Avalov's forces in 1919: "Imanta. Jāņa Mediņa simfoniskais tēlojums," *Hallo, Latvija (Radiofona programma)* 363 (November 8, 1936); "Jāņa Mediņa simfoniskais tēlojuma 'Imanta'," *Hallo, Latvija (Radiofona programma)* 467 (November 6, 1938).

productions, but after the early 1920s he attracted less attention from creative minds seeking a character to feature in their works.

Despite Imanta's mass appeal there was a certain unease with him as a hero, and it is evident that he represented a previous literary tradition. One anonymous literary critic in the early 1920s wrote that in his view most of Latvian literature was an offshoot of German literature, suggesting that Latvians had created Imanta in the place of Barbarossa.[111] At a time when Latvian politics were polarized, some saw Imanta as the hero of Latvian nationalists and conservatives. In his poems published in 1920, leftist poet Linards Laicens (1883–1938) portrayed Imanta as an ally of the rich in the struggle against the poor.[112] Imanta also became an object of satire. In 1921, when parliament was discussing the project of adopting a new coat of arms for the country, the satirical journal *Svari* presented numerous mock suggestions, including one for "zealous patriots" that depicted the two national heroes, Imanta and Lāčplēsis (Figure 4).[113]

During the early 1920s there was a consensus amongst Latvia's academics that Imanta was a fictitious character, and they openly questioned his use as a national hero. The vocal critics were all from the newly founded University of Latvia humanities departments, which focused on "Latvian matters" and provided academic expertise on Latvian history.[114] The prominent Baltic German historian Leonid Arbusow Jr. (1882–1951) criticized the use of *Wanem Ymanta* and other works of fiction as sources in history textbooks.[115] Even nationalist-leaning historians, such as Augusts Tentelis (1876–1942), acknowledged that Imanta's story had been misinterpreted and did not correspond with the historical sources.[116] Sinologist and ethnographer Pēteris Šmits (1869–1938) took a more active stance and repeatedly tried to remind educated audiences that Imanta was fictional character.[117] When the names for the national currency and its subunits were being discussed, Šmits argued in the press that it should not be named after the killer of a priest (Bishop Berthold), noting that in 1919 the Bolsheviks had killed numerous Lutheran pastors and questioning whether Imanta should be seen as a national hero.[118] In the early

111 "Piezīmes pie E. Blanka 'Latviešu tautiskā kustība'," *Kultūras Vēstnesis* 7 (September 1, 1921).

112 Linards Laicens, *Karavane: dzejoļi, 1913–1919* (Rīga: Vainags, 1920), 76, 104.

113 *Svari*, 7 (January 28, 1921).

114 Per Bolin, *Between National and Academic Agendas : Ethnic Policies and 'National Disciplines' at the University of Latvia, 1919–1940* (Huddinge: Södertörns högskola, 2012): 57–116.

115 Leonīds Arbuzovs, "Leons Paegle, Ievads vēsturē. 3. pārlabotais izdevums. Rīgā, 1922," *Izglītības Ministrijas Mēnešraksts* 5 (May 1, 1923): 595–606.

116 Augusts Tentelis, *Latvijas vēsture: Lekcijas lasītas Virsnieku kursos 1926. g.* (Rīga: Valsts prezidenta Čakstes kunga virsnieku kursu lekciju un tulkojumu fonda izdevums, 1926), 50–51.

117 Pēteris Šmits, *Etnografisku rakstu krājums*, vol. 1. (Rīga: Jānis Misiņš, 1912), 17.

118 Pēteris Šmits, "Latvijas naudas nosaukumi," *Latvijas Sargs* 217 (September 24, 1920).

1920s, when the Baltic German and Russian imperial street names in Riga were changed to more Latvian ones, Šmits argued that Imanta should be left to poets and should not to be boasted about on the streets.[119] In his review of one of the history textbooks compiled by Birkerts, Šmits emphasized that Imanta was a poetic creation of Merkel, one that he transformed into a Latvian leader, and that even his Liv name in The *Chronicle of Henry of Livonia* had been misread – it was Ymaut (Imauts) not Imanta.[120] Šmits also listed other suspect heroes from the textbooks, arguing that respect for history as a science could not be fostered by using such heroes. Reacting to the criticism, in the new editions of the textbooks Birkerts changed Imanta's name to Imauts and emphasized that he was Liv, but he did not refrain from portraying him as a hero – a man who could be considered to be "the nation's defender" because he killed Bishop Berthold.[121] Starting in the early 1920s, Imanta was more frequently called Imauts, which academics considered to be the historically correct version of his name.

Šmits went even further in his criticism of Imanta and Latvian collective memory. He argued that myths about the Latvian past were deeply rooted within the national consciousness and that there was an unwillingness to accept the criticism of Imanta's historicity.[122] In reference to Imanta, Šmits stated that "such empty figures from the past are closer to us than true life in present times and consciously invented persons are dearer to us than real national activists." Šmits acknowledged that all nations praise "the exceptional men from ancient times" and that the Latvian desire to do the same was understandable, but he argued that "we should venerate ancient Latvian rulers and heroes" from the 13th century, such as Rūsiņš (Russinus), Viesturs, and Tālivaldis (Thalibaldus), who in his view were not celebrated enough.

Indeed, in the late 1920s and early 1930s Imanta's time as the main Latvian national hero had passed. He still remained popular and cultural references were made to him; however, it was a time for new heroes from the Middle Ages. The coup d'état by Kārlis Ulmanis (1877–1942) and his supporters in 1934 introduced an authoritarian regime that was ideologically rooted in Latvian nationalism.[123] Thus, the new heroes were backed by the new regime. The historical struggle of

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119 Pēteris Šmits, "Par Rīgas ielu pārdēvēšanu," *Latvijas Sargs* 24 (February 1, 1923).

120 Pēteris Šmits, "A.Birkerta Latvijas vēstures chrestomatija, liela un mazā," *Izglītības Ministrijas Mēnešraksts*, no.11 (November 1, 1921); Birkerts, *Mazā Latvijas vēstures chrestomatija*, 140–41.

121 Antons Birkerts, *Mazā vēsturnieka lasāmā grāmata: ainas un viela no Latvijas vēstures: pamatskolas iii. un iv. klases kurss* (Rīga: Kulturas Balss, 1923), 38; Antons Birkerts, *Latvijas vēsture: pamatskolas kurss* (Rīga: Ansis Gulbis, 1926), 42.

122 Pēteris Šmits, "Latviešu mitoloģija," in *Tautas audzināšana: pedagoģiski-sabiedrisku rakstu krājums*, vol. 1, ed. Andrejs Vičs (Rīga: Latvijas Nacionālo skolotāju centrs, 1923): 92–99, 92.

123 Aivars Stranga, "The Political System and Ideology of Karlis Ulmanis's Authoritarian Regime: May 15, 1934 – June 17, 1940," in *War, Revolution and Governance: The Baltic Countries in the*

the Latvians against the Germans was an important element of the regime's ideology and the historiography influenced by it. Historians who supported the regime wrote about the "medieval struggle for freedom" and looked to the 13th-century "Latvian kings" and indigenous aristocracy from before the crusades.[124] The "Latvian kings" who were celebrated as medieval heroes included the Semigallian chieftains Viesturs and Namejs (Nameyxe, Nameitis, Nameisis), the Letgallian chieftains Visvaldis and Tālivaldis, and the Curonian chieftain Lamekins (Lammekinus, Lameiķis). They were all described in detail in the two most important Livonian 13th-century chronicles – the *Livonian Chronicle of Henry* and the *Livonian Rhymed Chronicle* – and their existence could be proven.

Imanta was not among the medieval heroes celebrated by the authoritarian regime. Instead, "ruler-heroes" were now celebrated together with the heroes of the War of Independence.[125] Nor did Imanta have any new iconographic representations. In the late 1930s, for what was called the "Ancient Rulers' Room" in Riga Castle, paintings of Namejs, Viesturs, Visvaldis and Tālivaldis, and Lamekins were commissioned from Ludolfs Liberts (1895–1959).[126] These paintings were published in the journal *Senatne and Māksla*.[127] The representations of the Latvian "kings" were also included in the primary school textbooks used in the 1930s; in contrast with the 1920s textbooks, Imanta was no longer visually represented.[128]

In the conflict between history and collective memory, history won. Imanta was important as a national symbol during the First World War and the War of Independence, and even in the first years of the new state he could claim the place of the main medieval hero; however, in the early 1920s his fall from grace began. Academics started to openly criticize the veneration of a fictional literary hero, suggesting other heroes who easily replaced him. Though the "ruler-heroes" celebrated in the 1930s were also highly ideological, there was more historical evidence that helped to justify their roles as heroes. Despite losing his place as the main medieval

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Twentieth Century, ed. Lazar Fleishman and Amir Weiner (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2018): 56–75.

124 Misāns, "'Wir waren immer ein Kriegervolk'," 188.

125 Marija Šumilo, "Vēstures mīti par 'Senlatvijas' vardarbīgu pakļaušanu krusta karu laikmetā: mītu pārnese uz 20. gadsimta vēstures procesiem," *Latvijas Universitātes Žurnāls Vēsture* 6 (2019): 148–61, 150.

126 Māra Caune, *Rīgas pils* (Rīga: Zinātne, 2001), 128; Toms Ķencis "Iztēlotā Latvija," in *Varas Latvijā: no Kurzemes hercogistes līdz neatkarīgajai valstij : esejas* (Rīga: LU Akadēmiskais apgāds, 2019): 660–741, 702.

127 Francis Balodis, "Latviešu senatne latviešu glezniecībā," *Senatne un Māksla* 1 (1936): 111–17.

128 Aleksandrs Grīns, *Latvijas vēsture pamatskolām: elementārkurss, sastādīts pēc 1935. gada programas* (Rīga: Zemnieka Domas, 1939).

national hero, Imanta remained deeply rooted in Latvian arts and literature as an ancient hero, who kept reappearing in images and poems (Figure 5).

Conclusion

The case of the hero Imanta demonstrates how the medieval legacy, in this case knowledge about a historical figure, was transmitted from the medieval context to the Enlightenment and then was used in the age of nationalism. All the historical knowledge about Imanta came from one source – The *Chronicle of Henry of Livonia* – in which Ymaut is identified as the killer of Bishop Berthold. It is evident that Imanta was a hero whose creation as a fictional character during the Enlightenment and nation-building period had nothing to do with the Middle Ages; on the other hand, he symbolized the eternal Latvian struggle for freedom, and through him, the story of the conquest could be told. This was a hero of the age of Romanticism, who was transformed into a national hero during the nation-building period and then lost his appeal when his historicity was questioned by academics after the establishment of the Latvian state and its academic institutions.

Merkel's saga played a seminal role in creating Imanta as an enduring hero. In Merkel's *Wanem Ymanta*, Imanta was a Romantic hero of the Enlightenment who was made to serve the author's aims – to justify the claim that Latvians, peasants living in serfdom, had a past and were worthy of rights in the present. Though Imanta had lost all of his historicity in Merkel's interpretation, becoming completely fictional, this made him all the stronger as a hero. As a literary hero stripped of all factuality, he would inspire generations of Latvian authors to create new poems and theatre plays. When Imanta became a Latvian national hero he was perceived as being both factual, by emphasizing that he had killed Bishop Berthold, and fictional, as an immortal hero who lay under a mystical mountain.

For the first generation of Latvian intellectuals, Imanta as created by Merkel provided an opportunity to quickly appropriate an existing hero, adjusting him to the needs of an emerging nation. Imanta as a combination of fictional character and real historical personality embodied all the traits required for a Latvian hero: the struggle against the Germans and the actual success of killing one of the crusaders' leaders – Bishop Berthold. As an anti-colonial text, Merkel's text and Imanta himself inspired a vast production of Latvian poetry, literature, choir songs, and theatre plays, starting in the 1870s. The poem *Imanta*, by Andrejs Pumpurs, a Latvian version of Friedrich Rückert's *Barbarossa*, was essential to his popularization as a Latvian hero, who was just lying dormant under the Blue Mountain waiting to be awakened, just like the nation's spirit. In the late 19th and

early 20th centuries, Imanta became a well-known figure through the performance of poems, songs, and plays. Several failed cultural projects, such as a partially composed opera and numerous theatre plays that were never finished, also demonstrate Imanta's influence and importance. Literary, musical, and theatrical representations of the past and its heroic figures were not just entertainment. They influenced the collective memory of Latvian society, creating images of the past deeply embedded in cultural memory.

During the First World War and following Latvia's independence, Imanta characterized Latvian society's attitude towards its medieval past – he was a symbol of the struggle for freedom of the Latvian nation against Baltic German supremacy and a mythological figure who embodied the glory and ancient freedom of the pre-crusade days. During the First World War and the War of Independence, Imanta easily became a military hero, retaining this aspect of his heroism into the 1920s. Imanta was a figure of memory for the Latvian nation to remember the conquest of the Eastern Baltic in the Middle Ages, just like his fellow bishop-killer Lalli was for the Finns. However, although Imanta as a hero had medieval roots, he was more a product of the Romantic era, and his fictionality was criticized by academics. Yet, as shown by the efforts of Pēteris Šmits and others, it was difficult to push Imanta aside with rational arguments and historical evidence in the 1920s and 1930s, as he had become deeply rooted in the memory of the nation thanks to poems, plays, and choir songs from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In 1930s Latvia, especially after the authoritarian regime was put in place in 1934, other heroes – the "ancient Latvian kings" – became more prominent than Imanta; the medieval Liv warrior, the killer of Bishop Berthold, was no longer needed as a figure of memory for Latvians' century-long struggle against foreign powers. Imanta lost his appeal because he was a fictitious hero originating in the Romantic era, and other, more "real," heroes were needed in the age of authoritarian regimes.

Figures

Figure 1: Imanta’s and Caupo’s latst battle. Sketch of Ansis Legzdiņš (1859–1914). Published in Vaidelots, “Imanta pareģojums,” *Rota* 9 (March 4, 1886).

Figure 2: The killing of Bishop Berthold. Image by Friedrich Ludwig von Maydell (1795–1846). Published in Friedrich Ludwig von Maydell, *Fünfzig Bilder aus der Geschichte der deutschen Ostsee-Provinzen Russlands nebst erklärendem Text. Zweite Lieferung* (Dorpat: F. Kluge, 1842), no. 4.

Figure 3: *Imants pie Rīgas* (Imants near Riga). Illustration by Otto Skulme. Birkerts, *Mazā Latvijas vēsture: pamatskolas 3. un 4. klases kurss* (Rīga: Kulturas Balss, 1923), 18.

Figure 4: Mock coat of arms of Latvian heroes. Published in *Svari*, 7 (January 28, 1921).

Figure 5: *Lībiešu vadonis Imanta 1199. gadā kaujā ar bruņiniekiem Daugavas grīvā* (Liv leader Imanta in 1199 in battle with knights at the mouth of the Daugava). Postcard by Oļģerts Krūmiņš, 1931. Image: National Library of Latvia.

Local

Steffen Hope

Saints and Urban Medievalism: The Case of Saint Knud Rex in Modern-Day Odense

Introduction

While the cult of saints was abolished in Denmark during the Protestant Reformation of 1536–37, the saints themselves have remained notable features in Danish religion and culture, as well as occupying an important place in what we might call the Danish historical consciousness, or the collective memory of Denmark.[1] One factor that has ensured this kind of continuity is the fact that several saints occupied important places in Danish history and have served as figures of memory.[2] This term describes how some historical figures became focal points of collective memory for one or several groups and for one or several localities. These are figures that have served as points of orientation and reference, whose lives, deeds, and events set a certain locality onto the timeline of recordable – and thereby commemorable – history. The locality in question may be a city, a county, a country, or a broader region such as Scandinavia. In the case of Danish saints, there could be a significant overlap between a figure of memory's importance for a village, a city, or the entire country, especially because these saints often had an impact on areas beyond their primary locality of veneration.

Among those saints who have continued to occupy an important place in the Danish collective memory is Knud Rex (r. 1080–86). Knud was elected king following the death of his brother Harald, and his reign was marked by tension between king and subjects, in part owing to economic uncertainties. Following an abortive

1 Many of the theoretical reflections in this article were first formulated in the presentation "The medieval in the modern city – saintly medievalism in Odense," at the conference *Using the Past: The Middle Ages in the Spotlight*, held in Batalha from December 10–12, 2020 (although hosted online due to the pandemic). These reflections were subsequently further developed thanks to input from friends and colleagues. My presentation was part of two sessions on the use of medieval saints in the modern period that I co-organized with Dr Sara Ellis Nilsson. I am indebted to my co-organizer and to my co-panellists Dr Ragnhild M. Bø, Dr Terese Zachrisson, Dr Jenni Kuuliala, and Dr Rebecca Pinner for feedback and input. I am also grateful to Farah Abbas for valuable feedback on the text and its content, and Rasmus Willaing Lock at Odense Stadsarkiv for providing several important images. An especially heartfelt thanks goes to Mads Runge and Mikael Manøe Bjerregaard for their extensive help and collaboration to expand our knowledge about the cult of Saint Knud Rex. A final expression of gratitude goes to Cordelia Heß, Gustavs Strenga, and Karl Levesque for their tireless help in providing feedback and suggestions.

2 See Cordelia Heß and Gustavs Strenga's introduction to this volume.

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raid on England, Knud was murdered in Odense in 1086 by a group of insurrectionists, along with his brother Benedikt and a retinue of warriors. Knud's cult remained an important aspect of both local and national history, extending well beyond the Middle Ages.[3] His position as a king ensured that he could not be overlooked or ignored in the historical narrative of Lutheran Denmark; and, as a king murdered in circumstances narrated in detail by the sources, he serves as a figure of memory for all of Denmark even into the modern period. For the royal authorities, Knud was an illustrious forebear whose iconography, in the course of the Kalmar Union (1397–1521), became a symbol of Danish royal power.[4] For the ecclesiastical authorities, Knud was an important figure in the history of the Danish Church, one who had played a crucial part in establishing Denmark as a Christian kingdom. For the civic authorities in Odense, a city whose history goes back to the pre-Christian era and whose origins are not known,[5] Knud was a symbol of the city itself. He had been its patron saint in the Catholic era and continued to be a figure of memory in the Protestant era as a king who had met with a violent death and had become the most famous part of the city's history. His death anchored him in the collective memory of the city, just as it anchored Odense in the collective memory of Denmark. Moreover, his role as a symbol of the city itself was reinforced by his inclusion in the city's coat of arms, which ensured that the saint-king would be a continuous presence in the city's iconography. The present article aims to explore how Knud has continued to be an important focal point for the city of Odense and how the city's urban identity has partly been formed around Knud as a key figure of memory.

It is not only Knud's place in Odense's coat of arms that has ensured his longevity as a figure of memory for the citizens of Odense. Despite the end of the formal cult, his role as the city's patron saint in the Middle Ages could not be easily forgotten, especially given that his remains were still physically present in the cathedral.[6] Towards the end of the 16th century, the bones of Knud and his brother Benedict were examined and placed in the cathedral crypt; so although they had lost their

3 For an overview of this event and its early impact on Odense, see Jakob Tue Christensen, Mikael Manøe Bjerregaard, and Mads Runge, "Odense Before and After the Canonization of Cnut," in *Life and Cult of Cnut the Holy – The First Royal Saint of Denmark*, ed. Steffen Hope, Mikael Manøe Bjerregaard, Anne Hedeager Krag, and Mads Runge (Odense: Syddansk Universitetsforlag, 2019): 10–25.

4 Sara Ellis Nilsson, *Creating Holy People and Places on the Periphery* (Gothenburg: Gothenburg University, 2015), 89.

5 See Mogens Bo Henriksen. *Odenses opståen* (Odense: Odense Bys Museer, 2018), 7–20.

6 Jens Vellev, "Helgenskrinene i Odense – fund og forskning 1582–1986," in *Knuds-bogen. Studier over Knud den Hellige*, ed. Tore Nyberg, Hans Bekker-Nielsen, and Niels Oxenvad (Odense: Odense bys museer, 1986): 123–56, 123–25.

previous place of prominence within the church space, they were not altogether lost or destroyed. Indeed, they were brought out of storage in 1582 and were re-examined several times in the following centuries.[7] The relics can now be viewed in the crypt below the choir of Odense cathedral. Moreover, the story of Knud remained widely available in post-Reformation Denmark. His story was recounted in the early 12th-century *vita* by Aelnoth (which was printed in five different editions in the period 1602–1774, with a sixth edition in 1908 and a Danish translation in 1893),[8] in Saxo Grammaticus's *Gesta Danorum* (c. 1200; printed in nine editions in the period 1514–1931 and in five Danish translations in the period 1575–1908),[9] and also in vernacular ballads from the 16th century.[10] Moreover, Knud's life, death, and saintly status were included in postmedieval historiographies, such as Ludvig Holberg's *Almindelig Kirkehistorie* (General Church History).[11] In short, Knud's story was continually and widely accessible throughout the modern period and well into the 21st century, including in fictionalized form.[12] Knud must therefore be seen as a powerful centre point in an urban identity-formation based on Odense's medieval past, as Knud has conveyed a place of belonging in both local and national history.

In the 20th and 21st centuries, the Danish saints continue to occupy important places in the historical consciousness of Denmark, and they remain important symbols of identity. The identity in question might vary, as it might be connected to the entire country, one of the country's regions, an institution, or a city. Through the continuous use of narratives and iconography, as well as new versions of these, modern Denmark can showcase several examples of saints being used as carriers and perpetuators of various forms of identity.[13]

The present article will explore how the city of Odense on the island of Fyn has employed the figure of Saint Knud Rex to formulate and develop an urban identity. The use of Saint Knud is part of a more general employment of Odense's medieval history to shape the city's identity. I have termed this kind of engage-

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7 Vellev, "Helgenskrinene i Odense – fund og forskning 1582–1986," 123–25.

8 Jacob Isager and Aidan Conti, "Ailnothus," *Medieval Nordic Literature in Latin* (online), https://wiki.uib.no/medieval/index.php/Ailnothus.

9 Karsten Friis Jensen, "Saxo Grammaticus," *Medieval Nordic Literature in Latin* (online), https://wiki.uib.no/medieval/index.php/Saxo_Grammaticus.

10 Rita Pedersen, "Den ædle Herre de vog met wræt. Viser fra det sekstende århundrede om Sankt Knud," in *Knuds-bogen. Studier over Knud den Hellige*, ed. Tore Nyberg, Hans Bekker-Nielsen, and Niels Oxenvad (Odense: Odense bys museer, 1986): 101–16.

11 Ludvig Holberg, *Almindelig Kirkehistorie*, (København 1738), 560.

12 See, for instance: Cai Woel, *Riget af evighed* (København: Gyldendal, 1940); Maria Helleberg, *Den hellige Knud* (København: Aschehoug, 2005).

13 Other examples are Saint Ansgar in Ribe and Saint Knud Dux (Lavard) in Ringsted.

ment with the medieval within the context of an urban setting "urban medievalism."[14] Importantly, urban identity and its reliance on urban medievalism are distinct from national identity but not entirely separate from it. Both national and urban identities might draw on the same sources for identity-formation, such as historical figures, but the application of this source material is different in scope. In the case of Knud, for instance, his place in national identity-formation highlights his importance in Danish history, due to his historical role as king and also to the continued dissemination of his story up until our present day. Urban identity-formation, on the other hand, focuses on his importance to the city, and, in some cases, also on how Knud's importance to the city makes the city stand out within the national context. There are, in other words, significant connections and overlaps between these two layers of identity, but they have different aims, different scopes, and different audiences for their employment of the past. In the course of this article, I will explore some of the ways in which various actors across generations have sought to connect the modern city of Odense with its medieval past through urban medievalism, and more specifically through the figure of Saint Knud Rex. Moreover, I will explore the various purposes for which the Middle Ages have been used by different actors whose efforts have impacted the cityscape of Odense.

It is important to note that urban medievalism is only one aspect of Odense's urban identity, as this identity also draws heavily on aspects of the city's postmedieval history, such as Hans Christian Andersen and Odense's industrial heritage. This article is, therefore, not an attempt to map the entire mosaic of Odense's urban identity. Moreover, the employment of Odense's medieval past is not limited to the figure of Saint Knud Rex, but also draws on several other aspects of medieval Odense. Consequently, while the present article will position the use of Saint Knud Rex in Odense's cityscape within a range of other evocations of the Middle Ages, I will focus on Saint Knud Rex in order to show how individual figures from the medieval past – a king, a saint, perhaps even a hero – might serve as carriers of urban medievalism in the construction of an urban identity.

14 The term "urban medievalism" is my own coinage, but for similar ideas regarding the evocation of the Middle Ages in a context of tourism, see Megan Arnott, "The Tourist Gaze and the 'Medieval' Landscape," in *The Middle Ages in Modern Culture*, ed. Karl C. Alvestad and Robert Houghton (London: Bloomsbury, 2021): 121–39, 123–25.

Theoretical Underpinnings

Defining Urban Medievalism

Before going into detail about the ways in which Knud Rex appears in different forms in the urban medievalism of Odense, it is necessary to explain the concept of urban medievalism itself. At its core, urban medievalism is the use of the medieval past within an urban context. In other words, in order to identify urban medievalism, we need to examine how the Middle Ages are employed and evoked within the cityscape.[15] It is important to note that here we are primarily talking about ideas concerning the city's medieval past, rather than any remnants of the medieval city that might still be standing. The preservation and restoration of medieval structures, and the adaptation of the modern cityscape around such structures, are not necessarily what we might term medievalism, although they certainly play a part in the formation of urban identity. This is to say that continuity in the use of remnants from the medieval period might simply be a matter of practical or aesthetic concerns, and need not be explicitly tied to the medieval context of those remnants. For something to be considered "medievalism," I argue that there must be a conscious engagement with the medieval past – either that past as understood through scholarly evaluation of its source material or the way in which that past is imagined through the filters of modern popular culture and legends.[16] Medievalism is, in other words, an evocation of the medieval past, an active employment and

15 This article contains references to several establishments and businesses. All these businesses are still running at the time of writing, and the information about them is accurate as of June 2022. Future alterations to Odense's cityscape may render some details obsolete. I do not personally benefit from including any such still-running businesses, and all references are made solely for the sake of their relevance to the topic.

16 The term "medievalism" is still subject to debate, and no consensus exists about how to define it. My understanding draws on Elizabeth Emery's 2009 article; see Elizabeth Emery, "Medievalism and the Middle Ages," in *Studies in Medievalism XVII: Defining Medievalism(s)*, ed. Karl Fugelso (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2009): 77–85, 81–83. I also draw on Karl Fugelso's suggestion that medievalism requires distance from the Middle Ages, or it must stand the period: Karl Fugelso, "Continuity," in *Medievalism – Key Critical Terms*, ed. Elizabeth Emery and Richard Utz (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2014): 53–61, 53. Similarly, I draw on the formulation "self-conscious recreation of medieval culture in the modern age" in David Matthews, "Middle," in *Medievalism – Key Critical Terms*, 141–48, 146. However, for counterarguments, see Mette Birkedal Bruun, "A Case in which a Revitalization of Something Medieval Turned out not to be Medievalism," *Universitas: The University of Northern Iowa Journal of Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity* 2, no. 1 (2006): 1–4, 3–4; Nils Holger Petersen, "Medievalism and Medieval Reception: A Terminological Question," in *Studies in Medievalism XVII: Defining Medievalism(s)*, ed. Karl Fugelso (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2009): 38–44, 40–42.

development of ideas, images, or physical remains that goes beyond mere continuity or preservation, but that also shapes the representation of the medieval past according to elements of modern culture or modern self-conceptualization within the greater historical narrative. Urban medievalism, therefore, is the employment or evocation of the medieval past in the making and shaping of a contemporary urban space.[17]

Odense's medieval past is increasingly well known, thanks to a significant number of textual sources, as well as recent archaeological excavations.[18] Moreover, some physical remnants of medieval Odense have survived, albeit with post-medieval alterations. One example is the cathedral church of Saint Knud's, the current shape of which was largely put into place in the 14th century, although both the interior and exterior have been altered since.[19] Similarly, Odense's other surviving medieval churches – the Church of Saint John and the Church of Our Lady – also retain much of their medieval forms, as does the Latin school situated right next to Our Lady. These structures are medieval, but they do not in and of themselves represent forms of medievalism, because the usage and preservation of these buildings have been mainly practical; for instance, as places of worship. Granted, medievalism might be employed in the way these buildings are presented or conveyed to various audiences, but in that regard we must distinguish between their everyday practical use and the use of these buildings as evocations of a medieval past.

Urban medievalism is primarily fashioned through elements that are integral to the cityscape. For instance, urban medievalism can be observed in street names, the names of companies or shops, the names of buildings, and in cities' iconography, such as municipal coats of arms, statues, art installations, and decorations of façades. These urban elements become vehicles for the evocation of the

17 Since medievalism has to do with the evocation of the Middle Ages rather than the Middle Ages themselves, urban medievalism is not dependent on the existence of a medieval past. For studies in medievalism in places outside of the geographical remit typically considered "medieval," see Kathleen Davis and Nadia Altschul, eds., *Medievalisms in the Postcolonial World: The Idea of "the Middle Ages" outside Europe* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University, 2009); Nadia Altschul, "Medievalism and the Contemporaneity of the Medieval in Postcolonial Brazil," in *Studies in Medievalism XXIV: Medievalism on the Margins*, ed. Karl Fugelso, Vincent Ferré, and Alicia C. Montoya (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2015): 139–54; Stephanie Trigg, ed., *Medievalism and the Gothic in Australian Culture* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016).

18 See especially: Mads Runge, Malene Refshauge Beck, Mikael Manøe Bjerregaard, and Torben Birk Sarauw, eds., *From Central Space to Urban Place. Urbanisation processes in Viking Age and Medieval Odense and Aalborg, Denmark* (Odense: University of Southern Denmark Press, 2022).

19 Hans Krongaard Kristensen and Bjørn Poulsen, *Danmarks byer i middelalderen* (Aarhus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 2016), 160–61.

medieval past. They may employ references to medieval buildings or institutions, such as monasteries or hospitals, they may be connected to specific historical events, or they may convey the medieval past through references to historical figures. These figures might be named individuals, as in the case of Knud, or they might be stock characters from our modern picture of the Middle Ages, such as the king, the queen, the nun, the monk, the knight, the saint, and so on.[20] These strategies for employing urban medievalism are shared by all cities that engage in this form of identity-construction, but the exact employment differs from case to case, and depends on the unique historical makeup of each city.

Whatever its form, constellation, or vehicles, urban medievalism serves to shape an urban identity. As mentioned above, it is very rare for an urban identity to be wholly comprised of evocations of the Middle Ages, as most cities will also draw on other parts of their history. But the medieval piece of the identity puzzle can in many cases serve as the biggest one, and the shape of this piece – i.e., the shape of urban medievalism – depends on the form, the constellation, and the vehicles that are employed to shape it. For instance, the Middle Ages are most often evoked to connect the modern city with its medieval past and to create a sense of continuity and longevity.[21] Additionally, a city can use its medieval past to inscribe itself, or to insist upon its place, in the wider historical vista of a locality, such as a region or a country, or even the world at large. When considering this wider remit of the formation of urban identity, it is important to keep in mind that this identity is simultaneously directed at several different audiences, as are all identity formations. In other words, the formation of urban identity not only addresses the citizens of the city in question, but also visitors, neighbouring cities, or addressees even further afield. Urban identity is therefore inextricably linked to national identity and very often to a global identity.[22]

The formation of an urban identity is a complex process that involves several actors, including official representatives of the city (e.g., the city council), public organizations (e.g., museums or universities), and also private organizations (e.g., businesses). Typically, the official representatives will have more power in decid-

20 These stock figures belong to what William Woods calls a "register" of elements that serve as shorthand for the Middle Ages. See William Woods, "Authenticating Realism," in *The Medieval Hero on Screen: Representations from Beowulf to Buffy*, ed. Martha W. Driver and Sid Ray (Jefferson: McFarland, 2004): 38–52, 47; Pam Clements, "Authenticity," in *Medievalism – Key Critical Terms*, 19–26, 23–24.

21 On the importance of continuity, see Djamel Boussaa, "Urban Regeneration and the Search for Identity in Historic Cities," in *Sustainability* 10, no. 8 (2018): 1–16, 2. See also Elizabeth Fay's formulation of certain types of medievalism as "a reconstructed cultural lineage": Elizabeth Fay, "Troubadour," in *Medievalism – Key critical terms*, 255–63, 255.

22 See Arnott, "The Tourist Gaze and the 'Medieval' Landscape," 128–35.

ing how the medieval past is to be employed in the cityscape.[23] However, this employment typically draws on shared ideas about the city and its past, as well as a canonical narrative about its history. Moreover, who the intended audience is of the urban identity-formation also affects what form the employment of the medieval past takes. Some aspects, like commemorative plaques or street names, or the names of shops or other establishments, can be said to be addressed primarily inwards, i.e., to the city's citizens. Other aspects, such as statues, museums, or festivals, while being addressed in part to the city's citizens, are perhaps first and foremost addressed to audiences outside of the city.[24] It is important to note that for several of these actors, the employment of, and engagement with, the medieval past are deliberate: when the medieval is employed or engaged with, a deliberate selection is made of what to employ and with what to engage. As such, this serves as an example of what Cordelia Heß and Gustavs Strenga have termed "doing memory."[25] Moreover, there is also a performative element to this engagement; an active aspect that shows that memory is not simply subject to passive continuation but to an active, deliberate form of memoralization. In the case of Knud, as we shall see below, the way in which different actors have chosen to emphasize various aspects of his life, or how his character has been interpreted, provide examples of how memory has been done in the shaping of Odense's urban identity.[26]

Due to the numerous different audiences, as well as actors, that are involved in the shaping of urban identity, urban medievalism can be executed in a wide range of forms. In the case of Odense, we shall see several examples of such forms, which comprise a complex facet of Odense's urban identity – serving to connect Odense with its medieval past and, by extension, with Denmark's medieval past. These forms can be categorized according to the degree of their use of, or engagement with, the medieval past. I use the terms primary and secondary medievalism to distinguish between these degrees.

23 See Fátima Bernardo, Joana Almeida, and Catarina Martins, "Urban Identity and Tourism: Different Looks, One Single Place," *Urban Design & Planning* 170, no. 5 (2017): 1–12, 5.

24 Karl. C. Alvestad, "Middelalders helter og Norsk nasjonalisme før andre verdenskrig," *Slagmark* 79 (2019): 77–95, 81–86.

25 See Cordelia Heß and Gustavs Strenga's introduction to this volume.

26 See Cordelia Heß and Gustavs Strenga's introduction to this volume.

Primary and Secondary Medievalism

While the previous subsection has described what constitutes "urban medievalism," the term needs to be defined even more carefully. Because the medieval facet of a city's urban identity is constructed through the input and effort of a wide range of actors, is aimed at different audiences, and is executed at different points in time, the urban medievalism of any given city will be comprised of a wide variety of nuances. In other words, there is rarely one single holistic evocation of the medieval, but rather many singular elements that together make up a variegated mosaic. It is therefore necessary to be as precise as possible when analysing urban medievalism. One way of achieving greater precision is to distinguish between what I term primary and secondary forms of medievalism.

Primary medievalism is when the urban element in question is directly linked with its historical medieval reference point. In these cases, the link with the Middle Ages is intentional and deliberate. Common examples of such primary medievalism are statues, names of schools, or street names. For instance, there is a square in Odense called Sortebrødre Torv, Blackfriars' Square, which is named after the Dominican friary that once stood there.[27] Similarly, a square called Gråbrødre Plads, Greyfriars' Place or Square, is named after the medieval Franciscan friary that was converted into a hospital following the Reformation.[28] These are both cases of primary medievalism since the medieval buildings and institutions, either lost or made invisible by postmedieval transformations, are used as reference points; they are evoked in their absence to forge a link with a lost past. To put it differently: these names are not solely a matter of convenience, since the landmarks referred to in the names are no longer visible or identifiable in the cityscape. Instead, the names are chosen to evoke a lost medieval past and to create a sense of continuity across the centuries. Similarly, the restaurant Klosterkroen, the cloister arms, which is situated on Lille Gråbrødrestrede, Little Greyfriars' Street, is an example of primary medievalism since the name evokes the now-lost medieval building.[29] Two final examples from Odense to be considered here are Benedikts Plads, Benedict's Square, and Benediktsgade, Benedict's Street. These two urban elements are

27 *Danmarks kirker* IX, vol. 3 (København: Nationalmuseet, 1998–2001), 1764–68.

28 *Danmarks kirker*, 1559–78, 1769–1876.

29 On its sign, this establishment uses an image of a fat, jolly monk holding aloft a fork piercing a chicken leg. The monk is dressed in a brown habit in the manner of the Benedictines, and both the colour of the clothes and the figure's delight in food suggest that the establishment is drawing on the stock figure of the fat monk from the popular imagination. It is, therefore, not so much the Franciscan friary that is being evoked, but the general idea of the stereotypical medieval monastic house.

ostensibly named after Benedict, the brother of Saint Knud Rex. The names of these two urban elements are both cases of primary medievalism, as the names refer back to a historical reference point but are not themselves from the Middle Ages. If a street has kept its name from the medieval period, I argue that this should not be considered medievalism.

Secondary medievalism is when an urban element is linked with an evocation of the medieval past – i.e., an expression of primary medievalism – rather than directly with the medieval past. This kind of medievalism is incidental and a consequence of where the urban element is located in relation to other urban elements. It is not intended as an evocation of the past, but through its connection to a form of primary medievalism, it does nonetheless evoke the medieval past. One example of secondary medievalism from Odense can be seen in relation to Benedikts Plads and Benediktsgade: a fast-food restaurant formerly located on Benedikts Plads, but now relocated due to the construction of the Odense tramway in 2017–21, is called Benedikt Grillen, the Benedict Grill. Since the restaurant does not feature any figure of the historical Benedict in its iconography, it is most likely that the reference to the medieval person is incidental and a result of the fact that the business had been located in a place that already bore the name of a historical individual. This is a case of secondary medievalism. Such secondary medievalisms might be the result of convenience rather than any interest in the Middle Ages, but for audiences familiar with the medieval past such incidental connections to the Middle Ages will still serve to evoke that past.[30]

The distinction between primary and secondary medievalism provides an important tool for understanding the nuances in a city's urban medievalism. When analysing how the actors who shape the cityscape present a city's medieval past, we need to focus on the cases of primary medievalism in order to understand what aspects of the medieval past have been deliberately conveyed and used to shape a part of the urban identity. Street names are excellent examples of deliberate employment of the Middle Ages, as are statues and official buildings. Shops that are named after the streets on which they are located, on the other hand, have often taken their names for practical reasons rather than in an attempt to connect with the medieval past. Granted, some privately owned establishment may evoke the Middle Ages and thus contribute to urban medievalism through deliberate action, as we saw in the case of Klosterkroen. Often, however, such es-

30 It might also be useful to talk about tertiary medievalism, which is when an urban element is linked with a case of secondary medievalism rather than with a case of primary medievalism, but this concept is not necessary for the present study.

tablishments do not deliberately draw on the medieval past, and we see this kind of incidental medievalism in the restaurant Benedikt Grillen.

Continuity and the Emergence of Urban Medievalism: The Case of Odense's Coat of Arms

Having defined urban medievalism as a tool for analysing the formation of urban identity, I return to the figure of Saint Knud Rex, arguably the centre point of the urban medievalism of Odense. As stated in the introduction, Knud's continued function as an important reference point in Odense's iconography was in part ensured by his place in the city's coat of arms (Figure 1). Since the coat of arms was a public sign that was widely accessible to the general populace, Knud remained a representative of the city. Even though the saint-king might no longer have been officially venerated after the Reformation, his importance to the urban identity of Odense continued from the medieval into the modern period, in part due to the continuous use of the coat of arms.[31] The image found on today's coat of arms is part of an iconographical lineage that goes back to Odense's city seal in the late Middle Ages. Here, I will provide a short overview of the development of this iconography. I do so in part because this history will explain the ubiquity of images of Knud in modern Odense. However, I also focus on this development because it serves as a good example of how medieval figures retained an enduring and ongoing relevance throughout the postmedieval period. This continuity was not unique to Knud, but the case of Knud is illustrative of how medieval saints can become embedded within a city's urban identity over the centuries.

One of the earliest surviving versions of Odense's seal dates to 1450 (Figure 2). Here, Knud can be seen in armour and a royal cape, standing upright in the centre, with long billowing hair protruding from under his crown and with a thin moustache and beard, looking straight ahead. His legs are slightly apart, and a fleur-de-lis is placed between his heels. He holds a fleur-de-lis banner in his right hand and the royal orb in his left. The background of the seal is a star-studded field.

31 The best overview of the early Knud iconography on sigils and coats of arms remains Nils. G. Bartholdy, "Sankt Knud Konge og Odense-liljen," in *Knuds-bogen. Studier over Knud den Hellige*, ed. Tore Nyberg, Hans Bekker-Nielsen, and Niels Oxenvad (Odense: Odense bys museer, 1986): 93–99.

In a version from 1584 (Figure 3), the figure remains the same in most of its elements, except his face is clean shaven, his hair is hidden under a cowl, and he is looking to his right instead of straight ahead. The major change is in the background of the seal, where instead of the star-studded field we now see two churches, one on either side. It is possible that one was supposed to signify the cathedral where his bones were enshrined, while the other was supposed to signify the church of Saint Alban where he was murdered.[32]

A third notable version of this iconography can be seen in a stained-glass window from 1610 (Figure 4), which was placed in the Odense City Hall and which is now kept at Museum Odense. The window shows the crown-wearing Knud with the royal orb in his left hand and the fleur-de-lis banner in his right. Additionally, the fleur-de-lis is also placed between his legs. The depiction of the king follows that of the 1584 sigil, but the king is looking ahead, the orb is rendered in more detail, and the background consists of intricate scrollwork rather than the 1584 sigil's two churches. Beneath the king's feet is a banner with the inscription "INSIGNIA CIVITATIS OTTHONIENSIS": the sign of the city of Odense.[33] This window reportedly remained at Odense City Hall until 1794, when the building was renovated and the windows removed. In 1888, this window was used as the basis for the standard colouration of Odense's coat of arms,[34] which had been placed in the new 1883 city hall.[35] This coat of arms from 1888 is still in place today and serves as a good reminder of the place Knud Rex continues to hold in Odense's urban identity.

Furthermore, in addition to continuity, the coat of arms serves as a reminder that images and objects accrue meaning over time. On September 19, 1944, German troops arrested the Odense police at the city hall. As the arrests were taking place, several shots were fired, and one bullet hit the right knee of Knud. When the coat of arms was later renovated, the decision was made to keep the bullet hole intact – a decision that added another historical layer to the figure.[36]

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32 The medieval Church of Saint Alban was located between the Church of Saint Knud and Odense city hall, at what is now called Flakhaven. See Mikael Manøe Bjerregaard and Jakob Thue Christensen, "Skt. Albani Kirke og Kirkegård," in *Knuds Odense – vikingernes by*, ed. Jesper Hansen and Mads Runge (Odense: Odense Bys Museer, 2017): 106–16.

33 Finn Grandt-Nielsen, "Laugshusets pryd – malede vinduer fra Odense 1563–1641," in *Fynske Minder* (Odense: Odense Museum, 1998): 76–96.

34 Grandt-Nielsen, "Laugshusets pryd – malede vinduer fra Odense 1563–1641."

35 Jørgen Thomsen and Johnny Wøllekær, "Farverne i Odenses byvåben," *Fyens Stiftstidende* (online), February 23, 2007, https://fyens.dk/odense/farverne-i-odenses-byvaaben. Note that this only became the official sign of the city in the 1930s.

36 Jørgen Thomsen and Johnny Wøllekær, "Odenses byvåben," *Om Odense* (online), n.d., https://odenseleksikon.wordpress.com/.

The question is, of course, whether and to what extent we can call Odense's coat of arms and its use a form of medievalism. Since the coat of arms originated in the Middle Ages, it makes no sense to consider the 1450 version an example of medievalism. Granted, iconography in the late Middle Ages did employ figures that by then were inhabitants of a distant past, and this employment can be considered a kind of antiquarianism. However, it is important to keep in mind that in 1450 Knud was still being venerated as a saint. Therefore, he was not a figure from the past but of the present: he was an advocate for the living in the court of Heaven, as were all saints.[37] The late-medieval Knud iconography, therefore, was neither an example of antiquarianism nor of medievalism. In the versions of the coat of arms from the late 16th and early 17th centuries, the situation is more complicated. Officially, Knud was no longer a saint, but a figure from the distant past. Perhaps this might explain his more chivalric attire as compared to the 1450 version, but we should be cautious about such a hypothesis. It is possible that these later versions are cases of antiquarianism, but probably not medievalism, as it is unclear whether the concept of the Middle Ages as a period distinct from the contemporary, modern period had gained ground in Danish historical consciousness by that point in time.[38]

At the point that the coat of arms was placed at the entrance to Odense's city hall in 1888, where it can still be seen today, there is a greater basis for considering this choice to be a form of medievalism. The iconography of the coat of arms had already been established, so that particular aspect might not be seen as a deliberate decision but rather as a practical matter. Even so, the decision to employ the old colours and to place the coat of arms above the entrance can be considered a budding form of urban medievalism, and I suggest that the origins of Odense's urban medievalism can be identified in the late 19th century, a time when the Middle Ages served as a widely popular reference point in Scandinavian, and Western European, culture.[39]

If we accept that there has been a shift in understanding Knud's role in the city's identity, namely from a king of old to a specifically medieval king, we might also understand the current coat of arms and its various employments as instances of primary medievalism. However we interpret this use, the coat of arms is an important reason why the image of Knud is so ubiquitous in Odense's cityscape. This ubiquity is crucial in order to understand how the development of Odense's

37 Robert Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead do Such Great Things?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 102–3.

38 See Matthews, "Middle", 141–44.

39 Pernille Hermann, "Middelalderisme og erindring – Oehlenschläger og den nordiske mytologi," *Slagmark* 79 (2019): 47–62, 48–49.

urban identity is so centred on the saint-king, and how the story of Knud, which has anchored the city of Odense more firmly within the broader national history of Denmark, can also be seen as a means to expand and elaborate Odense's urban medievalism.

Odense's sigil and coat of arms provide perhaps the best example of Knud Rex's afterlife in postmedieval Denmark. In part, they serve as a good example because of their documented longevity. Perhaps more importantly, the history of the coat of arms ties into a broader shift towards medievalism in Denmark in the 19th century, which means that the figure of Knud can be understood more specifically as an evocation of the Middle Ages. Furthermore, many different versions of the coat of arms have been employed in Odense's cityscape, thereby ensuring Knud's ubiquity in the medieval part of Odense's urban identity. As Knud has received a different visual representation at each point – sometimes to invoke a contemporary bearded king, sometimes to invoke a figure from the distant past – we see how his memory has been done differently from iteration to iteration. In the following section, I will include some examples of how the coat of arms has been employed in Odense, together with other examples of Knud's role in Odense's urban medievalism.

Saint Knud Rex and the Urban Medievalism of Odense

There are several categories of urban elements that can contribute to the formation of an urban identity. Some examples have already been mentioned, such as street names or the names of restaurants. Similarly, the names of buildings, as well as the erection of statues and similar art installations – with or without a commemorative function – contribute to this identity, as do guidebooks or other publications aimed at connecting the city with its past. Also, as noted by Fátima Almeida et al., such elements as "narrow streets, with colourful tiles," and similar references that play on the intended audience's notion of the medieval past, can serve to evoke that past.[40] As we have seen, different actors can contribute to this formation of urban identity in different ways. Members of a city council have the authority to name or re-name streets and public buildings, and even in cases where such names are decided by public polls, the decision to conduct that poll and the decision to accept its outcome still rest on the council's authority. Simi-

40 Bernardo, Almeida, and Martins, "Urban Identity and Tourism," 7.

larly, a city council also typically authorizes the erection of statues, even in cases where the statue might be a gift from the artist. Organizations and private businesses contribute to the process by employing names that evoke the Middle Ages, or draw on a connection with the medieval past through their use of iconography or literature.[41]

Since the formation of urban identity is a continuous process that extends across generations, there is very rarely a unified strategy behind its formation. Urban identity coalesces in layers, and not all of its building blocks will harmonize with each other. Sometimes the shaping of an urban identity deliberately continues with older expressions, while in other cases there is a deliberate departure from those expressions. In still other cases, continuity and departure might be equally incidental. For this reason, the use of Knud in Odense's urban medievalism does not cohere in a unitary view of the saint-king, nor even in a unitary view of Odense and its place in the broader Danish history. I have therefore divided the different types of employment of Knud into categories, and examples from each category will provide the foundation for presenting the main themes in how Knud is presented and understood in Odense's urban identity.

The categories in question are names, images, and temporary displays. The latter category also includes images, but these are instances where the employment of Knud is not intended as a permanent part of the cityscape and where there is a clear understanding all along that the display will be removed at some point. Even though such displays are temporary, they are nonetheless important because they can contribute to the formation of an urban identity and how a particular historical figure contributes to that identity. The impact of temporary displays is perhaps especially important considering that for visitors and tourists, these temporary displays might be just as integral a part of their experience of the city as the permanent evocations of the medieval past.

Names

Names of buildings, streets, and parks are among the most basic forms of medievalism in a modern urban setting. Yet these features in the cityscape can also be difficult to properly categorize since, as mentioned above, it can be difficult to distinguish between what I call primary and secondary medievalisms.

41 At Restaurant Grønttorvet, next to Sortebrødre Torv, table mats provide a historical presentation of the establishment that connects the restaurant with the kitchen of the Dominican friars. The phrase "madglade munke," food-loving monks, ties into the same trope of the jolly monk that is used in the iconography of the Klosterkroen restaurant on Gråbrødre Strede.

In Odense, there are at least two such names that can be considered expressions of primary medievalism. First, there is the high school Sct. Knuds gymnasium, which was established in 1853 and was originally located in Nørregade closer to the cathedral than its present location.[42] While it is unclear whether or not the original choice of name can be considered an expression of medievalism, the school in its current form can absolutely be considered an example of primary medievalism. The school's logo is a version of the Saint Knud sigil that shows the king seated on a throne with a crescent moon and a star in the background, seen respectively on the right and the left side of the image. The sigil's legend reads "Sct. Knuds Gymnasium Odense." In the school's video presentation aimed at prospective students and parents, this logo is superimposed on an aerial view of the school grounds, meaning that the figure of Saint Knud is one of the first things visitors to the school's website will encounter. The logo is also placed in the background of the website. Consequently, while we do not know whether the connection to Saint Knud Rex began as an intentional evocation of Odense's medieval past, such an evocation is clearly deliberate in the way the school currently presents itself.

Secondly, there is the street called "Sankt Knuds Gade," which is located on the south side of the river, the opposite side from the cathedral. While I have not been able to ascertain the exact date when the street received its name, the area where it is situated appears to have been built up after 1839, as a map from that year by N. F. von Juel shows the area as uninhabited.[43] It is possible that the name of the street pertains to the cathedral, but it is just as likely that the name is intended to honour and memorialize the saint-king himself, just as we saw in the case of his brother Benedict, who is commemorated in the name Benedikt Plads.

Other names in Odense's cityscape are more difficult to assess. The street "Sankt Knuds Kirkestrede" most likely takes its name from the cathedral rather than from the dedicatee of the cathedral. Similarly, the pharmacy Sct. Knuds Apotek in Kongensgade is located close enough to the cathedral to suggest that its name derives from its location rather than from a desire to commemorate a historical person. This interpretation is all the more likely given that there is also an Albani Apotek located by Albanigade. A final name to be considered here is Skt. Knuds Fastfood, located on Klostergade, a street that runs parallel to Kongensgade where the pharmacy is located. Consequently, there is reason to think that

42 "Brudstykker af Sct. Knuds Gymnasiums historie," Sct. Knuds Gymnasium, https://www.sctknud-gym.dk/om-os/skolens-historie/.

43 Kongelige Bibliotek København, Kort og atlas, 18816.

the fast-food restaurant has taken its name from its proximity to an architectural landmark rather than from the historical person.

In the case of names derived from a building rather than a person, the question of whether we can consider this to be medievalism becomes more complicated. On the one hand, the building itself is a medieval structure and its name originated in the Middle Ages, so we should perhaps consider names derived from that building as attempting to reference or draw upon its medieval past in order for these establishments to benefit from such a connection. On the other hand, a building such as a church is often in continuous use, serving a contemporary function. And such a contemporary function might be more important than its medieval roots in the choice of names to refer to the structure. Moreover, for establishments such as a fast-food restaurant or a pharmacy, to take a name from a nearby and famous building might simply be a matter of convenience, a kind of nominal mapping that allows potential customers to immediately know where the establishment is located. This balance between intention and accident is what makes names such a complicated element when mapping medievalism in an urban context. The various images within a cityscape that in some way or other evoke the medieval past provide much more straightforward material.

Images

One of the earliest employments of images of Saint Knud Rex in Odense's cityscape is the previously mentioned coat of arms that was placed above the entrance to Odense city hall in 1883. A little over twenty years later, we find another occasion where Saint Knud Rex was given a visible and public place in Odense's cityscape, namely the Roman Catholic Church of Saint Alban, located next to Albani Torv (Saint Alban's Square) opposite Odense city hall (Figure 5).[44] This new church was intended to serve the Catholic minority in Odense, which had been established through missionary work from 1867 onwards. The building of the church began in 1906, and it was consecrated in 1908, although it was not yet completed at the time.[45] The church is jointly dedicated to Saints Alban, Mary, and Knud Rex, although it is now most commonly referred to as "Sct. Albani Kirke." The church contains several images of Saint Knud, to which I will return shortly. As mentioned above, it is always difficult to assess whether and to what degree

44 Albani Torv is a postmedieval name that evokes the now-lost medieval Church of Saint Alban located nearby. The modern Roman Catholic church is no doubt intended to be the successor of the medieval church where Saint Knud was killed.

45 *Danmarks kirker*, 1602.

the use of saints in modern settings can be called medievalism when those who use the saints believe them to be holy and ever-present figures rather than representations of a lost past. In the case of Saint Alban's Church, however, we can safely say that in the building in which we find the images of Saint Knud Rex, much effort has been made to deliberately invoke the medieval contemporaneity of the royal saint. For instance, the church is built predominantly in the neo-Gothic style with some elements inspired by Romanesque.[46] Moreover, a deliberate lack of stylistic uniformity also serves to give an illusion of a building with a long and complicated history,[47] which in turn should qualify as a form of medievalism as it is a deliberate evocation of the medieval past.

In Saint Alban's Church there are six images depicting Saint Knud Rex. The most prominent is a statuette placed in a niche above the main entrance, located beneath a niche containing a statuette of the crucified Christ. These two statuettes were replaced in 1994,[48] and the statuette of Knud was taken down by November 2021, possibly in circumstances related to the building of the tramway, which now runs past the church. A second depiction of Knud can be found in one of the four panels of the two wooden doors at the main entrance. Two of these panels contain scenes from the life of Saint Boniface, one from the life of Saint Ansgar, and the fourth portrays Knud's martyrdom before the altar (Figures 6 and 7).

The remaining four images are found inside the church. One is on the right side of the altarpiece, while the final three are found in the Saint Knud chapel to the right of the choir. In this chapel, three stained-glass windows from 1908 contain the following scenes: Knud's confession (to the east), Knud's martyrdom (to the west) and Knud in heavenly majesty in the middle. These images are accompanied by psalm quotations in modern Danish; we thus see a blend of a medieval-looking aesthetic with modern cultural norms.

The depictions of Saint Knud in Saint Alban's Church serve a purpose unlike other depictions of Knud in Odense since they are expressions of religious veneration. Despite this different purpose, however, the iconography – showing the king as a medieval monarch – does not diverge from the iconography of non-religious depictions in Odense's cityscape. These depictions are also in tune with the canonical narrative as handed down to us through the medieval hagiographies. Moreover, given that these depictions in Saint Alban's Church are Catholic depictions that emerged in a Protestant context at a time when Catholicism had long been viewed with suspicion, we can understand the references to Saint Knud as a

46 *Danmarks kirker*, 1603.

47 *Danmarks kirker*, 1603–4.

48 *Danmarks kirker*, 1603.

way for modern Danish Catholics to justify their presence in a Protestant country by referring to the city's and the country's medieval Catholic past. In short, the references to Saint Knud provide a way to highlight the shared past of Protestants and Catholics alike.

Perhaps the most notable image of Saint Knud Rex in Odense's cityscape is the bronze statue located between the city hall and Saint Alban's Square. This statue, roughly two metres tall, was designed by Einar Utzon-Frank (1888–1955) and was unveiled in 1953 (Figure 8).[49] The statue is a good example of how private actors can influence the cityscape, as it was donated to the city by the private bank Fyens discontokasse.[50] Utzon-Frank's statue shows Knud in medieval garb, and an inscription on the pedestal states that Knud was martyred. Yet the depiction of the king is unusual in that Knud is shown with his sword raised in preparation for battle, the blade behind his back as if he were about to strike. Additionally, the king's head is looking upward in an almost defiant manner, more belligerent than the more humble or static figure found in earlier depictions. The bronze statue shows how depictions can retain continuity in some respects while also adding elements that preclude a completely uniform, unchanging iconography. When compared with the coat of arms from the 1880s and the ecclesiastical art from the early 1900s, the statue shows how iconography can develop even within a relatively short time span and within a limited geographical remit.[51]

While Utzon-Frank's bronze statue is the most well-known and conspicuous of the images of Saint Knud Rex in Odense, it is the city's coat of arms that provides the most frequent and widespread encounters with the saint-king within the cityscape. Since the coat of arms can be seen in many different public contexts, its various employments ensure that Knud is featured in many different places. This situation is typical of municipalities or cities that feature saints on their coat of arms. In the case of Odense, we find a stylized minimalist version of the saint-king – drawn in sharp, clean, and simple lines with little detail – on the city's rubbish bins and other items, such as notification boards (Figure 9). This version is also used as the logo of the Odense municipality website. Another version of the coat-of-arms motif can be found atop a public lavatory in Sortebrødre Torv, where the image is rendered in imitation of stained glass. Notably, Knud does not feature on Odense's manhole covers, a common location of such municipal motifs. Instead,

49 For the date, see "Statuen af Knud den Hellige," https://arkiv.dk/vis/3441991.

50 See "E. Utzon-Frank, Knud-statuens skaber 1953," https://arkiv.dk/vis/1211221.

51 I am currently preparing an article on the statue of Saint Knud Rex and its historical and iconographical context, so I am limiting my remarks about the statue here.

each manhole cover features one of three scenes pertaining to the story of Odin, in reference to the city's origin as a place where Odin was worshipped.[52]

While the use of Odense's coat of arms results in numerous and widespread portrayals of the saint-king, it is difficult to assess the impact this has on Odense's urban identity. Nonetheless, that a medieval saint-king is used as a symbol for the city does serve to remind observers that Knud is an important reference point in the city's history. The publicly visible images of Saint Knud in Odense might range from the conspicuous to the seemingly insignificant, but they all share one crucial aspect, namely that they are permanent features of the cityscape. By being permanent, they shape the city's urban identity in a quiet yet persistent manner, and they serve as continuous reminders of the medieval aspect of that urban identity.

Temporary Displays

Besides the permanent images of Knud in Odense, there are various temporary displays that feature the saint-king. Although these temporarily visible images do not have the same long-term quiet impact on the formulation or the shaping of Odense's urban identity, they do have a more immediate impact because of their temporary nature. Since these are displays that are available for only a limited time, they are often located in noticeable places, either in a way that makes them ostentatious or in a way that makes them more quietly unmissable. Two examples from recent years will serve to illustrate how such temporary displays might impact and shape the urban identity of Odense.

Following excavations in Odense city centre in 2015–17, prompted by the planned construction of the Odense tramway, Museum Odense (then called Odense Bys Museer) launched an exhibition called "Knuds Odense – vikingernes by," in English translated as "Canute's Odense – City of the Vikings." The exhibition, which opened on May 19, 2017, and served to showcase findings from the recent excavations, was a large-scale enterprise. The exhibition room was decorated with posters that featured drawings of scenes from Odense's medieval past by artist Sune Elskær, and on one of the short walls was hung a portrait by Thomas Kluge which shows Saint Knud as a man in his late forties, tired, awaiting his inevitable death. He is clad in chainmail, a cross is hanging by a chain around his neck, and a sword is placed across his knees (Figure 10). In the foreground stood Knud's casket in its

52 See VandCenterSyd, "Kend betydningen af kloakdækslerne i Odense," 2013, https://www.vandcenter.dk/viden/spildevand/kloakdaeksler.

current condition, stripped of its original adornments, with the king's bones clearly visible within.[53]

Kluge's portrait is a novel interpretation in that it shows nothing of the saintly acceptance of death that we find in the depictions in Saint Alban's Church, nor the defiant resistance of Utzon-Frank's statue, nor the serene majesty of the coat of arms. This portrait also served as the cover image of the book *Knud – konge, helgen, myte* (Knud – king, saint, myth).[54]

The exhibition at Museum Odense is an excellent example of how an urban identity can be formulated and reformulated around a single historical figure. The very title of the exhibition connected the history of Knud and his cult with Odense's Viking past; in this way, the title served to invoke two aspects of the Middle Ages that are often seen as separate in the public imagination of the Danish past, even though they are part of the same historical period: namely, the saint-king and the Viking. From an academic point of view, the title and the exhibition served to emphasize continuity and longue durée; from a marketing point of view, they served to connect one figure of predominantly local importance, Knud, with a figure with a longstanding and persistent place in popular culture, the Viking. While a museum exhibition in and of itself is not necessarily a form of medievalism, the publicity for the exhibition served to boost and reinvent the medieval aspect of Odense's urban identity. Consequently, the exhibition has also contributed to the use of medievalism in service of Odense's identity construction (Figure 11).

That the exhibition at Museum Odense also served an identity-shaping purpose was made clear from the start. In a brochure written for the exhibition, curator Mads Runge wrote that "Odense can get another topic that tourists will travel to see, and that the citizens can be proud of" (my translation).[55] This intention was also evident in an adaptation of Jacobsen and Johansen's book that was given as a Christmas present to Odense school children in grades 7–9, as was stated in a press release on the Odense municipal website on December 12, 2017.[56] Through illustrations, an elaborate exhibition, and a new book, Saint Knud Rex

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53 Malene Birkelund, "3 grunde til at Kluge sagde ja til at male Knud," *Fyens Stiftstidende* (online), March 6, 2020, https://fyens.dk/odense/3-grunde-til-at-kluge-sagde-ja-til-at-male-knud; Malene Birkelund, "Kong Knud flytter hjem i krypten, og det sætter spot på underbelyst historie," *Fyens Stiftstidende* (online), March 6, 2020, https://fyens.dk/odense/kong-knud-flytter-hjem-i-krypten-og-det-saetter-spot-paa-underbelyst-historie.

54 Karsten Kjer Mikaelsen, *Knud – konge, helgen, myte* (Odense: Odense Bys Museer, 2017).

55 "Odense kan få endnu et tema, som turister vil rejse efter og byens borgere være stolte af." Mads Runge, *Knuds Odense – vikingernes by* (Odense: Odense Bys Museer, 2017), 29.

56 "Knud den Hellige lever videre i ny bog til Odenses skoleelever," press release by Odense kommune (Odense Municipality), December 12, 2017, https://www.odense.dk/presse/pressemeddelelser/pressemeddelelser-2017/knud-den-hellige-lever-videre-i-ny-bog-til-odenses-skoleelever.

became a much more active force for identity-construction in contemporary Odense, especially since his role in the city's history and in the shaping of Odense at an early stage of its urbanization was made accessible to people of all ages. Consequently, even though the exhibition has long since been dismantled and the banners and posters removed from the cityscape, the impact of the enterprise is likely to have a long-lasting effect.

One final example of how temporary displays can serve to shape urban identity is similarly connected to the construction of the Odense tramway. Following the excavations of 2015–17, the construction of the tramway and new apartment buildings in Torvegade caused a section of several hundred metres of the street to be blocked off by plywood panels and walls. To beautify these panels, they were decorated with graffiti and other artwork. Among the works of art that came to decorate this part of Odense city centre was a series of about twenty panels designed by the Danish artist Mormor (Kristian Bruun Djurhuus) and put up in the spring of 2017 (Figure 12). These panels were collectively described as "twenty metres of Odense's history," with each panel summarizing a specific historical period.[57] This historical overview began with the cult of Odin, and in the third panel the death and cult of Knud were depicted. Knud was shown here in a tunic, wearing a heavily-jewelled crown, and with angel's wings. His skeleton was also depicted in its casket, waving to a crowd of approaching pilgrims with the words "I'm back" (Figure 13). In its own way, Mormor's rendition of Knud conformed to previous versions, in that it retained the saintly calm of the figures in Saint Alban's Church and also something of the achronological and slightly macabre reinterpretation by Thomas Kluge.

The commissioning of these works by a popular artist, who designed the panels in collaboration with local figures and institutions, including historians,[58] is another clear example of how urban identity can be deliberately shaped and how it can become a public enterprise. Mormor's artwork touched on several facets of Odense's urban identity, ranging from the pre-Christian to the contemporary, and in this way the installation serves as a good example of how layered a city's urban identity can be. Saint Knud Rex was only one part of this history, but certainly a very memorable part. Moreover, when the first two panels were stolen in April 2019, one consequence was that for a certain period the condensed ver-

57 Lars Bjørnsten, "Odenses historie på 20 meter plankeværk i Odense Centrum," *hcandersen-homepage.dk* (online), August 8, 2017, https://www.hcandersen-homepage.dk/?page_id=88692.
58 Linea Maria Andersen, "Kunstner fortæller historien om Odense på 20 meter hegn," *Fyens Stiftstidende* (online), May 16, 2017, https://fyens.dk/odense/kunstner-fortaeller-historien-om-odense-paa-20-meter-hegn.

sion of Odense's history effectively began with Saint Knud.[59] While this theft is unlikely to have had a significant impact on Odense's urban identity, it did mean that visitors who may have been encountering the city's history for the first time got a very different starting point than what had originally been intended.

Conclusion

In the case of Saint Knud Rex, we see how a medieval saint can have a complex and varied afterlife as a fixture in the construction of urban identity. As a figure from the Middle Ages whose history is inextricably linked to the history of the city, and indeed to the history of the country, Knud has been employed as a reference point and as a tool for identity-construction in Odense for more than a century. The various ways in which Knud has been presented, employed, and reimagined from the late 19th century to the present show how potent and versatile medieval figures can be as identity-markers. Even in a predominantly Lutheran city in a predominantly Lutheran country, a Catholic monarch and saint still serves to forge an identity for the city. The way in which the saint is understood and depicted varies from one case to the next. In the instances mentioned here, we have seen Knud as a chivalric, courtly figure in the coat of arms, as a citizen of Heaven in the Catholic church art, as a defiant warrior in Utzon-Frank's statue, and as a tired and very human character in Thomas Kluge's painting. In each of these instances, the memory of Knud has been done in a different way and a new iteration of Knud as a figure of memory has been presented to the public and integrated into the variegated mosaic of Odense's urban identity.

This example also shows how multiple actors are involved in a city's identity-formation, as are multiple vehicles, and the depictions and representations of Knud can vary according to whoever is responsible for them. Generations of city councils, private establishments or businesses, and institutions such as museums and schools, all contribute to add pieces to an urban identity. By formulating and shaping this urban identity through references to the city's medieval past – and through a person who connects the city with the rest of the country – part of the identity-formation takes place through medievalism, through evocations of the city's past for the purpose of communicating a kind of belonging, positioning, or historical continuity. When medievalism is used in a specific urban context, I have

59 Jens Baisgaard, "Unikke billeder om Odenses historie er forsvundet," *TV2 Fyn* (online), April 11, 2019, https://www.tv2fyn.dk/odense/unikke-billeder-om-odenses-historie-er-forsvundet.

termed this urban medievalism. Saint Knud Rex is a central element in the urban medievalism of Odense, partly because he is a well-known figure in the history of the city, as well as in the country, partly because of extensive iconographic continuity, and partly because as a king, as a saint, and as a Viking, he appeals to many different modern placeholders and ideas about the medieval past.

When examining how Knud has been used in the identity-formation of Odense, we see how ubiquitous medieval reference points can be in the public sphere, and how many different ways such reference points can be employed. Moreover, Knud in Odense allows us to grasp the complexities of identity-formation since his role in the shaping of Odense's urban identity has taken place over several generations and through the efforts of several different – yet often connected – actors representing both public and private interests within the city. The confluence of various actors and various vehicles for identity-construction, as well as the long timespan during which the process has taken place, also highlights the need for careful attention to detail when mapping the nuances of how medieval elements are employed in the cityscape.

The uses of Knud in Odense also alert us to the often interwoven forms of urban medievalism that comprise a city's identity-formation. While this article has focused on the figure of Knud, we see that other figures from the story of Knud can be identified in the medieval aspect of Odense's urban identity. As mentioned above, Knud's brother Benedict has lent his name to a street and a square, and by extension to a fast-food restaurant. While not mentioned much in this text, Saint Alban, some of whose relics were brought to Odense by Knud according to the latter's hagiographies, has also lent his name to a square and a street, and by extension to the city's brewery, Albani. When trying to understand how a city engages with its medieval past, it is therefore important to note the complex mixture of medievalisms that comprise the medieval aspect of an urban identity.

Knud's afterlife in modern Odense is multifaceted and complex, and his function in the city varies from group to group. To the Catholics of Odense, he is a still-present saint whose medieval past is largely a historical accident; what matters is his ability to intercede for the living in the here and now. But for some Catholics, Knud might also be a representative of the city's Catholic past and a figure who can imbue the modern-day congregation with historical weight. To non-Catholic groups, Knud can serve as a representative of the city's medieval past, whether that past is imagined as a golden age, an exotic temporal otherness, or a mark of the city's longevity and continuity. Moreover, Knud can be imagined as either a patient Christian hero, a king in battle, a monarch in majesty, or as a tired victim of circumstances beyond his control. In the words of Cordelia Heß and Gustavs Strenga, Knud's memorial career has given rise to many different

iterations.[60] No matter the specific configuration of purpose and form, Knud serves as a symbol for Odense, and he continues to mean different things to different people. The multifaceted nature of his place in Odense's urban identity and in the historical consciousness of Odense's citizenry ensures that Knud is a figure of perennial importance, and no matter how he is depicted or how the understanding of him develops and changes, his afterlife in Odense is secure.

Figures

Figure 1: The Odense coat of arms, placed above the entrance to Odense City Hall. The picture was taken around 1960 and shows a bullet hole in Knud's right knee. Odense stadsarkiv B1959, unknown photographer.

60 See Cordelia Heß and Gustavs Strenga's introduction to this volume.

Figure 2: The Odense seal, c. 1450. Knud is shown atop a fleur-de-lis, holding a banner in one hand and the royal orb in the other. Odense stadsarkiv B2634, unknown photographer.

Figure 3: The Odense coat of arms, 1584. Illustration by Anders Thiset, printed in Anders Thiset, “Om danske By- og Herredsvaaben,” *Tidsskrift for kunstindustri* (1893), 135.

Figure 4: The Odense coat of arms, stained glass, previously at Odense City Hall. Museum Odense. Photo: Jens Gregers Aagaard.

Figure 5: The Church of Saint Alban, Odense, 2015. This picture was taken before work had begun on the construction projects in the city centre. Photo: Steffen Hope.

Figure 6: The doors of the Church of Saint Alban, Odense. Carved by C. Rasmussen of Odense. Photo: Steffen Hope.

Figure 7: Detail from the doors of the Church of Saint Alban, Odense. The scene adheres to the canonical narrative in several details but also contains some new elements, such as Knud being stabbed by a sword. Carved by C. Rasmussen of Odense. Photo: Steffen Hope.

Figure 8: Saint Knud Rex, statue in bronze by Einar Utzon-Frank. The statue was unveiled in 1953. On the pedestal of the statue is the following inscription: "Knud sattes dette minde/ den Knud der her blev dræbt/ Danmarks konge 1080 – 1086/ myrdet modtog han martyrkronen/ Knud den hellige" (Knud was given this memorial/ the Knud who here was killed/ King of Denmark 1080–1086/ murdered, he received the crown of martyrdom/ Knud the holy; translation by Steffen Hope). Photo: Steffen Hope.

Figure 9: Possibly a municipal notification board. The logo of Saint Knud Rex is heavily stylized and represents a continuation of the iconography established in the seal of c. 1450. Photo: Steffen Hope.

Figure 10: *Den hellige Knud. Knud den Hellige* (The holy Knud. Knud the holy), painting by Thomas Kluge (2017) for the exhibition "Knud's Odense." Courtesy of Thomas Kluge and Museum Odense.

Figure 11: Banner advertising the upcoming exhibition "Knud's Odense," taken May 5, 2017. Photo: Steffen Hope.

Figure 12: The beginning of Mormor's art installation "Twenty Metres of Odense History." The picture was taken in October 2019, after the first two images had been stolen. Photo: Steffen Hope.

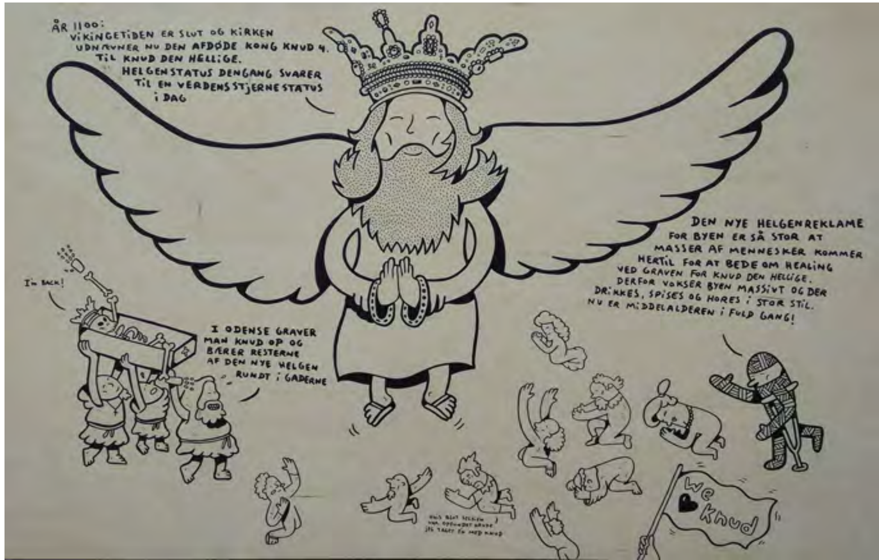

Figure 13: Third instalment of Mormor's art installation "Twenty Metres of Odense History," showing the canonized Saint Knud Rex. Photo: Steffen Hope.

Marianna Shakhnovich

The Memorialization of Natural Loci and the Veneration of the Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Princess Olga in Northwestern Russia (19th–Early 21st Centuries)

Princess Olga (b. 893–920, d. 969) is an impressive character in the history of ancient Rus' and in the history of Orthodoxy, occupying a particular place in the collective memory of both Russia and Ukraine.[1] We know from the Russian *Povest' vremennyh let* (Primary Chronicle) that Princess Olga ruled in Kiev (Kyiv) as a regent on behalf of her son Sviatoslav (b. 920–942, d. 972) after the death of her husband Igor in 945. She became not only the first woman on the Kiev throne, but also the first Christian. The *Povest' vremennyh let* notes that Olga was christened in Constantinople with the name "Helena," after Saint Helena (b. 246–248, d. 330), the mother of Constantine the Great. Olga's grandson Vladimir the Great (958–1015) Christianized Rus'. In 1547, nearly six hundred years after her death, the Russian Orthodox Church canonized Olga as a saint, Equal-to-the-Apostles in rank, though her earliest veneration started long before, in the 13th century.[2]

Although Princess Olga was canonized early on, there was no church officially dedicated to her for a very long time. Churches named for the Equal-to-the-Apostles Princess appeared only in the 19th century.

In 1862, in the city of Novgorod in the northwest of Russia, Emperor Alexander II (1818–1881) decreed that a "Millennium of Russia" monument be erected in honour of the millennium of Russian statehood, which, according to the chronicles, had started with the summoning of the Varangians. This great monument, standing opposite the ancient Cathedral of St Sophia, includes representations of more than one hundred statesmen, military leaders, and heroes of Russian history, from the Varangian Prince Rurik (d. 879) to Nicholas I (1796–1855). Among

1 This paper was written with support from the Russian Science Foundation, Project No. 21-48-04402.

2 Aleksej Karpov, *Knyaginya Ol'ga* (Moscow: Molodaya Gvardiya, 2009); Jonathan Shepard, "The Origins of Rus' (c.900–1015)," in *The Cambridge History of Russia. Volume 1, From Early Rus' to 1689*, ed. Maureen Perrie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Francis Butler, "A Woman of Words: Pagan Ol'ga in the Mirror of Germanic Europe," *Slavic Review* 63, no. 4 (2004): 771–93 (with detailed bibliography).

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them there is Princess Olga; she is to be found in the circle of religious enlighteners, a cross in her hand, as the first Christian ruler of Old Rus'. Half a century later, in 1911 in Kiev, Nicholas II (1868–1918) decreed that another monument be erected to specifically emphasize Olga's significance as Equal-to-the-Apostles. There, Olga stands in the centre of the composition, with Apostle Andrew the First-Called – who, according to legend, visited Russia – to her left, and the Saints Cyril (827–869) and Methodius (815–885) – the creators of Slavic writing and Christian missionaries – to her right.

At the official level, in the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, the veneration of Princess Olga was primarily connected with her role as the first Christian leader of Old Rus'. This interest in Olga as a legendary historical figure has recently enjoyed a revival, in both Russia and Ukraine. In Kiev, in 1996, a monument to St Olga that had been destroyed in 1923 was recreated, and in Russia in the Pskov region, two chapels from the 19th century, destroyed during the years of the revolution, were restored. Two new monuments were also erected, and the old names returned to the toponymy of the city of Pskov: Olginsky bridge and Olginskaya embankment appeared once again. Whereas in 1913 Nicholas II had established a special award, "The Badge of the Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Princess Olga," to distinguish women for their public service, in the modern era, such simple badges were replaced with orders: in 1997, Ukraine established the state "Order of Princess Olga" to recognize women who had displayed outstanding merit in state and social activities, and in 1998 in Russia the Russian Orthodox Church founded the women's "Order of the Equal-to-the-Apostles Princess Olga" to recognize women's accomplishments in church, state, and public service.

Parallel to this official veneration of St Olga, there is a long tradition in the Pskov region of her cult as a local saint-healer. There is a clear contradiction between the official narrative about Olga being a tough ruler and a Christian believer and the popular veneration of memorial natural objects linked with her as a healer. That veneration has deep roots and has been very important to the local population. During the Soviet period, when the official church shrines associated with St Olga in the Pskov region were destroyed, pilgrimages to her sacred places in nature continued.

Religions as they actually exist include not only systems of religious ideas expressed in sacred texts and dogmatic constructions, but also practices of everyday life, often far removed from these constructions in their ideological meanings and internal logic. These ideas and practices, for the most part, are of a non-institutional nature, but over time they can spread and take root to such an extent that they acquire the necessary institutionalization and legitimization at the official church level; sometimes they become embodied in the form of independent religious institutions. Such forms of religiosity associated with the subjective

aspects of beliefs and unofficial religious practice, which are widespread primarily in the grassroots social environment, are referred to in anthropology as *folk religiosity*, *folk religion*, or *vernacular religion.*[3] In recent years, Actor-Network Theory has been used to identify the features of folk religious systems.[4] The cult of saints occupies a special place in folk religion – holy kings became healers in the minds of the common people, just as holy bishops became patrons of farmers and seafarers. In this regard, the study of the anthropological aspects of the veneration of Princess Olga, one of the important historical figures from ancient Rus', and the identification of its connection with folk religiosity, the worship of nature, and female religious practices are of great interest.

Princess Olga as a Locally Venerated Saint

The *Povest' vremennyh let* states that Olga was born near Pleskov (Pskov). According to the official church *Zhitie svyatoj Ol'gi* (Life of Saint Olga), drawn up in the process of canonization, and according to *Kniga stepennaia tsarskogo rodosloviia* (The Book of Degrees of the Royal Genealogy), also written in the mid-16th century, Olga met Igor, the son and heir of Prince Rurik, at the spot where one could cross the Velikaya River, near the village of Vybuty in the Pskov region. In the 19th century, local peasants would show this place, calling it "Olga's Gate."[5] Her *vita* recounts that Prince Igor was hunting near the village where Olga lived. Approaching the bank of the Velikaya River, Igor noticed that the opposite bank looked like a very good place for hunting. He wanted to cross the river, but there was no boat. He spotted a boy in a boat and shouted for him to take him across the river. Once on the boat, Igor, glancing at the rower, saw not a young man but a beautiful young girl in boy's clothing, and fell in love.

The early 20th-century Pskov historian Nikolai Serebryansky (1872–1940) believed that Varlaam, the abbot of the Pskov monastery of John the Theologian, who compiled Olga's *vita* in the mid-16th century, was the first to write about her

3 Leonardo Primiano, "Vernacular Religion and the Search for Method in Religious Folklife," *Western Folklore* 54 (1995): 37–56; James A. Kapaló, "Folk Religion in Discourse and Practice," *Journal of Ethnology and Folkloristics* 1, no. 1 (2013): 3–18.

4 Jens Kreinath, "An Introduction to Tracing Ritual Associations in Pilgrimage and Festival: Applications of Bruno Latour's Actor-Network Theory to Ritual Studies," *Journal of Ritual Studies* 33, no. 1 (2019): 1–11.

5 Nikolay Bogushevsky, "Zametka o sele Vybutah (Lybutah), rodine svyatoj velikoj knyagini Ol'gi rossijskoj," *Trudy III Arheologicheskogo s'ezda v Rossii, 2, Prilozheniya* (Kyiv: Universitetskaya tipografia, 1878): 142.

coming from the village of Vybuty, but that he was drawing on earlier short hagiographic narrative texts, known as *prolojnye jitiya*, used in spiritually edifying readings since the 13th century, as well as on the oral tradition. Serebryansky wrote: "The indication of Vybuty as the place of Olga's homeland does not seem to me completely unfounded. In ancient times, Vybuty was not just a small village or churchyard, but one of the military outposts, and the Varangians might have been in it."[6] Archaeologists have discovered the remains of an ancient unfortified settlement in Vybuty and a burial mound from the 10th or early 11th century, as well as the remains of dwellings and other buildings. Among the finds were work tools, handicrafts, items for fishing and hunting, combs, rings, jewellery, as well as numerous fragments of ancient pottery. Some even claim that the settlement in Vybuty existed in the 9th century. The church in Vybuty, which still stands today, was built in the 15th century. Previously, another church stood at this place, for there is an icon of the Prophet Elijah from it that dates from the 13th century, which is now preserved in the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow – and it is possible that the first church on this site was founded earlier than that.

Most of the places associated with Princess Olga were recorded not far from Pskov in the valley of the Velikaya River close to the Vybutsky rapids, where the river flows downhill causing it to increase in speed. There is still only the one place to cross this dangerous part of the river near the village of Vybuty. Olga's toponyms mark the section of the waterway from the mouth of the Narva River, which flows into the Baltic Sea, to the Vybutsky rapids on the Velikaya River, and along the eastern coast of the Chudskoe and Pskov lakes. Archaeologists have found burial mounds of Scandinavian origin in this area that date from the 10th century. In this region there existed – and still exist to this day – several sacred sites or objects of natural origin associated with Olga. These are water objects, such as bodies of water and springs, and stone objects, such as stone benches where Olga sat, stones with her footprint, and "thunder stones," from under which streams or springs flow in which she washed herself. It is known that at the end of the 19th century, on the banks of the Cherekha River, which flows into the Velikaya River, there was a stone believed to be the bed where Olga gave birth to Sviatoslav.[7]

The legends about Princess Olga as a girl are associated with a compact territorial cluster located in the lower reaches of the Velikaya River. Folklore narra-

6 Nikolay Serebryansky, *Drevnerusskie knyazheskie zhitiya. Obzor redakcij i teksty* (Moscow: Synodal'naya tipografia, 1915), 39.

7 Anatoly Aleksandrov," "Ol'ginskaya toponimika, vybutskie sopki i russy v Pskovskoj zemle," in *Pamyatniki srednevekovoj kul'tury. Otkrytiya I versii. Sbornik statej k 75-letiyu V.D. Beleckogo*, ed. Anatoly Kirpichnikov (St Petersburg: Art-contact, 1994): 25.

tive sources that were collected in these places from the late 19th century to the early 1930s indicate that there existed a stable legendary tradition, which had apparently taken form in the late Middle Ages. By the time Olga's official life-story was compiled (in the mid-16th century),[8] a relatively stable tradition of venerating natural objects associated with her had probably already formed. Pilgrimages to bodies of water and sacred stones, as well as prayers at them, were the most ancient, living, and informal manifestations of faith, most clearly demonstrating the folk character of Orthodoxy in Russia.

Natural Loci and Doing Memory

Starting in the mid-19th century, a procession would take place on July 11, from the Pskov Trinity Cathedral to the village of Vybuty, celebrating the feast of the Equal-to-the-Apostles Princess Olga. The procession would stop at Olga's Stone, which is not far from the local shrine, and a prayer service would be conducted there. In the 1890s, a small chapel was built above the stone as a monument to Olga. On a hill in a nearby forest, there was another worship stone, even larger in size, which was also associated with Olga. It was believed that she liked to sit on it and contemplate her surroundings. There was a small chapel there, as well. That chapel and that large stone were both blown up in the 1930s. Now one can see a pyramid of small stones erected in its place, with a metal cross installed on top.

In 1931–1932, the historian Arkady Vasiliev (1891–1942) wrote a book about the Pskov Orthodox shrines, based on his own fieldwork. The text of his manuscript has been preserved.[9] This manuscript recounts that there used to be a huge stone called "Olga's Stone" not far from the village of Vybuty. Its origin was explained by legends, recorded by Nikolay Bogushevsky at the end of 19th century and by Vasiliev in 1930. According to one of these, Olga was going to church carrying a stone in her sleeve for the bridge that she was building across the Velikaya River. On the way, she heard the church bell ring and, afraid of being late and missing the beginning of the service, she threw the stone to the ground in order to make it easier to run. As a result, she arrived at the church on time. According to another legend, on her way to war, Olga carried several stones with her in her sleeve. The sleeve was torn, and a stone fell out of it. According to the legend re-

8 Aleksej Karpov, *Knyaginya Ol'ga* (Moscow: Molodaya Gvardiya, 2009), 274.
9 F. 265, op. 1, d. 1. Archive of Saint Petersburg Institute of History of Russian Academy of Science.

corded at the end of 19th century, at one point somebody wanted to use the stone for the construction of a railway bridge across the river, but "Olga did not give." However, in 1932, the stone was blown up and was used to build a highway.[10]

Not far from this place, closer to the village of Vydry (Ol'genetz), there is Olga's Spring where, according to legend, she washed herself. The water from this spring has long been thought to have healing properties, especially effective against eye diseases.[11] Vasiliev wrote: "Many pilgrims and sick people came to the spring bringing coins as sacrifice to throw into it. The local population encouraged the legend about the healing properties of the spring's water since the pilgrimage brought them as benefits money remaining in the spring and payment for the pilgrims' accommodation."[12]

To the north of Pskov, to the right of the road to Gdov, in the village of Olgino Pole, there is a chapel that was built at the end of the 19th century, which also contains a sacred Olga's stone. There are two rectangular dents in it – according to legend, two footprints that were left by Princess Olga. There is a spring nearby, from which Olga is believed to have drunk water. The water is said to have healing properties, and the stone is thought to protect from troubles.

It is important to note that pilgrimages to these places did not stop during the Soviet period. They continued, even though the authorities viewed such pilgrimages as manifestations of religious fanaticism and a violation of public order. In the 1930s, local authorities sought to destroy stone shrines, using the stones as building material, and in 1958 the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union adopted a special secret resolution "On Measures to Stop Pilgrimages to 'Holy Places'," aimed primarily against holy springs.[13]

Most of the pilgrims to Orthodox holy places were women. Women were traditionally responsible for the health and well-being of their families, and the pilgrimage was one of the ways to protect the family, as were requests for intercession addressed to the Mother of God and individual saints. In this context, pilgrimages to natural shrines associated with Princess Olga can be compared with pilgrimages

10 F. 265, op. 1, d. 1, 104. Archive of Saint Petersburg Institute of History of Russian Academy of Science.

11 Nikolay Bogushevsky, "Zametka o sele Vybutah (Lybutah), rodine svyatoj velikoj knyagini Ol'gi rossijskoj," *Trudy III Arheologicheskogo s'ezda v Rossii, 2, Prilozheniya* (Kyiv: Universitetskaya tipografia, 1878): 141–45, 143.

12 F. 265, op. 1, d. 1, 107. Archive of Saint Petersburg Institute of History of Russian Academy of Science.

13 Ulrike Huhn, "Mit Ikonen und Gesang oder: ein Bischof auf der Flucht vor seinem Kirchenvolk. Massenwallfahrten in Russland unter Stalin und Chruščev," in *Jahrbuch für Historische Kommunismusforschung 2012*, ed. Ulrich Mahlert, Jörg Baberowski, Bernhard H. Bayerlein, et al. (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 2012): 315–34.

to similar shrines associated with the veneration of divine female advocates for women – St Paraskeva Friday or the Mother of God.[14] Constituting a sacred space, such holy sites usually consist of a revered natural locus (a stone, spring, or well) and an anthropogenic locus in the form of a chapel or a shrine.

The ritual of the procession itself, the collection of holy water from the spring, the touch of the lips to the stone, and the votive offering are all representations of a request for help.[15] The religious procession reproduces the time of a previous miraculous event, and the healing properties of sacred loci are explained by hagiographic legends. These legends usually discuss events that explain the origin of the sacred properties of the place. The spring got its healing properties after Olga washed herself in it, and the stones got their healing properties after Olga sat on the one stone and threw the other from her sleeve. A natural place is not sacred in itself, but the legendary narrative ascribes special properties to it via its connection with the saint; thus, the natural place itself acquires a memorial character, is endowed with a special meaning, and is included in ritual practice.

Memorialization of Local Saints and Vernacular Religion

The worship of locally revered saints arose spontaneously among the peasantry, forming one of the most important foundations of Orthodox folk culture.[16] Most often, those declared saints were ordinary people to whom something unusual had happened, because of which they acquired the gift of performing miracles. The fact that Prince Igor fell in love with a simple peasant girl and made her his wife was enough to testify to her unusualness. In addition, of course, the veneration of natural objects – stones and springs – had pre-Christian foundations, and with the spread of Christianity they acquired a new interpretation.

14 Nikolay Matorin, *Zhenskoe bozhestvo v pravoslavnom kul'te. Pyatnica-Bogorodica. Ocherk po sravnitel'noj mifologii* (Moscow: Moskovskij rabochij, 1931); Alexander Panchenko, *Issledovaniya v oblasti narodnogo pravoslaviya. Derevenskie svyatyni Severo-Zapada Rossii* (St Petersburg: Aletheia, 1998), 92–94.

15 Matorin, *Zhenskoe bozhestvo v pravoslavnom kul'te*, 7–12.

16 Alexander Panchenko, *Ivan i YAkov – neobychnye svyatye iz bolotistoj mestnosti. "Krest'yanskaya agiologiya" i religioznye praktiki Novogo vremeni* (Moscow: NLO, 2012); Andrey Moroz, *Narodnaya agiografiya. Ustnye i knizhnye osnovy fol'klornogo kul'ta svyatyh* (Moscow: Neolit, 2017); Marianna Shakhnovich, "Mestnochtimye pravoslavnye svyatye v Rossii v konce 1920-h – nachale 1930-h godov (po materialam etnograficheskih ekspedicij)," *Religiovedenie* 3 (2021): 5–14.

Tatiana Bernshtam has noted that in Russia in the second part of the 19th century, “most authors agreed that the majority of peasants were ignorant in matters of faith, they pray to icons as ‘gods,’ do not know about the Hypostases of the Trinity, do not distinguish between God and saints.”[17] An anonymous author in the journal *Cerkovnyj* Vesnik (Church Herald), most likely a parish priest, wrote in 1889 that the peasants believed St Nicholas to be a god, while Intercession and Assumption were thought to be the names of saints. That author published the text of a conversation between a priest and a peasant about his beliefs:

> How many gods do you have?
> — God knows them!
> Name at least one.
> — Savaokh[18] and Lord, Lady of Kazan, Michael the Archangel, Christmas, Easter.
> Is Shrove Tuesday a god?
> — Shrove Tuesday? No, Shrove Tuesday isn’t a god – the peasant said after thinking a little.[19]

In 1929, Nikolay Matorin (1898–1936), based on his own experiences in the field amongst Christianized minorities and Russian peasants in the Volga region, described similar findings as to ideas about God and saints that were at variance with Orthodox dogma.[20] Matorin referred to this phenomenon as “Orthodox animism,” or double belief (*dvoeverie*), which was described as a syncretism of two separate belief systems – Christian and pagan.[21] He proposed that anthropological expeditions should seek to ascertain if there were any revered sacred stones, groves, trees, springs, lakes, wells, mountains, or caves associated with the names of any saints, or if it was said that any saints had left any trace on them (or in them), in areas under study.[22] As an example, he pointed to one image of St Nicholas, often reproduced in the minor images on his icons, which he felt provided a

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17 Tatiana Bernshtam, *Prihodskaya zhizn’ russkoj derevni. Ocherki po cerkovnoj etnografii* (St Petersburg: Peterburgskoe Vostokovedenie, 2005), 304.

18 Savaokh is a distorted form of “Sabaoth.”

19 A. Pa-v, “Sledstviya malogramotnosti sredi prostogo naroda i sredstva k rasprostraneniyu prosveshcheniya,” *Cerkovnyj Vestnik* 37 (1889): 635–37, 637.

20 Nikolay Matorin, *Religiya u narodov Volzhsko-Kamskogo kraya prezhde i teper’* (Moscow: Bezbozhnik, 1929), 104–5.

21 Eve Levin, “Dvoeverie and Popular Religion,” in *Seeking God: The Recovery of Religious Identity in Orthodox Russia, Ukraine and Georgia, ed.* Stephen K. Batalden (*DeKalb*: Northern Illinois University Press, 1991): 31–52.

22 Marianna Shakhnovich, “Sekciya po izucheniyu religij narodov SSSR pri Muzee istorii religii Akademii nauk SSSR (1934 g.),” *Gosudarstvo, religiya i cerkov’ v Rossii i za rubezhom* 31, no. 1 (2013): 215.

vivid demonstration of this "Orthodox animism." The minor image shows St Nicholas chopping down a tree, which is standing at a spring. The tree as an object of pagan worship falls, and an imp jumps out of the spring; meaning, the water is cleansed of evil spirits and becomes holy.[23]

William Francis Ryan, in his book on magic and divination amongst the Russian peasantry, pointed out that *dvoeverie* should not be considered an exclusively Russian phenomenon, since "the evidence from other societies shows that Russia as a whole differs little from the rest of Christendom, Eastern or Western, in the matter."[24] One must agree with Ryan in this regard. The veneration of natural loci – primarily stones, springs, and trees – that were associated with the cult of saints existed in medieval Western Europe, as well.

In the last century, there were several comparative studies made of the veneration of stones in connection with the cult of saints in Western and Eastern Christianity. For example, in 1928, in Leningrad, Nikolay Matorin established a research group for the study of folk Orthodoxy and religious syncretism; historians, anthropologists, and folklorists presented reports on modern religious practices at meetings of that group up until 1934. Several sessions were devoted to the cult of stones and springs in everyday religious practice, as well as its connection with the veneration of Christian saints. At one session, Arkady Vasiliev and Nikolay Kurazov (1887– after 1940) reported on the cult of saints and the veneration of stones and springs in the northwest of Russia, including shrines associated with Princess Olga. The archive has preserved a draft of a report by Olga Dobiash-Rozhdestvenskaya (1874–1939) on the veneration of stones in Northwestern France in the early Middle Ages. She argued that Merovingian and Carolingian ecclesiastic legislation attempted to suppress the cult of stones in order to safeguard Christian spirituality but that the church culture and tradition of that time also supported the cult of stones. Dobiash-Rozhdestvenskaya called attention to the process of the struggle against the cult of stones and its simultaneous support, referring to this as *dvoeverie* and underlining its similarity with Orthodox culture. She was writing about sacred stones in medieval France, but the contemporary religiosity of the Russian peasantry was clearly not far from her mind: "In most cases, when the presence of a cult of stones is described, it is subconsciously motivated, but [it is] always very naturally and psychologically plausible given its appearance in the natural environment in some strange or mysterious way. It reminds me of my housekeeper's expression 'manifested stones'."[25] Dobiash-Rozhdestvenskaya relied on the hagiographical

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23 Nikolay Matorin, "Ikonografiya v antireligioznoj propaganda," *Antireligioznik* 2 (1931): 52.

24 William Francis Ryan, *The Bathhouse at Midnight. An Historical Survey of Magic and Divination in Russia* (*University* Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 14.

25 F. 254, d. 144, 3, Department of Manuscripts of the Russian National Library.

writings of Gregory of Tours (538–594), which described not only the lives of the saints and their numerous miracles, but also the miracles that took place at the sites associated with them after their death. Among these, one finds the veneration of a stone which cures disease, associated with the worship of the Saint Thaumastus (born c. 400). Scrapings from the stone at his burial place were believed to have healing powers against toothache and fever. The stone on the grave of St Cassian of Autun (d. 350) was thought to grant healing from all kinds of disease; because of this, according to the testimony of Gregory of Tours, stone dust was scraped from it.

Archangel Michael is also addressed with prayers for healing. This is due to the veneration of St Michael as the victor over evil spirits, which in Christianity were considered the cause of disease. In many places in Asia Minor there are healing springs dedicated to St Michael; the most famous such spring is in Chonae, today Honaz (Turkey). In Italy, there is a famous cave in Mount Gargano; since the 5th century, it has been believed that its stones protect against the plague, since the Archangel Michael appeared there. Pilgrims who visited the cave not only kissed the stones but also received a small stone as a talisman. Dobiash-Rozhdestvenskaya wrote: "The world of Merovingian hagiographic ideas described by Gregory is a host of a huge number of local saints, local geniuses who have merged with their shrines: cliffs, streams, springs, trees, and stones."[26]

In 1929, while compiling a methodological manual for ethnographic expeditions studying everyday Orthodoxy, which included the cult of saints, Nikolay Matorin criticized the term *dvoeverie*:

> The ethnographer is little interested in the armchair perception of religion: what matters to him is what exists among the masses, and the sophistication of learned theologians can safely remain the property of mice. Since the time of Theodosius Pecherskij[27] the term "dvoeverie" has been used to characterize the syncretic religious worldview of the Russian masses. It is essentially misleading, although it has acquired all the rights of existence. There is, after all, not a mechanical combination of two faiths – dual belief – but a kind of amalgam, a syncretic, but at the same time a holistic, worldview. If in the Mordovian fairy tale the old pagan gods sit on a tree together with Mykola,[28] then here it is not a dual belief, but something new, created as a result of the interaction of two religious systems. Until we have found a new term, we must use the old one, but with the above caveat. A new term will be put forward as study of the subject deepens.[29]

26 Olga Dobiash-Rozhdestvenskaya, *Kul'tura zapadnoevropejskogo srednevekov'ya* (Moscow: Nauka, 1987), 182.

27 Theodosius of the Caves was an 11th-century monk; he founded the Kiev Caves monastery.

28 Mykola refers to St Nicholas.

29 Marianna Shakhnovich and Tatiana Chumakova, "Nikolay Matorin i ego programma izucheniya narodnoj religioznosti," *Religiovedenie* 4 (2012): 191–202, 193–94.

In the second half of the 20th century, the concept of *folk religion* began to be used,[30] but very quickly this term too ceased to suit scholars striving for an adequate analysis of the phenomenon under consideration. For example, Patrick Geary has expressed his dissatisfaction with the term, especially for characterizing peasant religious ideas and practices.[31] He has criticized this term for opposing genuine Christian religion to folk religion, which is portrayed as mired in magic, superstition, and pagan survivals, if not outright paganism: "essentialist definitions of religion and their contrast with magic or superstition are of little use historically, just as attempts to define a religious sphere from a secular sphere imply anachronistic assumptions about human behaviour that destroy the integrity of social thought and practice."[32] Relatively recently, folklorists who study the oral and written hagiographic narratives that exist among the peasantry and that contain information about canonized saints or locally venerated non-canonized ascetics, reflecting the specific features of popular ideas about holiness and saints, have begun to use a new term to refer to peasant beliefs and practices.[33] Folklorists have adopted a term coined by Leonardo Primiano, who suggested that instead of *folk religion* or *popular religion*, that the concept of *vernacular religion* be used to define religion as a form of personal practice and understanding.[34] Thus, vernacular religion is opposed to institutional religion, and the problem of a religious norm or dogmatically correct religious practice is removed from the equation, since the main thing is not the religious institution but the individual's personal faith and the actions associated with it.

The practice of undertaking a pilgrimage to places associated with Princess Olga, praying at her memorial stones, and using holy water from her springs in the hope of healing, may be qualified as a manifestation of vernacular religion, even though it is thought best to undertake the pilgrimage on the day of official church veneration of the saint. To adequately understand this complex religious phenomenon, which involves not only Christian ideas and ritual practices but

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30 Aron Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture: Problems of Belief and Perception*, trans. Jánoš M. Bak and Paul A. Hollingsworth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

31 Regarding the debate on this term in German medieval studies, see, for example, Paul Hugger, "Volksfrömmigkeit," *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz* (HLS) (online), January 21, 2023, https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/de/articles/011511/2014-12-27.

32 Patrick J. Geary, "Peasant Religion of Medieval Europe," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 12 (2001): 185–209, 194.

33 Andrey B. Moroz and Alexander V. Pigin, "Studies into the Folk Hagiography of the Russian North: Judas Koneschelsky," *Scrinium* 15 (2019): 277–96, 278; Alexander Panchenko, *Ivan i YAkov – neobychnye svyatye iz bolotistoj mestnosti: "Krest'yanskaya agiologiya" i religioznye praktiki v Rossii Novogo vremeni* (Moscow: NLO, 2012), 5–6.

34 Primiano, "Vernacular Religion and the Search for Method in Religious Folklife," 44.

also the natural objects related to them, Bruno Latour's Actor-Network Theory may be of use. According to some scholars, Actor-Network Theory promises to establish a new analytical framework that is able "to integrate the material and immaterial, or visible and invisible by accounting the different assemblages of inanimate objects and animate beings."[35]

Being an anti-essentialist approach, Actor-Network Theory does not distinguish between actors such as humans, non-human objects (natural objects), and those actors that are currently commonly referred to as supernatural agents (other-than-human beings). Material objects (stones and springs) establish a network between pilgrims (humans) and supernatural (other-than-human) agents, which manifests itself in concrete actions: rubbing a stone, kissing a stone, washing oneself in a spring. The strengthening of this connection is facilitated by the corresponding votive offering of a coin thrown into the spring or a rag or ribbon tied to a tree near the stone. These non-human agents act as a conduit between the natural and supernatural worlds; they establish a direct connection with the saint, who is still constantly present in this sacred place. In this way a network is built, which has important psychological significance to the person participating in the pilgrimage. As such, humans do not venerate non-human material objects, but through them interact with other-than-human beings, constructing a network of socially significant relations.

Conclusion

The veneration of the Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Princess Olga in Pskov region in the Velikaya river basin combines the veneration of natural loci, folklore narratives, and Orthodox worship. The cult appeared prior to the mid-16th century, when this saint was officially declared Equal-to-the-Apostles and has been associated with the veneration of natural objects, based on the local oral legendary tradition. An important feature of the local legend is the idea that the future princess was an ordinary villager who attracted the prince with her beauty. The natural shrines (stones and springs) are the oldest markers of the memorial sacred sites associated with the veneration of Olga, and shrines of an anthropogenic nature (chapels, worship crosses, and other places of worship) were only added much later. Natural objects perform an important function as conduits to sacred space,

35 Jens Kreinath, "Tracing Tombs and Trees as Indexes of Saints' Agency in Veneration Rituals: Bruno Latour's Actor-Network Theory and the Hıdırellez Festival in Hatay, Turkey," *Journal of Ritual Studies* 33, no. 1 (2019): 52–73, 65.

enabling the construction of a special network between a pilgrim and Saint Olga, characterized by the psychological and emotional investment of the person who seeks protection, help, or healing from the saint. Even though sacred stones were destroyed during the Soviet period, the veneration of natural shrines persists to this day.

In this regard, the veneration of the Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Princess Olga as a local holy healer is a vivid example that demonstrates the characteristic features of folk religion: it responds to the needs of everyday life and enters into a certain contradiction with the logic of official glorification. A distinctive feature of folk religion is the reduction of dogmatically and symbolically complex ideas into simple, understandable, everyday ones. The sacred is embodied in material objects providing communication with supernatural agents, which are accompanied by propitiatory offerings according to the principle *do, ut des*. The objects of worship can be either officially determined material objects (icons, worship crosses) or unofficial locally revered shrines, such as springs, stones, trees, and even landscapes. This form of religion is a kind of refraction of the dogmatically formalized official religious system, passing through the prism of traditional beliefs, sometimes of archaic origin. As a result, a distinct folk religious system arises, which organizes and regulates human activity in its own way.

National

Anna Ripatti

State, Race, and Colonization: Tyrgils Knutsson's Controversial Monuments in 19th-Century Finland

Tyrgils Knutsson (d. 1306), a knight and military leader in the Kingdom of Sweden, was a celebrated yet contested hero in the 19th century. His memory was largely based on the 14th-century *Chronicle of Duke Erik* (in Swedish, *Erikskrönikan*), which depicts him as "a judicious man, to concord devoted."[1] Although medieval sources about him are unreliable, it is highly likely that he was an influential figure in the court of King Magnus III (c. 1240–1290). The *Chronicle* suggests that, after the king's death in 1290, this "wise man and of loyalty well tried" became the regent of Sweden while the new King Birger was still underage.[2] It further describes Tyrgils Knutsson's reign as a time of prosperity and happiness, as a peaceful and merry "golden age":

> Peasant and priest and squire and knight,
> they all at that time did unite.
> To dance and joust and entertain
> was common, as were pork and grain.
> Herring and other fish plentiful were.
> Nor did unrest in the kingdom occur,
> but peace and joy and harmony reigned.
> None to treat others wrongfully deigned.
> [. . .] Matters in Sweden so well then stood
> that they will not for ages be as good.[3]

Tyrgils Knutsson has been remembered primarily as the founder of Viipuri (Viborg/Vyborg) Castle, built from 1293 on as the eastern stronghold of the Swedish kingdom. He led major military campaigns in Karelia, a region in the Northeastern Baltic, in the 1290s and around the year 1300. One of these is known as the Third Swedish Crusade, which is said to have taken place in 1293. According to the *Chronicle of Duke Erik*, the medieval campaign aimed to expand the Swedish territories towards the east and to Christianize the heathen locals. Since the Mid-

1 *The Chronicle of Duke Erik: a verse epic from medieval Sweden*, trans. Erik Carlquist and Peter C. Hogg (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2012), 89.
2 *The Chronicle of Duke Erik*, 88.
3 *The Chronicle of Duke Erik*, 89, 92.

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dle Ages, Swedish and Finnish historians have portrayed Tyrgils Knutsson as the conqueror of Karelia, who expanded the Kingdom of Sweden towards the east.[4]

This article explores the ways in which different individuals and elite groups in 19th-century Finland sought to revive Tyrgils Knutsson's memory. Focusing on the "doing" of his memory,[5] it examines how distinct persons and societies with their conflicting political and cultural agendas interpreted, constructed, and used the medieval figure and his legacy. More precisely, it examines how authors, historians, journalists, and cultural activists shaped and reshaped his remembrance through material, literary, and visual monuments. By studying these monuments – a castle, a play, and a statue – this article seeks to demonstrate how Tyrgils Knutsson's memory crystallized the most controversial issues about Finland and its history, as he reminded 19th-century Finns of a decisive historical event: the country's incorporation into Sweden.

Tyrgils Knutsson and the "Third Swedish Crusade" he is said to have led in Karelia in 1293 offered fascinating material for the 19th-century historical imagination. Numerous authors echoed the medieval *Chronicle of Duke Erik* in their narratives. Anachronistically, but in line with the 19th-century nation-building process, they often referred to the land Tyrgils Knutsson conquered in the Middle Ages not simply as "Karelia" but also as "Finland." For example, an anonymous popular historian paraphrased the *Chronicle* by summarizing the events: "With a majestic navy, Torkel Knutsson landed in Southeastern Finland, waged war upon the Karelians, and forced them to be baptized. After that, he built Viipuri Castle to secure his conquest."[6]

Tyrgils Knutsson's commemoration mainly focused on a specific location: the town of Viipuri (Viborg/Vyborg), now situated in Russia. The town which grew around the castle in the Middle Ages has long been contested by different political regimes. In 1710, Peter the Great (1672–1725) conquered Viipuri from Sweden.[7] In 1812, it was attached to the Grand Duchy of Finland, which was part of the Russian Empire until Finland's independence in 1917. In 1944, the city and the surrounding region were ceded to the Soviet Union. As is often the case in borderlands, conflict-

4 For example: *The Chronicle of Duke Erik*, 92–93; Seppo Suvanto, "Tyrgils Knutsson," *Biografiskt lexikon för Finland* (Helsingfors: Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland, 2008), https://www.blf.fi/artikel.php?id=168.

5 See Cordelia Heß and Gustavs Strenga's introduction to this volume.

6 "Med en mäktig flotta landade Torkel Knutsson i sydöstra Finland, bekrigade karelarne och twang dem att antaga dopet. Sedan anlade han till stöd för sin eröfring Wiborgs slott." "Finlands historia," *Folkwännen*, September 25, 1861. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own.

7 See, for example, the classic study on the history of Viipuri: J. W. Ruuth, *Viborg stads historia* (Helsingfors, 1906).

ing memories have been continually negotiated and debated in Viipuri, visualized and materialized in its townscape and monuments.

In 19th-century Finland, Tyrgils Knutsson's memory was repeatedly attached to a decaying historic building: Viipuri Castle. "Torkel's castle," as it was usually called, embodied the memory and legacy of its medieval founder. In addition, his public statue still adorns a square nearby.

From the 1880s onwards, Tyrgils Knutsson – also known as Torkel Knutsson – became a prominent figure in a fierce controversy. At the time, Finnish society was profoundly marked by what was known as the language strife; in short, this was a quarrel between pro-Finnish and pro-Swedish movements about the hegemony of their respective languages and political positions. The proponents of these movements fiercely disputed whether Finns were indebted to Swedes for having brought Western culture, laws, freedoms, social order, and the Christian religion to the country during the Middle Ages. The controversy focused on the evaluation and meanings of the "Swedish heritage" in Finland.[8] In this context, it is not surprising that Tyrgils Knutsson was mainly celebrated as a hero by the pro-Swedish nationalists. By contrast, many pro-Finns saw him as a violent conqueror and oppressor. As we shall see, his statue provoked a quarrel about Finland's medieval colonization, the country's status as an autonomous state within the Russian Empire, and, ultimately, how Finland's autonomy should best be preserved.

Several historians have examined the checkered history of the statue. Commissioned by a group of Swedish-speaking burghers in 1884, its installation was, however, prohibited due to rising Russian nationalism. In 1908, the bronze statue was finally erected. After Soviet troops invaded the city in 1944, the statue was removed and remained in storage until the end of the Soviet era. In 1993, in the newly founded Russian Federation, the statue was re-installed as a monument celebrating Vyborg's multi-ethnic and multicultural past.[9] Historians have interpreted the statue as a reflection of changing political climates and regimes, as a bone of contention between the Russian nationalist movement and two different nationalist movements in Finland: the pro-Swedish movement, which fostered strong cultural and historical connections between Finland and Sweden and erected the statue; and the pro-Finnish movement, which cherished the Finnish language and its

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8 See, for example, Max Engman, *Språkfrågan. Finlandssvenskhetens uppkomst 1812–1922* (Helsingfors: Svenska litteratusällskapet i Finland, 2016), 85–90; Anna Ripatti, "'This hidden corner of Europe': evaluating medieval architecture in nineteenth-century Finland," *The Journal of Architecture* 25, no. 8 (2020): 1002–27.

9 Ljubov Kudrjavceva, "Bor'ba za 'Mesto pamjati' v imperii: istorija pamjatnika osnovatelju Vyborga Torgil'su Knutssonu," *Ab Imperio* 2 (2004): 417, 432–33.

unique, age-old culture (distinct from Sweden's), and which objected to the statue. It is well documented that the emerging Finnish labor movement was also fiercely opposed to the statue in the early 20th century.[10]

Nonetheless, while focusing on the statue's reception, previous scholarship has not paid attention to the meanings of the medieval figure as such, how his memory was created, and how it was embedded in wider political discussions. In my earlier work, I have demonstrated that the castle and the statue – the two monuments repeatedly attached to Tyrgils Knutsson's memory – were interconnected.[11] Approaching the subject from a previously unexamined perspective, this article seeks to demonstrate that the history of Tyrgils Knutsson's memory appears more nuanced and multifaceted than scholars have previously suggested. Although it is evident that Tyrgils Knutsson was mainly celebrated as a pro-Swedish hero, his remembrance cannot be reduced solely to this interpretive frame. Through this figure, the political meanings of the medieval heritage were continually under debate. Several 19th-century authors depicted the man as a wise, saint-like regent with exemplary masculine qualities. Furthermore, many interpreted him as a harbinger of modernity. His imagined qualities and use in nationalist narratives made him a typical 19th-century hero, comparable with many other medieval heroes in modern Europe.

To understand the meanings assigned to this medieval figure and how they changed or remained the same over time, I will start by discussing the ways in which Tyrgils Knutsson was remembered in the middle decades of the 19th century. I will then examine how the planned restoration of Viipuri Castle aimed to revive and present his memory. This planned restoration, which included the idea of erecting a statue of the castle's founder, led to his memory becoming a

10 Sven Hirn, *Rajatapauksia. Vanhan Viipurin ja Karjalan kulttuurimuistoja* (Helsinki: Otava, 1964), 102–18; Sven Hirn, "Strövtåg i österled. Kulturhistoriska studier," *Bidrag till kännedom av Finlands natur och folk* 108 (1963): 91–107; Petri Neuvonen, *Linnoituksesta historialliseksi muistomerkiksi. Viipurin vanhakaupunki 1856–1939* (Espoo: Aalto University, 2017), 125–29; Maria Lähteenmäki, "Satunnaisesti venäläinen Viipuri: Kamppailu julkisuudesta toisena sortokautena," in *Satunnaisesti Suomessa*, ed. Marko Lamberg, Ulla Piela, and Hanna Snellman (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2018): 270–96.

11 Anna Ripatti, *Jac. Ahrenberg ja historian perintö. Restaurointisuunnitelmat Viipurin ja Turun linnoihin 1800-luvun lopussa* (Helsinki: Finnish Antiquarian Society, 2011). Building on my own work, Kersti Tainio has also studied the interconnected meanings of the castle and the statue: Kersti Tainio, "Rajalinna politiikan näyttämönä. Venäläisiä näkökulmia Viipurin linnan restaurointiin 1880–1890-luvuilla," in *Monumenteista tanssiaskeliin. Taiteiden ja kulttuurin Viipuri 1856–1944*, ed. Anna Ripatti and Nuppu Koivisto (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society of Viipuri, 2020): 188–214; Kersti Tainio, "Poliittinen muistomerkki. Viipurin linnan venäläinen restaurointi 1888–1895" (unpublished Master's dissertation, University of Helsinki, 2017).

controversial political issue in the year 1887. After studying the controversy fuelled by the statue, which was rekindled in 1908 when the statue was finally erected, I will explore how it was intertwined with themes of colonization, state-building, and race. In what follows, I suggest that, throughout the century and even beyond, all the monuments of Tyrgils Knutsson have expressed and illustrated varying notions of political or civic freedom. Above all, his memory has served as a tool for imagining political autonomy in both the past and present. Ultimately, his monuments appear as calls to defend and re-establish threatened freedoms. Yet, the definitions of those freedoms differed considerably from one group to another.

Religious Reformer and Exemplary Statesman

Tyrgils Knutsson's memory in 19th-century Finland centred on the themes of victorious conquest and the spread of Christianity. These two aspects, one secular and one religious, formed the core of his legacy. It is important to note that, despite what is described as his war against the Karelians, all the Finnish authors described him in positive terms during the middle decades of the nineteenth century. At the time, he was remembered as one who brought Western values, civilization, and the Christian faith to the periphery. In other words, before the 1880s, Tyrgils Knutsson was uncontested as a hero who bravely conquered new territories, attached them to the Swedish kingdom, and converted heathens to Christianity. What's more, many celebrated him as an embodiment of masculine ideals: physical and moral strength, rare intelligence, and natural leadership. The medieval figure had become a gallant 19th-century hero.

The Christianization of the Karelians held pride of place in Tyrgils Knutsson's 19th-century commemoration. For the Finnish historian and author Zacharias Topelius (1818–1898), Viipuri Castle, the castle Tyrgils founded, formed a focal point that "gradually spread Swedish power and the Christian religion into Karelia."[12] This view was likewise highlighted in a historical novel by Pietari Hannikainen (1813–1899), entitled "Torkel and Viipuri Castle" (1845), published in serial form in his Finnish-language newspaper. The novel depicts encounters between Swedes and the heathen Karelians in the 1290s, focusing on Torkel and his fictive sister Edla, and the Karelian hero Kilpinen and his sister Omena. After several violent battles, the enemies – the Swedes and the Karelians – are united by love, and Edla, who marries Kilpinen, Christianizes the locals. At the end of the conciliatory

12 Zacharias Topelius, *Finland framställdt i teckningar* (Helsingfors, 1845), 180.

story, the Karelians praise Christianity and the Swedish king.[13] The novel portrays Torkel Knutsson as a hero who introduced Christianity to the hinterland, forged a peaceful union between the Swedish and Finnish peoples, and, ultimately, laid the foundation for a united, bilingual Finnish nation. As such, Hannikainen celebrated the medieval hero as the founder or unifier of the Finnish people.

In the 1840s, Tyrgils Knutsson was often characterized as a brave conqueror, an honest man, and an exemplary statesman. In a history of Finland annexed to a popular version of the Bible published in 1845, an anonymous writer describes him as “a decent, honest, and steadfast man, far from injustice, fraud, and flattery.”[14] According to this popular narrative, Tyrgils enhanced the king’s power and increased the state’s revenues at the expense of the Catholic Church.[15] The medieval hero was remembered for having spread Christianity and for restricting the power of the Catholic Church. Marked by anti-Catholic sentiments, the latter aspect was particularly important in Lutheran Sweden and Finland.

This multifaceted political, religious, moral, and gendered memory of Tyrgils Knutsson emerges with particular clarity in a play entitled *Torkel Knutsson*, written by the Swedish playwright Bernhard von Beskow (1796–1868) in 1836. This “great historical drama” was performed for the first time in Finland in 1873 at the New Theatre, later known as the Swedish Theatre, in Helsinki, where it attracted full houses of the Swedish-speaking bourgeoisie.[16] The play was praised in Swedish-language newspapers as “magnificent” and “touching.”[17]

The drama depicted the medieval figure as a brave hero, a powerful man with all the best qualities of a statesman: a strong leader of iron will and rare intelligence. In von Beskow’s patriotic narrative, Tyrgils Knutsson served as an *exemplum virtutis*. He was a vigorous defender of political, religious, and intellectual freedoms, a profound thinker, fair minded and very generous, even with the enemy. An embodiment of masculine virtues, he was an ideal leader, a true gentleman, a loving father and husband. Furthermore, he was a victorious con-

13 Pietari Hannikainen, “Torkel ja Wiipurin linna,” *Kanawa, sanansaattaja Wiipurista*, February 22, 1845; March 1, 1845; March 8, 1845; April 5, 1845; May 1, 1845.

14 *Pyhän Raamatun Wähä Aikakirja elih Piplian Mainioitten ja Opetusten Lyhyä Ydin, yynnä Kristillisen Uutuuden Opin Historian Pää-asian, Grundtvikin mukaan, ja Lyhykäisen Ruotsalaisten Kuningasten Elämäkerran kanssa, siihen aikaan astih, jona Suomi asetettiin Wenäjän Wallan alleh* (Turku, 1845), 148–49.

15 *Pyhän Raamatun Wähä Aikakirja.*

16 “Nya theatern,” *Finlands Allmänna Tidning*, November 8, 1873 and November 10, 1873; “Teater,” *Helsingfors Dagblad*, November 11, 1873.

17 An anonymous journalist noted that the play was “staged with all the splendour that the theatre’s resources allow.” “Nya theatern,” *Finlands Allmänna Tidning*, November 11, 1873; November 24, 1873; November 25, 1873; November 26, 1873; December 1, 1873.

queror, who honoured his native Sweden with his military campaigns in the east. This military hero displayed all the best qualities for being a king. According to the play, not only did he "expand our frontiers" but he also "raised the Swedish people to [a position of] well-being, power, and honour."[18]

Above all, von Beskow's drama portrayed its medieval protagonist as a proto-Reformer: a precursor of Lutheran values who tried to restrict the power of the Catholic Church. It narrated the birth of a modern age, a new era, which was characterized by centralized states and the increasing importance of an active citizenry. Promoting "the independence of Sweden from Rome," its protagonist declared that "the turning point in a state's life" was at hand: the Catholic Church was losing its power, and the close ties between the Church and the state were being severed.[19] The vitality of a modern state, the drama's hero maintained, depended entirely on "the strength, enlightenment, and diligence of its citizens."[20] The play tells a story about the emergence of modernity and historical progress, symbolized by the (pre-)modern hero Torkel Knutsson. Nonetheless, he became a martyr of modernity because of his ambitious anticlerical, reforming ideas and, in particular, due to his loyalty to the crown. At the end of the play, Torkel Knutsson, a proto-Lutheran model statesman, is beheaded due to the machinations of small-minded pretenders to the throne, scheming representatives of the Catholic Church, and the jealous king who envied his popularity. The play celebrates the medieval hero as a herald of modern times.

Stressing the importance of hereditary kingship for maintaining social order, the drama emphasizes Tyrgils Knutsson's unshakeable loyalty to the king. It culminates with King Birger's coronation scene in a gothic church (Figure 1). In this scene, Torkel cedes his interim power to the king, who has just reached majority. He raises an infant, the crown prince Magnus, in his arms and pledges allegiance to the child and to the dynasty.[21] With this gesture, he is promoting a peaceful transfer of power and hereditary kingship; in other words, a stable, modern Sweden, which, according to the play's moral and patriotic message, should be governed from one generation to the next by one royal family. The fictive Torkel Knutsson fostered the establishment of a stable, secular state based on the king's centralized power.

The play's message – promoting a peaceful transfer of power – resonated widely in revolutionary 19th-century Europe. In Sweden, it must have evoked the

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18 Bernhard von Beskow, *Torkel Knutsson. Sorgespel i fem akter med prolog*, second edition (Stockholm: P. A. Norstedt & Söner, 1861), 45.

19 von Beskow, *Torkel Knutsson*, 128.

20 von Beskow, *Torkel Knutsson*, 46.

21 von Beskow, *Torkel Knutsson*, 62–63.

newly established royal family of Bernadotte, which was seeking to legitimize its power at the time. In the Grand Duchy of Finland, the autonomous political status of the country within the Russian Empire was crucially dependent on the emperor's goodwill. The play implied that, to preserve their freedoms, modern men and women should remain loyal to the sovereign, who guarantees peace and stability in turbulent times. But it could also be interpreted as an attempt to highlight the strong cultural and historical connections between Finland and Sweden.

In the drama and in the public imagination, Torkel Knutsson served as an example: he was loyal to the crown until his death, an anti-Catholic, brave and wise – a man to be admired and followed. As one Finnish journalist wrote, von Beskow's play was "a bloody and dreary tale about how a noble and mighty spirit, in the hardest times of darkness and oppression in the North, fights for light and freedom, and with his own blood seals his unshakeable belief in them."[22]

Nineteenth-century Finnish historians, such as Gabriel Rein (1800–1867), depicted Tyrgils Knutsson in similar terms. Rein wrote that he was "a true patriot," a hard-working and intelligent statesman. Moreover, the medieval figure had accomplished the long process of attaching Finland to Sweden by imposing both Swedish rule and Christianity. He brought Western civilization to the hinterland, made "Finland" a province of the Swedish kingdom, and in so doing paved the way for "a better future."[23] Historians narrated Tyrgils's story as an essential chapter in the process of state formation, as a starting point for a teleological process of modernization leading towards an autonomous Finnish state. By conquering new territories for the Swedish crown and by establishing an important stronghold, a regional administrative centre, he considerably strengthened the king's power, expanded Swedish territory, and laid the foundations for future state administration.

Tyrgils Knutsson's memory and the meanings attributed to Viipuri Castle and the Finnish state-building enterprise were all intertwined in the 19th-century historical imagination. Many 19th-century Finnish historians tried to prove that Finland had always been a distinct entity, tracing the roots of its autonomy through the ages. Medieval castles played an important part in this narrative. They were administrative centres through which feudal lords, the king's vassals, had exercised considerable power over their territories. Arguing for Finland's age-old autonomous history, the pro-Swedish historian Magnus Gottfried Schybergson (1851–1925) summed things up in 1876: "Our current constitution has developed naturally from

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22 "[. . .] denna blodigt mörka saga om huru en ädel och mäktig ande midt under mörkrets och förtryckets hårdaste tider i norden kämpar för ljus och frihet och med sitt eget blod beseglar sin orubbliga tro på dem." "Nya theatern," *Finlands Allmänna Tidning*, November 22, 1873.

23 Gabriel Rein, *Föreläsningar öfver Finlands historia I* (Helsingfors: G. W. Edlunds förlag, 1870), 131.

medieval societal conditions."[24] He celebrated Tyrgils Knutsson as the founder of one such castle, which later in the Middle Ages served as an administrative centre of a quasi-independent province. As well as providing an example for future statesmen, the medieval figure is to have laid the groundwork for an autonomous state administration.

Anachronistically, Tyrgils Knutsson was often imagined as a statesman who planned and secured a great future for Finland as an autonomous state. As a visitor to Viipuri Castle wrote poetically about its medieval walls, it was the place "where Torkel Knutsson devised his plans for Finland's future."[25] The castle and its founder thus marked and manifested the centuries-old roots of the Finnish state-building process.

Monumentalizing the Founder

In late 19th-century Finland, Tyrgils Knutsson's memory became an integral part of what is known as the language strife – a fierce and bitter political quarrel over the role of the Swedish language and heritage. Although the proponents of the pro-Swedish movement based their interpretations on previous scholarship, they increasingly sought to revive and manifest the medieval hero's memory through monuments.

The most imposing monument dedicated to Tyrgils Knutsson was the restoration of Viipuri Castle, the castle he was said to have founded in 1293. In 1871, a group of prominent men and women from the local Swedish-speaking community organized to raise funds to repair "Torkel's Castle" and rescue it from ruin. They saw the castle as "one of the most valuable monuments in Finland."[26] Viipuri Castle, which for centuries had represented Sweden's military might and the incorporation of the region into Sweden, had fallen into disrepair. Vegetation grew over its remains, and only the outer walls, cellars, and some decayed vaulted rooms remained of the main building. One of these was called "Torkel's Hall," probably because of its beautiful ribbed vault, which stirred visitors' historical imagination

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24 "Genom naturenlig utveckling har vårt nu varande statsskick framvuxit ur medeltidens samhällsförhållanden." M. G. S. [Magnus Gottfried Schybergson], "Finlands statsrättsliga ställning under medeltiden," *Finsk Tidskrift* 2 (1876): 67–80, 80. He mentions Tyrgils Knutsson as one of the mighty medieval rulers who helped build up the king's power.

25 "En rundresa inom eget land III," *Östra Finland*, June 28, 1878.

26 "Vårt herrliga slott," *Wiborgs Tidning*, February 1, 1871.

(Figure 2).[27] The vaults were, however, collapsing, and it seemed that the half-ruined castle would soon be beyond saving. Locals bemoaned the fact that their hometown's most spectacular monument was falling apart, and they considered it their moral duty to save the symbol of their city for future generations.[28]

Significantly, prior to the 1880s, repairing the castle was not a pro-Swedish project but rather a national one. As a fortification, the castle belonged to the Russian crown; its neglect and lack of use encouraged locals to take measures to return the castle from Russian to Finnish hands. In the 1870s and 1880s, Finnish and Russian authorities negotiated a transfer of ownership. The Finnish press followed the negotiations closely, deeming them a brave patriotic endeavour.

Nevertheless, in the 1880s, the restoration of the castle became a pro-Swedish project, thanks to the architect Johan Jacob (Jac.) Ahrenberg (1847–1914), an active member of this movement. Although "Torkel's Castle" was Russian property, the Senate of Finland commissioned plans to restore the building to its former splendour. The restoration plan, although never realized, was to be carried out by this Viipuri-born architect and writer (Figure 3). For Jac. Ahrenberg, Viipuri Castle was the most outstanding example of Swedish heritage in Finland, a heritage he especially cherished. By restoring historical monuments, he aimed to substantially increase the visibility of Finland's Swedish heritage. The idea was to visually attach Viipuri Castle to the castles in Sweden and to thus manifest its Swedishness through its architectural restoration.

An important aspect of Ahrenberg's restoration project was its symbolism connected to statehood, political freedom, and good governance. The lower floors of the main castle were to be transformed into arsenals, to store weapons and other equipment belonging to the newly founded Finnish military. As such, the architect emphasized the military character of the building and its uses connected to national defence. Above the arsenal, he planned a city archive, a library, and a museum. The latter was meant to store ethnographic, archaeological, and natural history collections from the region.[29] Intended to nurture patriotism, this triad of institutionalized memory formed an intellectual arsenal, a storehouse of documents and objects, on which the memory, history, and the future of a nation could be built. As Dominique Poulot has noted, these three institutions – museum,

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27 Viktor Löfgren, "Viipurin linnan pohja-piirrokset," *Historiallinen arkisto* 3 (1871): 118–133. The hall was situated on the top floor of a small tower, referred to as the Tower of Paradise, probably built in the 15th century.

28 This and the following three paragraphs are based on my book: Ripatti, *Jac. Ahrenberg ja historian perintö*, 2011.

29 "Wiborgs slots restaurering II," *Wiborgsbladet*, April 16, 1883; "Förslaget till Wibogts slotts restaurering II," *Östra Finland*, July 4, 1883.

library, and archive – constitute "a patriotic symbol and a proof of good governance."[30] Accordingly, the restored castle can be interpreted as a showcase of good governance, based on the legacy of its medieval founder.

In his restoration plan, Ahrenberg envisaged a statue representing Tyrgils Knutsson to be erected either in the restored castle or in its immediate surroundings.[31] From early 1884 on, he organized fundraising events for a "smallish" Tyrgils Knutsson statue.[32] Along with the growing funds, ambitions about the size and placement of this statue grew as well. In the autumn of 1884, he contacted the Finnish sculptor Ville Vallgren (1855–1940), who lived and worked in Paris; Vallgren accepted the commission, a "serious work" that "will stand forever."[33] Vallgren meticulously studied medieval costumes and weapons at the Museum of Artillery in Paris, so as to base his work on authentic sources.[34] He also made drawings of Tyrgils Knutsson's seal in the National Archives of Sweden in Stockholm and incorporated the heraldic lion of the seal into his sculpture.[35] In 1885, due to financial difficulties, the statue's casting was postponed. Although the plaster sculpture stood in Vallgren's Paris atelier for years, the statue was now envisaged as dignifying some "square or open space" in Viipuri, "Eastern Finland's metropolis."[36]

To raise money for the statue, Vallgren proposed a major literary monument dedicated to Tyrgils Knutsson. In January 1887, he wrote that he had "a brilliant idea to cherish Torkel Knutsson's memory" and to acquire funding "to erect his statue as soon as possible."[37] The idea was to produce a splendidly illustrated commemorative publication, "a celebration magazine," to be entitled "Torkel Knutsson's memory," printed "in large, modern format," and sold all over Finland. Vallgren proposed to collect "literary and artistic material" for this commemorative magazine in Paris, and engaged his Scandinavian friends to help. Several Scandinavian artists and writers, such as Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson (1832–1910), Carl Larsson (1853–1919), and Anders Zorn (1860–1920), were to contribute

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30 Dominique Poulot, "L'histoire du patrimoine: essai de périodisation," in *Patrimoine et société*, ed. Jean-Yves Andrieux (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 1998): 21–34, 22.

31 "Uusi Suometar och Torkel Knutssons staty," *Helsingfors Dagblad*, January 21, 1887.

32 "En mindre staty af Torkel (rättare Torgils) Knutsson," *Östra Finland*, February 19, 1884.

33 Ville Vallgren's letter to Jac. Ahrenberg, October 8, 1884. SLSA 294.6. National Library of Finland.

34 Ville Vallgren's letter to Jac. Ahrenberg, April 2, 1885. SLSA 294.6. National Library of Finland.

35 Ville Vallgren's letter to Jac. Ahrenberg, January 20, 1887. SLSA 294.6. National Library of Finland.

36 Jac. Ahrenberg, "Torkel Knutsson-statyn i Wiborg," *Helsingfors Dagblad*, November 30, 1886.

37 Ville Vallgren's letter to Jac. Ahrenberg, January 20, 1887. SLSA 294.6. National Library of Finland.

to the publication.[38] Its spectacular title page was to be decorated by the leading Finnish artist of the time, Albert Edelfelt (1854–1905). A specialist in medieval literature, Werner Söderhjelm (1859–1931), was to write Tyrgils Knutsson's biography. The text was to explain "what [Tyrgils Knutsson] had done for Finland, and consequently, why the Finnish nation is compelled to put up his monument."[39] Vallgren had underlined the word "compelled" (in Swedish, *tvungen*) three times. By this stage, the celebration of Tyrgils Knutsson's memory had clearly become an urgent political endeavour for the artist and the Swedish-speaking liberal elite writ large.

The lavish publication would have formed a visual, material, and literary monument to the medieval hero.[40] It would have included an image of Vallgren's statue, "in large format," and an essay by Ahrenberg on how Tyrgils Knutsson was represented through architecture and heraldry. Ahrenberg would have also written a detailed account of his plans for restoring "Torkel's castle."[41] The illustrated publication was meant to highlight the historical, cultural, and political significance of Tyrgils Knutsson and his legacy. In his letter to Ahrenberg, Vallgren encouraged him to pursue their endeavour with vigour, "so that we get the whole thing to come together like the finest clockwork."[42] Vallgren's commemorative publication was, however, never realized due to a bitter controversy that arose in Finland about the remembrance of the medieval figure.

In the 1880s, at a time when the language strife was escalating, Tyrgils Knutsson's memory became caught up in the conflict. January 20, 1887 – the same day that Vallgren wrote his detailed plans for his commemorative publication – a pro-Finnish newspaper published a polemical article against Tyrgils Knutsson's statue. The newspaper portrayed the figure as a "foreign conqueror and enemy," a violent

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38 Vallgren listed authors and artists who had already promised to participate: "Writers: Björnson, Lie, Kaufman, Spada, Wetterhoff. Sculptors: Runeberg, Stigell, Hasselberg, Lindberg, Vallgren. Painters: Edelfelt, Sederström, Salmson, Hagborg, Larsson, Berg, Wahlberg, Thegersström, Ekström, Arsenius, Zorn." Ville Vallgren's letter to Jac. Ahrenberg, January 20, 1887. SLSA 294.6. National Library of Finland.

39 Ville Vallgren's letter to Jac. Ahrenberg, January 20, 1887. SLSA 294.6. National Library of Finland.

40 Clearly, Vallgren planned a publication similar to that which had been published some years earlier for Per Brahe, a 17th-century statesman, to promote his statue in Turku. *Per Brahes minne* (Stockholm, 1880). I wish to thank Rainer Knapas for informing me about this publication.

41 Ville Vallgren's letter to Jac. Ahrenberg, January 20, 1887. SLSA 294.6. National Library of Finland.

42 Ville Vallgren's letter to Jac. Ahrenberg, January 20, 1887.

colonizer who oppressed the ancient Finns and brought them under foreign rule.[43] In the pro-Finnish historical imagination, Tyrgils Knutsson had brutally put an end to the ancient Finns' independence. The journalists considered it immensely shameful to honour an enemy with a statue in a public space. Such a statue, they claimed, was not a national monument; it did not "foster patriotism or national self-esteem" but, on the contrary, evoked "the memory of national weakness at the time of the Finnish people's infancy."[44] The statue thus appeared as a monument to a tragedy, memorializing an imagined massacre of ancient Finns and their violent subjugation by foreigners, the Swedes.

Somewhat surprisingly, the editor-in-chief of this newspaper was Viktor Löfgren (1843–1909), a Viipuri-born journalist, who was one of the first to have studied and documented the ruined Viipuri Castle in the late 1860s and who had also promoted its repair at the time.[45] Nonetheless, he clearly opposed erecting memorials for its founder and interpreted the statue as "a demonstration, first, against the Finnish People, and second [. . .] against Russia."[46] The article in his newspaper sparked a lively controversy about Swedish heritage in general and monuments of Tyrgils Knutsson in particular.

Due to the controversy, which will be discussed in greater detail below, Russian authorities obstructed both Tyrgils Knutsson's monuments – the statue and the restoration of Viipuri Castle. The governor general of Finland, representative of the emperor, deemed the fundraising to be illegal, as it had not been explicitly approved by the emperor – this put a stop to the undertaking.[47] From the Russian nationalist point of view, both monuments were signs of political separatism. In 1888, Emperor Alexander III (1845–1894) declared that Viipuri Castle was a historical monument that "honoured the Russian crown." Consequently, it was restored by the Russians to suit their historical imagination, to mark the conquest of the city by Peter the Great.[48]

As a result of the controversy about Tyrgils Knutsson's memory, his painted plaster statue stood in the Viipuri town hall for almost twenty years (Figure 4).

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43 "Hän on ollut meille muukalainen voittaja ja vihollinen." "Torkel Knuutinpojan kuvapatsaan homma," *Uusi Suometar*, January 20, 1887.

44 "Torkel Knuutinpojan kuvapatsaan homma," *Uusi Suometar*, January 20, 1887.

45 Löfgren, "Viipurin linnan pohja-piirrokset."

46 "Vielä Torkel Knuutinpojan muistopatsaan hommasta," *Uusi Suometar*, February 8, 1887.

47 A. L. von Knorring, "Till redaktionen för Östra Finland," *Östra Finland*, February 7, 1887. His reasoning was, however, questioned by the pro-Swedish press. "Statyfrågan officielt förklarad," *Wiborgsbladet*, February 8, 1887.

48 Ripatti, *Jac. Ahrenberg ja historian perintö*, 223–28; Tainio, "Rajalinna politiikan näyttämönä," 188–214; Tainio, "Poliittinen muistomerkki"; "Förbud att i Wiborg uppresa Torkel Knutssons staty," *Östra Finland*, February 3, 1887; "Torkel Knutssons staty," *Nya Pressen*, January 26, 1887.

According to Ahrenberg, a local guide presented the statue to the visiting governor general, describing Tyrgils Knutsson as "Finland's first governor general."[49] Another major consequence was new legislation. In 1890, Alexander III passed a statute according to which "monuments, statues, and other memorials cannot be erected in squares or other public places" without the emperor's approval.[50]

In 1906, in more liberal times, the municipal council of Viipuri returned to the idea of erecting Vallgren's "extremely beautiful and artistically valuable" statue in a public square. Although some members of the council opposed the monument to a Swedish statesman, the vast majority endorsed the idea, and the council requested the emperor's permission.[51] Emperor Nicholas II (1868–1918) agreed, probably as an act of appeasement in the radicalized, even revolutionary, political climate. The minister-secretary of state of Finland, August Langhoff (1856–1929), who presented the application to the emperor, stressed that the monument was purely historical, not political.[52] Finally, in October 1908, Tyrgils Knutsson's statue was erected in a square near the castle (Figure 5). Although venerated mainly by the pro-Swedish movement, he was widely cherished as a hero who had laid the basis for the city's future growth and prosperity.

Contesting the Colonizer

The controversy regarding Tyrgils Knutsson's remembrance evolved around the theme of medieval colonization, meaning Finland's incorporation into the Kingdom of Sweden. Academic and popular historians alike constantly portrayed him as the colonizer and conqueror of Karelia, insisting that he had "consolidated Swedish domination in Finland."[53] With the rise of the pro-Finnish movement from the 1880s on, this ancient colonization appeared increasingly problematic. It was this narrative of conquest and colonization that the pro-Finns used to accuse the medieval figure of brutal violence and war against the Finns.

49 Jac. Ahrenberg, *Människor som jag känt*, 4 vols (Helsingfors: Söderström & Co, 1909), 68.

50 *Storfurstendömet Finlands Författning-Samling för 1890* (Helsingfors, 1891). See also Jac. Ahrenberg, "Till Torkel Knutsson statyns historia," *Wiborgs Nyheter*, October 3, 1908.

51 Application to the Emperor, STO AD 3593/429 1906, Archive of the Senate, National Archives of Finland; "Viipurin kaupunginvaltuuston kokouksessa lokakuussa 1906," *Wiipuri*, October 28, 1906.

52 Kudrjavceva, "Bor'ba za 'Mesto pamjati' v imperii," 423–24, 433–34.

53 For example: Vilhelm Grefberg, "En blick på Finlands historia," *Pennibibliothek för svenska allmogen i Finland* (Helsingfors: Edlunds förlag, 1866), 7.

Nonetheless, many considered Finland's medieval colonization to have been a highly beneficial process. Numerous 19th-century Finnish and Swedish historians, writers, and educators had long claimed that, through the "Crusades," the indigenous Finns had been forced to yield their lands to "brave" and "bold" Swedes who were particularly skilled in warfare.[54] In the heroic narratives of conquest and colonization, often written in Swedish, Tyrgils Knutsson appeared as the brave conqueror of heathen lands who brought with him the Christian religion. Although he conquered the region with armed force and violence, his "Crusade" was justified for it ushered in "Western civilization." Many believed that the new religion would not have taken root had it not been "protected" by "sword and lance."[55]

It must be stressed that even some pro-Finnish nationalists evaluated Tyrgils Knutsson positively, because his conquest, although violent, had proved beneficial. He was widely seen as a figure who enabled the full development of Finland as a nation-state. A pro-Finnish newspaper in Viipuri claimed that, despite his aversion towards the Catholic Church, Tyrgils Knutsson was "God's weapon and vehicle," a man who secured the Finnish people's unity and future autonomy.[56] Both pro-Finnish and pro-Swedish nationalists agreed that he had united various "Finnish" tribes into "the political and social entity that we now [. . .] call Finland."[57]

Nevertheless, although no one denied Tyrgils Knutsson's importance to the Finnish state- and nation-building processes, his imagined encounters with indigenous Finns led to sharply divided opinions. Whereas a pro-Swedish newspaper in Viipuri explained that the medieval hero "sowed the slender seed of civilization among our half-wild ancestors and made it grow into a vigorous plant,"[58] most pro-Finnish authors vehemently disagreed. A pro-Finnish newspaper responded that the claim that Tyrgils Knutsson would have brought "culture" and "civilization" to "half-wild ancestors" was utterly degrading. "The people of Kalevala," the newspaper declared, "left to posterity a much more significant cultural

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54 For example: *Beskrifning öfver Storfurstendömet Finland* (Hernösand: J. A. Johansson, 1864), 12–13.

55 "Kulturens väg gick fordomtima i korsets tecken, men den kristna kyrkan kunde ej växa, om hon ej hägnades af svärd och lans." "Tyrgils Knutssons minne," *Wiborgs Nyheter*, October 3, 1908.

56 "Vaikka Torkel ei ollut mikään kirkonystävä, vaan päinvastoin papiston ylivallan masentajia, oli hän kuitenkin Jumalan kädessä aseena ja välikappaleena, jonka vaikutuksen kautta ja sen yhteiskunnallisten lakien turvissa tämä jälelle jäänyt kansastomme on voinut yhteisenä ja näinkään itsenäisenä pysyä. [. . .] Kaikkihan me Suomessa asuvat heimot olisimme Torkelin tulotta mordvalaisten, vepsäläisten y.m. itäheimoimme tilassa." "Torkel Knuutinpojan muistopatsasasia," *Ilmarinen*, February 3, 1887.

57 Jac. Ahrenberg, "Torkel Knutsson-statyn i Wiborg," *Helsingfors Dagblad*, November 30, 1886.

58 "Förbud att i Wiborg uppresa Torkel Knutssons staty," *Östra Finland*, February 3, 1887.

heritage than the whole of Scandinavia at the time of Torkel Knutsson."[59] The struggle over linguistic, cultural, and political hegemony was thus projected onto a distant past.

The narrative of Finland's colonization provided material for imagining an ancient independence. It was the local heathen's violent attacks against "new Swedish colonies" that had fuelled Tyrgils Knutsson's "crusade" in Karelia.[60] The term "Swedish colony," which referred to medieval settlements, was widely used in 19th-century historiography. This narrative implied that, by attacking the colonizers and by responding to their violence, the ancient Finns were bravely defending their independence. The pro-Finnish scholars tried to prove that, before their colonization, the Finns had "lived in their self-governed societies and defended their independence against neighbouring peoples."[61] As Theodor Schwindt (1851–1917) argued, Tyrgils Knutsson demolished their ancient freedom. His conquest meant "the end of Karelia's independence."[62]

According to a common pro-Finnish interpretation, Tyrgils Knutsson introduced a brutal suppression that destroyed the Finns' ancient civilization. This "foreign subjugator," one journalist bemoaned, "deprived our ancestors of their freedom and forced them to become his and his king's servants."[63] Another inhabitant of Viipuri declared: "we can judge him as a cruel conqueror who violently invaded the Karelian tribe's land and destroyed, ravaged, burned, and shattered peaceful living conditions."[64] His monuments – hailing "a foreign conqueror and enemy,"[65] or even "a medieval master robber"[66] – appeared as memorials, even cenotaphs, for a lost independence.[67] Such monuments to oppressors, many pro-Finnish nationalists believed, were an utter disgrace for the nation.[68] As one anonymous

59 "Vielä Torkel Knuutinpojan muistopatsaan hommasta," *Uusi Suometar*, February 8, 1887.

60 For example: *Beskrifning öfver Storfurstendömet Finland* (Hernösand: J. A. Johansson, 1864), 12–13.

61 Johan Reinhold Aspelin's unpublished manuscript "Suomen muinaislinnat" (Hill Forts of Finland), Johan Reinhold Aspelin Archive, Hr 6 Personalia, Finnish Heritage Agency.

62 "Käkisalmen 600-vuotinen juhla. Tri Schwindtin esitelmä," *Wiipuri*, July 4, 1894.

63 "Vieraalle valloittajalle, jonka tarkoituksena oli riistää isiltämme heidän vapautensa ja tehdä heidät hänen ja hänen kuninkaansa vasalleiksi, tuli meidän nyt vuosisatojen perästä pystyttää muistopatsas." "Milloinkahan saisimme lunastaa viimeisen velkakirjan?" *Karjala*, October 31, 1906.

64 "[. . .] voimme pitää häntä raakana valloittajana, joka hävittäen tunkeutuu Karjalan heimoin maille, riistää ja raastaa, polttaa ja pirstoo rauhallisen elämän ehdot." Jalo, "Mikä mies oli Torkel Knuutinpoika?" *Työ*, October 3, 1908.

65 "Torkel Knuutinpojan kuwapatsaan homma," *Uusi Suometar*, January 20, 1887.

66 "Torkel Knuutinpojan kuvapatsas," *Kansan lehti*, January 10, 1907.

67 Jalo, "Mikä mies oli Torkel Knuutinpoika?" *Työ*, October 3, 1908.

68 "Matti Pietinen, Torkkeli Knuutinpoika, Wäring ja Jyry," *Wiipuri*, October 30, 1906.

writer declared, "We Finns do not see any particular necessity to worship those who have shattered with fire and sword the Karelian tribe and the freedom of our people as a whole, and under whose heavy yoke we still remain."[69]

Russian nationalists used the pro-Finnish interpretation for their own political purposes. Both saw Tyrgils Knutsson as a conqueror, and further, as a metaphor for the Swedish-speakers' hegemony in Finnish society. In supporting the pro-Finnish movement, Russian authorities aimed to "free the Finnish people from the memory of Swedish oppression."[70] Although both deemed Tyrgils Knutsson an enemy and oppressor, and thus opposed the statue, their views diverged considerably regarding another monument, Viipuri Castle. Russian authorities considered the castle a Russian fortification, a monument to Russian conquests and a symbol of their military and political power over the region.[71]

Defender of Western Freedoms

There was one significant factor, however, on which many pro-Finnish and pro-Swedish spokesmen agreed. For both, the most significant legacy of Tyrgils Knutsson was the attachment of "Finland" to "the West." Otherwise, it might have been assimilated into the Eastern, Russian realm with its peasant serfdom. As we have already seen, Tyrgils Knutsson was widely interpreted as an importer of Western laws, culture, and liberties. For instance, in requesting approval to erect his statue, the municipal council of Viipuri spoke for many when they wrote that "he deserves eternal credit for introducing Christianity, civilization, and the rule of law in Eastern Finland. Protected by the strong fortress, these all could take root and develop further."[72]

Numerous 19th- and early 20th-century authors claimed that Tyrgils Knutsson and his castle marked the dividing line between West and East, between two religions and political cultures – that of freedom and that of despotism. Ahrenberg,

69 "[. . .] me suomalaiset emme tunne mitään erikoista tarvetta jumaloida niitä jotka tulella ja miekalla ovat musertaneet Karjalan heimon ja koko kansamme vapauden ja joiden valmistama ies edelleenkin raskaana meitä painaa." Wiikari, "Parannuksen teillä," *Wiipuri*, December 9, 1908.

70 Tainio, "Rajalinna politiikan näyttämönä," 204.

71 Tainio, "Poliittinen muistomerkki"; Tainio, "Rajalinna politiikan näyttämönä."

72 "[. . .] jonka ainaiseksi ansioksi on luettava, että kristinusko, sivistys ja lainalainen yhteiskuntajärjestys saivat Suomen itäosissakin jalansijaa sekä pääsivät mainitun vankan linnoituksen suojaamina täällä juurtumaan ja kehittymään." Application to the Emperor, STO AD 3593/429 1906, Archive of the Senate, National Archives of Finland.

for instance, wrote that "for perpetuity, he traced the line between two worldviews, that of autocracy (Orient) and that of freethinking and knowledge (Occident)."[73] A local Swedish-language newspaper echoed this by stating that "the border between the Eastern and Western worlds, between Byzantine and German spiritual life, between Caesarism and the rule of law which was based on an age-old freedom of peasants – this is Tyrgils Knutsson's everlasting achievement and glorious memory."[74]

Viipuri Castle played a dominant role in the narrative of Western freedoms. The castle was repeatedly described as "an outpost of Western culture."[75] It was portrayed as a defence fortification that protected Finland, its people, traditions, laws, and social order. As an anonymous writer explained, the building served as "a shield which protected the Finnish and Swedish peoples' freedom, culture, and institutions."[76] Although many pro-Finnish nationalists maintained that Tyrgils Knutsson had put an end to the ancient Finns' independence, they nonetheless concurred with the pro-Swedish camp that Viipuri Castle had protected the Finnish people and their freedom against the Russians. One pro-Finnish newspaper declared that Tyrgils Knutsson's memory was, first and foremost, connected with his castle, which was built to defend the local people against the attacking Novgorodians. Without the castle, the region would have been incorporated into the Russian realm as early as the Middle Ages.[77] Tyrgils Knutsson and "his castle" thus symbolized not only Finland's Swedish past and heritage but also the deep roots of its Western culture.

Swedish laws, in particular, were widely seen as the foundation of Finland's autonomous status. These "inherited laws" were based on those established by

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73 "[. . .] det var ju han som [. . .] drog för eviga tider gränsen mellan två världsåskådningar, självherrskaredömets (orientens) och det fria tänkandets och kännandets (västerlandets). Hvad vore vi dag om ej denna klartseende, men vidtfamnande ande ingripit i tid?" Jac. Ahrenberg, "Till Torkel Knutsson statyns historia," *Wiborgs Nyheter*, October 3, 1908.

74 "Att ha råfäst gränsen mellan Öster- och Västerland, mellan byzantinism och germansk andelif, mellan cäsarism och ett rättskick, fotad på urgammal odalmannafrihet – det är Tyrgils Knutssons ovanskliga bragd och stolta äreminne." "Tyrgils Knutssons minne," *Wiborgs Nyheter*, October 3, 1908.

75 For example: "en förpost för västerländsk odling." "Rådhustorget: Torkel Knutssons statyns miljö," *Wiborgs Nyheter*, October 3, 1908.

76 "Helsingfors den 2 December," *Morgonbladet*, December 2, 1875.

77 "Aika, jona Torkel Karjalan valloitti, oli tälle maakunnalle paljoa vaarallisempi kuin sen saattaminen Ruotsinvallan alaiseksi. Novgorodin puolelta tehdyt hyökkäykset itäisempänä asuvain kansaheimoimme kimppuun olivat jo nielleet nämä yhteensä [. . .]. Näitä idän mahtaviksi jo käyneitä puuskauksia vastaan perusti Torkel Viipurin linnan." "Torkel Knuutinpojan muistopatsasasia," *Ilmarinen*, February 3, 1887.

Tyrgils Knutsson.[78] It was these laws that the Russian authorities tried to abolish from 1890 on.[79] At a time when Finland's autonomy was threatened, Tyrgils Knutsson and his legacy took on even greater importance. In this context, the strong walls of Viipuri Castle were believed to protect Finland's "inherited laws against all attempts at assimilation into the East."[80] Some insisted that the laws, "inherited from Tyrgils Knutsson's days," provided "the sole protection in which our society can flourish."[81] Finland's future depended on these laws. "Preserve Tyrgils Knutsson's legacy, the Swedish law: it means historical wisdom, it is the white stripe that will illuminate our way to the future."[82]

According to such an interpretation, Tyrgils Knutsson was not just a pro-Swedish hero, but also a pro-Finnish hero, since he served to secure Finland as a Western nation-state. In 1906, a group of local notables in Viipuri declared that not all pro-Finnish patriots were opposed to Tyrgils Knutsson's statue. On the contrary, by erecting a monument to the founder of their city, a man who had "laid the foundation for the spiritual and material development of Karelia," the city was only fulfilling its duty.[83] They saw the castle and its founder as heroic defenders of Western culture and values.

Around the year 1900, Russification was experienced in Finland as a violent attempt to destroy Finland's status as a state. Many believed that it was through their Swedish heritage that the Finnish nation and state would be able to secure their survival against Russian imperialism. In one of his novels, written at the height of this political crisis, Ahrenberg described Viipuri Castle as the ultimate bastion of national resistance: "against its strong walls shall the Slavic army be

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78 "I de lagar vi i dag tillämpa spåras än de rättssatser som funnos fastlagna i de gamla lagar Tyrgils Knutson lät kodifiera i Uplandslagen." "Torkel Knutsonstatyns aftäckning," *Hufvudstadsbladet*, October 5, 1908.

79 See, for example, Tuomo Polvinen, *Imperial Borderland. Bobrikov and the Attempted Russification of Finland, 1898–1904* (London: Hurst & Company, 1995).

80 "[. . .] bevarande sina ärfda rättsprinciper och sina ärfda lagar mot allt assimileringsarbete östanfrån." "Tyrgils Knutssons minne," *Wiborgs Nyheter*, October 3, 1908.

81 "Vi veta att denna sedan Tyrgils Knutssons dagar ärfda rätt ytterst är det som skänker lycka åt hvart värk vi här grunda, att blott i dess hägn vårt samhälle kan blomstra vidare upp till fröjd och pris för fosterland och folk." "Tyrgils Knutssons minne," *Wiborgs Nyheter*, October 3, 1908.

82 "Bevara Tyrgils Knutssons arf, den svenska rätten: det är häfdens lärdom, det är den hvita strimman som skall lysa oss mot framtiden." "Tyrgils Knutssons minne," *Wiborgs Nyheter*, October 3, 1908.

83 Hannes Ignatius, Eugen Wolff, E. Polón, Uno Sarén, C. N. Sellgren, Waldemar Fagerström, Tanfred Lojander, William Otsakorpi, and Elis Sirelius, "Muistopatsas Torkel Knuutinpojalle," *Karjala*, November 3, 1906.

crushed."[84] He was convinced that the future of Finland depended on the preservation of Tyrgils Knutsson's memory.

Imagining Race and State

In addition to arguing for the importance of Swedish heritage, Ahrenberg also emphasized Tyrgils Knutsson's Swedishness. Informed by 19th-century theories about human races, he emphasized the medieval hero's "racial" characteristics. At the time, Sweden was often imagined as the cradle of the so-called Scandinavian race, which, according to many race theories, belonged to the Germanic racial category.[85] This race, it was believed, bore an innate inclination towards initiative and action. The capacity for conquest and expansion was likewise seen as specific to the Germanic race. Furthermore, in the words of Robert Knox (1791–1862), the "Saxon or true German, that is, Scandinavian, race" was "the only race which truly comprehends the meaning of the word liberty."[86] Tyrgils Knutsson – the symbol of Swedish power, conquests, and freedoms – was imagined as embodying these racial characteristics.

Racial and even racist discourse is evident in Ahrenberg's writings. He was a personal acquaintance of Arthur de Gobineau (1816–1882), one of the most influential race theorists of the day.[87] Drawing on de Gobineau's theory about the survival of civilizations – in short, that their decadence was caused by the deterioration of human races – Ahrenberg was convinced that the Finns were a weak race, not capable of forming a state of their own. Without the help of the Swedes, without the latter's innate "Aryan" strength and vitality, the Finns would have remained an unknown, uncivilized, and stateless nation within the Russian realm. His thinking implied that it was crucial that the superior position of the Swedes be maintained in Finnish society. The future of Finland as a state depended on their dominance. He wrote:

> [. . .] if the Aryans of the German and Scandinavian race had not taken care of the Finns, they would have become like Bulgarians and Magyars, so that only their grammar would

84 "[. . .] mot dess fasta murar skola slavernas härar krossas." Jac. Ahrenberg, *Med styrkans rätt. Äventyr och strider i österled* (Helsingfors: Söderström & Co., 1899), 246.

85 See, for example, Erik Gustaf Geijer, *Svenska folkets historia 1* (Örebro, 1832), 14.

86 Robert Knox, *The Races of Men: A Fragment* (Philadelphia: Lea & Blanchard, 1850), 40–41; Arthur de Gobineau, *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines*, Tome 4 (Paris: Firmin Didot frères, 1855), 183.

87 Jac. Ahrenberg, *Människor som jag känt*, 37–66.

> have remained of their Finnish origins. The Finnish peoples have never been state builders [. . .] As long as the Swedish blood was strong in our country, [Finland] was united, and it appeared like a state-like entity. Then came the great emigration of the Swedish element, the great Finnish baby boom, and, accordingly, the not-state-building race's dominant position in society. As a consequence, the reciprocal disputes and conflicts show their repulsive physiognomy more and more every year [. . .]. How many Finnish tribes haven't been swallowed by the Slavic hordes, drawn into their whirlpool? Mordovians, Cheremisses, Krevinians, Vepsians, and whatever names these miserable remnant people have, who don't possess any strength to defend their nationality other than their passivity, are all, or have been, our nearest kinsmen. How long their lifetime as a race will last is hard to say, but all scholars say that they are dying, absorbed into the Russian blood.[88]

Ahrenberg was not alone in thinking that the hegemony of the "Swedish element" in Finnish society was of utmost political importance. In addition to de Gobineau's race theories, for instance, his ideas resembled those of August Sohlman (1824–1874), who emphasized that "Finland is a creation of Swedish culture."[89] A common pro-Swedish argument suggested that the Swedes had brought culture and civilization to Finland and that they still played an important role as "the carriers of culture" (*Kulturträger*). Tyrgils Knutsson was believed to have brought with him the "Scandinavian Germanic culture,"[90] which was thriving still.

For Ahrenberg and many other pro-Swedish patriots, it was the Swedes' innate qualities that transformed Finland into a state. "In the Swedish conquests of Finland [. . .] we can trace an expression of the idea of state building, which has always characterized the Scandinavian race."[91] By linking together race and state,

88 "[. . .] hade ej arier af germansk och skandinavisk ras tagit finnarna om hand, så vore de som bulgarerna och magyarerna ombildade, så att endast grammatiken påminde om deras finska ursprung. De finska stammarna ha aldrig varit statbildande [. . .]. Så länge det svenska blodet var starkt i vårt land, hölls detta land samman, hölls ihop, så att det dock gaf ett intryck af en viss statlig enhet. Kom så den stora emigrationen af det svenska elementet, den stora finska nativiteten och därmed den icke statbildande rasens öfvermakt i samhället och de inbördes tvisterna och striderna visa sin år för år allt mera vedervärdiga fysionomi [. . .]. Huru många finska folkstammar har ej det allt uppslukande slaviska folkhafvet dragit in i sina strömhvirflar? Mordviner, Tscheremisser, Kreviner, Vesper och hvad de allt heta dessa eländiga folkrester, som icke besitta någon annan kraft att försvara sin nationalitet än sin passivitet, äro eller ha ju alla varit våra närmaste stamförvanter. Huru lång deras lifstid som ras blir, är ju svårt att ange, men alla forskare säga, att de äro i utdöende, uppsugna i det ryska blodet." Jac. Ahrenberg, "I den stora trätans dagar," *Hufvudstadsbladet*, January 29, 1908.

89 August Sohlman, *Det unga Finland. En kulturhistorisk betraktelse* (Stockholm: C. M. Thimgren, 1855), 18.

90 "Torkel Knutsonstatyns aftäckning," *Hufvudstadsbladet*, October 5, 1908.

91 "I den svenska eröfringen af Finland [. . .], kan man spåra ett utryck för den statsbildande idé, som alltid karaktäriserat den skandiska folkstammen." "Den svenska dagen. Festen i Rådhussalen," *Östra Finland*, November 7, 1908.

they argued that without the Swedes' inherent Germanic vitality, and without their innate inclination for state building, Finland would not prevail against Russian imperialism.

It is significant that in numerous texts about Tyrgils Knutsson, the words "masculine strength," "courage," "vitality," and "wisdom" are constantly repeated. His statue, too, conveyed "resolution" and "determination."[92] In the late 19th century, these characteristics were associated with the Scandinavian race. Ahrenberg wrote that the statue expressed "manly strength and resolution" and that "it conveys them in a very general form, without individualization, it provides a type, not a personal character."[93] Tyrgils Knutsson and his statue thus embodied "Swedish" racial characteristics. In addition to the capacity for conquest, his monuments expressed the Swedes' innate ability to excel at leadership, state formation, and good governance.

Ahrenberg hoped to strengthen the historical and cultural connections between Finland and Sweden through monuments. Tyrgils Knutsson's statue was meant to enhance the main idea of the restored Viipuri Castle: to highlight the Swedish presence in Finland and thus to protect the nation against Russification. He wrote about the castle, that "if it wasn't there, the whole of Eastern Finland would now be similar to the District of Olonets. Only the Swedish genius for statesmanship (*statsmannageni*), with the help of Finnish perseverance, has preserved this region in the fatherland, and this genius, as well as perseverance, sought protection behind the castle's holy walls."[94]

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After the Finnish Civil War in 1918, Tyrgils Knutsson was, once again, radically reinvented. The "Reds," meaning the socialists, adopted former pro-Finnish arguments concerning the medieval figure. For them, he remained "the Swedish oppressor."[95] By contrast, the "Whites," including pro-Finnish nationalists, transformed him into a venerated hero of Finland's independence. Tyrgils Knutsson's monuments – both the statue and the castle – now boldly celebrated that independence.

92 See, for example, "Torkel Knutssons staty," *Spets*, February 26, 1887; "Tyrgils Knutssons minne," *Wiborgs Nyheter*, October 3, 1908; Jac. Ahrenberg, "Torkel Knutsonsstatyn och dess skapare," *Hufvudstadsbladet*, October 3, 1908.

93 "[. . .] den ger oss en fullödig bild af manlig kraft och beslutsamhet. Man kan säga, och man har skäl att säga, att detta ger den en väl allmännelig form utan någon individualisering, den ger en typ och icke en personlig karaktär." Jac. Ahrenberg, "Torkel Knutsonsstatyn och dess skapare," *Hufvudstadsbladet*, October 3, 1908.

94 Jac. Ahrenberg, *Människor som jag känt*, 31.

95 "Se oli ruotsalainen sortaja se Torkkeli Knuutinpoika." *Suomen sosiaalidemokraatti*, April 28, 1927.

In the early decades of the 20th century, Tyrgils Knutsson's memory became increasingly militarized. Photographs of his statue, as well as "his castle" with the Finnish flag, were used to promote a collective will to defend the Finnish nation. As one military magazine maintained: "This energetic man sternly put an end to the prevailing unruliness and inner turmoil in Sweden and re-established order in the country. When the prerequisites of a strong foreign policy had then been created, he vigorously started to advance the nation's interests in the East."[96] The contested medieval figure was transformed anew into a national hero, an exemplary military leader. Prior to the Second World War, his monuments in Viipuri recalled the repeated conflicts between "West" and "East," between "Western freedom" and "Eastern oppression." As one Finnish-language newspaper wrote in 1920: "It seems that Tyrgils Knutsson now stands more beautiful than ever on his pedestal and smirks with a winner's calm."[97]

Conclusion

In the 19th century and beyond, Tyrgils Knutsson served as a mediating figure between the past, present, and future. His memory has been used for various political purposes. For a long time, he was imagined as an exemplary statesman who united the people and brought prosperity and well-being to all. Many cherished this symbol of good governance as a national hero who paved the way to modernity.[98] The Swedish playwright von Beskow portrayed him as an exemplary man who fostered Sweden's independence from Rome's political and spiritual influence. He imagined Tyrgils Knutsson as a proto-Lutheran patriot, a torchbearer of freedom. Furthermore, von Beskow fostered the popular image of the medieval hero as an embodiment of ideal masculinity, courage, and strength, as well as loyalty, kindness, and honesty. As in the medieval *Chronicle of Duke Erik*, Tyrgils Knutsson's reign was often characterized as a brief but happy "golden age."

This medieval figure has been primarily remembered for having imposed Swedish rule and Christianity on the heathen lands of Karelia. This beloved local

96 "Tämä tarmokas mies lopetti ankaralla kädellä Ruotsissa valtaan päässeen kurittomuuden ja sisäiset levottomuudet palauttaen järjestyksen maahan. Kun edellytykset täten voimakkaan ulkopolitiikan ajamiselle oli luotu, ryhtyi hän pontevasti toimiin valtakunnan etujen ajamiseksi idässä." *Sana ja miekka: aikakauslehti puolustustahdon lujittamiseksi* 11 (1927): 202.

97 "Näyttää siltä kuin Torkel Knuutinpoika nyt seisoisi entistä kauniimpana jalustallaan ja hymähtäisi voittajan tyyneydellä." *Karjala*, August 1, 1920.

98 See, for example, "Torkel Knutsonsstatyn och dess skapare," *Hufvudstadsbladet*, October 3, 1908; "Tyrgils Knutsson. Hans bild i historien," *Wiborgs Nyheter*, October 3, 1908.

hero, the founder of Viipuri, was widely commemorated as the disseminator of Western civilization, as the one who brought Swedish laws and social order to Finland in general, and to Karelia in particular. Many 19th-century historians described him as a hero who laid the foundation for Finland as a modern state and nation and for the future state administration. Many believed that preserving his legacy would secure Finland's autonomy and its people's freedoms in turbulent times. A symbol of good governance, Tyrgils Knutsson provided a tool with which to envision Finland's future.

From the 1880s onward, however, this national hero became a focal point of a major controversy about Finland's medieval colonization and its far-reaching consequences. To pro-Swedish nationalists, he had introduced Western social order, including peasant freedom, and, as said, had laid the foundation for Finland's autonomy. To the pro-Finnish side, by contrast, he appeared as the brutal destroyer of the ancient Finns' independence. For them, he represented violence and oppression.

In particular, the architect and author Jac. Ahrenberg sought to revive Tyrgils Knutsson's memory through various monuments. His restoration plan for Viipuri Castle and his idea for a public statue were intended to highlight and strengthen the "Swedish element" in the Finnish-Russian borderland. At a time when statues for colonial heroes were being erected around the world, Tyrgils Knutsson's statue in Viipuri was meant to celebrate not only his heroic deeds but also his racial characteristics. The controversy surrounding his memory reveals that themes of race and colonialism were central, even if today often forgotten, components of the late 19th- and early 20th-century public debate about the Finnish state and nation.

Tyrgils Knutsson's memory has been constantly reinvented. Ultimately, changing notions of civil and political freedom have been at the core of how he has been remembered. Depending on one's point of view, he either introduced civil and political freedoms or restricted such freedoms. For the former, he symbolized independence; for the latter, he represented foreign invaders. A local hero became a national hero; a pro-Swedish hero became a pro-Finnish hero. Today, he is remembered in Finland as the symbol of lost Finnish Viipuri, whereas in Russian Vyborg he appears as a reminder of a bygone, more liberal age.

Figures

Figure 1: Fredrik Wilhelm Scholander: Stage design for Bernhard von Beskow's play Torkel Knutsson. Wikimedia Commons.

Figure 2: Uno Albrecht: "Torkel's Hall," published in *Kaukomieli: Wiipurilaisen osakunnan albumi II*, 1890.

Figure 3: Jac. Ahrenberg: Restoration plan for Viipuri Castle, 1885. The National Archives of Finland, Mikkeli Regional Archive.

Figure 4: Ville Vallgren: Tyrgils Knutsson's plaster statue, photographed by Daniel Nyblin ca. 1887. The Finnish National Gallery.

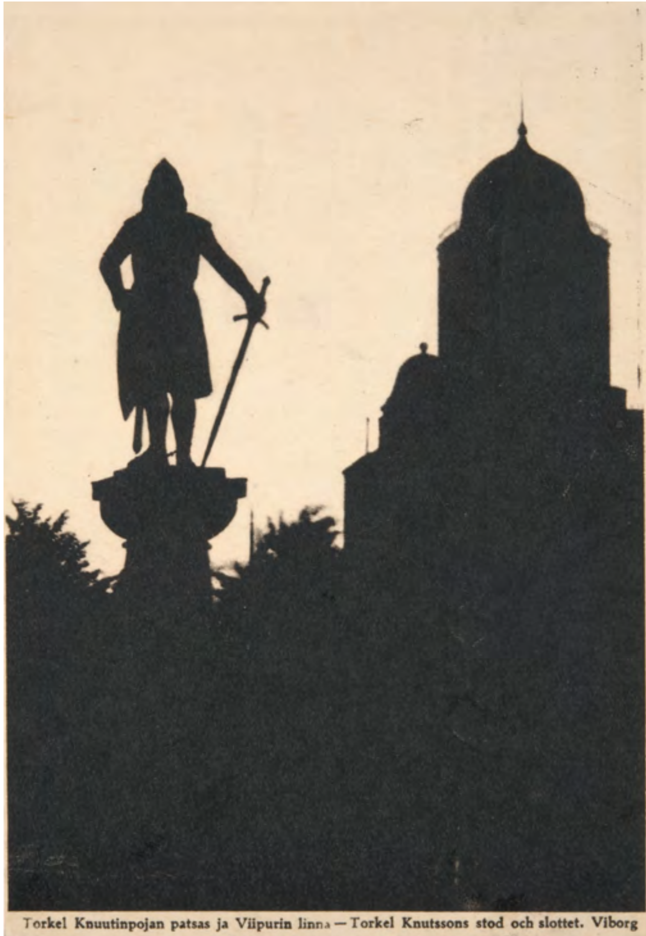

Figure 5: Tyrgils Knutsson's statue and Viipuri Castle in a 1920s postcard. The Finnish Heritage Agency.

Henrik Ågren

St Erik, Reformation, and Enlightenment: Early Modern History Writing on a Swedish Catholic Patron of the Realm

The commemoration and symbolic importance of role models from the past are always dependent on the values of the present.[1] As times change, so do ideas about what is right and wrong, good and bad, commendable and reprehensible. Take, for example, Catholic saints in Protestant countries like Sweden. The Reformation drastically changed saints' positions as role models and within the cultural heritage. This phenomenon is both important and general: how are the heroes of the old system presented after a new order has been established, especially if the transition was violent? Several regimes – and not just newly Protestant ones – have faced similar dilemmas, particularly in modern times. French republicans in the late 1700s and Russian communists in the early 1900s – to give two examples – combined condemnation of the church, the monarchy, and the cultural heritage associated with these institutions, with the realization that there were benefits to grounding their ideologies in their respective countries' pasts. This was enhanced by the fact that the revolutionary identity in both cases, as in many others, was also patriotic. A few examples illustrate how this conflict was resolved in different ways.

Early Soviet history writing painted a generally negative picture of the old Russian society and its agents. Rebels against the czarist regime, like the Cossack leaders Stenka Razin (c. 1630–1671) or Yemelyan Pugachev (c. 1742–1775), served as notable exceptions.[2] An even more inclusive attitude towards the past was shown by late 18th- and 19th-century French radicals, who presented Joan of Arc (d. 1431) as a revolutionary; or by East German authorities when they included Martin Luther (1483–1546), Frederick the Great (1740–1786), and Otto von Bis-

1 This article is a slight revision of Henrik Ågren, "Erik den helige, reformationen och upplysningen – en katolsk rikspatron i eftermedeltida historieskrivning," in *Helgener i nord. Nye studier i nordisk helgenkult*, ed. Magne Njåstad and Randi Bjørshol Wærdahl (Oslo: Novus forlag, 2020): 163–79, based on the research project *St Erik – idol or father of nation? The conception of domestic saints in Swedish history writing in the 17th and 18th centuries*, financed by the Swedish Research Council.

2 Nina Tumarkin, "The Myth of Lenin during the Civil War Years," in *Bolshevik Culture. Experiment and Order in the Russian Revolution,* ed. Abbott Gleason, Peter Kenz, and Richard Stites (Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1985): 77–92, 84.

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marck (1815–1898) in Germany's anti-fascist history.[3] A third strategy was to compare revolutionaries like Marat (1743–1793) or Lenin (1870–1924) with Christian martyrs or with Jesus himself.[4] We see here how the gap between the old history and the new system could be bridged in different ways: promoting dissidents against the old regime, describing that same regime's representatives according to the new authorities' ideal, or giving revolutionary heroes traditional and familiar attributes.[5] This process included not only emphasizing similarities, but also passing over differences, thereby making these less prominent in the collective memory. Furthermore, a first wave of iconoclastic frenzy was often followed by a more forgiving attitude towards the past, especially once the new regime had established itself in power and become more conservative.[6] In other words, different approaches can be identified, but a frequent trait is that attitudes towards role models from the old regime have been ambivalent. Complete condemnation has been as rare as uncritical acceptance.

As shown above, how modern revolutions have related to the previous history and culture has been analysed quite thoroughly. The effect of the Reformation on history writing and the uses of history has been studied less, but the ambivalence of modern revolutions provides a good starting point for such a study. It is reasonable to assume that post-Reformation history writers were faced with the same challenge. There are also important differences, however. The general worldview and the new forms and importance of media separate the early modern Reformation from modern revolutions. What's more, in the French and Russian cases – as in many others – the period dominated by revolutionary values can be measured in years or at most in decades, whereas most Reformation countries remain Protestant centuries later. Therefore, other historical processes, like secularization or disenchantment, can also be expected to have affected the change in attitudes. In light

3 Michel Winock, "Joan of Arc," in *Symbols*, ed. Pierre Nora, transl. Arthur Goldhammer, vol. 3, *Realms of Memory. The Construction of the French Past* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998): 433–80, 440–41; Bo Stråth, "Introduction: Myth, Memory and History in the Construction of Community," in *Myth and Memory in the Construction of Community. Historical Patterns in Europe and Beyond*, ed. Bo Stråth (Bryssel: PIE Lang, 2000): 19–48, 37–38.

4 Albert Soboul, "Religious Feeling and Popular Cults during the French Revolution: 'Patriot Saints' and Martyrs for Liberty," in *Saints and Their Cults. Studies in Religious Sociology, Folklore and History*, ed. Stephen Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985): 217–32, 227–28; Tumarkin, "The Myth of Lenin during the Civil War Years."

5 For a more exhaustive presentation and further examples, see Henrik Ågren, *Kejsarens nya kläder. Historiebruk och kulturarv under tidigmodern reformation och modern revolution* (Uppsala: Opuscula Historica Upsaliensia, 2011), 35–59.

6 Ågren, *Kejsarens nya kläder*, 79–80 and 107.

of this, a Protestant regime's treatment of Catholic figures is an object of study worth analysing in both a short- and a long-term perspective.

Domestic saints are of particular interest. As saints, they definitely represented the value system the Protestant rulers were in conflict with during the Reformation era. As domestic figures, on the other hand, they represented the country, which was another matter. They could (and can) be used to promote the greatness of the country and its inhabitants. In the Swedish case, there were several domestic saints to choose from. From a religious point of view, the most important was the noblewoman St Birgitta (c. 1303–1373), founder of the Birgittine order (Order of the Most Holy Saviour) and Vadstena Abbey. Being female and non-royal, however, she lacked some of the traits that, for example, made the royal St Olaf (995–1030) of neighbouring Norway a suitable representative for a realm and a nation slowly in the making. Sweden did, however, have its own royal saint, and even though his cult was far less popular than Birgitta's, he still grew to become an essential political symbol in medieval Sweden. This saint was the 12th-century King Erik Jedvardson, or St Erik, who died around 1160. At the time of the Reformation he was an important figure, not only as a saint but also as a representative of royal virtues and of the Swedish realm. Therefore, he is a perfect case study for the question of how Protestant historians treated a character from the old – Catholic – system, one who still in some respects represented positive values and national pride.

Historical Background

King Erik ruled Sweden for a short period in the mid-12th century. His reign is usually estimated as taking place in the years 1154–60, but all the information about him is vague – to such an extent that even his existence has been questioned.[7] This did not stop Erik from being a significant person in Swedish history writing, especially before the birth of modern source criticism. The reason is that people at the time *thought* they possessed reliable knowledge of his life and deeds. Practically all that knowledge was obtained from his legend. It contains the standard tropes of hagiographic texts of the period and is today viewed as a source of minimal value, revealing more about the general opinions and values of the 13th-century society in which it was written than facts about Erik's own

7 Knut Stjerna, *Erik den helige. En sagohistorisk studie* (Lund: Gleerup, 1898) and to some extent Mikko Heikkilä, "Sanctus (H)e(n)ricus rex Suetie et sanctus Henricus episcopus Upsalensis – en och samme engelskfödde man?," in *Historisk tidskrift för Finland* 98 (2013): 333–73.

time.[8] Up until the late 19th century, however, it was considered a reliable and valuable source concerning the story it told. Furthermore, it contains a veritable treasure trove of details that fit very well with the moral and political history writing of the medieval and early modern era.[9]

According to this legend, St Erik was a Swedish man of both royal and common ancestry, who was elected king in a situation where the Swedish realm was in want of a leader. His reign was short but successful. Among other deeds, he improved the Swedish law and strengthened Christianity by building churches, supporting the clergy, and initiating a crusade in Finland. Through this latter endeavour, he simultaneously converted the Finns and extended Sweden's borders. Erik is not only described as an able ruler but also as a pious and good person in general. The latter traits were manifested by his fasting and mortification, as well as by his kindness and generosity towards his subjects. For example, his legend claims that Erik refused to accept extra taxes when they were offered to him by the people. As a consequence of the troubled times he lived in, he was attacked and killed by his enemies, led by a Danish prince, when he was about to attend a service in Uppsala. Miracles reported in connection with his death laid the foundation for his cult.[10]

Apart from Erik's life and his cult there is one more central factor behind his importance as a historical role model. His cult was never large or widespread; from the late 12th century to the early 15th it was largely limited to the archdiocese of Uppsala, particularly the region of Uppland, and to the upper classes. Among the peasantry, he was less popular than St Birgitta or St Olaf of Norway, for example.[11] In spite of that, he became a central political symbol of Sweden in the late Middle Ages. The main reason for this was that as a former Swedish king,

8 Sture Bolin, "Erik den helige," in *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon*, 14 (Stockholm: Albert Bonnier, 1953): 248–57, 250; Knut B. Westman, "Erik den helige och hans tid," in *Erik den helige. Historia. Kult. Reliker*, ed. Bengt Thordeman (Stockholm: Nordisk rotogravyr, 1954): 1–108, 47.

9 Concerning older history writing, see, for example, Sten Lindroth, *Medeltiden. Reformationstiden,* vol. 1, *Svensk lärdomshistoria* (Stockholm: Norstedts, 1975), 165–170; Arthur B. Ferguson, *Utter Antiquity. Perceptions of Prehistory in Renaissance England* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 94.

10 "Erik den heliges legend på latin, fornsvenska och modern svenska," in *Erik den helige. Historia. Kult. Reliker*, ed. Bengt Thordeman (Stockholm: Nordisk rotogravyr, 1954 [c. 1270]), xviii–xx.

11 Carl R. af Ugglas, "Helge Erik i motvind. Till frågan om Stockholms stad sigillbild," in *Svenska Dagbladet*, February 3, 1944: A9–10, 9; Ingrid Lundegårdh, "Kampen om den norrländska Olavskulten," in *Helgonet i Nidaros. Olavskult och kristnande i Norden*, ed. Lars Rumar (Stockholm: Riksarkivet, 1997): 115–137; Peter Reinholdsson, *Uppror eller resningar? Samhällsorganisation och konflikt i medeltidens Sverige* (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsalienses, 1998), 52.

St Erik held unique symbolic value for the realm. In late medieval Sweden, several – unofficial – national patrons were mentioned in different contexts; these could vary from one case to the next.[12] Except for Erik, all of these were either non-royal (like Birgitta), non-Swedish (like Olaf), or both (like the English missionary bishops St Sigfrid and St Henrik).[13] Therefore, unlike Erik, none of them could represent institutions of power, such as Swedish laws and the ruling king.

This role became particularly important during the last decades of the Kalmar Union (1397–1523) between Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. During this period, the primarily Danish kings of the Union had no real power in Sweden, and the stewards who ruled the realm lacked royal legitimacy. This, together with conflicts with the Union kings, who represented Denmark, contributed to the need for a general politico-religious symbol of Sweden.[14] St Erik was perfectly suited for the role: he was strongly associated with Swedish law, oaths were taken in his name, his image adorned both coins and the national seal, and he had been killed by Danes.[15] In the early 1500s, Erik was the prime symbol for power and justice in Sweden, perhaps even for the realm as such. His political role had become as important as his religious, if not even more so. This important position is evident in the history writing of the time. In the 1470s, Ericus Olai (c. 1420–1486), canon of Uppsala cathedral, described St Erik with the following words: "The holiness of his life was known and signified by his being, his actions, and his commands throughout his entire lifetime."[16] In the mid-1500s, Sweden's last

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12 Sven Helander, *Den medeltida Uppsalaliturgin. Studier i helgonlängd, tidegärd och mässa* (Lund: Arcus, 2001), 176. The first known mention of Swedish national patrons is from 1371.

13 Anna Nilsén, *Program och funktion i senmedeltida kalkmåleri. Kyrkmålningar i Mälarlandskapen och Finland 1400–1534* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1986), 433; Tuomas Heikkilä, *Sankt Henrikslegenden* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2009), 75.

14 Thomas Lindkvist, "Med Sankt Erik konung mot hedningar och schismatiker. Korståg och korstågsideologi i svensk medeltida östpolitik," in *Väst möter öst. Norden och Ryssland genom historien*, ed. Max Engman (Stockholm: Carlsson, 1996): 13–33, 23; Christian Lovén, "Erikskulten i Uppsala. Dubbelhelgonet och den långa stationsvägen," *Årsboken Uppland* (2004): 7–37, 9; Christian Oertel, *The Cult of St Erik in Medieval Sweden. Veneration of a Christian Saint, Twelfth–Sixteenth Centuries* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016), 259.

15 Henrik Schück, "S. Erik och hans reliker," in *Från det forna Uppsala. Några kulturbilder* (Stockholm: Hugo Gebers, 1917): 1–29, 17; Bengt Thordeman, "Nordens helgonkonungar. Föredrag hållet vid finska vetenskapssocietens sammanträde den 21 september 1959," in *Societas scientiarum Fennica. Årsbok – vuosikirja* XXXVIII (Helsinki: Societas scientiarum Fennica, 1960): B2:1–26, 9, 18; Reinholdsson *Uppror eller resningar*, 51–52; Harald Gustafsson, *Gamla riken, nya stater. Statsbildning, politisk kultur och identiteter under Kalmarunionens upplösningsskede 1512–1541* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2000), 45.

16 Ericus Olai, *De swenskes och göthers historia*, trans. Johannes Sylvius (Stockholm: Nicklas Wankijff, 1678 [c. 1470]), 131. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own.

acting Catholic archbishop, Johannes Magnus (1488–1544), introduced Erik's reign thus: "Now I will tell of our fatherland's brightest light, King Erik, the holy, pious, and godly son of the noble Jedvard."[17]

As a prominent representative for good governance, justice, brotherly love, and especially for the Swedish realm, Erik had a symbolic value that would have been attractive for any ruler or system. In post-Reformation Sweden, this value was challenged by the fact that he was also associated with a saint's cult, fasting, mortification, an independent church, and other elements conceived as Catholic. But even though St Erik's halo lost much of its lustre, there is still reason to study how he was perceived in Protestant Sweden. The fact that his religious significance disappeared does not necessarily mean that his political importance did the same. And, regardless of which sentiments towards Erik dominated among scholars and politicians, it was impossible to ignore that he had once been the king of Sweden. Chronicles and other historical texts had to mention him, one way or the other.

St Erik in Previous History Writing

Modern research on St Erik can be divided into two major fields. One consists of scholars trying to establish some reliable knowledge out of the meagre sources about Erik's own life.[18] Even though such research is valuable and is often done well in its own right, it is not relevant to this study and therefore will not be considered any further. The other research field concerns the memory of St Erik. This field has mainly been concerned with his cult and various ideas about him during the Middle Ages.[19] With the Reformation, the Erik cult disappeared in Sweden, but his memory survived in symbols and history books. How prevalent these were and how widely his name was known is hard to say, but it is obvious from scholarly writing that he was still part of an acknowledged past. Modern historians have shown some interest in his post-Reformation remembrance, which

17 Johannes Magnus, *Svea och Göta krönika . . .*, trans. Erik Schroderus (Stockholm: Ignatium Meurer, 1620 [1554]), 528.

18 For example: Bolin, "Erik den helige"; Westman, "Erik den helige och hans tid"; Jarl Gallén, "De engelska munkarna i Uppsala – ett katedralkloster på 1100-talet," *Historisk tidskrift för Finland* 61 (1976): 1–21. And to some extent: Heikkilä, *Sankt Henrikslegenden*.

19 Amongst many examples, see Nils Ahnlund, "Den nationella och folkliga Erikskulten," in *Erik den helige. Historia. Kult. Reliker*, ed. Bengt Thordeman (Stockholm: Nordisk rotogravyr, 1954): 109–54; Lundegårdh, "Kampen om den norrländska Olavskulten"; Lovén, "Erikskulten i Uppsala"; Oertel, *The Cult of St Erik*.

serves as an example of the problem a Catholic role model poses in a Protestant context. This has, however, always taken the form of shorter reflections in works principally concerned with other matters.[20]

A more thorough study of the depiction of St Erik in Protestant Sweden must consider that the Swedish Reformation was not only a revolution in religious values but also a political process. Attitudes towards Catholic symbols changed for the worse, in parallel with a development whereby the state and the royal power established greater control over the church and religion. Consequently, the government exerted greater influence over cultural and intellectual life. History writing was primarily viewed as a general guide to encourage good behaviour, but it was also supposed to encourage loyalty to the realm.[21] From that perspective, it was problematic that Sweden had been a Catholic country for so long. Kings from that part of history retained symbolic value as venerable predecessors, but what about saints? Could what was right and good be represented by a person associated with miracles and indulgences?

To investigate this question, I have studied Swedish history writing from the period c. 1550 to c. 1800; i.e., from the Reformation until the early Romantic period. As such, this study examines not only the effects of the Reformation but also the more long-term consequences of factors like the Enlightenment, secularization, and so forth. The source material consists mainly of historical chronicles, but antiquarian works, speeches, sermons, poems, and plays have also been included. The overall findings have been published in my monograph *Erik den helige – landsfader eller beläte? En rikspatrons öde i svensk historieskrivning från reformationen till och med upplysningen*[22] (in English, *St Erik – Father of Nation or Idol? The Fate of a Patron of the Realm in Swedish History Writing from Reformation until Enlightenment*). This article is a summary of the most salient findings. It is focused on the question of whether and how the Reformation affected how St Erik was depicted in Swedish history writing, and how this depiction changed over time and what that tells us more generally about a society's relation to its past. Therefore, it has been divided into two parts. The first part considers the Reformation era in the 16th century and the period of Lutheran Orthodoxy in

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20 Martin Lamm, *Olof Dalin. En litteraturhistorisk undersökning av hans verk* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1908), 435; Nils Eriksson, *Dalin, Botin, Lagerbring:. Historieforskning och historieskrivning i Sverige 1747–1787* (Gothenburg: Institutionen för idé och lärdomshistoria vid Göteborgs universitet, 1976), 27.

21 Gustafsson, *Gamla riken, nya stater*, 310–12; Ingun Montgomery, *Enhetskyrkans tid*, vol. 4, *Sveriges kyrkohistoria* (Stockholm: Verbum, 2002), 54.

22 Henrik Ågren, *Erik den helige – landsfader eller beläte. En rikspatrons öde i svensk historieskrivning från reformationen till och med upplysningen* (Lund: Sekel, 2012).

the 17th; the second part examines the Enlightenment tendencies in the 18th century.

St Erik during the Reformation and the Era of Lutheran Orthodoxy

How, then, was Erik's image affected by the Reformation and the centuries that followed? This story is complicated and the answers perhaps unexpected. In general, Erik retained his good reputation. It would have been possible to use him as an example of the superstition and false beliefs of times past, but that did not happen. Instead, historians still portrayed Erik as the perfect king: pious, merciful, and just. The first Protestant chronicle of Swedish history was written by the leading reformer Olaus Petri (1493/1497–1552) around 1540. His work evinces less awe than Catholic historians, like Ericus Olai in the 1470s or Johannes Magnus in the mid-16th century. Still, Olaus describes Erik's lenience with taxes, his lawmaking, and his crusade in Finland with approval.[23] He is also generous when sketching Erik's personal traits: "Of this King Erik, much is written about how well and honourable he behaved as a king." Or: "It is obvious that this King Erik was nothing else than a pious and virtuous man."[24] This attitude characterizes the entire period from the Reformation era until the end of the 18th century. In the 18th century, the attitude became a bit less approving – more about that below – but never to the extent that negative opinions predominated.

There is no room to quote or even to list all the historians who commended St Erik in various ways. A few examples will instead illustrate the continuity. The judgement of Petrus Petrejus (c. 1570–1622) – "He was a god-fearing, just, pious, and virtuous man, and lived an angelic life"[25] – in 1611 is not very different from that of Haquin Spegel (1645–1714) – "He was not only widely famous for his uprightness and piety, but also particularly inclined towards godliness"[26] – in 1708 or that of Jöran Jakob Thomæus (1786–1845) – "Erik Jedwardson, known as the Holy, was a good and skilful king" – in 1812.[27] This last quote, one of the latest

23 Olaus Petri, *En svensk krönika* (Uppsala: Sveriges kristliga studentrörelses förl., 1917 [1540]), 55–56.

24 Olaus Petri, *En svensk krönika*, 55.

25 Petrus Petrejus, *En kort och nyttig krönika . . .* (Stockholm: Ch. Reusner, 1611), 47.

26 Haquin Spegel, *Den svenska kyrkohistorien I* (Linköping: Kempe, 1708), 14–15.

27 Jöran Jakob Thomæus, *Sveriges historia uti kort sammandrag för den spädare ungdomen* (Kristianstad: F. F. Cedergréen, 1812), 15.

statements about Erik in this study, shows that the royal saint was still held in high esteem among Swedish history writers at the time. It is, however, worth noting that his piety is not mentioned. Thomæus had opinions about that, too, but those will be presented below.

Had nothing changed then? Actually, it had, but the changes were more complicated than a total inversion of St Erik from role model to villain. Instead, his good reputation came with a price: Protestant historians in the 16th and 17th centuries kept silent about problematic passages. They were keen to describe Erik's contributions to the justice system or the security of the realm, and they praised his general character, but they were more reluctant to mention details that stood in opposition to their own values. This fact is remarkable in and of itself. It shows that history writing was affected by the Reformation, after all, but it also shows that St Erik as a symbol had value worth preserving. The exemplary king from Sweden's previous history was still needed as a role model. In order to uphold that role, historians had to revise the stories about him.

The religious side of St Erik was toned down, but that did not mean that he was no longer presented as a good Christian. The quotes above show that his piety and deeds to promote Christianity were popular topics. Other examples include Petrus Petrejus claiming that Erik "founded many churches, in God's honour"[28] and Olof Verelius (1618–1682) stating that he "strove to promote the rights of priests, piety, and religion."[29] Johannes Schefferus (1621–1679) thought that Erik's good character was based on "his Christian upbringing and [the fact that] he acted on religious commandments."[30] It is evident that Protestant historians did not view Erik's faith as perverted or misguided in any way. He was a good Christian at heart, just as they were.

When dealing with matters of a more Catholic nature, historians took a different approach. Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century history writing mentioned the Erik cult, but various forms of distancing can be observed. The most common approach was either to mention relics, the feast day, and customs or politics associated with Catholicism without emphasizing their religious importance, or else to omit them completely.[31] Verelius's explicit statement about Erik's efforts on be-

28 Petrejus, *En kort och nyttig krönika . . .*, 48.

29 Olof Verelius, *Epitomarum historiæ Svio-Gothicæ . . .* (Stockholm: Horrn, 1730 [c. 1650]), 57.

30 Johannes Schefferus, *En bok om det svenska folkets minnesvärda exempel*, trans. Birger Bergh (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2005 [1671]), 178.

31 For example: Olaus Petri, *En svensk krönika*, 73; Johannes Messenius, *Tumbae veterum ac nuperorum apud Sueones Gothosque regum, reginarum, ducum . . .* (Stockholm: Reusner, 1611), 11; Laurentius Paulinus Gothus, *Historia Arctoa* (Strängnäs: Barkenius, 1636), 127; Samuel von Pufendorf, *Inledning till svenska historien*, trans. Petrus Brask (Stockholm: Eberhardt, 1688), 84–94.

half of priests was an exception. This piece of information is mentioned in the legend and was stressed by Catholic historians,[32] while Protestants were more cautious addressing it. They viewed strong clerical power and independence as typical of the Catholic Church.[33]

St Erik's personal history was also treated differently by Protestant historians. The legend mentions among his positive qualities that he gave alms to the poor and that he fasted and practised mortification. While these were signs of a good Christian character in the legend, both these customs were viewed with suspicion in Protestant Sweden due to their Catholic connotations. Therefore, most authors ignored them.[34] If they did mention alms, fasting, or mortification, it was worded vaguely. For example, a chronicle written by King Charles IX (1550–1611) reduces the giving of alms to the claim that Erik "was prone to help the poor."[35] The cryptic formulation used by the royal historian Johannes Loccenius (1598–1677), that Erik "groomed his body, mainly out of concern for his soul," refers to fasting and mortification.[36]

To summarize, 16th- and 17th-century historians did not emphasize any fundamental difference between Erik's faith and their own. In their eyes, there was no insuperable conflict between older Catholic and contemporary Protestant Christianity. A medieval Christian's faith was fundamentally good, and the bad aspects of Catholicism were mostly unfortunate side issues, which one was best to ignore or tone down.

In other words, St Erik was not judged more harshly than before the Reformation, at least not initially. However, his position as a historical role model declined. This diminishing importance is to some extent discernible in history writing itself. For example, historians became a bit more sceptical towards information from the legend. This is best illustrated by Laurentius Petri's (1499–1573, reformer and brother of Olaus Petri) statement: "Of this King Erik, much has been both said and written, among which some is true, and some is of such character that wise people may listen to it as much as it pleases them, because it has a strong flavour of papal sourdough."[37] The statement does not contain any criti-

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32 "Yngre redaktion av Lilla rimkrönikan," in *Svenska medeltidens rimkrönikor*, vol. 1, ed. G. E. Klemming (Stockholm: Norstedt & söner, 1865 [c. 1520]): 254–88, 282–83; Magnus, *Svea och Göta krönika . . .*, 531.

33 Ågren, *Erik den helige – landsfader eller beläte*, 138, 141.

34 Ågren, *Erik den helige – landsfader eller beläte*, 154.

35 Karl IX, "Historiska betraktelser," ed. S. Clason, in *Historisk Tidskrift* 26 (1906 [c. 1590]): 127–52, 134.

36 Johannes Loccenius, *Historiae Svecanae a primo rege Sveciae usque ad Carolum XI . . . libri tres* (Frankfurt: Joachim Widius, 1676 [1654]), 77.

37 Laurentius Petri, "Svenska chrönika," in *Scriptorum rerum Svecicarum Medii Aevi II:2*, ed. Eric Michaël Fant (Uppsala: Palmblad et soc., 1828 [c. 1560]): 1–160, 64.

cism of Erik as a person; however, it questions the foundation for his excellent reputation and points out that some details may be fabricated. By doing so, Laurentius Petri indirectly reduces Erik's value as a symbol of virtue or holiness. A pure symbol should not be questioned; indeed, medieval and Reformation-era Catholic history writing alike did not express any such reservations.[38] Right from the start, however, Protestant historians made it clear that Erik was no longer above questioning.

St Erik's deteriorating status is even more evident in speeches, sermons, poems, and the like. During the second half of the 16th century, Erik remained one of the most popular choices when kings or princes were being compared with a predecessor. Starting approximately a decade or so into the 17th century, however, he was gradually replaced – first by the Reformation King Gustav Vasa (c. 1495–1560), later by other post-Reformation Swedish kings – until he finally disappeared from such works altogether.[39]

In a poem written in 1743, when Adolf Frederick of Holstein-Gottorp (1710–1771) was elected heir to the Swedish throne, Erik's absence is particularly striking: the king is asked to live up to "Adolf in war and Fredrik in peace," to "be Carol in the good years and Carol in the bad," to be Nearch "who gave us a golden time," to support Sweden like "Segersäll" did, and to be "Magnus Ladulås, Stenkil and Ingo."[40] Footnotes to the poem explain who the role models were that Adolf Frederick was expected to emulate. Adolf is Gustavus Adolphus (1594–1632), the hero of the Thirty Years' War, and Fredrik is Adolph Frederick's direct predecessor, Frederick I (1676–1751), whose reign was remarkably peaceful by Swedish standards. Carol in the good years is King Charles XI (1655–1697), who also reigned during a peaceful time with stable finances, and Carol in the bad is his son Charles XII (1682–1718), under whom Sweden was brought close to ruin in the Great Northern War. Nearch is a mythical king in the Gothicist tradition, whose time was known as a golden age. The last four kings are all medieval. Segersäll is the Viking King Erik the Victorious (d. c. 995), a successful warrior. Magnus Ladulås (d. 1290) is known for having strengthened both Swedish law and the Swedish church. Stenkil (d. c. 1065) and his grandson Ingo or Inge the Younger (d. c. 1125) were pivotal in establishing Christianity in Sweden.

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38 For example: Ericus Olai, *De swenskes och göthers historia*, 126–36; "Yngre redaktion av Lilla rimkrönikan," 282–86; Magnus, *Svea och Göta krönika . . .*, 528–34.

39 Ågren, *Erik den helige – landsfader eller beläte*, 208–9. The same can said of the value of having St Erik among one's ancestors: this was still being emphasized in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, but less so later on. Ågren, *Erik den helige – landsfader eller beläte*, 211.

40 Andreas Hesselius, *Underdånig lyckönskan över . . . Adolph Fredrik . . .* (Stockholm: Peter Göransson Nyström, 1743).

We see here a number of Swedish kings, together representing the most well-known of the positive qualities St Erik was usually associated with. He was a warrior king who protected the country; his reign was a golden age, and he was a pious man who promoted law and faith. Despite that, his name is absent when strength, prosperity, justice, and piousness are being hoped for in the new king. The fact that several of the mentioned figures were medieval kings shows that this absence was not due to a general aversion to that era. Instead, the reason is that Erik gradually became irrelevant. Opinions about his life and deeds did not change into their opposite, but he was no longer Sweden's once-and-eternal king. The time when his picture was the obvious choice for the national seal was gone. From this it can also with near certainty be deduced that he was no longer a central character in the national collective memory. Whether this was due to the Reformation or to the fact that Sweden had found new heroes in more modern kings is hard to say. An educated guess is that the Reformation was a precondition but not the primary factor for the marginalization of St Erik.

St Erik during the Enlightenment Era

A more thorough re-evaluation of St Erik did eventually occur. However, this re-evaluation was not a direct consequence of the Reformation, even though it was distinguished by solidly anti-Catholic sentiments. It was instead the Enlightenment and related ideas that lay behind these less positive opinions of the royal saint.

Prior to roughly 1690, it is almost impossible to find a single negative word about St Erik in Swedish history writing. After that, a more critical attitude became more and more pronounced. At first, criticisms were selective and not primarily aimed at Erik but at his cult, a topic earlier Protestant historians had avoided. The Uppsala student Petrus Höök's (1689–1756) dissertation tells us, for example, that the holiday of St Erik (May 18) survived as a fair after "the mists of the Roman religion had dispersed."[41] The National Antiquarian (*riksantikvarien*). Johan Peringskiöld (1654–1720) was even more explicit when he claimed that the Erik cult was an example of "simple-minded people's false beliefs and delusions during the papal reign."[42] Historians of the 16th and 17th centuries had tried to ignore the Catholic side of St Erik, thereby emphasizing continuity and affinity.

41 Petrus Höök and Fabian Törner, *De Erico IX sive Sancto* (Uppsala: Werner, 1712), 41.

42 Johan Peringskiöld, *Monumenta Ullerakerensia cum Upsala Nova illustrata ellerUlleråkers härads minningsmärken med nya Uppsala* (Stockholm: Horrn, 1719), 54.

Their early 18th-century successors, on the other hand, singled out these traits, with the intent to alienate the present from the past. To an increasing degree, medieval Swedes were now placed in the role of the Other. Still, flat-out criticism of the old patron of the realm remained too big a step to take.

In history books from the mid-18th century, however, it is evident that Erik himself had started to become a target of criticism. At the time, such criticisms were relatively mild and were primarily associated with perceived Catholic details. Royal Historiographer (*rikshistoriograf*) Anders af Botin (1724–1790) gave a mixed review of St Erik's personality: "His life was a mixture of good and bad, a sum of Christian virtues and superstitious customs; his heart was sound and benign, but his mind was weak, deceived, and corrupted."[43] Af Botin did not dispute the picture of Erik as pious and benevolent, but he weakened it considerably with his qualification. Samuel Loenbom (1725–1776) rendered a similar judgement. In a generally strongly favourable presentation of Erik, he also remarked that he "granted the clergy harmful privileges."[44] In other words, superstition, a failing intellect, and promotion of clerical influence were stains on the memory of an otherwise exemplary monarch.

By the end of the century, this negative development had gone even further. St Erik was now openly criticized – not often, but more than just occasionally. Furthermore, the negative statements now included more than just typical Catholic traits. The aforementioned Thomæus provides an example of this, in a comment about Erik's piety: "his godliness, although mixed with heresy, seems to have been sincere."[45] Thomæus's judgement was nuanced, but a few decades earlier, the publicist Carl Christopher Gjörwell (1731–1811) had stated that among Erik's faults was "an exaggerated godliness, which we now call superstition."[46] According to Gjörwell, it was not only the nature of Erik's piety but also its intensity that merited reproach. Secularization had started to make itself known and contributed to lowering the esteem in which Erik had been held.

This deteriorating esteem was not limited to Catholic details or to the degree of St Erik's religiosity. Gradually, his efforts in other areas were also judged more and more harshly. Two cases that illustrate this are the war against the Finns and his generosity towards the poor.

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43 Anders af Botin, *Sjätte tidevarvet*, vol. 4, *Utkast till svenska folkets historia* (Stockholm: Lars Salvius, 1764 [1760]), 162.

44 Samuel Loenbom, *Kort inledning till svenska historien och statskunskapen* (Stockholm: Kungl. tryckeriet, 1768), 24.

45 Thomæus, *Sveriges historia uti kort sammandrag*, 15.

46 Carl Christopher Gjörwell, *Caracteren av Sveriges regenter alltifrån överdrotten Oden till konung Gustaf III* (Stockholm: Carlbohm, 1793), 210.

Erik's attack on Finland had always been perceived as both a Christian and a worldly initiative. It was partly a crusade to spread Christianity, partly a response to Finnish raids on Swedish coastal areas and an opportunity to expand Sweden's borders. Early Protestant historians viewed the expedition positively, as shown by Laurentius Petri in the 16th century:

> Through his journey to Finland, he won great honour. First, because he fought in a manly way, won a victory, and forced the enemy to peace, for they often conducted harmful attacks on our borders. Furthermore, he thereby spread and extended Christianity. Because he did not give the enemy any peace until they all had received the Christian faith and accepted to be baptized.[47]

Similarly, as stated by Samuel von Pufendorf (1632–1694) in the 17th century: "Moreover, this Erik has undertaken a great war expedition against the Finns, who were still inclined to the pagan delusion and unwilling to accept Swedish dominion. These he fortunately brought to obedience and Christian faith."[48] In the 18th century, especially in its second half, attitudes were sometimes different. Fredrik Conrad Broman (1758–1800) spoke for many, if not all, contemporary historians in 1782: "This king's well-intentioned aim was undeniably praiseworthy, but the inhumane violence he used is a regrettable sign of that era's destructive ideas and delusions."[49] Although this quote is not entirely negative, the differences when compared to earlier historians are evident. According to Broman, the ends did not justify the means. Furthermore, the reader does not have to wonder why Erik's "well-intentioned aim" resulted in "inhumane violence." The reason was the medieval Catholic mentality.

Anders af Botin's description of Erik's concern for the common people is less explicit concerning the cause but arguably illustrates the changed attitude even better. In the mid-17th century, Johannes Loccenius made the following comment about Erik's refusal to accept taxes: "Lust for money was despised by him, as unworthy of a sovereign, being well pleased with his ordinary incomes."[50] Af Botin, on the other hand, had this to say: "Through unlimited generosity to the poor, he filled the country with useless loafers."[51] A caring patriarch had been turned into a naïve slouch.

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47 Laurentius Petri, "Svenska chrönika," 65.

48 von Pufendorf, *Inledning till svenska historien*, 76.

49 Fredrik Conrad Broman, *Anteckningar uti svenska kyrkohistorien* (Stockholm: A. J. Nordström, 1782), 54.

50 Loccenius, *Historiae Svecanae*, 75.

51 af Botin, *Sjätte tidevarvet*, 59.

Times changed, and with them, opinions about the man who had once been called "our fatherland's brightest light." It was, however, not entirely due to conflicts between Lutheran and Catholic Christianity. The perspective expressed by af Botin is more inspired by mercantilist ideas about the value of work. This illustrates how 18th-century Enlightenment ideas – secularization, criticism of authorities, mercantilism – played a greater role in the re-evaluation of St Erik than the Reformation as such. It is possible that the previously mentioned marginalization was a precondition for this development: when Erik became less important as a symbol and role model, and probably less prominent in the collective memory, it became easier to criticize him. This interpretation is, however, not self-evident and as such must remain tentative.

Conclusion

St Erik's role and reputation in Swedish history writing were clearly affected by the Reformation, as they were by other factors in the centuries to come. However, his good reputation remained mainly intact, especially through the 16th and 17th centuries. While no re-evaluation was made during this time, historians did downplay or kept quiet about the Catholic aspects of his story. This silence shows that these parts of Erik's legacy were deemed problematic after the Reformation, but it also shows that he had a symbolic value worth protecting. Historians omitted what was no longer viewed as edifying, with Erik remaining the role model they wanted him to be. This rejection of Erik's faith was only partial, however. The parts that were omitted or downplayed were unmistakably Catholic, whereas Erik's beliefs and efforts for Christianity in general were praised. Historians of the 16th and 17th centuries were not interested in creating a conflict between past and present. Continuity was important, even though the break between the old system and the new had been dramatic.

Initially, therefore, the primary change was not re-evaluation but marginalization. With time, Erik became less and less significant as a symbol and role model. Partly, this was a consequence of the Reformation, but a more important factor was that other kings replaced Erik. Gustav Vasa, in particular, replaced Erik in the role of father of the nation. As a consequence, St Erik seems to have been exiled to the periphery of collective memory. He was simply no longer an important character in the construction of the Swedish self-image. This change had already started in the first half of the 17th century, and it became obvious in the 18th.

A more thorough re-evaluation of St Erik also took place during the 18th century. Now, both he and the times he lived in could function as an antithesis to the present. Initially, it was primarily the specifically Catholic parts of Erik's story that were criticized, and especially those about his cult rather than those about his own acts and beliefs. Later in the century, the scope of criticism broadened. Even though favourable judgements of St Erik still predominated at the time, one can find criticisms that would have been unthinkable for historians of earlier centuries, whether Protestant or Catholic. In other words, the Enlightenment affected the view of the past more than the Reformation did.

This last observation deserves a final comment. One of the starting points for this article was that dramatic politico-ideological changes significantly affect the relationship with the past. The Reformation was one such dramatic change, and it has been compared with modern revolutions.[52] The Enlightenment, of course, also had a significant impact on cultural life. Still, it was more of a school of thought and less of a fundamental change in politics, economics, or social relations. This is particularly true concerning Sweden, where the Enlightenment was never as radical as in, for example, France or Scotland. It has even been suggested that Sweden never truly experienced an Enlightenment.[53] Therefore, it is worth noting that in at least one field, such a mild trend affected the views to a much greater extent than a tumultuous occasion like the Reformation. Not every significant change is caused by a dramatic event.

52 Robert Kingdon, "Was the Protestant Reformation a Revolution? The Case of Geneva," in *Church Society and Politics. Papers Read at the Thirteenth Summer Meeting and the Fourteenth Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. Derek Baker (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975): 203–22.

53 Tore Frängsmyr, *Sökandet efter upplysningen. En essä om 1700-talets svenska kulturdebatt* (Höganäs: Wiken, 1993), 183–84.

Shared Heritage

Mart Kuldkepp

The Story of Sigtuna's Destruction (1187) and Estonian Nationalism, 1868–1940

Several medieval and early modern sources on Swedish history tell us of a major event that is said to have occurred in 1187. In that year, it is said, some pagans arrived in Sweden from the east, killed the archbishop of the important Swedish town of Sigtuna, and destroyed the settlement itself. Sigtuna, which in the 11th and 12th centuries had been the most important town in the Lake Malar area, was thereby reduced in status – especially in comparison to the emerging regional centre of Stockholm – and would subsequently remain a place of only local importance.

According to some of these sources, the eastern pagans in question were Estonians. Based on this assumption, in the 19th century the story of Sigtuna's destruction was integrated into the Estonian national discourse and transmitted to subsequent generations as an ancient heroic feat carried out by the ancestors of modern-day Estonians. As such, it was evoked as evidence of the spectacular fighting prowess of the Estonians' forefathers and of their level of political organization before the early 13th-century crusades; even, somewhat paradoxically, as evidence of close Estonian–Swedish relations in the distant past.[1] In this chapter, I will present a short overview of the role that the "Sigtuna story" played in the broader discourse of Estonian nationalism and how it was used by Estonian cultural and intellectual elites to further the goals of the national movement.

By the early 20th century, Estonians were a territorial national minority in the Russian Empire, inhabiting the northern part of what were at the time its Baltic provinces (Estonia and Northern Livonia). Having gone through a national awakening in the second half of the 19th century, the more educated Estonians – the leaders of the national movement – developed a natural interest in their ancestors from the distant past. Certainly, those Estonians who happened to spend time in Sigtuna found it to be an emotional experience. In August 1917, the town was visited by the famous Estonian politician and one-time German agent Aleksander Kesküla (1882–1963), who was later suspected of having acted as an intermediary

1 There are many parallel cases of ancient military feats being transformed into sources of national pride in the modern era. A notable example is the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest (9 AD). See Herbert W. Benario, "Arminius into Hermann: History into Legend," *Greece & Rome* 51, no. 1 (2004): 83–94.

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between Lenin and the German authorities in the first years of the war.[2] Kesküla sent several picture postcards depicting Old Sigtuna's medieval ruins to his friend Gisbert von Romberg (1866–1939), the German envoy to Bern. On the reverse of the postcards, Kesküla explained confidently that "Sigtuna was destroyed in July 1187 by an Estonian punitive expedition" and that "after Sigtuna's destruction, Stockholm was built up and made into the new capital." Boastfully driving his point home, Kesküla added that "today, Sigtuna has 300 inhabitants and one policeman."[3]

Twenty years later, in 1937, Sigtuna was visited by a group of Estonian students from the Tartu Gymnasium for Girls. Describing their trip, the newspaper *Postimees* noted that "the visitors became particularly excited when visiting the ruins of Sigtuna, where they enthusiastically sang the song 'Estonia, My Fatherland!'"[4] Clearly, this patriotic outburst had been inspired by the girls' pride in Sigtuna's destruction by ancient Estonians.

These two examples of Sigtuna's magnetic appeal for Estonians are perhaps somewhat more vivid than the norm, but they are far from being isolated cases. In Estonia, the story of Sigtuna's destruction remained salient for decades and came to be used for several different purposes. For anyone with a more granular interest in the development of Estonian nationalism, it is therefore pertinent to ask how and why Sigtuna became an important site of memory for Estonians, and what kind of role it has played in Estonian nationalist discourse. This chapter does exactly that, by exploring the functions of the Sigtuna narrative in Estonian nationalism and suggesting possible factors behind its position of relative importance.

In the context of this volume, the Estonian Sigtuna story provides yet another example of how (supposed) medieval acts of heroism were promoted, transformed, and instrumentalized in service of modern nation-building projects in the Baltic Sea region. But at the same time, the importance of the Sigtuna narrative is not limited to the Estonian national story alone: it is an inherently transnational phenomenon, in that it involves both Estonia and Sweden and, more broadly, interactions between the west and the east of the region.

I will focus on the period up until the Soviet takeover in 1940, but examples of Sigtuna's continuing appeal for Estonians could certainly also be found from the 1990s on. In future, parallel case studies of Sigtuna's destruction could also be added from Latvia, Russia, Finland, and possibly elsewhere. It would also be use-

2 About Kesküla, see Arens, Olavi, "Aleksander Kesküla," *Eesti Teaduste Akadeemia Toimetised. Ühiskonnateadused* 40, no. 1 (1991): 28–36.

3 Kesküla's postcards to Romberg, August 10, 1917, Bern 1324, L248744-L428746, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are made by the author.

4 "T.T.G. abiturientide laul kõlas Sigtuna varemeil," *Postimees* June 15, 1937.

ful to compare the story of Sigtuna in Estonian nationalism to other narratives of past heroic deeds, such as the St George's Night uprising of 1343–1345.[5]

Pagans from the East

Before turning to the topic of Estonian nationalism, it is worth briefly revisiting the relevant sources from the Middle Ages and the early modern period, since the identity of the "eastern pagans" who supposedly bore responsibility for Sigtuna's destruction is far from certain. The earliest known written source on these events, a set of annals from 1263, notes rather tersely that in 1187 the town of Sigtuna was destroyed and Archbishop Johan killed.[6] Another, much later set of annals from the 14th century adds that those responsible for the deed were pagans who had arrived from the east.[7] A few other sources go into slightly more detail about the origin of said pagans. The *Chronicle of Duke Erik* (*Erikskrönikan*), a lengthy rhymed chronicle written in the 1320s or the 1330s, claims that the attackers were Karelians.[8] The 16th-century Swedish historians Olaus Petri (1493–1552) and Johannes Magnus (1488–1544) surmise that the attackers were Estonians. Another historian, Johannes Messenius (1579–1636), claims at one point in his book that the attackers were Estonians, at another that they were Curonians.[9] In summary, it seems that the authors of these Swedish sources were not particularly concerned with exactly where the pagans had come from, simply agreeing that their place of origin was somewhere in the east.

It is therefore far from clear who exactly attacked and destroyed Sigtuna in 1187 – Estonians? some other pagans? – and, indeed, there are doubts as to whether any destruction on such a scale took place at all. Archaeological excavations conducted in 1988–1990 failed to locate the telling layer of ash that would constitute evidence of the town burning down in the late 12th century. Even if a force of eastern pagans did attack Sigtuna in this period, it seems that the town

5 About St George's Night in the context of Estonian nationalism, see Marge Allandi, "Kolm told: Jüriöö, võidupüha, laulupidu," *Ajalooline Ajakiri. The Estonian Historical Journal* 2, no. 3 (2014): 173–206.

6 Johan was actually archbishop of Uppsala, since Sigtuna had ceased to be a bishopric in the 1160s.

7 Philip Line, *Kingship and State Formation in Sweden* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 333.

8 *The Chronicle of Duke Erik: A Verse Epic from Medieval Sweden*, trans. Erik Carlquist and Peter C. Hogg (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2012).

9 Enn Tarvel, "Sigtuna hävitamine 1187. aastal," *Tuna. Ajalookultuuri ajakiri* 2 (2007): 24–27, 24–26.

was not completely destroyed. Contemporary written sources provide researchers with strong evidence that Sigtuna remained an important urban centre for the next 50 years after its supposed demise.[10] However, it is also well established that Sigtuna's importance did indeed begin to decline in the 13th century, most likely as a result of navigational problems that worsened over time due to Sweden's post-glacial rebound, as well as increased trade competition from Stockholm and Uppsala.[11]

One very likely reason why the story of Sigtuna's destruction made it into the Swedish realm's written sources in the first place, remained there for the following centuries, and attracted additional detail and embellishment over time, is in fact because it provided an explanation for Sigtuna's decline and the corresponding rise of Stockholm. The sources themselves also support this interpretation: the Visby chronicle (*Chronica Visbycensis*), written in the 15th century, claims that Stockholm was established when Sigtuna was destroyed.[12] Several 17th-century sources even claim that the founders of Stockholm must have been the former burghers of Sigtuna, who had ended up townless due to their settlement having been destroyed by the eastern pagans.[13] In other words, the story of Sigtuna's destruction was part of the origin narrative of Stockholm. This is what made this event significant for Swedish authors. Where exactly the eastern pagans had come from was, from their point of view, relatively unimportant.

Nevertheless, the historical importance of Sigtuna's destruction narrative was not limited to Sweden. For Sweden's eastern neighbours – the descendants of the supposed destroyers of Sigtuna – the story came to have a different resonance in the modern era. For them, it was less about the origins of Stockholm and more about daring warriors, possibly their ancestors, embarking on a dangerous expedition over the sea that culminated in a successful siege and sacking of the Swedish capital – one that was so successful that Sigtuna had to relinquish its capital status. And since the Swedish authors had paid little attention to where exactly the pagans had come from, several peoples to the east of Sweden could conceivably lay claim to this ancient feat.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, a remarkable number of historians, writers, and activists from national movements east of Sweden took a liking to the story of Sigtuna's destruction, with Finns, Russians, Latvians, and Estonians alike trying to connect the eastern pagans to their own – rather than someone else's – forefa-

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10 Tarvel, "Sigtuna hävitamine 1187. aastal," 27.

11 Tarvel, "Sigtuna hävitamine 1187. aastal," 27.

12 Göte Paulsson, ed., *Annales Suecici Medii Aevi: Svensk Medeltidsannalistik* (Lund: Gleerup, 1974).

13 Line, *Kingship and State Formation in Sweden*, 333.

thers.[14] The relevant historical and archaeological evidence was thin, not to speak of the fact that attributing medieval raids to modern nationalities was in itself a dubious exercise. Nevertheless, the event was appealing enough to warrant numerous attempts to ascribe Sigtuna's destruction to one's own ethnic group.

An interesting example of how different national perspectives could clash on this issue is provided by a 1935 travelogue about a trip to Sweden. It is narrated by an Estonian who was travelling together with a Finn and a Latvian. The stop at Sigtuna is made at the Estonian's suggestion, to which the others agree. One of them, the Latvian, buys a local travel guide, which – since the Swedes are "honest people," as the narrator puts it – contains "correct information" about Estonians having been responsible for the town's destruction. Nonetheless, the Latvian cannot believe that Estonians could have done such a thing, claiming – to the Estonian's dismay – that "they couldn't even win their War of Independence without Latvian assistance." Indeed, the real destroyers of Sigtuna must have been Latvians. At which point, the Finn intervenes in the conversation and corrects both of his companions by saying that, in fact, those responsible had been Karelians. The Latvian immediately agrees to this statement, suggesting that the heroic feat must have been a Latvian-Karelian joint effort.[15]

The Destruction of Sigtuna in Early Estonian Nationalism

As previously noted, Estonians are only mentioned as the perpetrators of Sigtuna's destruction in later Swedish sources from the 16th and 17th centuries. In itself, however, this does not prove that the pagans who attacked Sigtuna could not have come from present-day Estonia. Given the Estonian mainland's – and especially its islands' – proximity to Sweden, it was even perhaps the most likely proposition. Equating the eastern pagans with Estonians certainly came naturally to the leaders of the Estonian national movement in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

The first amongst them to popularize this theory was Carl Robert Jakobson (1841–1882) in his *Esimene isamaa kõne* (First Patriotic Speech) of 1868, which ap-

14 Linda Kaljundi, "Challenging Expansions. Estonian Viking Novels and the Politics of Memory in the 1930s," in *Novels, Histories, and Novel Nations: Historical Fiction and Cultural Memory in Finland and Estonia*, ed. Linda Kaljundi, Eneken Laanes, and Ilona Pikkanen (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2015): 182–207, 195.

15 "Ümber Läänemere 6. Kriis Rootsi vaimumaailmas – Upsalas ja Sigtuna varemeis," *Vaba Maa* November 25, 1935.

peared in print two years later.[16] Jakobson's speech was an early and very influential attempt to narrate Estonian history from the Estonian national point of view, which significantly diverged from earlier, Baltic German history writing, both in terms of emphasis and fundamental structure. As pointed out by the literary scholar Jaan Undusk, Baltic German histories of the Baltic provinces[17] had a linear character: they recounted the journey from pagan barbarism to Christianization, and subsequently the Reformation. As far as the indigenous peoples of the Baltics were concerned, the Baltic German narrative predicted their unavoidable incremental Germanization.[18]

The Jakobsonian understanding of Estonian history was completely different: it emphasized the resilience of the Estonian nation rather than its inevitable demise. It was also cyclical rather than linear in structure: in Jakobson's narrative, the time before the Northern Crusade became the Estonian golden age, "the time of light," and the following era of serfdom and domination by Baltic German landowners became "the time of darkness." Finally, the time of national awakening in the 19th century became, in its turn, "the time of dawn" – which implied some promise of a return to the original state of enlightenment.[19]

In this framework, Jakobson made use of the story of Sigtuna's destruction (likely relying on Olaus Petri's work, or a retelling of it) as a convenient way to demonstrate the worthiness of ancient Estonians in the "time of light." Before being reduced to serfdom, it seemed that Estonians had been verifiably capable of destroying the capital of a neighbouring state. This, in turn, must have meant that the Estonians were able to accomplish many other impressive things, too. This basic argument remained a mainstay of the subsequent Estonian discourse about Sigtuna. Furthermore, Jakobson's narrative includes other features that were typical of the Estonian version of the story, including the observation that Sigtuna's destruction had led to Stockholm becoming the new capital of Sweden and the equation of Sigtuna's destroyers with Estonians, without mentioning any other possible interpretations. Interestingly, Jakobson also claims, based on unknown (if any) sources, that the local people in Sweden had retained a living oral

16 Carl Robert Jakobson, "I. Eestirahva valguse-, pimeduse-, ja koiduaeg," in *Kolm isamaa kõnet. Kriitiline väljaanne käsikirjast kommentaaride ja järelsõnaga*, ed. Rudolf Põldmäe (Tallinn: Eesti Raamat, 1991 [1870]): 11–32.

17 Before 1917, the territory of present-day Estonia was split between the governorates of Estonia and Livonia.

18 Jaan Undusk, "Ajalootõde ja metahistoorilised žestid. Eesti ajaloo mitmest moraalist," *Tuna. Ajalookultuuri ajakiri* 2 (2000): 114–130, 117–18.

19 Undusk, "Ajalootõde ja metahistoorilised žestid," 117–18.

tradition about Sigtuna's destruction, and particularly about how brave its Estonian destroyers had been.[20]

This claim about the Swedish folk tradition seems strange, at least at first sight. Why would a nation whose capital had been destroyed by foreign invaders attribute any bravery to said invaders? Arguably, Jakobson would have been more credible had he claimed that the local Swedes still harboured resentment towards the "brave Estonians." But some further factors need to be considered. Firstly, Jakobson was naturally not interested in showing Estonians in any negative light: his concept of Estonian history was focused on promoting the idea of Estonians as innocent victims of foreign (especially Baltic German) oppression, long-suffering as they had been throughout their "time of darkness." Even an act like Sigtuna's destruction therefore had to be described as an example of Estonian bravery, rather than one of unprovoked violence. Secondly, Estonians had a stake in emphasizing their historical ties to Scandinavia and particularly Sweden, a positive cultural orientation that offered an alternative to the *Kulturträger* pretentions of the Baltic Germans. By linking their ancestors to Scandinavian – Viking – culture, it was possible to minimize the supposed civilizing role of the crusading Teutonic knights.[21]

To make such an interpretation of Sigtuna's destruction possible, it was important to argue that the town had been destroyed in an act of righteous revenge for some comparable act that had previously been undertaken against Estonians. Jakobson comes up with such a justification by arguing that in 1186 the Danish king had unsuccessfully tried to attack some Estonian seafarers, which was what entitled the Estonians to take revenge by attacking Sigtuna, a town that – as Jakobson claims, seemingly without any grounds whatsoever – was ruled by the king of Denmark at the time.[22]

Perhaps due to the paucity of sources, but also possibly due to literature's inherent subversive potential to challenge dominant historical narratives, Sigtuna's destruction soon became a favourite theme for fictional treatment.[23] Estonian authors who came to write fictional narratives about Sigtuna's destruction by Estonians preferred to adopt other grounds for revenge. One of them, Karl August Hermann (1851–1909), published a novella in 1886 entitled *Auulane ja Ülo* (Auulane and Ülo), where revenge is provoked by Swedish Vikings kidnapping a young Estonian woman called Linda, the daughter of the Estonian elder Auulane.

20 Jakobson, *Kolm isamaa kõnet*, 19.

21 See Mart Kuldkepp, "The Scandinavian Connection in Early Estonian Nationalism," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 44, no. 3 (2013): 313–38, 327–28.

22 Jakobson, *Kolm isamaa kõnet*, 19.

23 Kaljundi, "Challenging Expansions," 183.

Linda's fiancé Ülo ends up following the Vikings and his bride to Sweden, where he and his men destroy Sigtuna and rescue Linda. Throughout the story, Hermann emphasizes that the Swedes and Estonians should be seen as equals.[24] Later, Hermann's story was used as the basis of a libretto for Evald Aav's (1900–1939) opera *Vikerlased* (The Vikings), which opened in 1928 and has retained its popularity down to this day.[25]

In other, non-fictional contexts, it was Jakobson's idea that the Estonian attack on Sigtuna was some form of act of tit-for-tat international politics that retained currency, even if the concrete justification could vary. An example can be found in the thinking of another leading figure of early Estonian nationalism, Villem Reiman (1861–1917), who regarded the story of Sigtuna's destruction as an important milestone in Estonia's geopolitical history. In 1907, Reiman wrote that Estonians were a people with an eventful and warlike past, who had never been able to enjoy any idyllic time of peace.[26] On the contrary: Estonia had always been traversed by great trade routes, and its territory had been coveted by various neighbouring states and peoples. By settling on the coast of the Baltic Sea, the Estonians had "opened a spring of misfortune that would never again run dry."

But at the same time, according to Reiman, Estonians had not simply been passive victims on the stage of history. In ancient times, at least, they had fully participated in regional power politics. For example, Reiman argues, Estonians had defeated the Swedish King Ingvar in the Battle of Kividepää (a mythical battle, possibly around the year 600) and had subsequently destroyed the Swedish capital of Sigtuna as revenge for Ingvar's campaign in Estonia.[27] Only in the early 13th century, when their enemies combined to attack them all at once, were the brave Estonians defeated after a string of heroic victories.

As Reiman was probably well aware, there were about five hundred years between Ingvar's supposed invasion of Estonia and the destruction of Sigtuna in the 12th century. But chronological details and causal chains were less important than the broader significance of the destruction of Sigtuna, which was a central episode in the historical narrative about the so-called Estonian Vikings: the idea that Estonians had participated in Viking-Age geopolitics as equals to everyone else. Reiman believed that in their journeys to foreign lands, Estonians had engaged in both trade and, when necessary, also in pillage and warfare, and that

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24 Karl August Hermann, *Auulane ja Ülo. Jutt Eesti muistsest ajast* (Tartu: K. A. Hermann, 1887).

25 Herbert Salu, "Sigtunas förstöring i estnisk prosalitteratur," *Svio-Estonica* 13 (1956): 43–53, 47–48; Kaljundi, "Challenging Expansions," 201.

26 Villem Reiman, "Kolm sammukest rändamise teed," *Sirvilauad. Eesti rahva tähtraamat* 11 (1907): 44–59, 47.

27 Reiman, "Kolm sammukest rändamise teed," 47.

being embedded in the heroic Viking culture had been just as natural to them as it was to their contemporary Swedes and other Scandinavians.[28]

In the end, this idea of the Viking Age as a shared regional cultural heritage was much more important than establishing a credible revenge narrative regarding Sigtuna's destruction. In his cursory treatment of Estonian history published in 1918, Aleksander Kesküla claimed that the Estonian raid (*expedition maritime*) against Sigtuna had been undertaken because the town had welcomed a Norwegian fleet that had returned from an expedition pillaging on the Estonian coast. According to Kesküla, the story of Sigtuna's destruction indicates that the Viking Age "peaked in Estonia a few generations later than in the western part of Northern Europe."[29]

In 1920, in his short book about Estonia for foreign audiences, Estonian socialist Mihkel Martna (1864–1930) confidently stated that "according to historians, Estonians were a warlike people who often troubled and attacked their neighbours," and that "many times, the Scandinavian peoples had to repel the attacks of Estonians, who had conquered and destroyed the Swedish capital of Sigtuna."[30] Yet another early 20th-century Estonian nationalist leader, Hindrik Prants (1858–1932), wrote in 1911 that some of his contemporaries went so far as to suggest that the reason why Sigtuna had even been established in the first place was to serve as a fortress against Estonian pirates.[31]

This understanding of Estonian history had deeper political implications, which could not be discussed publicly in the repressive atmosphere of Russian Empire, but which nevertheless touched upon a fundamental layer of Estonian national identity. Amongst other examples of the historical and cultural Estonian–Scandinavian connection, the stories about ancient Estonian Vikings strongly hinted that the Estonians' natural place was not in the Russian Empire and that their natural fate was not to live under the political and cultural dominance of the Baltic Germans. On the contrary: it suggested that Estonians, just like the Scandinavians and the Finns, were natural members of the Nordic space, from which they had once been removed

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28 Regarding the discourse about Estonian Vikings, see Kaljundi, "Challenging Expansions," 184–88.

29 Aleksander Keskula, *La Question Esthonienne et la Question Septentrionale: Mémoire présenté au nom des Esthoniens de la III conference des Nationalités* (Lausanne: Librairie centrale des Nationalités, 1918 [1916]), 6.

30 Mihkel Martna, *L'Esthonie, les Esthoniens et la Question Esthonienne* (Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1920), 29.

31 Hindrik Prants, *Soomesugu rahvad Veneriigi rajamisel* (Tallinn: "Hariduse" kirjastus, 1911), 11.

through a series of historical misfortunes and to which it was in their national interest to return.[32]

Sigtuna's Destruction and Estonia's Independence

The independent Republic of Estonia, established near the end of the First World War (1918) and in its aftermath, was undoubtedly the greatest achievement of the Estonian national movement. Once independent, Estonia had a natural interest in following up on its Nordic ambitions, which by that time had become an established feature of Estonian nationalism. Facing a very uncertain security situation and envious of the relative stability of the neutral Scandinavian states, the political elites of independent Estonia did all they could to forge political ties with the Nordic countries. Different schemes were debated and attempted, including the idea of a joint Finnish-Estonian state and of a proposed Baltic League, a regional federation which according to the original Estonian vision would have included both the Baltic and the Scandinavian countries.[33]

But at the same time, the political and intellectual elites of Estonia also had to rethink some of the deeper characteristics of Estonian nationalism in order to provide a statist, rather than a purely cultural, basis for the ideal of national consolidation. In earlier, pre-independence Estonian nationalism, independent Estonian statehood had not been considered a realistic political goal; the national discourse had been built on a different, cultural nationalist-regionalist basis, which could imagine seceding from the Russian Empire but was not quite prepared for independent statehood.[34]

The Estonian declaration of independence in February 1918 came about due to a specific chain of events, and in many ways in a desperate situation, which at the turn of the year 1917–1918 led to all the Estonian political parties (with the exception of the Bolsheviks) adopting independence as an immediate aim.[35] Nevertheless, it was only after Germany's defeat in the First World War in the au-

32 Kuldkepp, "The Scandinavian Connection in Early Estonian Nationalism," 321–22.
33 About the idea of a Finnish-Estonian state, see Seppo Zetterberg, *Suomi ja Viro 1917–1919. Poliittiset suhteet syksystä 1917 reunavaltiopolitiikan alkuun. Väitöskirja* (Helsinki: Suomen historiallinen seura, 1977). About the Baltic League, see Marko Lehti, *A Baltic League as a Construct of the New Europe: Envisioning a Baltic Region and Small State Sovereignty in the Aftermath of the First World War* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1999).
34 Kuldkepp, "The Scandinavian Connection in Early Estonian Nationalism," 319–20.
35 Ants Piip, *Tormine aasta: ülevaade Eesti välispoliitika esiajast 1917–1918. aastal dokumentides ja mälestusis* (Tartu: Akadeemiline Kooperatiiv, 1934), 79–81.

tumn of 1918, and after the subsequent Estonian successes in the Estonian War of Independence, which lasted until early 1920, that an independent Estonian state became a fully credible reality.

Initially, however, Estonian nationalist discourse was still very much a product of the Estonians' previous experience as a national minority in the Russian Empire and was not prepared to handle the deeper implications of independence. When it transpired that an independent Estonian state was viable – to the surprise of many outside observers, and doubtless to some members of the Estonian political elite as well – the ideologues of Estonian nationalism were naturally incentivized to develop a new statist narrative that would embrace the idea of independent statehood as the natural outcome of long-standing Estonian national ambitions and endeavours.[36]

One way of doing this was to try to demonstrate that some form of Estonian state had already existed prior to the ancient fight for freedom against the crusading knights in the early 13th century.[37] If this was the case, then it was possible to regard all the following periods of foreign rule as foreign occupations. The "return" to independent statehood in early 1918 and the bolstering of Estonian independence in the War of Independence that followed could be interpreted as a natural outcome of the lifting of the latest, tsarist Russian occupation, in the turbulent context of the First World War, rather than some unprecedented revolutionary action.

The activists of the Estonian national movement who embraced the statist idea therefore had to go looking for the roots of Estonian statehood in the Viking Age. Unsurprisingly, the familiar story of the destruction of Sigtuna by Estonians came into renewed focus. While there had been some signs of its use to bolster a statist narrative before – already in Hermann's 1886 story, it is stated that Ülo's father had been the chieftain of "the Estonian people," i.e., a kind of head of state – it was in the mid-1930s that the most monumental treatments of the Sigtuna narrative made their appearance.[38]

The most prominent example of these was August Mälk's (1900–1987) 1936 novel *Läänemere isandad* (Masters of the Baltic Sea), which contains a detailed description of the destruction of Sigtuna at the hand of Estonians (or, more precisely, inhabitants of Saaremaa), which is once again narratively explained as re-

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36 Liisi Veski, "Towards Stronger National Unity: Statist Ideas in Estonian Nationalism during the 'Era of Silence' (1934–1940)," *Journal of Baltic Studies* (online) doi.org/10.1080/01629778.2023.2190991

37 Veski, "Towards Stronger National Unity"; Marek Tamm, "History as Cultural Memory: Mnemohistory and the Construction of the Estonian Nation," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 39, no. 4 (2008): 499–516.

38 Karl August Hermann, *Auulane ja Ülo. Jutt Eesti muistsest ajast* (Tartu: K. A. Hermann, 1887), 1.

venge related to the kidnapping of a woman.[39] But Mälk also describes in great detail how the invasion force was assembled and structured: a complex political process that brought together people from various regions for a common military goal. Characteristically for Estonia's authoritarian period (post-1934), an important role was also assigned to the elders and elites, who led their people.[40]

Another fictional work that mentioned the Estonians' supposed destruction of Sigtuna as evidence of their capacity for political organization was Karl August Hindrey's (1875–1947) epic novel *Urmas ja Merike* (Urmas and Merike, 1935–1936), about pre-crusades Estonia.[41] Both Mälk's and Hindrey's novels were richly illustrated in a way that made an even stronger statement than the texts themselves. While the heroes in the novels are described as somewhat anxious and hesitant about going up against the Swedes, the illustrations depict a remarkably determined, militaristic force of Estonian conquerors.[42]

Both Mälk and Hindrey used as their source a radically statist treatment of Estonian history, published in 1932 and entitled *Eesti rahva ajalugu* (The History of the Estonian People), which had been authored by the journalist Juhan Libe (1904–1947) and three historians of the younger generation.[43] In the chapter "Eestlased Läänemerd vallutamas" (The Estonians Conquer the Baltic Sea), the book described the Estonian destroyers of Sigtuna as conscious and purposeful political actors who were attempting to claim military and trade supremacy over the Baltic Sea and to eliminate Sweden as a dangerous competitor.

An extreme example of this sort of geopolitical narrative can be found in history teacher Järvo Tandre's (also known as Rudolf Stockeby, 1899–1943) 1936 article in the magazine *Kaitse Kodu*, entitled "Mehine mineviku tee" (The Manly Way of the Past).[44] According to Tandre, Sigtuna's destruction had been "not just a simple pillaging expedition, but a far-sighted and successful foreign political action"

39 August Mälk, *Läänemere isandad. Romaan eestlaste viikingiajast* (Tartu: Noor-Eesti, 1936).

40 Salu, "Sigtunas förstöring i estnisk prosalitteratur," 49–50. For an early criticism of Mälk's politicization of the Sigtuna story, see Aita Kurfeldt-Hanko, "Sverige och svensktiden i den estniska litteraturen," *Svio-Estonica* 12 (1943): 5–23, 14. For a thorough analysis of Mälk's and Hindrey's novels from the perspective of Estonian nationalism's use of cultural memory, see Kaljundi, "Challenging Expansions."

41 Karl August Hindrey, *Urmas ja Merike: lugu aasta 1000 ümber*. 2 vols (Tartu: Noor-Eesti, 1935–1936).

42 Linda Kaljundi and Tiina-Mall Kreem, *Ajalugu pildis – pilt ajaloos. Rahvuslik ja rahvusülene minevik eesti kunstis. History in Images – Image in History. National and Transnational Past in Estonian Art* (Tallinn: Eesti Kunstimuuseum, 2018), 162.

43 Juhan Libe, August Oinas, Hendrik Sepp, and Juhan Vasar, *Eesti rahva ajalugu I* (Tartu: Loodus, 1932), 69, 82–83.

44 Järvo Tandre, "Mehine mineviku tee," *Kaitse Kodu* 13–14 (1936): 421–433, 422–23.

in which "Estonians destroyed their Carthage," so that "centuries went by before Sweden was able to assert its interests in the Baltics again."

In the end, revenge stories had turned out to be superfluous. Especially after the statist turn in Estonian nationalism, it was possible to justify Sigtuna's destruction with the national interests of the hypothetical ancient Estonian state, the defence and advancement of which had been the Estonian nation's natural right and privilege as early as the Viking Age – just as it was in the interwar period.

Sigtuna in Interwar Swedish–Estonian Relations

Highlighting the Estonians' state-building capacity was not the only use to which the Sigtuna narrative was put in interwar Estonia. It also played a role in Estonian–Swedish relations, as evidence that could be used to highlight the Estonians' belonging to the Nordic cultural and political space, and to underline their similarities to, and even good relations with, the Swedes. This discourse of positive Viking-Age commonality, which goes back to Jakobson and Reiman, affected both fictional and non-fictional Estonian narratives about Sigtuna. Tellingly, in both Mälk's and Hindrey's novels, learning Swedish is embraced by the Estonians as a mark of status, while in Hermann's story, it is the Swedish prince who has learned Estonian.[45]

In diplomatic contexts, pointing to the supposedly good relations of the past was rhetorically employed as a justification for the continuation of similarly close relations in the present and future. The fact that the event in question was the purposeful destruction of the Swedish capital was not necessarily seen as an obstacle. Nevertheless, for some Estonians, Sigtuna could serve as a slightly cheeky way of reminding the Swedes that the balance of power between the two nations had not always favoured the obviously stronger partner.

In the summer of 1907 (not in 1908, as stated in Rütli's memoirs), two Estonian liberal nationalists, Oskar Rütli (1871–1949) and Hugo Treffner (1845–1912), attended a major Nordic temperance congress that was being held in Stockholm. Amongst other events, they attended a breakfast in the Royal Castle, where they had a chance to exchange a few words with Crown Prince Gustav (1858–1950), who would soon become King Gustav V. Upon being introduced to the two "Estonians from Livonia," the crown prince said that he knew Livonia well and was happy to think of

45 Kaljundi, "Challenging Expansions," 201.

the times when it had formed a part of Sweden.[46] To this polite statement, Treffner replied that he was glad to hear that the crown prince thought so well of Estonians, even though they had destroyed the Swedish capital of Sigtuna. In response, the crown prince only nodded and kept quiet, apparently shocked by Treffner's words.

Similar use of the Sigtuna trope continued in the interwar period. Villem Ernits (1891–1982), a politician and temperance activist, mentioned Sigtuna while addressing the XII Nordic Temperance Congress, which convened in Tartu in the summer of 1926 and included several Swedish representatives.[47] Ernits stated, perhaps not altogether sincerely, that "we are not proud of the fact that our ancestors destroyed the Swedish capital Sigtuna, although we are glad that they were strong people."

In a more conciliatory tone, in the *Eesti-Rootsi* album (Estonian-Swedish Album), published in 1929 to mark Gustav V's visit to Estonia, the diplomat and former Foreign Minister Ants Piip (1884–1942) wrote that "there is no doubt that the peoples who surrounded the Baltic Sea in ancient times had close relations with one another. Sometimes, they engaged in friendly business; at other times, they raised weapons in war. Mutual friendship and understanding would grow as a result."[48] This idea – that warlike actions can over time lead to mutual understanding and even friendship – was in keeping with the earlier Estonian emphasis on the Viking Age as a kind of shared regional cultural heritage.

Whereas it is possible to understand Estonians' desire to depict the destruction of Sigtuna as the start of good relations between the two states, it is perhaps more surprising to note the Swedes' relative lack of interest in the subject, and even agreement with the Estonian point of view. Even in those cases where they did engage with the Estonian version of the story, it is fair to say that Swedish attitudes were characterized by a lack of negative emotional response, acceptance that any enmity between the two nations had over time been overcome, and even willingness to see this event as something positive in the history of Swedish–Estonian relations and as evidence of the ancient Estonians' bravery and might.

Sometimes, the story of Sigtuna's destruction was mentioned by the Swedes themselves for humorous effect, as an amusing historical fact. In 1928, in an inter-

46 Oskar Rütli, *Mälestusi ühe Eesti sugupõlve tööst ja võitlusist (1871–1949)* (Tallinn: Eesti Päevaleht, 2010), 259–62.

47 Villem Ernits and Nils-Herman Lindberg, eds, *XII Põhjamaade karskuskongress. Den tolfte Nordiska Nykterhetskongressen. Tartu 18–21 juli 1926* (Tartu, Helsinki: Suomalaisen kirjallisuuden seuran kirjapaino, 1929), 17.

48 Ants Piip, "Eesti-Rootsi koostöö," in *Eesti-Rootsi album. Estnisk-svenskt album*, ed. Bernhard Linde, Ants Piip, Hans Pöhl, Gunnar Reuterskiöld, and Jüri Uluots (Ühiselu: Tallinn, 1929): 16–18, 16.

view given to the Estonian newspaper *Postimees*, the Swedish envoy to Estonia Patrik Reutersward (1885–1963) noted that it was not just the Estonian and Swedish governments that were interested in closer relations between the two countries, but that the same was also true of their inhabitants more generally.[49] Over time, strong ties had developed between the two nations, which had been in contact with each other for centuries. Jokingly, the minister drew attention to the destruction of Sigtuna by Estonians, noting with laughter that contacts in more recent times had happily been more peaceful.

Another, more serious, way to talk about Sigtuna's destruction by Estonians was to treat it as an episode in the story of how Stockholm had been established, as Swedish historians had done already in the early modern period. In 1928, the Estonian-friendly journalist Pierre Backman (1892–1969) wrote – in an article marking the ten-year anniversary of Estonian independence – that, in fact, Estonians should be commended for their destruction of Sigtuna: after all, it had been the demise of this town that had made possible the subsequent rise of Stockholm as the new capital of Sweden.[50]

Another, and more common, option was to simply treat Sigtuna's destruction as a neutral historical fact, which, while it served as evidence of the ancient might of the Estonians, did not arouse any desire for revenge amongst the Swedes. Instead, there was a certain patronizing sense of wonder that Estonians had been able to accomplish something so impressive. In 1934, Estonia was visited by the former mayor of Stockholm, and a great friend of the Baltic states, Carl Lindhagen (1860–1946). In an interview with *Postimees*, he said that "the recognition of Estonian independence [by Sweden in 1921] was also greatly influenced by the destruction of the town of Sigtuna in the 12th century," since the Swedes, aware of the story of Sigtuna's destruction, had thought that "a nation that was strong enough to destroy the Swedish capital deserves independence and freedom."[51]

These remarks can be complemented by an unpublished speech for a Swedish audience, the transcript of which is to be found in Lindhagen's personal archive in the Stockholm City Archives.[52] There, he describes the ancient Estonians as a warlike people, given to both piracy and trade expeditions against Sweden and especially Gotland, but also further east. In 1187, Estonians burned down Sig-

49 "Heanaaberlikud vahekorrad arenevad järjekindlalt (jutuajamine Rootsi saadikuga," *Postimees* September 4, 1928.

50 Pierre Backman, "Estland inför tioårsdagen av sitt oberoende. En modern bondestat med gammalt nordiskt kulturarv," *Stockholms Tidning* February 12, 1928.

51 "Balti riikide lähendaja," *Postimees* July 4, 1934.

52 Lindhagen's speech, transcript, undated. Carl Lindhagens samling, B5, Vol 135: 1. Stockholm City Archives.

tuna. At home, however, their "various small states" were constantly at war against one another, with the more peaceful Latvians being forced to defend themselves against their "wild neighbours." The Estonian raids against Scandinavians provoked reprisals, as recorded on Swedish rune stones, but their contacts with peoples to the west and to the east also "brought new cultural elements to these uncivilized territories."

While the idea, attributed to Lindhagen in the Estonian newspaper, that Sigtuna's destruction had played any role whatsoever in Sweden's recognition of Estonian independence was pure fantasy,[53] it is likely that Lindhagen's orientalist understanding of "wild Estonians" was more widely shared. This meant that any harm caused in the distant past by such "culturally inferior" people was likely seen as something akin to a natural disaster, and therefore not something that needed to be compensated for.

This attitude, historically characteristic of Swedish views towards all areas and peoples to the east of Sweden, with a possible partial exception of Finland and the Finns,[54] suggests that anger towards Estonians – and towards ancient pagan Estonians at that – would have meant recognizing the Estonians as equals to the Swedes, challenging the Swedish sense of superiority towards people whom they considered their inferiors. At the same time, it must be kept in mind that there is no reliable information as to what extent Swedes in the interwar period were even aware of the story of Sigtuna's destruction by "eastern pagans," never mind whether they attributed this event to ancient Estonians or someone else.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it would be fair to say that a story of doubtful historical veracity – according to which the early medieval Swedish capital of Sigtuna had been destroyed by pagans from Estonia – played a relatively important role in the imagination of both pre-independence and interwar Estonian nationalism. It was a way of anchoring Estonian national history – and thereby also Estonian identity –

53 About the Scandinavian states' recognition of the independence of the Baltic states, see Seppo Zetterberg, "Der Weg zur Anerkennung der Selbständigkeit Estlands und Lettlands durch die skandinavischen Staaten 1918–1921," in *Ostseeprovinzen, Baltische Staaten und das Nationale. Festschrift für Gert von Pistohlkors zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Norbert Angermann, Michael Garleff, and Wilhelm Lenz (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2005): 415–46.

54 Mart Kuldkepp, "Swedish Political Attitudes towards Baltic Independence in the Short Twentieth Century," *Ajalooline Ajakiri. The Estonian Historical Journal* 3–4 (2016): 397–430, 411.

in the Viking Age, and therefore also in the interactions between the two shores of the Baltic Sea. In other words, belief in the Estonian destruction of Sigtuna gave the early Estonian national movement some confidence that not only Scandinavians, but also Estonians, had once been a powerful nation of seafarers who were, *inter alia*, capable of large-scale heroic destructive actions. For the most part, this went with the necessary caveat that the destruction of the Swedish capital had to be some kind of act of revenge.

After Estonia's declaration of independence, the Estonian national narrative of Sigtuna's destruction was integrated into the new, statist version of Estonian nationalism and its conception of history. It was evidence that pre-crusades Estonians had already possessed sufficient capacity for political organization to undertake such a large-scale military-political action – and perhaps even a form of pre-modern statehood, the existence of which would have legitimized post-1918 Estonian independence.

At the same time, the Sigtuna discourse also played a role in contemporary Swedish–Estonian relations, as a kind of historical precedent for close relations and, therefore, as reason to pursue similarly close relations in the future. On both sides, the people who engaged with this question were happy to admit that enmity between the two nations was a thing of the past; they were now able to think back to Sigtuna's destruction, perhaps with a sense of shared nostalgia, like two friends reminiscing about the quarrels of their youth. But what it also showed was that on the Swedish side, the matter lacked any political or emotional salience that would have made it difficult to adopt this point of view. Instead, their mostly indifferent attitude towards the supposed event was likely coloured by some degree of orientalism towards the Estonians

It is probably fair to say that even today, many Estonians think that it was their – rather than anyone else's – ancestors who destroyed the medieval Swedish capital, and that they still feel some degree of pride in this fact, even if they are unlikely to break into patriotic song when visiting the ruins of Old Sigtuna. But one should not underestimate the impact that the story of Sigtuna's destruction has had on Estonia's national memory culture. As a rare if contested example of a possible pre-13th-century Estonian military victory, it is likely to remain salient at least as a figure of imagination, if no longer as a constitutive building block of Estonian national identity.

Jan Rüdiger

The Bold/Bald Count: Tracing the 1½ Memories of Gerhard III of Holsatia

From a Kill to Two Views

In the small hours of April 1, 1340, a posse of armed men entered the sleeping quarters of Count Gerhard III of Holsatia (Holstein) in the town of Randers in Northern Jutland. The count, in his mid-forties and just recovering from a serious illness, was taken by surprise. He was killed along with several of his retainers. The armed men, led by a local strongman by the name of Niels Ebbesen (d. 1340), then made their escape across the River Gudenå.

Grave though the incident was, as all deaths by violence are, it does not loom particularly large in the long history of political killings, from Julius Caesar and beyond. Even in its own time, the 14th century, there had been, and would be, far more dramatic killings – let us just briefly mention the (presumed) murders of two English kings, Edward II (r. 1307–1327) and Richard II (r. 1377–1399, d. 1400), and then browse the pages of Barbara Tuchman's *A Distant Mirror*,[1] thinking for a moment about "tyrannicide" as a political tool right up to and including our own century. For a man (or, more rarely, a woman) to fall victim of a tyrannicide, he (or she) must of course have been a controversial figure. So, Gerhard III might very well have gone down in history as a relatively important 14th-century political figure who died a dramatic death. He would have shared the fate of thousands of other historical figures who just managed to leave a trace but not enough of one to enter the collective memory. Professional historians would now know him by name, local historical societies would see to it that the odd memorial plaque and street name were put in place, and most people would never have heard of him and would not feel any the worse for it. He would not have become a national nemesis. A long series of historical novels, plays, films, comic strips, children's audio books, and pop songs would not have been written and produced. Students would not be dancing round Niels Ebbesen's statue on midsummer or getting upset about Covid-19 rules stopping them from doing so.[2]

1 Barbara Tuchman, *A Distant Mirror. The Calamitous 14th Century* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978).

2 Ivan Freund Nielsen, "Dansen om Niels Ebbesen og byens statuer er aflyst," *Randers Amts Avis*, June 20, 2020.

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Strangely enough, all of this has happened to Gerhard III, simultaneously. He has become both a national hero/scoundrel and a mostly forgotten figure of local history; not in different periods of the modern era, which would not be all that unusual – there are many medieval personalities who used to rouse feelings in the memory culture of, say, the late 19th century but who were all but forgotten a hundred years later – but at the same time, only in different places. His career and afterlives are perhaps instructive in the context of a volume that applies the tenets of *lieux de mémoire* and the methodology of recent memory studies to heroes and saints of the Baltic Sea region, which no one has ever accused Gerhard III of being, though sanctity did become an issue for several other victims of similar killings in Scandinavian history. Gerhard's has been, however, a "contested memory,"[3] in that he came to play, along with other aspects of the long history of the "Schleswig Question," a highly controversial role in the 19th- and 20th-century historical debates around the emergent national border between Denmark and Germany. But more recently, it has also become an "uncontested memory" – or rather, a memory contested, as it were, by only one team in the arena (the "Danish side"), facing another team (the "German side") that has more or less decided to depart from the contest grounds and have a picnic instead.

Gerhard III provides an interesting if not unique example of what has been called "the narrative's offside," a concept I will return to later. It is also a part of the medieval and modern history of the Baltic Sea region that is rarely mentioned in Anglophone scholarship. In the present chapter, I will therefore briefly trace the career of the 14th-century power broker known as Count Gerhard and discuss medieval views of a man who, even in his own day and immediate afterlife, provoked both ample applause and adverse comment, before moving on to sketch the possibilities of research into the one-and-a-half memories of Count Gerhard in the 19th–21st centuries.

3 To name just a few publications addressing issues in European history: Raanan Rein, ed., *Spanish Memories: Images of a Contested Past* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002); *Contested Memories: Poles and Jews during the Holocaust and its Aftermath*, ed. Joshua D. Zimmerman (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003); *Contested Pasts: the Politics of Memory*, ed. Katharine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone (New York: Routledge, 2003); Erik Sjöberg, *The Making of the Greek Genocide: Contested Memories of the Ottoman Greek Catastrophe* (New York: Berghahn, 2017). This list can be continued almost ad libitum, with studies of "contested memories" of 1989, of World War II, of apartheid, of civic memorials in a single town, of a single author, or of the Nazi era worldwide.

A Man with Many Names: The Life and Death of Gerhard III

Who was the main casualty on April 1, 1340? We had best start by looking at his name. A typical form in vernacular sources, such as contemporary chronicles, would be *Gheert*, probably rendering a pronunciation /çe:rt/ with an initial palatal fricative quite similar to the sound in modern Flemish and several Low Saxon dialects. Typical Latin forms in documents and chronicles include *G*(*h*)*er*(*h*)*ardus*, conserving the elements of the Germanic two-part name *ger+hard* ("lance+bold") that seem to have become indistinct in everyday speech. The name is fairly common all over the Dutch/Low Saxon–speaking area and of course beyond. Neighbouring Danish sources use forms like *Gerit* or *Gerd*. Modern Danish authors have on the whole preferred "Gerd," while modern German historiography tends to prefer full etymological names over medieval vernacular forms. In fact, in present-day official German use, "Gerhard" is a name distinct from "Gert" or "Gerd." Thus, the usual names of the 14th-century comital family, which would be *Geert*, *Henneke*, and *Alf* in the vernacular, are, in modern German historiography, "Gerhard," "Johann," and "Adolf" respectively. (The sinister-sounding street name "Adolfsplatz" in Hamburg and Kiel refers in fact to the 13th-century Count *Alf*/ "Adolf" IV.) Since Danish historiography now seems to be going over towards the standard German "greve Gerhard," over the traditional "greve Gerd," it seems expedient to follow this usage in the context of this article, as it does for other names such as the comital House of Schauenburg (medieval *Schouwenborg*).[4] The county itself was referred to with the ethnonym *Hol*(*t*)*sten* – "[land of the] *Holtsaten*" ("wood dwellers") – in vernacular sources, and "Holsten" in modern Danish (though "Holstein" in standard High German, due to an incorrect etymology transforming the suffix *-sten*, equivalent to the Old English *-sæton* in "Somerset" or "Dorset," into "Stein," meaning "stone"). In keeping with common usage in Baltic history (Pomerania, Livonia, Scania), I am using its Latinate name *Holsatia*. As for other place names, no single consistent practice being viable, I shall aim by and large for modern forms based on medieval usage where there is no established English standard.

4 Some German historians have suggested that this convention be abandoned in favour of "Schaumburg," thereby stressing the dynastic links to the county of that name in the Weser Mountains. I refrain from suggesting "Schouwenborg" instead, not wishing to complicate matters in a time of online repositories and search tools, though it might be seen to perhaps best reflect the historical context.

I have intentionally complicated matters in order to "muddle" a seemingly all too clear-cut binary German/Danish storyline from the outset. I will now keep the historical sketch as simple as possible.[5]

1294–1340: The Events

The first counts of Schauenburg were implanted in Holsatia by the dukes of Saxony in the early 12th century in a short-lived attempt to gain a foothold in *Nordalbingia*, the lands north of the River Elbe but south of the Eider–Danevirke line, which constituted a kind of border zone between Saxony and Denmark.[6] They first gained importance as participants in, and profiteers from, the Christianization-cum-colonization drive into pagan Slav territory from the 1160s on. As Holsatia expanded eastwards towards Lübeck and the Baltic coast, the counts acquired numerous profitable holdings which would become the mainstay of their power. Their inclusion, along with nascent Mecklenburg and Pomerania, into the Danish kingdom around 1200 remained precarious. For much of the 13th and early 14th centuries, if the kings of Denmark were the most powerful force in the Western Baltic, more or less consistently recognized as overlords (*dominus, overhere)* by the numerous counts and dukes on the south coast, they mostly left local rulers to their own devices. By the 1270s, the county of Holsatia had been divided into collateral branches, regrouped, amalgamated, and redivided with every new generation. The object of division was not the county as such, but the comital possessions, revenues, and strongholds, including the right to demand armed support.[7] All branches – as many as five at one point – continued to style themselves *comites Holsatie*.

5 The standard English-language *Cambridge History of Scandinavia, vol. I: Prehistory to 1500*, ed. Knut Helle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) has four entries for Gerhard III in its index. Standard and/or useful histories of medieval Holsatia include: Hans Valdemar Gregersen, *Slesvig of Holsten før 1830* (København: Politiken, 1981); Erich Hoffmann, *Spätmittelalter und Reformationszeit* (Neumünster: Wachholtz, 1990); *Geschichte Schleswig-Holsteins. Von den Afängen bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Ulrich Lange (Neumünster: Wachholtz, 1996, 2003); Dirk Meier, *Schleswig-Holstein im Hohen und Späten Mittelalter. Landesausbau–Dörfer–Städte* (Heide: Boyens, 2012).

6 Jan Rüdiger, "Framing the Frontier: The Green Isthmic Border of the Danish Baltic," in *Expansion–Integration? Danish-Baltic Contacts 1147–1410 AD*, ed. Dorthe Wille-Jørgensen and Martin Borring Olesen (Vordingborg: Danmarks Borgcenter, 2009): 15–26.

7 See the book-length study: Ulrich Lange, "Grundlagen der Landesherrschaft der Schauenburger in Holstein, Teil 1," *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Schleswig-Holsteinische Geschichte* 99 (1974): 9–93; Ulrich Lange, "Grundlagen der Landesherrschaft der Schauenburger in Holstein, Teil II," *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Schleswig-Holsteinische Geschichte* 100 (1975): 83–160.

Gerhard was born c. 1294, the son of Count Hinrik (or Henry/Heinrich, r. 1290–1304), who ruled the westernmost slice of Holsatia, which consisted of much of "the old country." With comparatively poor soils and few comital possessions or castles, its main seat of power was at Rendsburg, where the main north/south thoroughfare (the Heerweg/Hærvej) crossed the River Eider. His mother was Heilwig/Helvig, from the lordly House of Bronkhorst in present-day Gelderland. Upon his father's death in 1304, he found himself tutored by his uncle Gerhard of Plön, whose slice of the county comprised far more of the good soils, intensive exploitation, and density of strongholds of Eastern Holsatia, and who was married to Agnes of Brandenburg, widowed mother of the Danish King Erik VI "Menved" (r. 1286–1319). The following years saw a lot of violent to-ing and fro-ing between the Schauenburg cousins and nephews, including a dramatic slaying in Segeberg Castle in 1315. After that, only three of the comital branches survived. The tiny Pinneberg branch on the River Elbe, just west of Hamburg, lost out to the more powerful branches of Rendsburg and Plön, headed, respectively, by young Gerhard III and his cousin Johan III (c. 1297–1359), son of Gerhard's namesake and erstwhile tutor, and half-brother of King Erik of Denmark by his mother. Finding himself with connections in high places, Gerhard had his sisters married to his neighbours to the southeast (the Duke of Saxony-Lauenburg) and to the north (the Duke of Slesvig). An armed attempt to conquer his neighbours to the west, the acephalous farmers' polity of Dithmarschen on the poldered North Sea coast, backfired badly.[8]

Upon the sudden death of King Erik of Denmark in 1319, Johan of Plön supported the candidature of Erik's younger brother Christopher, while Gerhard kept a low profile. His moment came in 1325 when, with Christopher losing ground fast, a loose coalition of disgruntled magnates decided to back the king's twelve-year-old nephew Valdemar of Slesvig (r. 1326–1329, d. 1364), Gerhard III's nephew and tutee, in his bid for the throne. Christopher fled the country, and Gerhard III seized the occasion to have his newly elevated nephew give up the Duchy of Slesvig in Gerhard's favour. Finding himself powerful and rich beyond everyone's expectations, Gerhard did suffer a setback when ex-king Christopher was briefly reinstated in Denmark. But despite renewed backing by his half-brother, Gerhard's Plön cousin Johan III, King Christopher was fighting a losing battle and died in 1332 in near-oblivion.

The ever-changing tides of princely politics – occurring against the backdrop of the agrarian and climatic crises of the period, exacerbated by ambitious extrac-

8 The main study of Gerhard's reign remains: Erich Hoffmann "Graf Gerhard III. der Große von Holstein. Der Aufstieg eines Territorialfürsten des 14. Jahrhunderts," in *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Schleswig-Holsteinische Geschichte* 102–103 (1977/78): 9–49, summarized in his volume of the *Landesgeschichte: Spätmittelalter und Reformationszeit* (1990).

tion and taxation on the part of *pantelen* holders[9] – lent the advances of Gerhard III and his cousin Johan III in the 1330s a special edge. The "most cruel lords the counts of Holsatia"[10] were not making themselves any friends, at least not in some quarters, when, upon King Christopher II's second fall from power and subsequent death in destitution, they assumed *pantelen* domination of the entire kingdom for a nominal value of 200 000 silver marks, dividing their holdings into a western half (Jutland and Funen) for Gerhard and an eastern half (the islands, Scania, Halland, and Blekinge) for Johan. Styling themselves *dominus* or *capitaneus* of their respective *terrae*, they never made any attempt to seize the elective kingship of Denmark, which was traditionally assumed to be reserved for a member of the royal family.[11] Christopher's heir apparent, Erik, had died shortly before; his second son, Otto, a one-time captive in Holsatia, seems later to have made his career with the Teutonic Order in nominally Danish Estonia;[12] his third son, Valdemar, was somewhere abroad (there are no records of his whereabouts, but his maternal kin in Brandenburg would seem a good bet). There were no other takers in sight. So the throne of Denmark simply remained vacant.

Apparently, most people in the 1330s were not much troubled by what modern national history construes as a shameful *interregnum*. Denmark continued to yield its surpluses, which in the case of the royal demesnes now went into the

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9 The "mortgage fief" or "pawn fief" (*pantelen*) is a political and economic practice involving a ruler in need of an immediate capital injection of cash or military assistance, who pawns off (Low Saxon *uppe pant lenen*) part of his revenues and/or strongholds to his creditor or military provider until the loan is paid off. In the absence of accounting in any modern sense, however, it was hard to assess the value of goods or services rendered, and all but impossible to assess the value of the profits from the assets received, and the rights to redeem the loans were circumscribed. The *pantelen* could therefore be worked to gain effective control of revenues and strongholds without touching the nominal rights of lordship. For a recent appraisal of its importance, see Oliver Auge, "Macht- und Landgewinn durch Pfandpolitik. Das Beispiel der Grafen von Holstein im 14. Jahrhundert," *Vierteljahresschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 109 (2022): 185–210. For the proliferation of strongholds, see *Vergessenes Burgenland Schleswig-Holstein. Die Burgenlandschaft zwischen Elbe und Königsau im Hoch- und Spätmittelalter*, ed. Oliver Auge (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2015); *Burgen in Schleswig-Holstein. Zeugen des Mittelalters einst und jetzt*, ed. Oliver Auge (Kiel: Wachholtz, 2019); Frederic Zangel, *Castrum, curia, berchvrede. Die Burgen Holsteins und Stormarns in ihrer geschichtlichen Bedeutung und Wahrnehmung (1134 bis 1534)* (Kiel: Wachholtz, 2021).

10 ". . . crudelissimi domini comites Holtsacie." "Chronicle of the Archbishops of Lund," c.13, in *Scriptores minores historiæ Danicæ medii ævi*, vol. 2, ed. M. Cl. Gertz (København: Gad, 1918–20): 116.

11 See Erich Hoffmann, *Königserhebung und Thronfolgeordnung in Dänemark bis zum Ausgang des Mittelalters* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2005).

12 Stefan Pajung, "Prins Otto af Danmark – en tragisk skæbne," *Skalk* 2 (2020): 32–34.

coffers of the Holsatian *pantelen* lords (who used them to pay off their own debts to merchants and mercenaries, and did not tarry to mortgage their Danish *pantelen* on to their own creditors in turn), while other landlords such as monasteries and bishoprics went on collecting their own dues. It may have been due to competition of this sort that Scania, clustering around the Archbishop of Lund, placed itself under the overlordship of the neighbouring King Magnus Eriksson of Sweden-Norway. Another portentous "first" in the national history of Denmark, in light of the later Swedish conquest and annexation of all of Denmark east of Øresund in 1658–1660, at the time it was just another manoeuvre by local stakeholders to offset Count Johan's influence.

By the end of the decade, there was a feeling that Lübeck and the other large Hanseatic towns were increasingly in favour of having young Valdemar return to assume the vacant kingship, probably with a view to keeping Holsatian power at bay. Geopolitics as such may be a modern invention, but the long-distance merchants would have been uncomfortably aware of the fact that the Danish straits and the land passage from Lübeck to Hamburg were now all under Holsatian sway. The counts seem to have recognized the signs of change; indeed, they themselves, just like other investors and creditors in Denmark, might have welcomed the prospect of a renewed royal power which made it its priority to pay off the *pantelen*. By 1338, Gerhard was moving out of Northern Jutland and Funen, consolidating his *pantelen* holdings in the Duchy of Slesvig; in February 1340, he had his nephew the duke agree to an exchange of *pantelen* rights in Northern and Southern Jutland respectively. At the same time, he was busy quashing local unrest in the north with the help of mercenaries. He fell seriously ill before the deal with the duke had been concluded; he received the sacraments but seems to have been recovering when, on the night of April 1, a war band led by a local knight, Niels Ebbesen,[13] entered his house at Randers and killed him.

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13 We know very little – in fact, almost nothing – about Niels Ebbesen, despite the efforts of modern historiography to locate the resistance hero in "actual history." He has been placed in various contexts in the Jutland gentry, which seems plausible as a background even if his individual lineage cannot be ascertained, and associated with Nørreris Castle a little south of Randers. He died, probably later in 1340, fighting outside the comital Skanderborg Castle. Later chronicles detail the ignominious treatment of his body, quartered and hung on the gallows or the wheel. It is far from certain that the men of 1340 would have viewed the slaying of Count Gerhard as quite the treacherous deed that would warrant this kind of demonstrative posthumous torture.

Medieval Depictions of Gerhard III

Just another 14th-century career, then – or was it? The political game *in al deme lande by der Osterzee* simply proceeded much as before. Young Valdemar IV was indeed elevated to the kingship later that same year; he also was married to the sister of his erstwhile competitor the Duke of Slesvig, a niece of Count Gerhard. He went on to become famous as Valdemar "Atterdag" (r. 1340–1375), known for his conquest of Gotland in 1361. His daughter Margrete (r. 1387–1412) would secure the rule of all three northern kingdoms (the Kalmar Union), with Denmark playing the lead. So the Danish kingdom had not vanished after all – on the contrary.

Meanwhile, in Holsatia, Gerhard's sons inherited his titles, holdings, and *pantelen*, making do as best they could; none of them ever assumed an important role in Baltic politics, though Gerhard's son "Iron Henry" (Isern Hinnerk, Jernhenrik, c. 1320–after 1384) would acquire some renown as a war-band leader in the Hundred Years' War. The descendants of Gerhard and Johan, who died in 1359, would finally merge in 1390 to recreate the single county of Holsatia, leaving out only small Pinneberg on the Elbe. A few years previous, their enfeoffment with the Duchy of Slesvig had become hereditary. In 1460, upon the extinction of the House of Schauenburg, King Christian I of Denmark, nephew of the last count, succeeded to both Slesvig and Holsatia, soon elevating the latter from county to duchy to match Slesvig. "The Duchies" (*Hertugdømmerne*) became part of the Danish Empire (*Helstaten*/*Gesamtstaat*) for four centuries to come.

This is where the memory production begins. Contemporaries had occasion to comment on Gerhard's political astuteness, presenting him as one of the foremost players in Southwestern Baltic Sea power games. A century later, hindsight made him appear to have been instrumental in bringing about what now seemed a critical juncture in Danish history: a low point before the dazzling rise under Valdemar Atterdag and Margrete I. Hindsight also presented him as being instrumental in arranging the rapprochement of Holsatia and Slesvig that was to lead to their de facto union. When the King of Denmark became Duke of Slesvig and Holsatia, both stories converged, though Gerhard was the hero in one of them but a bit of a non-hero if not the scoundrel in the other. Resentment from different quarters might focus on him. Right from its medieval beginnings, memory production around Gerhard was less than straightforward.

Observers in the 14th century gave Gerhard III his due as a master player. Closest in time is the Lübeck Franciscan friar Detmar, who towards the 1380s fi-

nalized a town chronicle incorporating sections from the early 14th century.[14] He describes Gerhard's early career, his sometimes dubious involvement in the intra-Schauenburg struggles, and his rise to being *vormundere des rikes*. Rendering the Latin expression *tutor regni*, the term *vormundere* (literally "mouth-up-front') is also a well-defined juridical expression denoting the power to act; Margrete I would choose the same term, *gantze righens af Danmark formynder*, to describe her position as the head of Denmark upon the death of her young son, King Oluf, in 1387.[15] From a Lübeck perspective, Gerhard was the "head of state" of Denmark. Detmar reports the slaying with his customary sobriety and a strong hint of disapproval: "The Danes came at night and unnoticed by the sleeping troops entered a stone house where the count had just had his hours [midnight prayer] read and fallen asleep again. They went up and killed the sick man in his bed, and his chaplain and three squires."[16] Nocturnal trespass, killing of an invalid and a man in holy orders – not quite the stuff of which a heroic tale is made.

Other chroniclers took a more sombre view of Gerhard's politics. The *Younger Chronicle of Zealand*, penned around 1370, hints at a certain degree of intransigence and arrogance on Gerhard's part, which made his downfall somehow inevitable: "He harried enormously all over the country, monasteries, and churches and otherwise, because he wanted not only to subjugate Denmark for himself but also other realms. But on [April 1] he was killed by Niels Ebbesen, whose fidelity he himself had earlier recused, and his army dispersed."[17] The previously anonymous war band now has a leader with a name, though the actual reasons for, or aims of, the killing remain as obscure as the perpetrator himself remains elusive. Repeated attempts to pin down Niels Ebbesen have proved futile; we can be fairly sure that he was a local landholder in Jutland, and therefore it is possible, indeed plausible, to

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14 See Christine Putzo, "Detmar of Lübeck," in *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, ed. R. Graeme Dunphy (Leiden: Brill, 2010): 519.

15 "Detmar-Chronik," c.549, in *Die Chroniken der niedersächsischen Städte. Lübeck*, vol. 1, ed. Karl Koppmann (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1884): 456; *Diplomatarium Danicum* IV 3 (222) (August 10, 1387).

16 "Detmar-Chronik," c.603: 484. "de [Denen] quemen . . . in der nacht . . . alse wartlude des slapenden heres treden se to eneme stenhus, dar de greve sine tide hadde lesen unde weder entleghen was. Dar quemen se up, unde sloghen den seken man uppe sinem bedde dot, dar to sinen cappellan unde dre knapen."

17 *Chronica Sialandie* s.a. 1340, in *Danmarks middelalderlige annaler*, ed. Erik Kroman (København: Selskabet for Udgivelse af Kilder til dansk Historie, 1980): 123. "Omnia circumquaque, tam in monasteriis et ecclesiis quam extra, enormiter devastabat; cupiebat enim non solum Daciam sibi subdere, sed et plura regna. Sed per Nicolaum Ebbesøn, quem ipse prius diffidaverat, . . . est interfectus, et exercitus suus est dispersus." See Lars Boje Mortensen, "Chronicon Sialandie," in *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, ed. R. Graeme Dunphy (Leiden: Brill, 2010): 428.

assume that there may have been local reasons – one slight too many, one imposition or requisition considered undue, one manoeuvre gone wrong – but it is all guesswork. While Gerhard III is well documented in numerous charters and documents, many his own, Niels Ebbesen is known only from the chronicles. The *Zealand Chronicle* implies that he was somehow the hand of the collective will.

The 15th-century *Holsatian Chronicle*, probably written by a cleric from the Wilster Marshes attached to the Hamburg cathedral chapter,[18] delights in telling a few chivalrous anecdotes about the "excellent and famous man, Count Gerhard the Great" (*praeclarus vir, comes magnus Gherardus*). This is the first mention of the epithet "the Great," used by the chronicler for practical reasons – "to tell him apart from others of the same name"[19] – but which has since become common usage in modern German historiography. He stresses the count's Marian devotion and puts the slaying in 1340 down to an evil spirit having sown discord between the count and his *miles* Niels Ebbesen, whose subsequent capture and public execution on the wheel and quartering are recounted with some satisfaction. However, there is also a strong hint that Niels Ebbesen was not himself the man behind the killing: "Whether some of the Holsatian great noblemen, who could not bear the luck of Count Gerhard, arranged for his death and became traitors, it is not for me to say."[20]

This is a remarkable view. According to contemporary opinion in both Holsatia and Zealand, the slaying had to do with political *superbia* on Gerhard's part, a common stock view present in many other late medieval tales of "tyrannicide,"[21] not with any general Holsatian-Danish antagonism. In a similar vein, the late 15th-century *Danish Rhymed Chronicle* and its Saxon translation go out of their way to stress the fact that both *Denen unde dudeschen, danskœ och tydskœ*, were to be found on both sides.[22] In fact, *dudesche/tydskœ* is more like a blanket term for *Sassen, Wenden, Holsten unde anderen*, an in-group term for those on the

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18 Jan Rüdiger, "Presbyter Bremensis," in *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, ed. R. Graeme Dunphy (Leiden: Brill, 2010): 1229.

19 Presbyter Bremensis, *Chronicon Holtzatiae*, c.20, ed. Johann Martin Lappenberg (Kiel: in Kommission der Akademischen Buchhandlung, 1862): 61f.: ". . . paulatim crevit in virum magnum et ad tantum, quod magnus Gherardus vocari potest ad differenciam aliorum hoc nomine dictorum."

20 Presbyter Bremensis, *Chronicon Holtzatiae*, c.21: 66. "Utrum eciam aliqui de Holtzatis maioribus nobilibus, fortunam tantam dicti comitis Gherardi sustinere non valentes, procuraverunt mortem et proditores extiterunt, non est meum discutere."

21 For a summary of late medieval views, see Jürgen Miethge, "Tyrann, Tyrannenmord," *Lexikon des Mittelalters* vol. 8 (München: Artemis & Winkler, 1980–1998): cols. 1135–38.

22 *Den danske Rimkrønike*, ed. Helge Toldberg (København: Schultz, 1958–61): vol. 1, 140–44; vol. 3, 123–25; see Lars Boje Mortensen, "Danske Rimkrønike," in *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, ed. R. Graeme Dunphy (Leiden: Brill, 2010): 509.

Southern Baltic who claimed to be outside of the Danish kingdom, to which they had, in a sense, belonged since 1214. They are in opposition to *deme utlendischen volke* – for example, the mercenaries from further afield, whom no one was prepared to trust. I have argued elsewhere[23] that *dudesch*, in the late medieval Baltic, was not an ethnonym but an in-group/out-group term denoting someone who could be "understood" both linguistically and socially – "one of us," as it were.[24]

By contrast, *Denen*/*danskœ* obviously refers to the people of the Kingdom of Denmark. There is an imbalance in usage here, prompted by the different layers of political/ethnic grouping south and north of the Baltic Sea. Living in their own kingdoms, *Denen* and *Sweden* are not quite on the same level as *Holsten*, *Sassen* ("Saxons," from the Duchy of Saxony), and *Wenden* ("Wends," the people of the former Slav territories east of Kiel, for the most part barely Slav-speaking any more), who have no kings of their own. But neither are the latter just subdivisions of *Dudesche* (as would be assumed from a modern perspective). The peculiar structure of the *romersche rike* was somehow at odds with real-life political and linguistic features, which were what would have mattered to most people, while the chroniclers shared a worldview that was grounded in visions of political *ordo*, so they took care to detail the nominal boundaries of the *rike*. When reporting events in the west, Holsatian chronicles differentiate between *Vlaminghen* and *Dudeschen*, the latter comprising people *van Brabant, van Holland, van beneddene by deme Rine* [the Lower Rhine], *van Westfalen*, etc.[25] – clearly not on account on any "ethnic" difference between Flanders and the others (who all shared the same language) but motivated by the fact that Flanders nominally belonged to France. In the minds of the literate, at least, the formal boundaries which loom so large in modern historical atlases had at least some reality. They do not, however, seem to have been reflected in the chroniclers' reports of contemporary events, such as Gerhard III's assuming the title of Duke of Southern Jutland, "or Slesvig as it was called since his day, after the city and bishopric of Slesvig, because that is a nobler name,"[26] a development never discussed with reference to the duchy being *densch* or *dudesch*.

All in all, there is an awareness that people speak and act differently according to where they are or where they are from; Gerhard III is a *Holste* and there-

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23 Rüdiger, "Livonia."

24 In that "dudesch/'deutsch" is a deverbal from "deuten" meaning "interpret, understand," cognate to "deutlich" meaning "clear[ly]."

25 "Detmar-Chronik," c.599.

26 Presbyter Bremensis, *Chronicon Holtzatiae*, c.20: ". . . ducatus pocior et ditior fuit ducatus Sunder-Jutland, qui a tempore Gherardi ducis nominatus est ducatus Sleszwiccensis a civitate et episcopatu Sleswzwiccensi, utpote nomine digniori."

fore, if required by context, *dudesch*, but political and other boundaries do not follow such distinctions. Some *Holsten* and *Denen* are with the count, others against him. King Christopher quells a rising in Funen with the help of *Teutonici*, while Gerhard III is *capitaneus tocius exercitus Danorum*. On a practical level, he was also the brother-in-law of both the Duke of Slesvig (who was the son of King Christopher II, whom he had twice dethroned), married to the granddaughter of King Erik Klipping (Sophia, from one of the Mecklenburg branches), and worked closely with his cousin Johan III, half-brother of Erik Menved and Christopher II (who were also Sophia's cousins). With a parentage like this, what made him *dudesch* rather than *densch*, except for the fact that his paternal holdings lay just to the south of the Eider River?

There are very few, in fact only two, contemporary sources that make a point of turning the difference *Dani/Teutonici* into an opposition, making Gerhard III not just a harsh ruler, but a harsh "Teuton" ruler. One is known as the *Jutish Chronicle*, a continuation of an abbreviation of Saxo Grammaticus's *Gesta Danorum*.[27] Saxo's enormous Latin history enjoyed little currency in the Middle Ages in its own right, though its subject matter must have circulated widely. Among the slightly more wieldy works inspired by Saxo is the fourteenth-century *Compendium Saxonis*. The *Jutish Chronicle*, so called on account of a certain regional focus on Jutland, takes up where Saxo and the *Compendium* leave off; that is, shortly before 1200. The *Chronicle* then takes the story into the mid-1340s. It can therefore be assumed that it is near-contemporary to the life of Gerhard III; it is also famous because of its systematic ideological perspective. In line with Saxo, but with quite an original tack, the anonymous chronicler traces the shifting fortunes of Danish domination on the southern rim of the Baltic, highlighting several phases. First comes the period of Valdemarian imperial rule in the early 13th century, which is cut short by two acts of insidious treachery: the capture of Valdemar II and his heir on Lyø by a Schwerin count in 1223, which allowed an opposition to form and led to the king's defeat at Bornhöved in 1227 and the subsequent reinstallation of the Schauenburg counts of Holsatia; and the slaying of King Erik Ploughpenny (r. 1241–1250) by his brother Abel (r. 1250–1252) at Slesvig in 1250. Abel, who became king but soon fell while warring against the Frisians, became the forefather of the ducal line of Slesvig, while the kingship remaining with the surviving brother, Christopher.

To the mind of a Jutish chronicler a hundred years on, both "treacheries" were located in, and prompted by, politics in Northalbingia. Starting from there,

27 See Lars Boje Mortensen, "Chronica Jutensis," *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, ed. R. Graeme Dunphy (Leiden: Brill, 2010): 353.

the chronicler develops a consistent narrative of a Danish kingdom living in peace and local equilibrium, often disturbed and harassed by intruders from the southern rim, mostly Holsatians but also Mecklenburgers and Pomeranians. They, and they alone, are the chronicler's *Teutonici* – there is hardly one person from south of the River Elbe in the entire chronicle. The use of the term is Saxo's, who in turn takes it from a learned Latin tradition of approximating the common term *diut·isk* (*~tydsk/dudesch*), which was "popular, understandable," with the 2nd-century-BC *Teutones* known to the medieval literate world from Roman history.[28] This semantic shift was to be a huge success. Even today, "Teutons" can mean "Germans" (another learned equation from the same period), and both apply to the 19th-century nation-state and its citizens.

The *Jutish Chronicle* is far from such views. The words *Teutonici* and *Teutonia* refer only to the Southern Baltic rim, mostly if not always Holsatia. Much in keeping with Saxo, whose grand idea was to tell the story of the Danes as inverted Romans, the *Jutish Chronicle*'s narrative, true to its Roman Latin models in style and vocabulary, recounts the struggle of a well-ordered polity led by a king against its belligerent neighbours with a significantly less well-ordered structure. If they advance too far, the kingdom falls on hard times; if the king is unworthy, or worse still, if there is no king to cluster around, then the kingdom has reached its low point.[29]

At the same time, the chronicler has a knack for political give-and-take. Gerhard III is introduced, not as a sinister fiend plotting the destruction of the Danes, but simply as a neighbour paid by evil King Christopher to help him quell a Danish rising. He is then, almost respectfully, described as winning battles and allies; if there is *falsitas* it can occur among *Teutonici* and *Dani* alike, and on the surface level of events the chronicle does not differ much from the others.

Two things set the *Jutish Chronicle* apart: One is the occasional rhetorical flourish, the insertion of learned phrases such as "the heavy yoke of the Teutons began to weigh upon the kingdom" (*incepit fieri gravissimum iugum Teutonicorum super regnum*), serving as a kind of stylistic cross-reference back to Saxo. The

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28 This, of course, is a story often told, perhaps most comprehensively by Urs Maas, *Was ist deutsch? Die Entwicklungen der sprachlichen Verhältnisse in Deutschland* (München: Fink, 2014). The learned equation of a term of no special circumscription meaning "popular, general" (common Indo-European *diut/tauta/þjóð*/etc. for "people") to a specific Germanic *gens* known from ancient history, and the subsequent assumption that this *gens* was perennial and therefore could be traced to medieval, or indeed modern, realities. Much of the confusion about the meaning of "deutsch" that has cost 19th- and 20th-century Europe so terribly dearly results from the fundamental impracticability of applying it to any one definable group of people.

29 Cf. Anders Leegaard Knudsen, *Saxostudier og rigshistorie på Valdemar Atterdags tid* (København: Instituttet for Historie ved Københavns Universitet, 1994).

other is a certain exoneration of Niels Ebbesen's slaying of Count Gerhard. The chronicler takes care to point out that the nocturnal foray was not a sneaky murder: far from "coming like a thief in the night," the forty-eight men (the number of the evangelists multiplied by the number of the apostles; other sources have up to sixty or make them appear to be only a handful) enter Randers to the sound of drums, setting fire all over the place (*percussis tympanis incendioque posito in villa*). In other words, they certainly make themselves known. In the face of the "4 000 armed men" at the count's disposal – an obviously absurd number, given that all of Randers could not have housed half that number – the killing is done *validissime* and *audaciter*, indeed. There is also no mention of the count being in bed or ill; furthermore, it is stressed that his mission was to "eradicate all the nobility of Jutland and to hand the land over to his Teutons" (*intendens totam nobilitatem Iucie extirpare et illam terram suis Teutonicis assignare*). Of course, Niels Ebbesen does not die on the wheel, either, "but fell after having inflicted heavy losses on a large Teutonic army." No need to call him a hero – the point is made, and the learned readership would have a long series of glorious tyrannicides all the way down from Livy at their disposal to fill in the blanks.

Besides the *Jutish Chronicle*, there is a remarkable metrical rhymed poem, preserved only in 17th-century copies but certainly composed in 1329, normally referred to as the "Complaint on the State of the Kingdom of Denmark" (*Planctus de statu regni Dacie*).[30] It addresses "dolorous Denmark": "Once you were glorious, conqueror of *Saxonia*, *Lombardia*, *Anglia*, *Sclavia*, *Esthonia*, *Holsatia*, and other realms [a remarkable mash-up of actual medieval Danish conquests and the Migration-Age reference to Lombardy – J. R.]. You used to be far and wide [*eras lata, prolongata*] and ruled down to the River Elbe, whereas now, clipped and eclipsed, you hardly reach the Eider or the Sli/Schlei." Her inhabitants have also acquired bad habits in *Teutonia*: long hair, tight trousers, pointed hats, and other *lupanares ritus* – "whore-house ways." There is nothing original in this moralizing as to its contents (indeed, much of it is present in Saxo, too) nor as to the list of sins that had taken hold of the country as of late. The originality lies in the intertwining of this stock morality with actual day-to-day politics like the conquest of Haderslev, the siege of Gottorp, the preaching campaigns of the bishops of Ribe and Aarhus, and the acquisition of *Synderiucia* and more than half of the kingdom by an unnamed *demon* who must be very close to Gerhard III. The changing tides of Holsatian-Danish relations are elevated to rhetorical heights

30 Gertz, *Scriptores minores historiæ Danicæ medii ævi*, I: 480–486. Cf. the thorough study by Kai Hørby, *Status regni Dacie. Studier i Christofferlinjens ægteskabs- og alliancepolitik 1252–1319* (København: Den danske historiske Forening, 1977).

and given a biblical-patristic resonance: "She who used to be your servant maid is now a lady to you" (*que quondam erat ancilla / nunc est tibi domina*).

Together, these two texts attest to a medieval opinion, however minoritarian, that was prepared to view the situation in 1330s Denmark not (only) in terms of *how* it was ruled, but also in terms of *who* ruled. Nineteenth-century historians would jump on it.

Four Modern Moments that Shape Medieval Memories

To explain how modern memories of Gerhard III were shaped, one cannot avoid mentioning four moments in 19th/20th-century history. They are the first thing anyone who busies him- or herself with Danish/Holsatian history will come across, so such readers are welcome to skip this section. But as they are not household facts in general history and in Anglophone scholarship, it might not be amiss, in the context of this volume, to briefly recite them:[31]

1848 – Civil War

The early modern Danish Empire, the Oldenburg monarchy, suffered the loss of Norway in 1814 at the end of the Napoleonic turmoil. It now consisted of the Kingdom of Denmark proper plus "The Duchies" – Slesvig (Southern Jutland) and Holsatia – plus the recent acquisition of the miniscule Duchy of (Saxe-)Lauenburg, island possessions in the North Atlantic (the Faroes, Iceland, Greenland) and the West Indies, the footholds in Africa and India having been lost previously. The Duchies made for a third of the area and two-fifths of the population. Though Slesvig was nominally part of the Kingdom of Denmark, Holsten was ex-imperial territory, now considered part of the loose *Deutscher Bund*. This notional boundary had no practical social, political, or economic relevance. The Duchies had been integrated, in terms of having a shared ruling class and shared institutions,

31 There are countless studies of these episodes, most of them in Danish or German. There is a very short overview in the chapter by Vagn Skovgaard Petersen, "Denmark: The Emergence of the Nation State," in *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia, vol. 2: 1520–1870*, ed. Erkki I. Kouri and Jens E. Olesen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016): 946–61. A foundational study is: Steen Bo Frandsen, *Holsten i Helstaten. Hertugdømmet inden for og uden for det danske monarki i første halvdel af 1800-tallet* (København: Museum Tusculanum, 2008).

for more than four hundred years. Their powerful landowners were deeply distrustful of post-Napoleonic ideas. In Copenhagen, the one large town in Denmark, such ideas were gaining currency among a bourgeois and academic elite who often found themselves barred from access to power. Bourgeois unrest was mounting throughout the 1840s, and the revolutionary moment of 1848 saw the nominally absolutist king swiftly agreeing to let the liberal elites establish a constitutional monarchy. This shocked the aristocrats in the Duchies into an unexpected alliance with local petit-bourgeois German nationalism of a kind that was commonplace across Continental Europe, and prompted a legitimist coup d'état in the Duchies. What ensued was a two-year civil war with several thousand casualties on both sides, leaving the liberal regime in Copenhagen victorious and much of the Duchies embittered.

1864 – War and Annexation

Deft manoeuvring on the part of newly-installed Prussian Prime Minister Bismarck and a reckless liberal Danish government resulted in the invasion of Denmark by Prussia and Austria in early 1864. The sticking point was that liberal opinion in Denmark was more or less prepared to give up Holsatia but keep and integrate Slesvig, whereas opinion in Holsatia favoured preserving the unity of the Duchies, either within Denmark or (preferably) as a separate state. The upshot was that neither got what they wanted. After a crushing military defeat, Denmark had to give up Schleswig-Holstein, as it was now often called (in the singular, regardless of hyphenation). But instead of becoming a principality in its own right, it suffered military occupation and, in 1867, annexation by Prussia. Popular opinion was bitter but subdued; opposition to whoever ruled in Berlin became a constant of Schleswig-Holstein politics for the next seventy years. In the northern half of Slesvig, large parts of the rural population came to view themselves as Danes under foreign rule.

1920 – Partition

At the end of World War I, Slesvig was one of several border zones in Europe whose political future was to be determined by referendum. Northern Slesvig had a three-quarters majority in favour of Denmark, Middle Slesvig a similar majority in favour of Prussia-Germany. The 1920 border, dividing the old duchy into two nearly equal halves, is the one that still exists to this day.

1940 – Occupation

Nazi Germany invaded Denmark and Norway on April 9, 1940. The occupation lasted throughout the war. Even though, when all is said and done, it was perhaps less horrible than in other countries occupied by the Wehrmacht, the occupation brought with it shootings, torture, deportation, and widespread terror. After the Liberation, large sections of the German minority in North Slesvig were charged with collaboration and interned, while a mass movement in South Slesvig (60–90% of the electorate) demanded separation from Holsatia and Germany and reunification with Denmark. Both Danish and British governments proved themselves reluctant to act, however, and as prospects for a revision of the 1920 border dimmed, the movement shrank towards the end of the 1950s.

Even a brief overview such as this illustrates two things:

(1) Once the two nationalisms, Danish and German, were in place by the 1840s – the Frisian movement was quickly pulverized in the "either/or" – subsequent history provided both "sides," as they now enjoyed being, with plenty of cause for triumphalism and rancour alike.

(2) The drive for a clear-cut national separation collided at every juncture with actual history, economy, and society. There was no ethnic divide in ethnographic terms, nor was there a proper linguistic one (the two standard languages were layered upon a continuum of Jutish, Low Saxon, and Frisian), nor were there religious differences or economic fault lines. As every student of modern nationalism knows, "imagined communities" need not have a factually obvious basis to become viable; indeed, the more similar populations are on an everyday level, the more vociferous national agitations will have to be, the more urgent the "invention of tradition" becomes.[32] The most exacerbated of national divisions may even originate precisely where the difference is otherwise hardest to discern, and where it takes the most "storytelling" to convince people that there *is* a difference. This is where Count Gerhard comes in.

A proper history of the uses of Count Gerhard in the 19th to 21st centuries would be a research project unto itself. As a historian and medievalist, I am perhaps not fully qualified to do it justice, since all kinds of media are involved: the study of a theatrical production, a monument, a children's book, and a summer pop song all require different hermeneutic methods, as does their contextualization against the wider background of contemporary society, education, and memory studies.

32 To quote the indispensable catchword-book titles by Benedict Anderson and Eric Hobsbawm.

On the other hand, it would be wrong to leave all this hanging. So what I propose to do is to give examples of the possible material, sketch possible avenues of research, and come up with some tentative conclusions.

In Holsatia: "The Bold Count" Rides – Up and Down

Mid-19th-century inventors of tradition and imaginers of communities were quick to hit upon Gerhard. After all, he had been the first Count of Holsatia to receive the Duchy of Slesvig in fief. More than that: according to one tradition, possibly spurious in today's view but taken as an indisputable fact at the time, Gerhard had the king pledge that Slesvig should never again be united with Denmark proper (the so-called *Constitutio Valdemariana*). So he was quickly promoted to being one of the founding fathers of "Schleswigholstein," paving the way for his grandson Gerhard VI (r. 1384–1404) to receive Slesvig as a hereditary fief in 1386, and for King Christian I, who, upon his election as new Count of Holsatia and Duke of Slesvig in 1460, swore to a lengthy oath of accession including the famous formula about the indivisibility of the Duchies that would become the rallying cry of the *Schleswigholsteiners* in 1848: *"Up ewig ungedeelt!"*

So, Gerhard "the Great" had wrested from Denmark the very unity which the Danish government was now trying to sever by its policies to include Slesvig but not Holsatia in constitutional change. He was also a winner, a strongman of the sort who is dear to nationalists of all kinds but perhaps to German nationalists more than most. After all, he had conquered Denmark – the last *Deutscher* to do so – dethroned its king, and in practice abolished the Danish monarchy and ruled Denmark from Holsatia. Quite a figure for a country wallowing in being downtrodden by "the Danes" with the connivance of the European powers. Gerhard the Great had shown the world that Holsatia could conquer Denmark. An 1866 story book for school pupils calls him "invincible" and "the scourge of Denmark."[33]

Nor was this just a regional sentiment. In the wake of the 1848 revolutionary movements, Schleswig-Holstein served as a powerful rallying point for the diffuse liberal nationalism that organized itself in the Frankfurt *Nationalversammlung*. Indeed, a large majority of those who deplored the end of the 1850 rising lived outside of the Duchies. One of them was the Hanover-born radical liberal publi-

33 Johann Friedrich Dücker, *Bilder aus der schleswig-holsteinischen Geschichte* (Schleswig: Schulbuchhandlung Heiberg, 1866), 110.

cist Gustav Rasch (1825–1878). Only a few days after the invasion of Holsatia by *Deutscher Bund* troops, he travelled to Rendsburg and wrote a series of articles for the journal *Die Gartenlaube*, titled "Aus den Landen des verlassenen Bruderstammes" (a phrase impossible to translate into any other language, or indeed any spoken variety of German), praising the locals for having ostracized the families of Danish officials over the past years and stressing their valour throughout history: "This is from where the Danes were repulsed to the north, the Slavs to the east; the war band of heroes with whom Gerhard the Great conquered the Kingdom of Denmark hailed from the region between the Eider and the Stör."[34]

This piece of popular journalism captures two different strands of memorializing Gerhard: as a forerunner of present triumphs and as a source of local pride, especially in Rendsburg. A local tradition has Gerhard spending his childhood in the town on the banks of the River Eider; the former royal castle was his main stronghold and, insofar as the word has any meaning in a 14th-century context, his residence; and most importantly, according to a charter of 1339, Gerhard granted the town a number of privileges plus extensive lands which circumscribed the communal boundaries up until the 20th century.[35] Rendsburg, one of the major towns of the Duchies and seat of the provisional government of 1848/50, took especial pride in its "great son." Today's town map sports the Gerhardsteich (a park and lake) on the Gerhardstraße, the Gerhardshain (a large section of woodland included in the 1339 grant), and, most prominent perhaps, the neo-Gothic cast-iron Gerhardsbrunnen, a water fountain erected in 1881 in the centre of Schlossplatz, site of the former castle (Figure 1). One of its three faces sports an embossed parchment with a seal and an inscription commemorating the 1339 privilege.

One layer of Gerhard's memory is local and civic. The street name Gerhardstraße can be found in several towns in Holsatia (but not, perhaps tellingly so, in Slesvig), typically in 19th-century developments and in the vicinity of names such as Schauenburgerstraße or those of the leading men of the 1848/50 rising, such as Theodor Olshausen (1802–1869) and Wilhelm Beseler (1806–1884). In terms of memory

34 Gustav Raschen, "Aus den Landen des verlassen Bruderstammes I: Ein Besuch in Rendsburg," *Die Gartenlaube* 5 (1864): 75: "Bei diesem energischen und kräftigen Menschenschlage fand Karl der Große auf seinen verheerenden Raub- und Eroberungszügen den kräftigsten Widerstand. Von hier aus wurden die Dänen nach dem Norden, die Wenden nach dem Osten zurückgeworfen; die Heldenschaar, mit der Gerhard der Große das dänische Reich unterwarf, war aus der Gegend zwischen Eider und Stör." A few days later, Rasch, having moved on to Flensburg, was arrested by the Prussian military as a troublemaker and banned from the Duchies.

35 For the Rendsburg connection and its medieval sources, see Hanns Christian Jensen, *Gerhard der Große* (Rendsburg: Möller, 1984).

culture, taken together they offered a kind of common ground on which the new Prussian rulers – personified by many higher officials hailing from, and taking orders from, the Old Prussian provinces and Berlin, plus a number of local Prussophiles – could meet the Schleswig-Holstein legitimists with their allegiance to the royal-ducal House of Augustenburg and their vision, now thwarted, of an independent Schleswig-Holstein within a German Confederation. The story of Gerhard's unification of the Duchies and his subjugation of Denmark was spacious enough to hold both an expansive nationalist *alldeutsch* view, such as was gaining ground in bourgeois circles nationwide towards the 1890s, and a regional-dynastic view.

The latter view, however, was slowly but steadily ousted from official visibility as the Prussian educational system put the former view, stressing *Deutschtum* at the cost of *Schleswig-Holsteinertum*, ever further to the fore.[36] As integration within Germany accelerated, Schleswig-Holstein was losing out on its traditional strengths – it had lost the industrial advantages it had held within the Oldenburg monarchy and its old enterprises were thwarted by protectionism while large sections of the younger generations of formerly wealthy landowners on the west coast were choosing emigration over impoverishment and the Prussian military draft.[37] The former Duchies were becoming peripheral within Germany, whose interest in the province focused mainly on Kiel, destined to become the main harbour for the new Imperial Marine, complete with shipyards and concomitant industries. This attracted more and more immigration from other provinces (Kiel went from a population of 18 000 in 1864 to nearly a quarter million[38]), and meant that by 1900 Schleswig-Holsteinism was coming to be seen by many as not just irrelevant but as outright offensive.

Against this socio-political background, it is easier to understand why such a large part of the agitation in the run-up to the 1920 referendum about the partitioning of Slesvig revolved around the idea of being *deutsch*. One of the most-publicized posters of the campaign shows a coarsely-designed, near-Expressionist chivalrous hero figure sporting a shield painted in blue, white, and red (the colours of the 1848 rising) with the motto: "Wir wollen Deutsch [!] sein, wie unsere Väter

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36 See Carsten Jahnke, "Die Borussifizierung des schleswig-holsteinischen Geschichtsbewusstseins, 1866–1889," *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Schleswig-Holsteinische Geschichte* 130 (2005): 161–90.

37 Overall emigration during the first fifty years of Prussian rule was upwards of 10%; see Paul-Heinz Pauseback, *Übersee-Auswanderer aus Schleswig-Holstein . . . als hätten sie nie eine Heimat, nie eine Mutter gehabt!* (Husum: Nordfriisk Instituut, 2000).

38 According to the relevant editions of the *Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich*, the population peaked in the war winter of 1916/17 with 226 645 inhabitants. During World War II, Kiel would reach the 300 000 threshold.

waren" (Figures 2 and 3). Looking back, it gives one an eerie feeling to ponder the fact that Schiller's then-famous formula from the "Rütli Oath" scene in his classic play *Wilhelm Tell* – "Wir wollen frei sein, wie die Väter waren" ("We want to be free, like our forefathers were") – was altered in a significant detail: *deutsch* ("German") replacing Schiller's *frei* ("free"). The poster does not provide any hints as to the identity of the knight in shining armour; indeed, the artistic suggestion is more mythical than historical, but there must have been many who could not help thinking of the knight from "real history" who had united Schleswig-Holstein. In fact, there exists a near-contemporary larger-than-life image of Gerhard III, quite similar in artistic effect though different in material: a wooden statue from 1914, used to collect contributions for the war effort. Those who had contributed were asked to hammer a nail into the statue, thereby helping to give Gerhard (as he is explicitly called) his symbolic iron armour. The statue, which is preserved in the Old Town Hall at Rendsburg, was widely publicized at the time via postcards, has often been reprinted in history books, and must, in the absence of any medieval image apart from a seal imprint, have loomed large in the popular imagination (Figure 4).[39]

When North Slesvig fell to Denmark after the referendum of 1920, this was widely viewed as an insult to *Deutschtum* as much as a social and economic challenge for the two halves of Slesvig. Post-war historiography was unanimous. According to a 1926 schoolbook, Gerhard's "main plan" had been the unification of the "severely threatened" Slesvig with Holsatia, he never intended to rule over Denmark but just to secure Slesvig, and he was killed by *Meuchelmörder* – "treacherous assassins."[40] Anyone familiar with post-1918 Germany's way of interpreting the war and the Versailles Treaty will recognize the theme: heroism undefeated in battle but stabbed in the back, with no expansive intentions but only acting in self-defence.[41] In a less obvious and more circumspect way, the *Geschichte Schleswig-Holsteins* by Otto Brandt (1892–1935), professor of *Landesgeschichte* at the University of Kiel, first published in 1925, tells much the same story. In the quasi-official version of the history of the province, Gerhard der Große, "versed in bold deeds of war," exercising "the power to tie Denmark down," was "the founder and carrier of

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39 Jan Rüdiger, "Vom Nutzen des Vergessens. Schleswig-Holsteins Landesmittelalter," in *Nordlichter. Geschichtsbewußtsein und Geschichtsmythen nördlich der Elbe*, ed. Bea Lundt (Köln: Böhlau, 2004): 87–135.

40 Wilhelm Ehlers: "Graf Gerhard der Große (†1340)," in *Schleswig-Holstein. Ein Buch von der Landesgeschichte für Schleswig-Holsteins Jugend,* Anhang C (Schleswig-Holsteinische Ausgabe) zum Neuen geschichtlichen Lesebuch von Max Reiniger und Hermann Nickol, ed. Wilhelm Ehlers and Johannes Vahlbruch (Langensalza: Julius Beltz, 1926): 42–44, 43.

41 *Geschichtliches Lesebuch für Schleswig-Holstein*, ed. Wilhelm Ehlers and Johannes Vahlbruch (Langensalza: Beltz, 1926): 42–44.

the idea of uniting Schleswig with Holstein."[42] The book's explicit aim, as stated in the preface, was to help the province in "dealing with a hard fate" – by which was meant not the loss of life in war, nor inflation, revolution, or economic crisis, but the outcome of the 1920 referendum. Large sections were devoted to the relations between *Dänentum* and *Deutschtum* over the past thousand years. Unchanged in its medieval passages, Brandt's handbook was regularly reprinted up until the 1980s and was only superseded as the standard single-volume reference book by the *Geschichte Schleswig-Holsteins* in 1996.[43]

It was also in keeping with the general view, another world war and another border conflict later. Neither Nazism nor the mass immigration of Pomeranian and East Prussian refugees that completely upset the population balance made any visible imprint on the way history was told in post-war Schleswig-Holstein, now elevated to a Federal Republic *Land* in its own right. The Schleswig-Holstein section of the widely-disseminated chronological "Territorien-Ploetz" makes unification the "guiding principle" (*Leitgedanke*) of all Schauenburg politics and has Gerhard inaugurating a "Hundred-Year Struggle for Schleswig."[44] It was only towards the 1970s that a less politicized view gained ground, starting with Erich Hoffmann's seminal 1977 article "Graf Gerhard III. der Große von Holstein" – the first, and to this day the most comprehensive, study of the count and his politics (much of which has been taken up in Hoffmann's 1990 volume of the *Schleswig-Holsteinische Landesgeschichte* and has thereby become something of the standard view).[45] While still stressing the tenacity of Gerhard's Slesvig policy, Hoffmann opened up space for a contextualisation and de-heroization, which has set the tone for subsequent scholarship. Tracing the historiography of Gerhard to the present day would require, and would have to be an integral part of, a full-length study, but that remains beyond the scope of this article. The general gist is that, as the Slesvig Question lost its immediacy and as regional historical culture as a whole was diluted in post-war nation-wide homogenization, Gerhard's role as the 14th-century unifier of *Schleswigholstein* backstabbed by scheming Danes was more or less played out. The Bold Count became a middling figure of medieval history in the narrow sense.

42 Otto Brandt, *Geschichte Schleswig-Holsteins. Ein Grundriß* (Kiel: Mühlau, 1981), 100–5. Additions and revisions by Wilhelm Klüver and Herbert Jankuhn touch on prehistory and the Viking Age as well as recent history.
43 Ulrich Lange, ed., *Geschichte Schleswig-Holsteins* (Neumünster: Wachholtz, 1996 and subsequent editions) adopts an entirely different perspective, focusing on social and economic history.
44 Alexander Scharff, *Schleswig-Holsteinische Geschichte–ein Überblick* (Würzburg: Ploetz, 1966), 19–21.
45 See note 9.

In Denmark: The "Bald Count" Rides – Still

Constraints of space and capacity also preclude any serious analysis of the memory of Gerhard in Denmark. This is because it is so multi-faceted and so important. I have mentioned tracing the one-and-a-half memories. The half-memory is the one south of the border, where Gerhard is today at best half-remembered, probably much less than that. As the Slesvig Question passed from national struggle to peaceful coexistence (1970s–1990s) and then on to asset and source of regional pride (from c. 2000), Gerhard's role as conqueror of Denmark and Germanifier of Slesvig was becoming obsolete. On the other hand, in view of the "uses of oblivion" of modern Schleswig-Holstein vis-à-vis its medieval past – a refusal to appropriate its potential which goes a good deal beyond the general neglect of regional narratives in Germany – it is not surprising that Gerhard III, along with practically all medieval history except for the Vikings in Slesvig,[46] is now nowhere much in evidence. Even the historical museum at Rendsburg takes care to avoid any mention of Gerhard beyond his role as a benefactor of the town[47] – in many other historical cultures, much would be made of a local count who rose to govern Denmark and was killed in dramatic circumstances. As to Gerhard's being largely unknown by today's population, this is so far only based on anecdotal evidence and would require a serious demoscopic effort, but given the ever more precarious position of medieval history and regional history (let alone both in combination) in the state schools,[48] and the disappearance of historical story books as a genre since around the 1980s,[49] it would seem a safe bet that hardly any young person, and not that many of the older ones, living in Schleswig-Holstein today have ever heard of Gerhard III. Lack of popular historical knowledge is not in itself a problem (unless one feels that neglecting a region's history is a political tool wielded intentionally[50]), but it is interesting, especially in comparison with the situation just north of the border.

46 Rüdiger, *Landesmittelalter*.

47 Observations from a personal visit, September 16, 2021.

48 See Detlev Kraack, "Landes-, Regional- und Lokalgeschichte – bislang weitgehend ungenutzte Potentiale für die schulische Vermittlung von Geschichte," in *Landesgeschichte an der Schule*, ed. Oliver Auge and Martin Göllnit (Ostfildern: Thorbecke, 2018): 109–133.

49 Hanns Christian Jessen, *Gerhard der Große* (Rendsburg: Heinrich Möller Söhne, 1985); Dierk Puls, *Schleswig im Mittelalter. Erzählungen zur Landesgeschichte* (Heide: Boyens, 1987), including the chapter "Die Mordnacht von Randers (1340)," 95–102.

50 Jan Rüdiger, "Vom Nutzen des Erinnerns. Über Landesgeschichte als Zukunftsvorsorge," in *Aspekte von Geschichte, Gender und Kultur in Afrika und Europa: Festschrift Bea Lundt = Beyond Dichotomies: Aspects of History, Gender and Culture in Africa and Europe*, ed. Samuel Ntewusu and Nina Paarmann (Berlin: Lit, 2020): 467–500.

In the summer of 1996, the pop group TV2 released their album *Kys bruden*, which includes the hit song "Sommer i Danmark" (Summer in Denmark). Its lyrics are a loose stream-of-consciousness list of places and cultural allusions by someone enjoying the Danish summer lying under a parasol. The one medieval reference (l. 4) is "The Bald Count rides again."[51] To the Danish public this is not an oblique reference, no more than Hans Christian Andersen or the Baroness of Rungstedlund (Tania Blixen), who are both mentioned later in the song. Though hardly anyone south of the border would know it, "the Bald Count" (*den kullede greve*) is Gerhard III of Holsatia.

It is unclear just why Gerhard became known for his baldness – of course, a man in his mid-forties who had been ill at the time of his death may very well have suffered from loss of hair, though no medieval source mentions such a thing. The first instance of this epithet we have is in a ballad (*folkevise*) which can be traced to the 16th century. It recounts *greve Gert*'s invasion of Jutland, his conflict with Niels Ebbesen, the slaying, and Ebbesen's escape. The hero stops over in a hut, where an old woman shares with him her last two loaves of bread, "for he slew the Bald Count" (*for han vog den kullede greve*).[52] Denmark's ballads (*folkeviser*) have been considered something of a national treasure ever since the days of Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig (1783–1872) and his son Svend (1824–1883), who took responsibility for the multi-volume academic publication project *Danmarks gamle folkeviser* (Denmark's Old Folk Songs, 1853).

The junior Grundtvig, who was also active in the national agitation around the 1848 rising, probably had an especially sharp eye for historical ballads about subjects that could be interpreted in terms of Danish vs German. The figure of Count Gerhard at the centre of 1330s *Holstenervælde* (Holsatian Rule), the moment when Denmark as such had almost ceased to exist while two "German" counts divided the country up among themselves, became extremely unsettling when Denmark suffered its devastating 1864 military defeat. For a while, it seemed a serious possibility that the country would be divided up, with Jutland going to Germany and the islands to Sweden. It did not happen, but the writing was on the wall. Fears of a loss of national cohesion and sovereignty have been a strong undercurrent in Danish politics ever since.

Given that background, it is not surprising that Niels Ebbesen's slaying the Bald Count and Valdemar Atterdag's subsequent rise to kingship and Denmark's ascent to Baltic supremacy would occupy pride of place in Denmark's liberal-

51 "Den kullede greve rider igen." "TV2: Sommer i Danmark" (words and music: Steffen Brandt), album *Kys bruden* (EMI 8373352, 1996), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YHKBK4lXrrw.

52 *Danmarks gamle Folkeviser*, vol. III 2 (København: Samfundet til den Danske Literaturs [!] Fremme, 1862), 515.

national narrative. The story resulted in a steady stream of historical novels, such as Herman Frederik Ewald's (1821–1908) *Niels Ebbesøn* (1886), and plays, such as Michael Wallem Brun's (1819–1891) *Ridderen af Randers Bro* (The Knight of Randers Bridge, 1881), turned into a film in 1907 and a Christmas comedy produced in Hobro in 2018. Enormously influential, books of general instruction, such as Adolf Ditlev Jørgensen's (1840–1897) classic *Fyrretyve Fortællinger af Fædrelandets Historie* (Forty Tales from the Fatherland's History, 1882), were reprinted and republished countless times and are still available in bookshops throughout Denmark today. They in turn sparked a whole series of similar books of more recent origin, from Marcus Lauesen's (1907–1975) *Fortællinger af Grænselandets Historie* (Tales from the Border Region's History, 1938–39) to Ebbe Kløvedal Reich's (1940–2005) *Ploven og de to sværd: 30 fortællinger om Danmarks unge år* (The Plough and the Two Swords: 30 Tales about Denmark's Younger Days, 1982), each with its chapter on Gerhard and Niels Ebbesen, and artwork like Agnes Slott Møller's (1862–1937) sombre painting of a pensive Niels Ebbesen, crossbow in hand, riding across frozen fields under a leaden sky (1883) – plus, of course, street names like Niels Ebbesens Vej and a statue of him in the centre of the Randers marketplace.

All this is part of European national history culture as described and theorized over the past thirty years in a large number of works on *lieux de mémoire* and is therefore not very surprising in itself. What *is* surprising is that the writers of the pop song "Sommer i Danmark" expected their audience to grasp the meaning of "the Bald Count" and not be put off by it. In most countries, most elements of traditional 19th-century national history culture are hardly "sexy" enough to have them pop up in a summer beach hit (although a few may serve as references for ironic or critical distancing). Young Danes certainly have plenty of occasions to become familiar with the Bald Count during their childhood, even if they do not go to school in "Niels Ebbesen Skolen" in Randers and celebrate their *studentereksamen* dancing around his statue in the marketplace (Figure 5). They may have enjoyed visits to the communal library, reading books like the 30-page *Niels Ebbesen* (2016) in the "Denmark Tales for Children" series, or *Mordet på greven* (The Count's Murder, 1990), which recounts the adventures of 14-year-old Peter in the retinue of Niels Ebbesen, or most recently *Ten Cool Tales from Danish History* by TV and radio presenter Asser Amdisen (2021), available as both an e-book and audio book.[53]

53 Søren Møller Kjeldsen, *Niels Ebbesen* (Silkeborg: Conta, 2018); Ole Frøstrup, *Mordet på greven* (København: Munksgaard, 1990); Asser Amdisen, *Ti vilde fortællinger fra Danmarkshistorien* (København: Carlsberg, 2021).

Their parents would browse *Kulør* magazine, free in grocery stores, which contains recipes for apple tart, decorative DIY, holiday tips, and a page about "Denmark's Kingless Period," explaining about *grev Gert* and his cousin Johan, the meaning of *pantelen*, and, of course, the Randers slaying.[54] They may then recall their recent visit to Copenhagen's Christiansborg Castle, seat of the Danish parliament and government, and the huge tapestries by artist Bjørn Nørgaard in the Great Banquet Hall, the nation's gift to Queen Margrethe on her fiftieth birthday in 1990. Among the many scenes from Danish history there is one of St George slaying the dragon. St George has a Dannebrog on his shield and the dragon he is piercing has a man's head, bearded but bald, screaming. At his side lies a helmet, an exact rendering of the image on Gerhard's seal imprint, and a shield with the coat of arms of Holsatia (Figure 6). In 2019, the last year before Covid-19, the state rooms of Christiansborg Castle had a little over a half a million visitors.[55]

This superficial sketch of the memory of *den kullede Greve* must remain preliminary. A serious study would require, for instance, the use of sales and loan statistics, printing histories, educational guidelines, and quantitative-qualitative surveys. It would also require a detailed study of the works mentioned and a study of the development of professional historiography, from Kristian Erslev's *Fra Holstenervældens Tid i Danmark* (From the Holstein Reign in Denmark) to *Politiken og Gyldendals Danmarkshistorie* (Politiken and Gyldendal's History of Denmark) and beyond.[56] All this can only be hinted at here, and the conclusion must remain general: apparently, Gerhard III has played a role in both official and popular "historical memory culture" in Denmark, more or less without interruption from the mid-19th century until the present day. The focus was and is on his death; he is nearly always "paired" with Niels Ebbesen, while most of his varied career remains in the back-

54 *Kulør* 143 (2017): 66.

55 *Nyt fra Danmarks Statistik* 212 (June 3, 2020): Christiansborg had 523 400 visitors, making it the third most popular museum in the country. This number does not take into account visitors to the political institutions but refers to the museum rooms alone. Of course, it may be assumed that only a fraction of the visitors actually look at any given tapestry; on the other hand, there are guided tours and explanatory leaflets to provide assistance.

56 It would also require an engagement with the priest and poet Kaj Munk, his plays *Valdemar Atterdag* and *Niels Ebbesen* – the latter written under German occupation, banned from production, and circulated in typescript in resistance circles – and his murder by the Gestapo on January 4, 1944. The play is too good and the story is too sad to be able to do it any justice in such a brief overview. Kristian Erslev, *Fra Holstenervældens Tid i Danmark. Kritiske Smaastudier*, [Dansk] *Historisk Tidsskrift* 6, series 6 (1895–1897): 389–437; *Gyldendal og Politikens Danmarkshistorie*, 16 vols, ed. Olaf Olsen (Copenhagen, 1988–1991), 2nd edition (17 vols) 2002–2005, now online at danmarkshistorien.lex.dk.

ground. *Grev Gerd/Den kullede Greve* is a household name both children and adults are familiar with and remember as a matter of course.

South of the border, the situation is more diffuse. *Gerhard der Große* was a central figure in historical memory culture in its different forms alluded to above for a little more than a century, during the upheavals of the 19th and early 20th centuries. He retained his position as one of the main figures of *Landesgeschichte* all through the first and well into the second post-war era. A number of factors, including changes in school and university curricula, trends in academic history, the evolution of the media, and developments in the political context, contributed to a general loss of interest in him, as in much of medieval *Landesgeschichte*, roughly from the 1970s on. In German national history he never seems to have had any significance, in keeping with the marginal role of Schleswig-Holstein within Germany generally.[57] In today's Schleswig-Holstein he is not a household name at all, but then knowledge of the Land's pre-modern history is generally scant beyond a vague awareness of a former *Dänenzeit*.

Conclusion

There has been much discussion recently about "contested memories." Gerhard III and Niels Ebbesen would seem a case in point – until half the memory flickered and faltered. Slesvig and Holsatia may well be described as a "contested region in history."[58] Their present position as the Land of (Southern) Schleswig-Holstein within Germany, and Northern Slesvig/Sønderjylland as an integrated part of the central state of Denmark – which cultivates its linguistic, historical, and cultural particularism – seems to be contested by no one.[59] Yet recent European history has taught us, if it has taught us anything, that things can change. Historical "memory," though, at least insofar as it concerns the Middle Ages, is not really contested.

57 Even the Kiel mutiny of November 1918, which may well be considered the only successful revolution in German history, is normally glossed over as a kind of preliminary step towards the events in Berlin on November 9, centred on the proclamation of the republic.

58 *Schleswig-Holstein – Contested Region(s) through History*, ed. Michael Bregnsbo and Kurt Villads Jensen (Odense: Syddansk Universitetsforlag, 2016). A number of the contributions in this volume are relevant to the subjects touched upon in this paper.

59 When Martin Henriksen (then Dansk Folkeparti), a member of the South Slesvig Committee of the Danish parliament, sent a Facebook message on January 14, 2020 (the centenary of the referendum), saying he still hoped South Slesvig would at some point return to Denmark, it sparked some mild controversy in the Danish media.

Which is not to say that it is uncontroversial. North of the border, the issues tied up with the Bald Count are still "hot"; questions ranging from border control to EU integration and sovereignty are often discussed with special attention to "the huge neighbour to the south." The shift in recent decades has been one of interpretation. Today's *kullede greve* was not a Holsatian but a German conqueror. The former entangledness of Danish and Holsatian history has receded in importance, perhaps because the image of Denmark as an expansive imperial power during much of its pre-modern history runs contrary to the country's cherished self-image of being small but content and best left alone.[60] Even the fact that Denmark used to be much larger than it is today seems to be receding from popular consciousness. To many of today's Danes, Schleswig-Holstein is now no longer a part of their own history, not even an entity in itself with a special cultural and historical proximity to Denmark, but is simply a part of Germany; for many, it is not much more than a "drive-through" country on the way "down into Europe," a smallish section of their huge neighbour. Holsatia is not presently a threat to Denmark, as it has been in many different hostile situations from the 12th century to the late 1940s. "Germany" still is. At the same time, Germany has come to be conceived of as a "normal" nation-state (indeed, this has been its central ideological tenet since 1990), with the result that the histories of its component parts have become subaltern and are less and less known both inside and outside of present-day Germany. Schleswig-Holsteiners today have little knowledge or interest in regional historical culture, national history being located elsewhere, on the Rhine or in Berlin. Even the idea of "Holstein" as a region and former duchy/county in and of itself, distinct from Schleswig, seems to be disappearing from everyday use, and Holsatians today have less use than ever for Gerhard III, either as a "bold" or as a "bald" count. He has ended up in "the narrative's offside,"[61] the rest of the field having taken a different direction, leaving him stranded. The two teams on the field are not playing the same game; both north and south of the border, historical culture is not dialogical but solipsistic.[62] To the south, people would be surprised to learn that a Count of Holsatia is the hero (or rather the thug) of Danish children's books and school plays; in fact, they would hardly recognize "the Bald Count" as "their" Gerhard III

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60 This is the main thesis of Michael Bregnsbo and Kurt Villads Jensen, *Det danske Imperium – storhed og fald* (København: Aschehoug, 2004).

61 See Jan Rüdiger, *MEMOREG: History and Memory – The Regional Dimension*, https://dg.philhist.unibas.ch/de/bereiche/mittelalter/forschung/geschichtsgebrauch/.

62 Historians on both sides of the border are addressing the problem with a multitude of joint ventures; see, for example, the 2022 initiative "Erinnerungsparlament," which includes young people's contributions and invites them to dialogue, https://www.perspektivregion.eu/erinnerungsparlament.

of Holstein-Rendsburg in the first place, to the extent that they have even heard of him. So, Niels Ebbesen can remain the hero of a national struggle for as long as anybody pleases; no one is coming to challenge him anymore. Rather than patriotic tales and speeches, his place is now in children's books, pop songs, and give-away magazines. You cannot really have a serious competition when the other party does not realize there is a contest going on.

Figures

Figure 1: Civic pride, medievalism, and the modern know-how of the local Ahlmann foundries converge in the iron Gerhardsbrunnen, erected on the site of the former castle at Rendsburg in 1881 to commemorate Gerhard III's generous endowment of the town in 1339. Photo: Jan Rüdiger.

Figure 2: “We want to be German, as our forefathers were.” A travesty of Schiller’s classic cry for freedom twisted into a national “heroic” rallying slogan in the campaign prior to the Slesvig plebiscite in 1920. Artist: Paul Haase (1873–1926). Photo: europeana.eu.

Figure 3: Søndertorv/Südermarkt in Flensborg during the 1920 plebiscite campaign. The Gerhard-like effigy of Haase’s poster was everywhere in the early months of 1920. Photo: Den slesvigske Samling, Dansk Centralbibliotek for Sydslesvig.

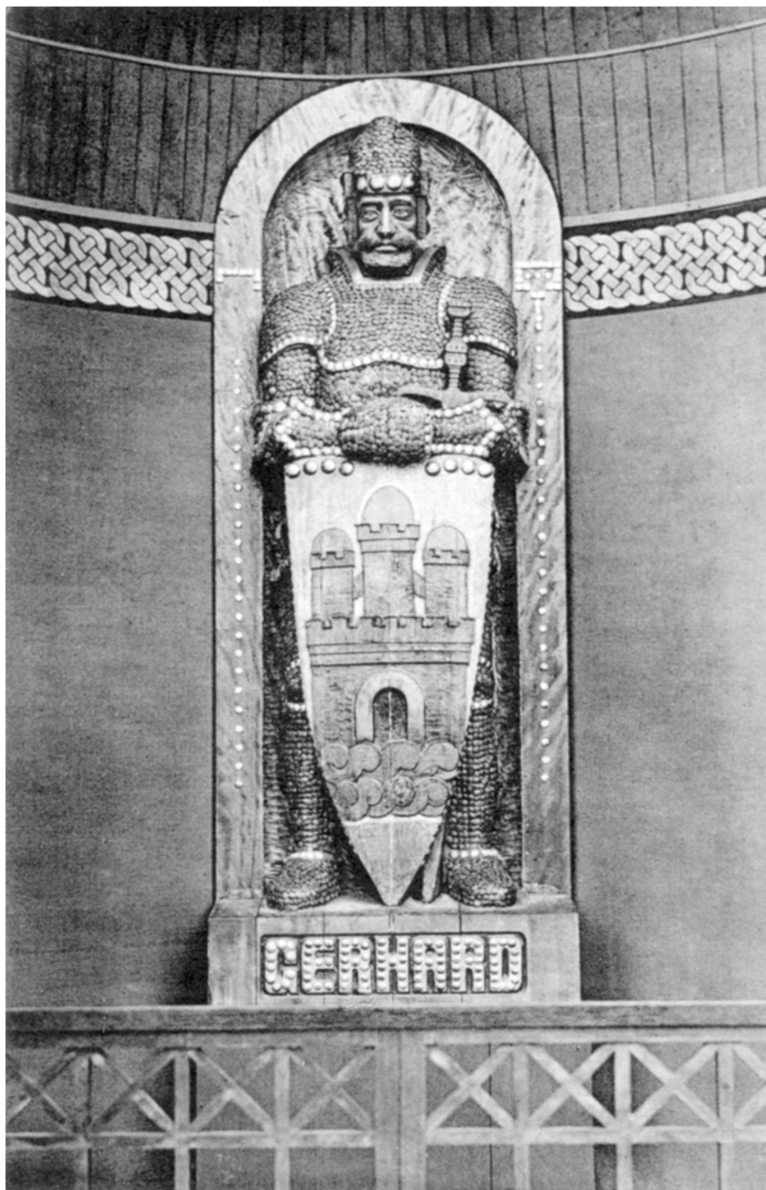

Figure 4: During the First World War, Germany ran several campaigns to raise private contributions to its war efforts. Citizens "bought" nails to hammer into wooden images of symbolic value, turning them into "iron-clad" defenders of the Fatherland. One such image is this larger-than-life effigy of Count Gerhard, preserved in Rendsburg's Old Town Hall. Period postcard, private collection.

Figure 5: In 1882, the town of Randers commemorated the slaying of Count Gerhard with a statue of Niels Ebbesen by Ferdinand Edvard Ring (1829–1886) on Rådhustorvet opposite the Town Hall. It is still at the centre of civic activities such as the traditional dancing of school leavers (*studenter*) at the end of June. Press photo by Mathias Fredslund Hansen, 2020.

Figure 6: Gerhard III as the dragon writhing under the lance of the knight bearing the arms of Denmark. From Bjørn Nørgaard's series of historical tapestries, the nation's gift to Queen Margrethe II on her fiftieth birthday (1990), in Riddersalen, Christiansborg Palace. Photo: Jan Rüdiger.

Kati Parppei

“The Holy Ascetics of Karelia”: The Integration of Russian Medieval Saintly Cults into Finnish Orthodox Collective Memory, 1896–1944

In November 2018, the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Constantinople proclaimed among the saints the holy Martyr and Confessor John (Johannes) of Sonkajanranta (1884–1918). This was at the proposal of the Finnish Orthodox Church, which has an autonomous status within said Patriarchate. John of Sonkajanranta was the first Orthodox saint of Finnish origin; he was a teacher and an Orthodox missionary who was executed by White Guards during the Finnish Civil War. At the same time, Elder John of Valaam (1873–1958) was also proclaimed a saint. John of Valaam was a monk of Russian origin who resided in Finland after the evacuation of Valaam monastery from the island of Valaam in Lake Ladoga to Heinävesi, Finland during the Second World War.[1]

Does the nationality or locality of saintly figures matter? Theologically, no. However, the relationship between the Orthodox Church and national(ist) ideas has been a complicated one since the 19th century, when the emergence of national local churches was intertwined with efforts to consolidate linguistic and cultural identities, especially in those areas governed by the Ottoman Empire. Already in 1872, the Orthodox Church issued a warning against tendencies to emphasize ethnicity in relation to local churches and to embrace the destructive ideas of nationalism and heretical “phyletism.”[2]

On the other hand, in Orthodox Christian culture in general, and especially in relation to saintly cults, a strong sense of a certain locality and spatiality has prevailed: relics of saints have been preserved in churches and monasteries, and pilgrimages – concrete devotional visits to relics and shrines – have been a popular

1 See, for instance: “Relics of Saint John of Valaam Exhumed at New Valaam Monastery in Finland,” Ορθοδοξία News Agency (online), October 25, 2019, https://www.orthodoxianewsagency.gr/foreignnews/relics-of-saint-john-of-valaam-exhumed-at-new-valaam-monastery-in-finland/; “Finnish Church Celebrates Canonization of St. John of Sonkajanranta,” OrthoChristian.Com (online), July 15, 2019, https://orthochristian.com/122424.html.

2 See, for instance: Berit Thorbjornsrud, “‘The Problem of the Orthodox Diaspora’: The Orthodox Church between Nationalism, Transnationalism, and Universality,” *NUMEN* 62 (2015): 574–76; see also *Social Ethos Document – Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America,* https://www.goarch.org/social-ethos.

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tradition. Especially in peripheral areas, such as Karelia, saintly cults and their veneration were intertwined with a flexible belief system consisting of Christian ideas as well as pre-Christian folk beliefs.[3] Gradually, places such as monasteries, containing the relics and icons of their saintly patrons, can be said to have gained a firm status as concrete *lieux de mémoire,* realms of memory, for the local or regional community of Orthodox believers.[4] In this context, according to Jan Assmann, "memory" refers to collective, cultural memory – rather than individual, communicative memory – formed by a symbolic heritage within which "the distinction between myth and history vanishes."[5] As Assmann notes, feast days, too, can be sites of memory: "in which the memory of entire national or religious communities is concentrated, monuments, rituals, feast days and customs."[6]

More often than not, despite the theoretical distance of the ecclesiastic organs from secular questions, contemporary political issues have been intertwined with religion. Especially in contested frontier areas, this has led to tensions as well as to a need to negotiate and re-negotiate between the local, regional, national, and transnational levels of religious ideas and practices. One such area is Karelia, a borderland between Russia and Finland.[7]

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3 Robert H. Greene, *Bodies Like Bright Stars. Saints and Relics in Orthodox Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010), 4–14; Laura Stark, *Peasants, Pilgrims and Sacred Promises. Ritual and the Supernatural in Orthodox Karelian Folk Religion* (Tampere: Tammer-Paino Oy, 2002), 54–60, 157–71, passim; see also Kati Parppei, "'Ja pian jo parantuivat ja lähtivät terveinä koteihinsa' – pyhiinvaellukset luostareihin ortodoksisessa Karjalassa," in *Suomalaisten pyhiinvaellukset keskiajalla – Kun maailma aukeni*, ed. Sari Katajala-Peltomaa, Christian Krötzl, and Marjo Meriluoto-Jaakkola (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura/Finnish Literature Society, 2014), 341–53.

4 Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," *Representations*, no. 26, Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory (Spring 1989): 7–24.

5 Jan Assmann, "Communicative and Cultural Memory," in *The Theoretical Foundations of Hungarian 'Lieux de Mémoire' Studies*, ed. Pál S. Varga, Karl Katschthaler, Donald E. Morse, and Miklós Takács (Debrecen: University of Debrecen, 2013): 36–43, 38.

6 Jan Assmann, *Religion and Cultural Memory,* trans. Rodney Livingstone (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 8–9.

7 In Finland, the concepts "Karelia" and "Karelian" are extremely value-laden, their meaning fluctuates, and they are very prone to being used anachronistically. In this article, Karelia is geographically mostly used to refer to the area to the west and north of Lake Ladoga, which was ceded from Finland to the Soviet Union in 1944. The concepts Eastern Karelia, located between Lake Ladoga and Lake Onega, and White Karelia, reaching up to the White Sea, are also used. Obviously, it is often impossible to conclusively define the ethnic background, let alone identities, of medieval or pre-modern people. Even though the concept "Karelian saint" is used, it does not refer to any assumptions as to the ethnicity of the saintly figure; rather, its usage in the article follows that of the source material.

The Orthodox[8] Karelian inhabitants speaking Finnic languages (Karelian or Finnish[9]) were in an increasingly difficult situation in the Grand Duchy of Finland (established in 1809). They faced deep suspicion from Finns, as nationalist and anti-Russian ideas were being consolidated in Protestant (Lutheran) Finland throughout the century. The Orthodox believers were seen as favouring Russia because of their religious background, which also made them potential pawns in political and cultural competition in the frontier area.[10] At the same time, Russia was worried about Finnish influence amongst the Orthodox population in Karelia and aimed to keep the population loyal to the ecclesiastic as well as secular power structures of the Russian Empire. Both sides, however, emphasized the importance of educating the Karelians, who were seen as a backward and superstitious people, ignorant even as to the very basics of their own faith.[11]

In Finland, one measure taken to tackle the educational issue was to found a seminary in Sortavala in 1880, one purpose of which was to train teachers to meet the needs of the Orthodox population of Karelia. Also, a group of Finnish and Karelian Orthodox priests – whom we can loosely label as "pro-Finnish" due to their preference to develop Finnish Orthodox culture rather than just relying on Russian tradition – took on the task of educating Karelians, explicitly opting to do so in Finnish. In 1885, they founded the "Brotherhood of Venerable Sergei and Herman" to coordinate their educational work, and in 1896 the first volume of the magazine *Aamun Koitto* (Break of Dawn) was published. According to its head editor, Father Sergei Okulov (1853–1940), the purpose of the magazine was

8 The slightly anachronistic concepts "Orthodox" and "Orthodox Church" are used throughout the text, even though in the Finnish context the church was officially called the "Greek Catholic Church of Finland" from 1918 to 1954. Before that, in the Russian Empire the Orthodox diocese in Finland was called the "Greek Russian diocese of Finland" from 1892 on. See, for instance: Hanna Kemppi, *Kielletty kupoli, avattu alttari. Venäläisyyden häivyttäminen Suomen ortodoksisesta kirkkoarkkitehtuurista 1918–1939* (Tampere: Hermes Oy, 2017), 36–39.

9 Many of the Orthodox Karelians actually spoke Karelian, which today is considered a language distinct from Finnish, but which previously was seen as its dialect.

10 See, for instance: Teuvo Laitila, "Ortodoksikarjalaiset idän ja lännen rajalla: suomalaisuus, karjalaisuus, venäläisyys ja kansallisen identiteetin rakentaminen," in *Epäluuloista ekumeniaan. Ortodoksisen ja luterilaisen kirkon vuoropuhelu,* ed. Suvi Niinisalo (Lappeenranta: Lappeenrannan teknillinen yliopisto, 2005): 107–30, 115–18, passim; Hannes Sihvo, *Karjalan kuva. Karelianismin taustaa ja vaiheita autonomian aikana* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen kirjallisuuden seura, 2003), 235–44. The issue was not just political but also cultural, as the rise of Finnish nationalism largely relied on the idea of Karelia as the semi-mythical cradle of Finnish culture. The Orthodox religion – along with other Russian influences embraced by Karelians – was considered a disturbing and alien feature in this romanticized image (Sihvo, *Karjalan kuva,* passim).

11 Laitila, "Ortodoksikarjalaiset idän ja lännen rajalla," 117.

“to provide educational spiritual texts for the Greek Catholic Finnish-speaking population.”[12]

These intertwined efforts to educate Karelians and create a Finnish Orthodox culture accelerated after the collapse of the Russian Empire, Finland’s independence in 1917, and the establishment in 1923 of the autonomous Orthodox Church of Finland, affiliated with the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. The process included the consolidation of the veneration of local and regional Orthodox saints of Karelia. In this chapter, the initial process of incorporating the originally Russian/Muscovite medieval saintly cults[13] into the collective memory of the nascent Finnish Orthodox culture is examined in light of contemporary developments. How and why did this incorporation or transmission take place? Was it a conscious effort? And if so, by whom exactly?

The focus of this chapter is on the volumes of Aamun Koitto magazine published from the 1890s to the 1940s. This kind of publication, despite its limited circulation (during 1896–1905, only several hundred; it was only after 1935 that it rose and stayed above one thousand[14]), offers an excellent window onto the issues the “pro-Finnish” Orthodox priests wanted to convey to their audience during this politically and ideologically challenging period. In the context of studying the shifting of the saintly cults between the local, translocal, and national levels, it is more relevant to examine those who were promoting the cults, rather than the grassroots-level reception of their input. Indeed, the latter is in most cases inaccessible to the present-day researcher, due to a lack of sources.

Saintly Cults of Karelia Prior to the Turn of the 20th Century

The influence of the Orthodox Church reached the peripheral wilderness area of Karelia in the 14th century. What is known as the hesychastic movement, empha-

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12 *Aamun Koitto*, no. 0 (1896): 1. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own.

13 In this article, I am using Janet Martin’s definition of the Russian/Muscovite Middle Ages, reaching all the way to 1584 – the year of the death of Tsar Ivan IV. Janet Martin, *Medieval Russia: 980–1584* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). The saints referred to in this chapter are said to have lived in the 15th and 16th centuries, and their cults initially took shape during a period lasting from the 16th to the 19th century.

14 Erkki Piiroinen, *Kirkkokunnan Aamun Koitto. Kirkon hengellisen sanoman ja uutisten viestintää Suomen ortodoksisiin koteihin sadan vuoden aikana 1896–1996* (Joensuu: Painotalo Puna-Musta, 1996), 14–15.

sizing the importance of solitude for spiritual development, encouraged monks from Novgorod and Moscow to found small monastic settlements in wilderness areas, including the northwestern part of Rus'.[15] Not only did the monasteries gradually spread Orthodox Christianity, they also brought the local inhabitants under the influence of contemporary power structures.

Among the first monastic settlements in Karelia was Valaam monastery on Lake Ladoga, which, according to contemporary sources, was founded at the turn of the 15th century by a monk named Sergei, of unknown origin.[16] Around the same time, Konevets monastery was founded on another island. Later, monks from Valaam are said to have founded other monasteries, such as Solovki on the White Sea in the 1430s and Svir in the area of Olonets at the beginning of the 16th century.

Savvatii and Aleksandr, the alleged founders of Solovki and Svir, respectively, were officially venerated – that is, included in the calendar of saints – in Metropolitan Makarii's council of 1547.[17] The date of inclusion of Arseni of Konevets in the calendar of saints is less clear; suggestions as to when it took place range from 1549 to 1721.[18] As to Sergei and his 15th-century successor German (Herman in Finnish), considered the founders of Valaam monastery, the issue is even more complicated; it appears that their founder cult was taking form during the latter half of the 16th century, but it was only in 1819, in relation to the visit of Tsar Alexander I (r. 1801–25) to Valaam, that they came to be officially venerated.[19]

For our purposes, it is worthwhile briefly examining the role of the monasteries and their founder cults in the local and regional Karelian communities prior to the 19th century. The wilderness areas in which the first monastic dwellings were founded were peripheral in relation to the central power, but they were not uninhabited. It seems that the initial reception of the monastic founders in the area was not always hospitable, and the monasteries only came to be accepted

15 See, for instance: Robert O. Crummey, *The Formation of Muscovy 1304–1613* (London: Longman 1987), 123–25; Dimitry Pospielovsky, *The Orthodox Church in the History of Russia* (New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998), 47–50.

16 About the debate concerning its foundation date, see Kati Parppei, *"The Oldest One in Russia": The Formation of the Historiographical Image of Valaam Monastery* (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers 2011), 81–86.

17 E. Golubinskii, *Istoriia kanonizatsiia sviatikh v russkoi tserkvi* (Moskva, 1903), 83,100; Jukka Korpela, "The Christian Saints and the Integration of Muscovy," in *Russia Takes Shape – Patterns of Integration from the Middle Ages to the Present*, ed. Sergei Bogatyrev (Saarijärvi: Gummerus, 2005): 17–58.

18 Golubinskii, *Istoriia kanonizatsiia sviatikh v russkoi tserkvi*, 148–49.

19 Parppei, "The Oldest One in Russia," 121–78.

gradually.[20] However, once established, the monasteries in the territory of Karelia owned increasing amounts of land and farms, which had an economic impact on the area and its population.[21]

The spiritual impact is more difficult to measure, for we do not have sources that shed light on the views of the local people. Nonetheless, the written *vitae* – hagiographic texts – of the venerated founders refer to the practice of local people visiting the monasteries to seek healing from illness. Such cases are reported in the stories of miracles attributed to each given saint. Of course, hagiographic texts, produced in the monasteries themselves, can hardly be considered objective sources and call for a meticulous source-critical approach. However, despite their bias, these texts do seem to suggest some kind of interaction as having taken place between the monasteries and the surrounding communities. For instance, in the *Skazanie o Valaamskom monastyre* (Tale of the Monastery of Valaam), dated to 1550–1570, the unknown author describes how a local fisherman named Andrei Garkuiev suffered from a pain in his hand, called upon the founders Sergei and German for help, and made a promise to work in the monastery if his hand would be healed. Andrei fell asleep and dreamed of being on the archipelago of Valaam and meeting Sergei and German. When he woke up, his hand was healed.[22]

Similarly, in a 17th-century *vita* of Arseni of Konevets, a monk active at the turn of the 14th and 15th centuries, it is described how a man from the village of Viazitsk, after becoming blind and destitute, met an old man in a dream. The apparition told him his name was Arseni and that he should go to the Konevets monastery. Led by his seven-year-old daughter, the man travelled to the monastery, where he kissed the sarcophagus of Arseni during a holy liturgy and regained his eyesight.[23]

20 The hostile reception the monks received from local inhabitants is described in the *vitae* of Zosima and Savvati of Solovki, as well as in the "Tale of the Monastery of Valaam." "Zhitie i chudesa prepodobnykh Zosimy i Savvatiia Solovetskikh chudotvortsev," in *Zhitie i chudesa prepodobnykh Zosimy i Savvatiia Solovetskikh chudotvortsev,* ed. S. V. Mineev (Kurgan: Izdatel'stvo Kurganskogo gosudarstvennogo pedagogicheskogo instituta, 1995): 19; "Skazanie o Valaamskom monastyre," in *Skazanie o Valaamskom monastyre,* ed. Natalia Okhotina-Lind (St Petersburg: Glagol, 1996): 166–69.

21 See, for instance: Irina Cherniakova, *Kareliia na perelome epokh. Ocherki sotsialnoi i agrarnoi istorii XVII veka* (Petrozavodsk: Izdatel'stvo Petrozavodskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, 1998), 20.

22 "Skazanie o Valaamskom monastyre," 190–93.

23 Heikki Kirkinen and Maria Widnäs, "Pyhittäjä Arseni Konevitsalaisen elämä," *Ortodoksia* 14 (1963): 9–45, 43–44.

Amongst numerous similar stories of people being healed due to saintly intervention, there are some that indicate a certain flexibility in the prevailing belief system. For instance, in a miracle story attached to the *vitae* of Zosima and Savvati of Solovki, the author explains how a man, Anisi, had first sought help from a local healer. In an apparition, the founder saints banished the healer from the house, and after regretting his mistake, Anisi was healed.[24]

The medieval and pre-modern miracle stories, for their part, confirm that there was a reciprocal relationship between monasteries and local inhabitants. To what extent the people were *de facto* aware of the monastic founder cults – which were only just taking shape in the 16th century – and exactly what kind of role they played in their everyday lives, collective memory, and belief system prior to the 19th century remains unclear in light of the sources known to us. What we do know is that the hold of the Orthodox Church, let alone secular power structures, on the inhabitants of Karelia was quite loose and inconsistent up until the end of 19th and even into the 20th century.[25]

The efforts to develop a network of local and regional saints in Karelia began in earnest at the turn of the 19th century. The prime motor for these endeavours was Valaam monastery with its efficient igumens.[26] After a century of being deserted due to borderland warfare, the monastery had been re-founded in 1719. Towards the end of the 18th century, the situation and status of Valaam improved with the support of the ecclesiastic power structures. However, only very fragmentary and partly contradictory information was available as to the early history of the monastery – even regarding its alleged founders, Sergei and German, practically nothing was known – while National Romantic ideas added to the pressure to write a "proper" history of the increasingly prestigious monastic centre.[27]

The gradual formation of a saintly network was one part of this development. It took place layer by layer. Based on their medieval hagiographies, it was already believed that Savvatii of Solovki (d. 1435) and Aleksandr of Svir (1448–1533) had lived in Valaam prior to founding their own monasteries in the 15th century. Both were accordingly mentioned in the monastic rule of Valaam, compiled in 1784.[28]

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24 "Zhitie i chudesa prepodobnykh Zosimy i Savvatiia Solovetskikh chudotvortsev," 66–68.

25 See, for instance: Teuvo Laitila, *Jumalat, haltiat ja pyhät. Eletty ortodoksisuus Karjalassa 1000–1900* (Turenki: Hansaprint oy, 2017), 88–142.

26 An igumen (hegumen) is the head of an Orthodox monastery.

27 Parppei, "The Oldest One in Russia," 57–66.

28 "Ustav obshchezhitelnyi Valaamskago monastyria" Val. XII, AOFMOV (Archive of the Finnish Monastery of Valaam). Written on paper dated to 1799.

Kornilii of Paleostrov and Adrian of Ondrusov were also mentioned in the rule (the latter being referred to as Aleksandr); they were said to have resided in medieval Valaam before founding monasteries in the Olonets area between Lakes Ladoga and Onega – Kornilii in the 12th century (this dating is connected with the 18th-century wishful idea of Valaam being "the oldest monastery in Russia") and Adrian in the 16th. However, both Kornilii and Adrian are very obscure saintly figures; their cults seem to appear out of nowhere along with the monastic rule. After that, they are only mentioned in ecclesiastic and monastic literature in the latter half of the 19th century.[29] It seems likely that their appearance in Valaam's monastic rule is connected with the revival of the Paleostrov and Ondrusov monasteries in the Olonets area in East Karelia, during the last decade of the 18th century – a process in which the monastery was involved.[30]

The origins of Sergei and Herman of Valaam were the object of speculation before their official veneration in 1819, for practically no information was available about these founder saints with which to write them a proper hagiography. In some handwritten texts produced at the beginning of the century, they were represented as Greek monks, which may have reflected the general interest in the Greek tradition during the Russian monastic revival at the end of the 18th century.[31] The idea of either one or both of the founders having a Greek background took hold relatively quickly, but more was to come: in 1818, Aleksandr Sulakadzev (1771–1830), an enthusiastic amateur historian and National Romanticist, wrote a history of Valaam based on various materials preserved in the monastery and supplemented by "medieval sources" he invented. His forged information – which was, nevertheless, quickly adapted to the historical imagery of the monastery – added a new layer to the contradictory information about the founder saints, suggesting, for instance, that they were of Slavic origin.[32] As we shall see, these ideas were later reflected in the Finnish version of the founder saints' background.

From the beginning of the 19th century on, more figures were added to this "saintly pantheon" of Valaam, in the spirit of national historico-hagiographical endeavour. Of these, the most relevant to our topic is Arseni of Konevets. He has quite a convincing hagiographic background, but it was only at the beginning of

29 I. A. Chistovich, *Istoriia pravoslavnoi tserkvi v Finliandii and Estliandii, prinadlezhashchikh k Sankt-Peterburgskoi eparkhii* (Sankt Petersburg, 1856), 16, 38–40.

30 Parppei, "The Oldest One in Russia," 220–22.

31 Parppei, "The Oldest One in Russia," 155–60.

32 Parppei, "The Oldest One in Russia," 66–72.

the 19th century that he was listed as one of the monastic founders to have actually resided in Valaam.[33]

The remarkable growth of the list of saints connected with Valaam took place in a context of national-hagiographic development, which emphasized the importance of establishing and consolidating Russian saintly cults in the 19th century. On the local and regional levels, it reflected the growing prestige of Valaam at the time, by emphasizing its role as a historical spiritual centre, as well as the monastery's endeavours to underline its historical connections to Olonets and other nearby areas. In 1864, a book was published by the monastery, *Valaamskii monastyr'* (Monastery of Valaam).[34] This book, which was sold at the monastery's bookshop and reprinted numerous times, was a turning point of sorts in the efforts to establish vivid images of Valaam's early history and its honourable saintly residents. Those images were based on very heterogeneous material, including Sulakadzev's forgeries.

In 1876, this development was represented in pictorial form, when a group icon of saints of the Karelian region was painted in Valaam. It depicted Sergei and German of Valaam with Apostle Andrew[35] and 45 local saintly figures.[36]

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33 Arseni was already mentioned in the "Tale of the Monastery of Valaam" as a close friend and collaborator of Sergei; the idea of him having actually resided in Valaam is of later origin ("Skazanie o Valaamskom monastyre," 184–85). In 1947, Afanasii of Siandem and German of Solovki, who had both been added to the "saintly pantheon" of Valaam in the 19th century, were mentioned in Erkki Piiroinen's book (see the Epilogue to this chapter). Afanasii of Siandem is yet another obscure figure; he appears on the scene in the 1850s, apparently in connection of Valaam's efforts to re-establish the Siandem monastery in the area of Olonets. There are hagiographic texts concerning German of Solovki, written at the end of the 16th or the beginning of the 17th century, but the first mention of him having resided in Valaam can be found in the book *Valaamskii monastyr'* (1864). See Parppei, *"The Oldest One in Russia,"* 226–32.

34 *Valaamskii monastyr. Opisanie Valaamskogo monastyria i podvizhnikov ego* (Sankt Petersburg, 1864).

35 Already in the 16th century there existed a legend of Apostle Andrew having predicted the foundation of the monastery on the island of Valaam. It was a local contribution to stories about the apostle's travels in Slavic areas, found, for instance, in the Primary Chronicle (*Povest vremennykh let*). "Skazanie o Valaamskom monastyre," 160–61; Parppei, *"The Oldest One in Russia,"* 98–109.

36 The process of adding more and more saints to the network, the centre of which was Valaam, was very similar – and partly overlapped – with another one, namely the growing list of disciples of Aleksandr of Svir. Both of these processes seem to have been connected with more general attempts to revive the ecclesiastic and monastic culture of Olonets during the 19th century; attempts that Irina Karvonen calls "missionary," in the sense that their purpose, at least in part, seems to have been to decrease the influence of Old Believers in the area and to increase the influence of the Orthodox Church amongst the Karelian inhabitants of Olonets. Irina Karvonen,

1896–1907: "He Probably Spoke Finnish, Too"

To examine the consolidation of the Russian-Finnish-Karelian saintly cults and their integration into Orthodox collective memory – at first in the autonomous Grand Duchy of Finland, and then in the country post-independence – let us begin by taking a look at how the saints were represented in *Aamun Koitto* magazine at the turn of the 19th century, and in what circumstances. As noted above, *Aamun Koitto* was published from 1896 on. Editor-in-chief Sergei Okulov and other pro-Finnish Orthodox priests had to operate while navigating a tense political situation. Finnish and Russian nationalist ideas were set on a collision course: political movements in Finland were gradually aiming to build a national state, while Russian political demands were increasingly directed against the autonomy of the Grand Duchy, as part of the more general move to increase control over the peripheral areas of the empire.[37]

In 1892, the diocese of Finland had been founded under the Russian Orthodox Church. The first archbishop of the new diocese, Antoni (1892–1898), was considered a sympathetic figure by the Finns. For instance, he encouraged the use of Finnish or Karelian in services.[38] However, the term of his successor, Archbishop Nikolai (1899–1905), coincided with a notable increase in "Russification" activities in Finland. Nikolai carried out this policy by, for instance, his emphasis on favouring Russian in Karelian schools as well as in churches.[39]

The editors of *Aamun Koitto* carefully avoided any provocation or political statements about contemporary events; as noted above, they concentrated on providing spiritually and morally uplifting texts for Orthodox Karelians in Finnish.

Pyhän Aleksanteri Syväriläisen koulukunta – 1500-luvun luostarihistoriaa vai 1800-luvun venäläiskansallista tulkintaa? (Joensuu: University of Eastern Finland, 2013), 107–9.

37 See, for instance: Andreas Kappeler, *The Russian Empire: A Multiethnic History* (London: Routledge, 2014), 260–61.

38 Teuvo Laitila, *Uskon luotsi. Sergei Okulov Suomen ortodoksien vaiheissa* (Jyväskylä: Gummerus Kirjapaino, 2004), 87–88; Jyrki Loima, "Nationalism and the Orthodox Church in Finland 1895–1958," in *Nationalism and Orthodoxy – Two Thematic Studies on National Ideologies and Their Interaction with the Church,* ed. Teuvo Laitila and Jyrki Loima (Helsinki: Helsinki University, 2004): 93–197, 130.

39 Laitila, *Uskon luotsi*, 116–18. On the national level, these measures were officially formulated in what is known as the February Manifesto, by Nicholas II, in which the autonomy of the Grand Duchy was effectively abrogated. These oppressive acts were part of the empire's tightening up its policy towards its minorities, a worrisome example of which was the Grand Duchy of Finland with its relative political and religious liberties. This first "Russification" period evoked passive as well as active resistance in Finland, culminating in the assassination of Governor-General Nikolai Bobrikov in Helsinki in 1904.

Despite these efforts to stay clear of political disputes, the publication of *Aamun Koitto* was suspended in 1907. Already, as of 1905, the amount of locally produced material had decreased and the quantity of translations from Russian increased; only a small number of texts were about topics explicitly concerning the Karelian region or Finland. The reasons behind this development and the suspension of the magazine are not clear. According to Teuvo Laitila, they included the pro-Russian sympathies of the archbishop (and the whole Holy Synod) and certain internal tensions between Orthodox priests in Finland. The language question, such as pressure for obligatory Russian classes, grew more acute during the term of Archbishop Sergei (1905–1917) and his assistant, Archimandrite and Bishop Kiprian (1906–1914). The language issue also directly concerned *Aamun Koitto*: the archbishop would have preferred the magazine to publish texts in both Russian and Finnish, but the editor-in-chief Okulov refused, which may have added to the publication’s slightly “separatist” image.[40]

During its first publication period (1896–1907), issues of *Aamun Koitto* consisted of biblical texts, sermons, religious stories (often translated from Russian), and news concerning ecclesiastic and educational matters in Finland and abroad. Local or regional saints were only mentioned very occasionally, and almost exclusively in the context of actual visits to the relevant monasteries and sites. These mentions can be seen as either intentional or semi-intentional efforts to produce educational material for Karelians, building on the foundation formed by their centuries-old tradition of visiting the monasteries and on their pre-existing collective memory and belief system concerning those sites.

For instance, in August 1898 an article was published on courses on Orthodox church music and chanting, aimed at Karelian Orthodox teachers. The author (pseudonym ”J – o H – n,” probably the pro-Finnish teacher Jaakko Härkönen [1873–1941]) explained how the group had visited Valaam and the island where Aleksandr of Svir was said to have lived as a hermit prior to moving on to found his own monastery. He mentioned that Aleksandr had been born in Olonets, near Lake Onega, and created an imaginary cultural bond between the readers and the saint by suggesting that “he probably spoke Finnish, too.”[41] The article was accompanied by a photograph, titled “A road to the cave of Aleksandr of Svir on Holy Island in Valaam.”[42]

In general, the amount of locally produced texts in *Aamun Koitto* grew gradually from 1899 on. The morally uplifting topics were sometimes labelled as “Kare-

40 Laitila, *Uskon luotsi,* 101–9; see also Loima, “Nationalism and the Orthodox Church in Finland 1895–1958,” 123–24, 137–45.

41 *Aamun Koitto*, no. 8 (August 1, 1898): 70.

42 *Aamun Koitto*, no. 8 (August 1, 1898): 69.

lian" and aimed at Karelian readers, thus setting them apart from generically Christian ones. Apparently, the pre-existing relatively positive and intriguing imagery of Karelia and Karelians, already established in the context of the Finnish National Romantic movement, was used by the pro-Finnish editors to navigate the tricky mental terrain between the Russian and Finnish cultural spheres. In other words, it was utilized to create and consolidate the identity and idea of Orthodox Karelians as proper Finns while also aiming to retain a certain room for diversity, as represented by the religion that differed from that of the majority.[43]

That said, the first text explicitly bringing forth local saints and their significance was published as late as July 1901. In a travel story, "Visit to Valaam," the anonymous author describes a trip to the Valaam monastery by a group of Karelian teachers who hoped to pray for the success of their future work "by the grave of the venerable Sergei and Herman,[44] who were the first to bring the Christian light to the Karelian people."[45] The author went on to quote Sergei Solntsev (1867–1933), who had given the teachers a short speech noting "how holy this grave is for us Karelians":

> There lie those who spread our holy faith in this faraway Karelia; due to their burning love of God, wishing to labour for his holy name, [they] abandoned their homeland, moved to the wilderness of Karelia, to our forefathers, who were wandering in the darkness of paganism, and kindled here in our Karelia the bright light of the Holy Gospel . . .[46]

It appears that Solntsev – an enthusiastically pro-Finnish Karelian priest who lectured on the Orthodox faith at the Sortavala seminary and who was a close associate of Sergei Okulov[47] – was a crucial figure in promoting local and regional saints, placing them in an explicitly Karelian and Finnish context for the readers of *Aamun Koitto* in the first years of the magazine. In 1903, a whole series of historical articles by Solntsev was published, titled "The Phases of the Orthodox

43 Kati Parppei, "Karjalaiset ortodoksit kahden kulttuurin välissä. Valistusta ja mielikuvien muokkausta *Aamun Koitto*-lehdessä 1896–1907," in *Karjala-kuvaa rakentamassa,* ed. Pekka Suutari (Helsinki: Suomalaisen kirjallisuuden seura, 2013): 214–40.

44 When translating Finnish texts, I use the Finnish form "Herman" instead of Russian "German."

45 *Aamun Koitto*, no. 7 (July 1, 1901): 58.

46 *Aamun Koitto*, no. 7 (July 1, 1901): 58. In August 1901, another travel story was published, written by pseudonym "K. R." This text, describing a trip to Valaam and Konevets by some elementary school teachers and their pupils, mentions the graves of Sergei and Herman of Valaam and Arseni of Konevets, as well as the cave of Aleksandr of Svir, but it does not include any additional comments about them. *Aamun Koitto,* no. 8 (August 1, 1901): 63–66.

47 Loima, "Nationalism and the Orthodox Church in Finland 1895–1958," 123; Kemppi, *Kielletty kupoli, avattu alttari,* 30–31.

Church in Finland." In these texts, he emphasizes the significance of monasteries and their founders for the religious development of Karelia. He seems to have used the book *Valaamskii monastyr'* (1864), mentioned above, as one of his sources (if not the only one), for he refers to some details originally produced by Aleksandr Sulakadzev in his texts. In his description of the founding of Valaam monastery, Solntsev refers to an "old story" of Sergei having arrived from "eastern lands" to convert hostile pagans on the shores of Lake Ladoga. After founding the monastery on the island of Valaam, he gathered followers, including Herman:

> Thus by the efforts and endeavours of these holy men, Sergei and Herman, for God, and their great love for humanity, a permanent and strong fort for the Orthodox faith in Eastern Finland was founded. Many times this monastery had to endure hard times together with the rest of Karelia; many times the enemy from the west plundered, destroyed, and burned the place, the rugged cliffs of the island were many times moistened with the blood of its pious inhabitants. However, the monastery of Valaam played a very significant role in spreading and establishing the Orthodox faith in Karelia.[48]

Furthermore, Solntsev mentions that "the preachers of the Orthodox faith left Valaam to go to Karelia" and lists several monasteries they founded.[49] He did not include references in his text, so it is impossible to know what kind of source material he used to compile this list; however, the places are located on the west or north of Lake Ladoga, so the list does not include any monasteries in, for instance, East Karelia. He also introduces the other island monastery of Ladoga, Konevets, and briefly recounts Arseni's life according to the hagiographic information concerning him, also mentioning his presumed stay at Valaam (which, as we noted above, is an addition from the 19th century).[50]

The changing and complex political situation and internal divisions in the church were subtly reflected, to give one example, in a "Sermon on School Celebrations," published on November 1, 1903. The sermon had been given on September 11 in Viborg by "V. K." (probably Viktor Krohin [1871–1949], a priest in Viborg, considered "pro-Russian" by his contemporaries)[51] on the official feast day of Russian schools in Karelia. The priest noted that "this day is celebrated today, because it coincides with the feast day of the first Orthodox Russian educators in our prov-

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48 *Aamun Koitto,* no. 2 (February 1, 1903): 11–13.

49 An unnamed monastery in Sakkola and the monasteries of Kannansaari in Kurkijoki, of Heinisemä in Tervu, of Vainila in Möntsölä, of Kuhasalo in Liperi, and of Orusjarvi in Salmi (*Aamun Koitto,* no. 2 [February 1, 1903]: 13–14). In Kuhasalo, at least, there was indeed a small monastery in the 16th century.

50 *Aamun Koitto,* no. 2 (February 1, 1903): 14.

51 Laitila, Uskon luotsi, 92, 353; Kemppi, Kielletty kupoli, avattu alttari, 31.

ince, venerable Sergei and Herman of Valaam."[52] Thus, at the turn of the century, the region's saints could be represented in *Aamun Koitto* as either "Finnish-speaking" or markedly "Russian," depending on the context and the preferences of any given speaker or author.

1918–1938: "The Holy Ascetics of Our Country"

Aamun Koitto was not published between January 1908 and December 1917. The "Brotherhood of Venerable Sergei and Herman" was also suspended, in 1910. When the magazine and the society were resurrected – the latter only in 1921 – the political situation was completely different from that of the first publication period: after gaining independence, in 1918 Finland had recognized the Orthodox diocese of Finland as an independent church, a status which the Patriarchate of Moscow acknowledged in 1921. However, the close ecclesiastic ties to unstable Moscow were considered a liability, so the new Orthodox Church of Finland was transferred to the Patriarchate of Constantinople as an autonomous church in 1923. The Gregorian calendar was adopted for use in the church, replacing the Julian one, which led to a long and bitter dispute. Also, the language used in services was changed from Church Slavonic to Finnish.[53]

The policy of the resurrected *Aamun Koitto,* with Sergei Okulov once again as its editor-in-chief, also differed from the cautious balancing act of the first publication period.[54] Now, the magazine openly and proudly supported and nurtured Finnish and Finnish-speaking Orthodox culture.[55]

Regarding the Karelian or Finnish saintly cults, at the turn of the 1920s the saints were still only very occasionally mentioned in *Aamun Koitto,* but those

52 *Aamun Koitto,* no. 11 (November 1, 1903): 80.

53 See, for instance: Loima, "Nationalism and the Orthodox Church in Finland 1895–1958," 156–70.

54 Sergei Okulov and the other editors of *Aamun Koitto* had continued their publishing activities during the decade that the magazine was suspended. Most Orthodox publications in Finnish were translations from Russian to be used in services; also, a pro-Russian "Karelian Brotherhood," founded in 1907, produced not just educational texts, but some more polemical publications in Finnish, too, in order to ward off the influence of the Lutheran faith amongst Karelians (Petri Piiroinen, *Ortodoksinen julkaisutoiminta 1780–1980* [Joensuu: Painotalo PunaMusta, 1991], 36). However, these publications are of secondary importance to our topic, as they did not discuss the issue of local or regional saints. In 1909–1910, the *Omahinen* newspaper was published in Sortavala, to some extent continuing the policy of *Aamun Koitto.* It did not include any texts concerning Karelian regional saints, either.

55 Laitila, *Uskon luotsi*, 261; Piiroinen, *Kirkkokunnan Aamun Koitto*, 15.

references that can be found reflect contemporary events and trends. A civil war broke out in Finland in 1918 as one of the political crises arising from the collapse of the Russian Empire, in which the "Whites" supported by Germany were fighting the "Reds" supported by Soviet Russia. On March 5, 1918, a prayer for peace was published in *Aamun Koitto*. It included the sentence: "In front of you [Lord] stand the intercessors of the Karelian land – our holy Fathers Sergei and Herman of Valaam, Arseni of Konevets, Aleksandr of Svir, and the other holy ascetics of our country."[56] Notably, the geographical unit used in the context of the saints was now updated to "our country," instead of "our province" or simply "our Karelia."[57]

As part of the changes and developments of these turbulent decades, in 1919 the Orthodox Church of Finland resurrected the idea of combining East Karelia ecclesiastically into Finland (this idea originated in 1913–1914, when the educational activities in White Karelia and Olonets were considered to be the responsibility of the diocese of Finland). This time, Estonia was included in the plan.[58] The question was actively discussed in *Aamun Koitto*, but for our topic we will highlight a report, published on August 20, 1919, on the subject of training teachers for primary schools in East Karelia. The course had included a visit to Valaam monastery. According to the report, Father Sergei Solntsev had joined the group, and once again he had given a speech by the grave of Sergei and Herman, "sharing what information was available about the venerable Sergei and Herman, and calling their grave a sacred place for the whole Greek Catholic Karelian tribe."[59] The report continues:

> The venerable Sergei and Herman were the first preachers of our holy faith amongst the Karelians, founding a monastery, from whence the venerable Sosima[60] left for Solovki and founded a monastery, from which our faith was spread to White Karelia. Also the venerable Aleksandr of Svir and Andronik of Andrusov, who went on from Valaam, started the propagation of our faith amongst the Karelians of Olonets. Loudly sounded the holy chants of our devotional moment, as one voice from the mouths of Karelians of Finland and Olonets in the cradle of our holy faith . . . White Karelia! The heart craved for you to join us.[61]

56 *Aamun Koitto,* no. 5 (March 5, 1918), additional leaflet: 4.

57 Also, in a prayer preceding a central synod on July 20, 1927: "the venerable Fathers of Finland and Karelia, together with our other heavenly friends" were mentioned (*Aamun Koitto,* nos. 13–14 [July 20, 1927]: 157).

58 Laitila, *Uskon luotsi,* 187.

59 *Aamun Koitto,* no. 16 (August 20, 1919): 138.

60 "Sosima" is a Finnicized version of Zosima, used by Solntsev.

61 *Aamun Koitto,* no. 16 (August 20, 1919): 138.

A similar passage, referring to speeches by Solntsev, was published on June 5, 1920, in a report on a trip to Valaam by Karelian refugees, and also on August 20, 1927, when he designated Aleksandr of Svir, Andronik of Ondrusov, and Sosima of Solovki as role models for Sunday school teachers visiting Valaam.[62]

Solovki is located in White Karelia, and Aleksandr of Svir and Andronik of Andrusov (Adrian of Ondrusov) were – as noted above – saints from the Olonets region in East Karelia. So the inclusion of these three saints in the list was undoubtedly a deliberate choice by Solntsev, who, as previously noted, had taken an active role in educating Karelians on the saintly cults and ecclesiastic history of their region. Doing so emphasized the alleged historical connection between the different areas of Karelia and Finland for contemporary purposes and proposed including the monasteries of Olonets in the nascent Orthodox Karelian-Finnish collective memory, in which Valaam already formed a central site from which various monastic founders had left to found monasteries of their own.

Yet another contemporary political issue was reflected in the representation of local and regional saints in *Aamun Koitto.* In October 1920, the area of Pechenga (Petsamo in Finnish) became part of Finland. Already in May of that same year, an anonymous article was published on the venerable Trifon of Pechenga, titled “The Monastery of Petsamo and Its Founder”; as such, yet another saintly figure who was said to have contributed to the spread of the Orthodox faith in the area of contemporary Finland was fit into the collective memory.[63]

During the first decades of being autonomous, the Orthodox Church of Finland continued to face the challenge of how to create and consolidate the concept of a Finnish Orthodox Church in theory as well as in practice, and to counter the suspicions and pressures emanating from the Lutheran majority and administration. In the 1920s, attempts to “Fennicize” – or as the actors themselves conceived of their plans, to “nationalize” – the church took place; for instance, a committee was established in 1925 to reform the ecclesiastic architecture, church interiors, icons, textiles, and so forth, into “Finnish” ones and to rid them of unwanted Russian influences. Also, Orthodox church music in Finnish was developed in earnest, utilizing the already established tradition of national song festivals as a means to consolidate the feelings of collective national pride.[64]

However, certain tensions persisted between the Orthodox believers of Finnish and Russian descent in Helsinki and other larger cities, a reflection of the dif-

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62 *Aamun Koitto*, no. 11 (June 5, 1920): 88; *Aamun Koitto*, no. 16 (August 20, 1927): 205.

63 *Aamun Koitto,* no. 10 (May 20, 1920): 79–80.

64 Kemppi, *Kielletty kupoli, avattu alttari*, passim; Maria Takala-Roszczenko, “Kirkkolaulupäivät Valamossa vuonna 1929 taitekohtana suomenkielisen ortodoksisen musiikkitoiminnan kehittämisessä,” *Musiikki* 2 (2019): 54–81.

ficult position of ethnic Russians in society in general. Both of these related issues, the nationalization of the church and internal tensions within it, were fuelled by the contemporary political atmosphere, including the rise of right-wing nationalist ideas at the turn of the 1930s. These were actively discussed in the pages of *Aamun Koitto* (the head editors of which, after Sergei Okulov retired, were Nikolai Valmo, 1926–1930, and Yrjö Somer, 1931–1940).[65]

These developments were also reflected in ideas concerning the Karelian saints, the "core list" of whom was being firmly established during the 1920s and 30s, explicitly in the context of the nascent Finnish Orthodox culture. For instance, "Our holy fathers Sergei and Herman of Valaam, Arseni of Konevets, Aleksandr of Svir, and Trifon of Pechenga" were included in the liturgical books used for the celebration of Divine Services, while saints considered Slavic were now mentioned only in the footnotes for services celebrated in Slavonic.[66]

There was still some variation, though. For instance, on September 4, 1931, *Aamun Koitto* reported on the consecration of the long-awaited theological college in Sortavala, quoting Archbishop Herman's (of Estonian origin, served 1925–1960) speech, in which he appealed to "the protectors of our archbishopric, the Venerable Sergei and Herman of Valaam, Arseni of Konevets, Trifon of Pechenga, and Aleksandr of Svir" to pray for the institution and its activities.[67] However, on October 23, 1936, the Orthodox priest and poet Aari Surakka (1909–1990) recalled his trip to Bulgaria and called for practices that would remind the Finnish believers that "we, Finnish Orthodox believers, even have four special intercessors, the Venerable Sergei and Herman of Valaam, Arseni of Konevets, and Trifon of Pechenga."[68] Aleksandr of Svir was left off of Surakka's list, perhaps because he wanted to emphasize the saints of the area belonging to Finland at the time, omitting Olonets as not relevant to the current situation. Surakka was also the first to raise the need to compile a Finnish troparion to the Konevets icon of the Mother of God as well as to Arseni of Konevets and Trifon of Pechenga, doing so in the pages of *Aamun Koitto* in his travel story recalling a trip to Konevets monastery, published on September 24, 1937.[69]

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65 Laitila, *Uskon luotsi*, 275–90; Piiroinen, *Ortodoksinen julkaisutoiminta 1780–1980*, 28.

66 See, for instance: *Öinen juhlapalvelus eli vigiiliat* (Sortavala: Oy Raamattutalon kirjapaino, 1928), 20–21; *Pyhän isämme Johannes Krysostomon liturgia* (Sortavala: Oy Raamattutalon kirjapaino, 1928), 10–11; *Pyhän isämme Johannes Krysostomoksen jumalallinen liturgia.* Sortavalan ortodoksisen pappisseminaarin rehtorin rovasti N. Valmon toimittama ja kustantama yksityinen painos (Kuopio: Oy Kuopion uusi kirjapaino, 1936), 81.

67 *Aamun Koitto,* no. 36 (September 4, 1931): 283.

68 *Aamun Koitto,* no. 43 (October 23, 1936): 342.

69 *Aamun Koitto,* no. 39 (September 24, 1937): 299.

Nor were Zosima of Solovki or Adrian of Ondrusov – saints "located" in White Karelia and Olonets – included anymore in the lists of Karelian saints in the 1930s. As such, we can conclude that the dimensions of the discursive realm and collective memory of Finnish Orthodox culture were still being negotiated, their borders shifting and adapting to the equally fluid contemporary conditions, in an ongoing process.

1939–1944: "The Sacred Memory of the First Apostles of Light"

The plans and endeavours to develop Finnish Orthodox culture were put aside due to a major crisis brought about by the Second World War. On November 30, 1939, the Soviet Union invaded Finland. The "Winter War" was ended by the Moscow Peace Treaty in March 1940, which required ceding border areas to the Soviet Union. The inhabitants of Finnish Karelia, many of whom had already been evacuated due to the war, were relocated to the interior of Finland. Some 55 000 of these evacuees were Orthodox Karelians; they would constitute 70 percent of the Orthodox inhabitants of Finland. The Finnish Orthodox Church had to leave behind about 90 percent of its property, including concrete sites of memory, such as the monasteries of Valaam and Konevets, as well as the administrative centre in Sortavala.[70]

Political tensions were ongoing, and in June 1941 war broke out again between the Soviet Union and Finland, which was now supported by Germany. Finland regained the ceded areas, and during the subsequent "Continuation War" (1941–1944) many Karelian evacuees returned to their old homes and churches. Moreover, encouraged by Germany's initial success, plans were devised to "liberate" East Karelia, which would form part of a "Greater Finland." However, Finland depleted its resources in the prolonged and arduous fighting, and in September 1944 the war ended with Finland having to accept harsh terms. For instance, in addition to the previously ceded areas of Karelia, it now lost the area of Pechenga, as well.

The profound shock, sorrow, confusion, and sense of dislocation were reflected in the pages of *Aamun Koitto,* which continued to be published throughout the war. During the Winter War, the publication largely concentrated on timely practical matters, but space was provided for mourning as well. For instance, in May 1940

70 See, for instance: Juha Riikonen, "Toisiinsa kietoutuneet. Suomen ortodoksisen kirkon ja Suomen valtiovallan pitkä yhteinen taival," *Ortodoksia* 54 (2015): 47–48.

Archbishop Herman lamented the territories lost and pointed out, amongst numerous other consequences, that "we cannot escape the grey everyday life by travelling to the Karelians' very own famous Valaam monastery anymore . . ."[71] The Karelian saints, however, were mentioned only once in 1939–1940, in the prayer by the archbishop on the occasion of the consecration of the now-relocated theological college in October 1940. As in 1931, at the original consecration of the college, he referred to "Venerable Sergei and Herman of Valaam, Arseni of Konevets, Trifon of Pechenga, and Aleksandr of Svir" as divine intercessors and friends of "our country and the Church."[72]

During the Continuation War, the general instability of the situation affected the contents and tone of the texts published in *Aamun Koitto.*[73] The diaspora of Orthodox believers continued, but at the same time, the invasion of East Karelia opened up new possibilities, which both Lutheran and Orthodox Churches sought to utilize, at times in a competitive manner.[74] *Aamun Koitto* published several articles concerning East Karelia and White Karelia, their history, and their inhabitants. Once again, as in the 1920s, the monasteries and monastic founders of these two regions were discussed; for instance, in two articles on East Karelian issues written by the priest Paavo Saarikoski.[75]

One of the most prominent sites of memory in Karelia, now in a kind of state of spatial division and transition, was Valaam monastery. During the latter half of 1941 (the exact date is missing from the volume) an anecdote was published in *Aamun Koitto,* in which it was described how the igumen of Valaam, upon his first visit to the estate in Heinävesi, Eastern Finland, which was to become the evacuated brethren's new home, saw an icon depicting Sergei and Herman on the wall of the main building, brought to the house at some point as a gift from a visitor who had also been to Valaam monastery at Lake Ladoga. This surprising sight gave him much comfort and a feeling of divine providence. The anonymous author proceeds to ask:

> Visitors to Valaam, Karelian pilgrims! As we are now on our arduous "pilgrimage," bestowed upon us by the Lord, believing and trusting in His holy, pious, and righteous leadership in individual lives as well as in those of peoples, do we not feel in our hearts that God's blessing is more plentiful on the Karelian tribe precisely because of the intercessions of the venerable founders of Valaam?[76]

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71 *Aamun Koitto*, nos. 16–17 (May 10, 1940): 66.

72 *Aamun Koitto*, no. 29 (October 18, 1940): 166.

73 The head editors were Aari Surakka in 1941–1942 and Fina Saarikoski in 1943–1944.

74 See, for instance: Aarne Ylä-Jussila, *Heimo, uskonto ja isänmaa. Kirkollinen kansallistamistoiminta Itä-Karjalassa 1941–1944* (Joensuu: University of Eastern Finland, 2020).

75 *Aamun Koitto,* nos. 28–29 (1941): 313; *Aamun Koitto,* nos. 19–20 (1942): 164–65.

76 *Aamun Koitto*, nos. 24–25 (1941): 267.

The author goes on to refer to an idea that in the past the remains of “Sergios and Germanos” – for some reason using this unusual form of their names – would have been hidden in a rocky place in Valaam to be protected from invaders, and notes that “in a similar way, we have concealed the sacred memory of the first apostles of light amongst our tribe in the rock of our heart.”[77]

This apposite text reflects the profound change that was taking place (despite plans during the Continuation War to restore the monastery at Ladoga): instead of actually visiting the shrine and relics of the monastic founders and maintaining a reciprocal relationship with them, the saints now had to be “relocated” from the spatial level to the more abstract dimension of places of memory. Furthermore, the rhetorical usage of the concept of the Karelian “tribe” was an implicit reference to the diaspora and to the hazardous situation that prevailed in geographical Karelia.

At the same time, however, the brethren of Valaam were concretely settling in their new location. In his text “The Significance of the Monastery of Valaam to Our Country,” J. Suhola (probably the priest Johannes Suhola [1908–1984]) assumed that this relocated Valaam would once again become a popular attraction as well as a spiritual centre. He pointed out that “by moving to the Finnish side [of the border] it has expressed its desire to belong to this country and people . . .”[78]

Of course, during and after the war, the whole idea of “Karelia” was in a similar state of flux between the concrete spatial and mental levels. As Petri Raivo has put it, “the images of the ceded areas were metaphorically removed from the national landscape gallery, although they continued to exist as distant nostalgic landscapes.”[79] For instance, Tapani Repo gave a talk prior to his ordination as a priest on February 6, 1944, in which he attempted to adjust the idealized Karelia to the surroundings in Joensuu, in North Karelia: “We do not have to go very far back in time in order to encounter genuine Karelian life here . . .”[80]

In October 1944, when Karelia had been lost for the second and final time, Suhola’s speech at the feast of the Orthodox Youth Association of Finland – which had been founded that same year – was published in *Aamun Koitto.* In it, he warned his audience not to dwell on bittersweet memories of the lost region: “Now we have to work and create Karelia there where the Lord has bestowed us

77 *Aamun Koitto*, nos. 24–25 (1941): 267.
78 *Aamun Koitto* (September 15, 1943): 288.
79 Petri Raivo, “The Peculiar Touch of the East: Reading the Post-War Landscapes of the Finnish Orthodox Church,” *Social & Cultural Geography* 3, no. 1 (2002): 11–24, 15.
80 *Aamun Koitto*, no. 6 (March 31, 1944): 95.

a new home. Now we have to build our home altars and other sacred places there where they have never been seen before."[81]

Epilogue: Feast for the "Enlighteners of Karelia"

After the war, the Orthodox Church of Finland faced an enormous task: once again, it had to create a collective culture – and, one might say, identity – that would comply with that of the Lutheran majority but still remain distinct and original, true to the theological and cultural foundations of the church. The reconstruction took place in many forms in society as a whole, as well as within the Orthodox Church. New churches and monastic centres had to be built, issues concerning services and religious education had to be resolved, and Orthodox Karelians had to be convinced not to convert to the Lutheran faith, which in many cases offered an easy way to avoid prejudice and discrimination. Also, in cases of mixed marriages, children were often baptized as Lutheran.[82]

Gradually, Karelian saints – and Orthodox saints and church fathers in general – were once again assigned a role in consolidating the religious conviction and inner cohesion of the Orthodox inhabitants of Finland, who were now permanently denied the chance to visit the concrete sites of memory of Karelia. During the last years of the 1940s and 1950s, numerous articles and texts were published in *Aamun Koitto* about the saints and holy fathers of the church.

An advertisement was published in *Aamun Koitto*'s July 1947 issue, announcing the publication of a new book by the priest Erkki Piiroinen.[83] The collection was titled "The Holy Ascetics of Karelia," and it introduced a total of 27 saintly figures with short stories about their lives, based on Russian sources and the network of saints compiled in the 19th century in Valaam monastery.[84] In the foreword to the book, he explained that:

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81 *Aamun Koitto*, no. 19 (October 15, 1944): 292.

82 See, for instance: Laitila, "Ortodoksikarjalaiset idän ja lännen rajalla," 120–21.

83 *Aamun Koitto,* nos. 13–14 (1947): 100.

84 The list of the saints mentioned in this book – either in the text or in the footnotes – in Finnish with English translations for saints mentioned in this chapter: Sergei ja Herman Valamolaiset (Sergei and German/Herman of Valaam), Arseni Konevitsalainen (Arseni of Konevets), Trifon Petsamolainen (Trifon of Pechenga), Aleksanteri Syväriläinen (Aleksandr of Svir), Andrian Ontrusovalainen (Adrian of Ondrusov), Atanasios Säntämäläinen (Afanasii of Siandem), Gennadi Vasojärveläinen, Nikifor Vasojärveläinen, Joona Jaasjärveläinen, Savvati Solokkalainen (Savvati of Solovki), Sosima Solokkalainen (Zosima of Solovki), Herman Solokkalainen (German of Solovki), Elisei Sumalainen, Vassian ja Joona Pertominskilaiset, Irinark ja Eleasar Solokkalaiset, Kor-

> The holy ascetics of Karelia have lived on the land of our own tribe; many of them have even been children of that tribe, speaking our beautiful language. This is why it should be especially dear to our heart to get acquainted with the lives of these holy men of our tribe.[85]

Furthermore, Piiroinen pointed out that the issue was especially topical at a time when Karelia and the whole Orthodox Church had had to face such ordeals, and that "it is encouraging to get acquainted with the heroes of our faith, who, without shying away from difficulties, trusting God, kindled God's flame and began the work of building our faith in our stark but beautiful Karelia."[86]

His description of Sergei and Herman includes a mixture of 19th-century Russian assumptions concerning the background of the saints: for instance, he refers to "old lore" when presuming that Sergei was a Greek, and mentions "some information" according to which Herman would have been of Karelian origin.[87] These details reflect the increased emphasis on Byzantine and Karelian features in postwar Finnish Orthodox culture and attempts to downplay Russian influences in order to facilitate assimilation.[88]

The saints listed by Piiroinen were included in the calendar of the Orthodox Church of Finland in 1948, but the veneration of Karelian saints as a group only became official in 1957, when the bishops' assembly established a feast day for the "Enlighteners of Karelia." Also, a hymnography – which Aari Surakka had called for in *Aamun Koitto* 20 years earlier – was composed for the day. Behind this decision was All Saints' Day, celebrated in Lutheran Finland on the Saturday between October 31 and November 6. This particular day had never been celebrated in the Orthodox Church, in which saints have their own commemoration days, and in which the deceased in general also have their own special memorial days. However, it was considered proper that the Orthodox Finns should celebrate a similar day at the same time as the Lutheran majority. Also, the theme and the name of the day made it possible to emphasize the importance of Karelia to the Orthodox faith and culture in Finland, and to keep the memory of the lost area alive in the minds of believers. Therefore, it can be seen as a prime example

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nilo Paleostrovilainen (Kornilii of Paleostrov), Joona Klimenitsiläinen, Aleksanteri Oshevenilainen, Lasarios ja Atanasios Muromilaiset, Kyrillos Tselmavuorelainen, Pakomios Keniläinen, Teodorit lappalaisten valistaja, Taddeus Petroskoilainen.

85 Erkki Piiroinen, *Karjalan pyhät kilvoittelijat* (Kuopio: Kirjapaino Oy Savo, 1947), 4.

86 Piiroinen, *Karjalan pyhät kilvoittelijat*, 7.

87 Piiroinen, *Karjalan pyhät kilvoittelijat*, 8–11. See also Parppei, "The Oldest One in Russia," 162.

88 Laitila, "Ortodoksikarjalaiset idän ja lännen rajalla," 122.

of a feast day that was intentionally created to serve as a site of memory for a certain society.[89]

From the 1960s on, the list of Karelian saints in Finland has been growing as a result of new research.[90] In 1974, the Russian Orthodox Church included the day for the "Enlighteners of Karelia" in its own calendar, after Patriarch Pimen visited Finland and received an icon representing the Karelian saints as a gift.[91] In a way, it might be said that a transnational circle of Karelia's saintly cults was thereby closed. Furthermore, the two canonizations in 2018 added yet another layer to the whole, presenting a 20th-century Finnish-Karelian teacher and a Russian monk as the first saints ever officially venerated by the Orthodox Church of Finland.

Conclusion

As part of the "Fennicization" of the church from the turn of the 20th century on, attempts were made to transfer certain Russian Orthodox saints into the explicitly Karelian-Finnish Orthodox culture and collective cultural memory, a process reflecting the surrounding political developments, tensions, and trends. At first, the saints were represented in *Aamun Koitto* almost exclusively in the context of visits to "their" monasteries and shrines. The cults, as the editors transferred them from the level of mere practice to the discursive realm – to be used as one of the textual means of educating and consolidating the faith of Orthodox Karelians – were maintained in a local and regional form, familiar to the intended audience. The network of 15th- and 16th-century Karelian saints, which had largely been established during the 19th century in the Russian national context, formed the foundation of this process. Rhetorically and geographically, the saints were connected with "our province," "Karelia," and "Eastern Finland."

The transition from local or regional to "national" sainthood in the Finnish Orthodox case took place in the context of developments such as the independence of Finland in 1917 and the Orthodox Church gaining autonomous status in

89 Karvonen, *Pyhän Aleksanteri Syväriläisen koulukunta,* 150–52; Hannu Pyykönen, "Karjalan pyhittäjäisien ja valistajien muistopäivä," *Ortodoksi.net* (online), https://www.ortodoksi.net/index.php/Karjalan_pyhitt%C3%A4j%C3%A4isien_ja_valistajien_muistop%C3%A4iv%C3%A4; Jopi Harri, "Pyhittäjäisiemme Karjalan valistajien yhteisen juhlan hymnografiasta," *Ortodoksia* 57 (2017): 53–81.

90 This has been due to historical and theological research done on saintly cults of Karelia; for instance, Heikki Kirkinen's work from the 1960s on. More recently, Jukka Korpela and Irina Karvonen have published source critical books and articles on the issue.

91 Harri, "Pyhittäjäisiemme Karjalan valistajien yhteisen juhlan hymnografiasta," 53.

1923. In rhetoric, concepts like “our country” and “Finland” were used from 1918 on when referring to the geographical – or even more so, the symbolic – “operating area” of the Karelian saints, the list of which varied depending on contemporary political and personal preferences. When the spatial ties to the concrete sites of memory were broken due to the Second World War, the saintly cults were “re-invented” and re-established, in the sense that their role was now to consolidate the shattered Orthodox Karelian population purely on the level of cultural memory and the discursive realm of Finland’s Orthodox minority.

Based on this survey of *Aamun Koitto*, the inclusion of these saints within the nascent Finnish Orthodox culture does not seem have been the result of any decisive, collective effort during the first decades of the 20th century. Instead, the saints and their veneration were more actively promoted consecutively by a few priests: first and foremost, Sergei Solntsev up until the 1920s; then Aari Surakka in the 1930s; and, finally, Erkki Piiroinen in the 1940s. It is worth noting, however, that in this transition process the initial “Russianness” of the saintly cults was never explicitly challenged – unlike, for instance, the features of Orthodox architecture and art which were considered “too Russian.” Instead, the representations and contributions compiled in the 19th-century Russian historico-hagiographical context were subtly and discreetly adapted to accommodate the culture and collective memory of the Finnish Orthodox community.

Concluding Remarks

Anti Selart

Remaking Saints and Heroes

The veneration of heroes – in the medieval Christian context first and foremost taking the form of the cult of saints[1] – is an important factor fostering social cohesion: "Heroes shape identities."[2] A common veneration or cult can potentially connect people of diverse social, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. A good and well-known medieval and early modern example in this context is the role of the patron saint of a human group (townspeople, guild members, etc.).[3] As societies change this also challenges the forms and methods of veneration, and the heroes can only survive if they are continually remade and reinterpreted. If the reinterpretation is impossible or irrelevant, the "old" hero will be buried in oblivion, perhaps to be replaced by new figures. In every historic city one can find monuments and street names venerating persons who are known to at best only a couple of historians today.

The contributions in the present volume investigate the modern rethinking and reinterpreting of medieval heroic or saintly persons in the countries of the Baltic Sea area. The list includes medieval saints of local origin; both real and imaginary individuals; warlords who, in many cases, although they lived in the Middle Ages, were only discovered by the broader public in the 19th century; and persons from mythology and historical fiction, for whom it is not unusual to have been venerated similarly to individuals who once really lived. The texts include a number of significant case studies discussing not only the development of na-

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1 Concerning the Baltic Sea area, see *Sanctity in the North. Saints, Lives, and Cults in Medieval Scandinav*ia, ed. Thomas A. DuBois (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008); Cordelia Heß, *Heilige machen im spätmittelalterlichen Ostseeraum. Die Kanonisationsprozesse von Birgitta von Schweden, Nikolaus von Linköping und Dorothea von Montau* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2008); Aleksandr E. Musin, *Cerkov' i gorozhane srednevekovogo Pskova. Istoriko-arkheologicheskoe issledovanie* (St Petersburg: SPbGU, 2010); Aleksandr E. Musin, *Zagadki doma Svjatoj Sofii. Cerkov' Velikogo Novgoroda v X–XVI vv.* (St Petersburg: Peterburgskoe Vostokovedenie, 2016); Sara E. Ellis Nilsson, *Creating Holy People and Places on the Periphery. A Study of the Emergence of Cults of Native Saints in the Ecclesiastical Provinces of Lund and Uppsala from the Eleventh to the Thirteenth Centuries* (Göteborg: University of Gothenburg, 2015); *Saints and Sainthood around the Baltic Sea. Identity, Literacy, and Communication in the Middle Ages*, ed. Carsten Selch Jensen et al. (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2018); *Symbolic Identity and the Cultural Memory of Saints*, ed. Nils Holger Petersen et al. (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2018).

2 See Cordelia Heß and Gustavs Strenga's introduction to this volume.

3 *Patron Saints and Saintly Patronage in Early Modern Central Europe*, ed. Marie Škarpová (Praha: Trivium, 2019).

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tional ideologies and cultures but also the ways in which the interaction between learned and vernacular, between official and popular, functioned.

Russian historian Vasily Klyuchevsky (1841–1911) once wrote: "*Vita* is related to historical biography in the same way as an icon painting is to a portrait."[4] The same observation holds regarding stories about heroes[5] and is pertinent when interpreting the historical past and their visual representation.[6] However, the genre rules of writing *vitae* and painting icons have changed considerably over time, even if they are ostensibly strictly prescribed and tradition-bound. Historical change also changes the notions of sainthood and heroism; the saints and heroes must be reshaped to avoid their falling into insignificance. Indeed, the most substantial change in the veneration of saints in Northern Europe during the transition from the Middle Ages to the modern era was, in most of the research area, the Reformation.[7] However, it is also of relevance to mention here that the cult of saints did not disappear after the 16th-century ecclesiastic reforms,[8] contrary to widespread perception. The violent *Bilderstürme*[9] had their limits, and a large number of medieval artefacts associated with saints remained visible in the now-Lutheran churches; they were gradually replaced only because they became old-fashioned and broken, not due to any religious reason.[10] The vernacular adoration of saints also continued, and its modified elements became registered as "folklore" in the 19th and 20th centuries.[11] Yet, during this period of large-scale collecting of folklore

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4 Vasilii O. Klyuchevsky *Sochinenia, vol. 7: Special'nye kursy* (Moskva: Mysl', 1989), 75: "Zhitie otnositsja k istoricheskoj biografii tak, kak ikonopisnoe izobrazhenie k portretu."

5 *Heiligen of helden. Opstellen voor Willem Frijhoff*, ed. Joris van Eijnatten et al. (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2007).

6 Willem Frijhoff, *Heiligen, idolen, iconen* (Nijmegen: SUN, 1998).

7 *Reformatio Baltica. Kulturwirkungen der Reformation in den Metropolen des Ostseeraums*, ed. Heinrich Assel et al. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2018); *Protestantismus in den baltischen Landen und in Litauen. Nation und Konfession vom 16. Jahrhundert bis 1918*, ed. Matthias Asche et al. (Münster: Aschendorff, 2021).

8 Sari Katajala-Peltomaa, "A Tool to Think With? Saint Birgitta as Cultural Heritage in Post-Reformation Finland," in this volume.

9 Sergiusz Michalski, "Bilderstürme im Ostseeraum," in *Macht und Ohnmacht der Bilder. Reformatorischer Bildersturm im Kontext der europäischen Geschichte*, ed. Peter Blickle et al. (München: Oldenbourg, 2002): 223–38; Joachim Krüger, "Bildersturm und friedlicher Wandel – die Städte im Ostseeraum," in *Luthers Norden*, ed. Kirsten Baumann et al. (Petersberg: Imhoff, 2017): 83–89.

10 *Indifferent Things? Objects and Images in Post-Reformation Churches in the Baltic Sea Region*, ed. Krista Kodres et al. (Petersberg: Imhof, 2020).

11 Irma-Riitta Järvinen, "Finnish Saints' Traditions and Folklore: Interpreting St. Anne, St. Katherine of Alexandria, and St. Birgitta of Sweden," in *Saints and Sainthood around the Baltic Sea*: 53–76; Tõnno Jonuks, *Eesti muinasusundid* ([Tallinn]: Postimees, 2022), 43–47.

material, the scholarly consensus held that "by and large [. . .] true folklore was oral, rural, ethnic and pagan and there was no need to collect recent and secondary folklore that was written, urban, of other [. . .] ethnicity or Christian."[12] As a result, data about vernacular saints' cults from 1800–1900 are rather limited, and the use of collected data for relevant research questions is complicated.[13] Within learned culture, the Enlightenment period, with its strong anti-clerical sentiment, affected representations of the past more than the Reformation did.[14]

Early modern Lutheran pastors had already labelled surviving elements of the cult of saints "pagan peasant customs"; similarly, modern scholars aimed to use the modern folklore data to trace the pre-Christian, "national" religion. This was especially the case for the "small nations,"[15] which did not have their "own" statehood and written record in the Middle Ages,[16] and which therefore had to invent their glorious past and its heroes drawing on folklore and fiction.

In Estonian[17] and Latvian,[18] and to a certain extent also Finnish,[19] nationalist discourse,[20] where (Catholic medieval) Christianity has been seen as an alien, imposed religion[21] and where, consequently, the medieval proponents of (violent)

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12 Jürgen Beyer, "Are Folklorists Studying the Tales of the Folk?," *Folklore* 122 (2011): 35–54, 43.

13 See Sari Katajala-Peltomaa, "A Tool to Think With?"

14 Henrik Ågren, "St Erik, Reformation, and Enlightenment: Early Modern History Writing on a Swedish Catholic Patron of the Realm," in this volume.

15 On the use of this term, see Oana S. Păltineanu, "Miroslav Hroch's Model of Small Nation-Formation and Begriffsgeschichte," *Nationalities Papers* 38 (2010): 813–27. See also *Kleine Völker in der Geschichte Osteuropas. Festschrift für Günther Stökl zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. Manfred Alexander et al. (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1991).

16 Kristi Kukk, *Väikerahvuste ajalookäsitluste genees ja narratiivid: Eesti võrdluses teiste Põhjala ja Baltikumi rahvustega 19. sajandist kuni Teise maailmasõjani* (Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, 2013).

17 Kristina Jõekalda, "Mothers of the Land: Baltic German and Estonian Personifications from the Virgin Mary to the Epic Linda," in this volume.

18 Gustavs Strenga, "From Bishop-Killer to Latvian National Hero: Imanta's Transformations from the Middle Ages to Nation-Building," in this volume.

19 Derek Fewster, *Visions of Past Glory. Nationalism and the Construction of Early Finnish History* (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2006).

20 *National History and Identity. Approaches to the Writing of National History in the North-East Baltic Region. Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Michael Branch (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 1999).

21 Tõnno Jonuks, "Der Estnische Nationalismus und sein Konzept der prähistorischen Religion: Die Nation als Gestalterin des Religionsbildes," *Forschungen zur baltischen Geschichte* 8 (2013): 145–64; Tõnno Jonuks, "Nationalism and Prehistoric Religion: Religion in the Creation of Estonian Identity," in *Estonian Study of Religion. A Reader*, ed. Indrek Peedu (Tartu: University of Tartu Press, 2019): 241–60; Atko Remmel, "(Non)religion in a Museum: Alterna(rra)tives to the Estonian National Story," *Historická Sociologie* 11, no. 2 (2019): 69–84.

Christianization were cast in the role of the national enemy,[22] pseudo- or semi-mythological heroes[23] came to the fore, such as Linda, the mother of the mythological Kalevipoeg in Estonia,[24] and the 12th-century Liv warrior Imanta in Latvia.[25]

In countries where the state could trace its roots back to the Middle Ages, medieval saintly kings were typically reconceptualized in early modern and modern writings as national heroes, creators of kingdoms, and founders of dynasties. This reconceptualization of kings or agents of Christianization started during the Reformation period and reached completion in the nationalist era. In Sweden, King Erik (d. 1160),[26] and in Denmark, King Knud (d. 1086),[27] originally venerated as martyrs and saintly patrons of royal dynasties, became predominantly secular figures from the past, and the Catholic elements of their legends were downplayed in new interpretations of their stories. Perhaps the most bizarre result of a reconceptualization of this kind is to be found on the Neo-Gothic façade of the St Knud Guild building in Tallinn Old Town (1864). The two bronze figures standing side by side there are the holy King Knud and Martin Luther, adapting the Catholic and Danish past of the Guild to the dominant Baltic-German Protestant narrative of this period.

Political and national tensions have provided fertile ground for finding new heroes from the past, including those who had never been venerated in the Middle Ages. The Swedish knight Tyrgils Knutsson (d. 1306), conqueror of Karelia and founder of Viipuri Castle, was an object of controversy in the triangle of Swedish, Finnish, and Russian interpretations of the past;[28] Count Gerhard III of Holstein (d. 1340), who played a central political role during the Danish interregnum, became an important and contested historical figure in the context of modern Danish–German controversies in Schleswig and Holstein.[29]

22 Anti Selart, "700 Years of Slavery – a View from Estonia," in *Controversial Histories – Current Views on the Crusades*, ed. Felix Hinz and Johannes Meyer-Hamme (London: Routledge, 2021): 89–90.

23 See Aivar Põldvee, "Agricola's List (1551) and the Formation of the Estonian Pantheon," in *Re-Forming Texts, Music, and Church Art in the Early Modern North*, ed. Tuomas M. S. Lehtonen and Linda Kaljundi (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016): 449–74.

24 Kristina Jõekalda, "Mothers of the Land."

25 Gustavs Strenga, "From Bishop-Killer to Latvian National Hero."

26 Henrik Ågren, "St Erik, Reformation, and Enlightenment."

27 Steffen Hope, "Saints and Urban Medievalism: The Case of Saint Knud Rex in Modern-Day Odense," in this volume.

28 Anna Ripatti, "State, Race, and Colonization: Tyrgils Knutsson's Controversial Monuments in 19th-Century Finland," in this volume.

29 Jan Rüdiger, "The Bold/Bald Count: Tracing the 1½ Memories of Gerhard III of Holsatia," in this volume.

The Orthodox part of the Baltic Sea area – Russia and Karelia – did not experience any period of antagonism against saints' cults similar to the Reformation. However, almost at the same time, in the 16th and 17th centuries, the grand princes and later tsars of Moscow initiated an ongoing centralization of the Russian Orthodox Church, which negatively affected the cults of those saints known only locally in the peripheries.[30] As a result, in Russia,[31] the locally venerated saints only started to be popular(ized) as local heroes very late, in the 19th century,[32] and the question must be raised once again as to whether their vernacular cult as reflected in 19th- and 20th-century folklore and toponymy really has pre-modern roots, or whether it (mainly) reflects modern localism and learned interest in the regional past. During this process, the medieval saints were "domesticated" in the Russian Empire as an element of civic pride, as exemplified by the example of St Olga (10th c.) in Pskov Land[33] and the Orthodox saints in Karelia.[34] In the latter case, however, another aspect became relevant: in independent Finland, the cult of the imaginary early (11th–12th centuries) Orthodox missionaries in Karelia, based on legends created in the 18th century, was meant to indicate that the Christianization of Karelia was rooted in Byzantine, not Rus', culture and to prove the historical independence and Finnishness of Karelia.[35]

At the same time, the example of the Russian Empire presents another form of modern reinterpretation of medieval saints and heroes. Cult, heroization, and historical memory were directly administratively regulated by the government authorities there.[36] As one might expect, this bureaucratic approach failed to produce any significant results. The formal decisions were not able to shape public

30 *Religion und Integration im Moskauer Russland. Konzepte und Praktiken, Potentiale und Grenzen, 14.–17. Jahrhundert*, ed. Ludwig Steindorff (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010); Musin, *Zagadki*: 206–16.

31 *Mobilizovannoe srednevekov'e, vol. 2: Srednevekovaia istoriia na sluzhbe natsional'noi i gosudartsvennoi ideologii v Rossii,* ed. Aleksandr I. Filyushkin (St Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Sankt-Peterburgskogo universiteta, 2022).

32 Marianna Shakhnovich, "The Memorialization of Natural Loci and the Veneration of the Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Princess Olga in Northwestern Russia (19th–Early 21st Centuries)," in this volume.

33 Marianna Shakhnovich, "The Memorialization of Natural Loci."

34 Kati Parppei, "'The Holy Ascetics of Karelia': The Integration of Russian Medieval Saintly Cults into Finnish Orthodox Collective Memory, 1896–1944," in this volume.

35 Jukka Korpela, "Die Christianisierung der finno-ugrischen Peripherie Europas. Zwei Theorien und unangenehme Tatsachen," in *Rome, Constantinople and Newly-Converted Europe: Archaeological and Historical Evidence*, ed. Maciej Salamon et al., vol. 1 (Kraków: Geisteswissenschaftliches Zentrum Geschichte und Kultur Ostmitteleuropas, 2012): 275–85.

36 Alexander Filyushkin, "Medievalizm na sluzhbe politiki", in *Mobilizovannoe srednevekov'e, vol. 2*: 210–230.

perceptions of the past. While this approach was intended to integrate the multicultural empire, it failed completely, proving unable even to address Russian nationalist perceptions of history.

Another aspect of the interpretation of Russian saints and medieval heroes is the conflict regarding the "sharing" of the heritage of medieval Rus', especially between the modern Russian and Ukrainian nations.[37] Current Russian nationalist discourse intensively utilizes the modern constructivist approach, which views nations as "imagined communities,"[38] to prove that the existence of the Ukrainian nation is an artificial "Russophobic" concept created relatively recently by the enemies of Russia.[39] At the back of the authors' minds, however, there is the understanding that the Russian nation is itself in fact the primordial one. Accordingly, the monument of St Vladimir (d. 1015) – the "Baptizer" of Rus' – in Kyiv (1853, Vasily Demut-Malinovsky, Alexander Thon, and Peter Clodt von Jürgensburg) was in 2016 complemented and symbolically replaced by the St Vladimir monument next to the Kremlin in Moscow (Salauat Shcherbakov), ceremonially unveiled by President Putin and Patriarch Kirill.[40] This *translatio monumenti* is meant to indicate that Kyiv and Ukraine have no claim to the Christian heritage of the territory of medieval Rus'. How effective this "making of heroes from above" is today remains an open question, however. The massive propaganda in the media, especially television,[41] certainly has its impact. St Vladimir himself never had a prominent place in the Russian historical memory of the modern period.[42]

37 Georgiy Kasianov, *Memory Crash. The Politics of History in and around Ukraine, 1980s–2010s* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2022).

38 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1989).

39 Andreas Kappeler, "Ukraine and Russia: Legacies of the Imperial Past and Competing Memories," *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 5 (2014): 107–15; Konstantin Ju. Jerusalimski, "Mr Putin as a Historian of Ukraine and Russia," *Cahiers di Scienze Sociali* 16 (2021): 114–29.

40 Kati Parppei, "'A Thousand Years of History': References to the Past in the Addresses to the Federal Assembly by the President of Russia, 2000–19," in *Medievalism in Finland and Russia. Twentieth- and Twenty-First-Century Aspects*, ed. Reima Välimäki (London: Bloomsbury, 2022): 39–55, 50–51.

41 Mariëlle Wijermars, *Memory Politics in Contemporary Russia. Television, Cinema and the State* (London: Routledge, 2018).

42 Evgenii A. Rostovtsev and Dmitrii A. Sosnitskii, "Knyaz' Vladimir Velikii kak natsional'nyi geroi: sozdanie obraza," *Dialog so vermenem* 65 (2018): 150–64; Evgenii A. Rostovtsev, "The Middle Ages on the 'Map of Memory' of Russian Society," in *Medievalism in Finland and Russia*: 21–38, 33–35; Ricarda Vulpius, "Der heilige Wladimir als Ressource. Das Ringen um die 'Kleinrussen' der Dnjepr-Ukraine im ausgehenden Zarenreich und in Galizien," in *Den Slawen auf dem Spur. Festschrift für Eduard Mühle zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Matthias E. Cichon et al. (Marburg: Herder-Institut, 2022), 197–215.

In a culture where historical actors often remain anonymous due to the scarcity of medieval written sources, a heroic deed can stand in for the individual hero. Unsurprisingly, even the fictional persons from belles-lettres blend in with the real historical figures: in Estonia one can find fictional Vambola[43] and Tasuja ("The Avenger")[44] as, for example, street names or names of navy vessels alongside the name of the real historical person Lembitu (d. 1217).[45] But all of them personify equally the "ancient Estonian struggle for freedom";[46] i.e., the romanticized idea of the fight for emancipation against Baltic Germans, particularly actual in Estonian society from 1860–1940.[47] When the city of Tallinn in 1923 decided to rename some Russian-sounding street names (originating from previous house owners' personal names), besides 13th-century Estonian real and fictional heroes they also used the name of the Latvian semi-fictional hero Imanta.[48] In 1976, a part of Imanta Street was renamed Ants Lauter Street to honour a hero of the modern era – the actor and theatre personality, "People's Artist of the USSR"[49] Ants Lauter (1894–1973), who had lived there.[50]

The Great Heroic Historical Event par excellence in the historical memory and culture of people of the Baltic region was the sack of the Swedish town of Sigtuna in 1187 by some invaders from the eastern shores of the sea. Finns, Russians, Estonians, and Latvians have competed against one another to be accepted as having been the aggressor.[51] The capture of Sigtuna – and the topic of "Estonian Vikings" in general – was popularized with government support in Estonia,

43 A character from the novella *Vambola* (1889) by Andres Saal (1861–1931).

44 A character from the novella *Tasuja* (1880) by Eduard Bornhöhe (1862–1923).

45 Anti Selart, "Lembitu: A Medieval Warlord in Estonian Culture," *Studia Slavica et Balcanica Petropolitana* 29, no. 1 (2021): 3–14.

46 Marek Tamm, "History as Cultural Memory: Mnemohistory and the Construction of the Estonian Nation," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 39, no. 4 (2008): 499–516.

47 Ea Jansen, *Eestlane muutuvas ajas. Seisusühiskonnast kodanikuühiskonda* (Tartu: Eesti Ajalooarhiiv, 2007); Ulrike Plath, *Esten und Deutsche in den baltischen Provinzen Russlands: Fremdheitskonstruktionen, Lebenswelten, Kolonialphantasien 1750–1850* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2011); Anti Selart, "Historical Legitimacy and Crusade in Livonia," in *Crusading on the Edge: Ideas and Practice of Crusading in Iberia and the Baltic Region, 1100–1500*, ed. Torben K. Nielsen and Iben Fonnesberg-Schmidt (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016): 29–54.

48 See Gustavs Strenga, "From Bishop-Killer to Latvian National Hero."

49 The highest honorary title awarded to actors in the Soviet Union.

50 Aleksander Kivi, *Isikunimelised tänavad Tallinnas* (Tallinn: Eesti Raamat, 1977), 28; see 58, 62, 125.

51 Mart Kuldkepp, "The Story of Sigtuna's Destruction (1187) and Estonian Nationalism, 1868–1940," in this volume.

especially during the interwar period,[52] both in literary fiction[53] and visual arts,[54] and the fictional names of fictional heroes, invented by authors who used the Sigtuna story in their novels and short stories, came to be used as popular given names.

Modern nationalism demands the clear categorization of past persons and events on the scales of ours/alien and hero/villain.[55] Competing accounts of history and its actors result in contests between heroes, which, in turn, change over the course of time. For example, Bishop Albert of Riga became heroized as *the* founder of "German Livonia"; as one of the founding bishops of the Livonian church[56] he was registered in some early modern Catholic publications as a saint.[57] In 1897, he was venerated by the local Baltic German society with a statue on the façade of the Riga cathedral.[58] On the other hand, the Baltic German liberal social critic Garlieb Merkel (1769–1850)[59] put forth the image of Albert as an evil genius: "Ohne Ungerecht kann man ihn, den gefühllosen Tyrannen, den ehrgeizigen Räuber, der mit kaltem Blute seiner Selbstsucht Nationen schlachtete, dem allgemeinen Abscheu weihen [. . .] Welches Erdbeben, welche Pest bezeichnet ihren Gang durch gräßlichere Spuren als dieser *große Mann* [emphasis by Merkel]!"[60] In the 19th century this was then adopted by Estonian and Latvian national histori-

52 Hain Rebas, "'Sigtuna kombusteerimine' 1187. aastal – veel kord. Mis juhtus? Mida teame?," in Hain Rebas, *Sukeldumised. 16 etüüdi Läänemereruumi ajaloost* (Tartu: EÜS Kirjastus, 2022): 54–91, 57–64.

53 *Novels, Histories, Novel Nations. Historical Fiction and Cultural Memory in Finland and Estonia*, ed. Linda Kaljundi et al. (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2015).

54 Linda Kaljundi and Tiina-Mall Kreem, *Ajalugu pildis – pilt ajaloos. Rahvuslik ja rahvusülene minevik eesti kunstis / History in Images – Image in History. National and Transnational Past in Estonian Art* (Tallinn: Eesti Kunstimuuseum, 2018).

55 Jan Rüdiger, "The Bold/Bald Count."

56 On his memory and possible veneration in the Middle Ages, see Gustavs Strenga, *Remembering the Dead: Collective Memory and Commemoration in Late Medieval Livonia* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2023), 44–50.

57 Anu Mänd and Anti Selart, "Livonia – a Region without Local Saints?," in *Symbolic Identity*, 91–122, 111.

58 Sculpture by Karl Bernewitz (1858–1934).

59 *Raynal – Herder – Merkel. Transformationen der Antikolonialismusdebatte in der europäischen Aufklärung*, ed. York-Gothart Mix and Hinrich Ahrend (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2017).

60 "Without injustice one can consign him, the callous tyrant, the ambitious robber who slaughtered nations with the cold blood of his selfishness, to universal abhorrence [. . .] What earthquake, what pestilence marks its course by more hideous traces than this *great man*?" Garlieb Merkel, *Die Vorzeit Lieflands. Ein Denkmal des Pfaffen- und Rittergeistes*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Vossische Buchhandlung, 1798): 438–39.

ography. Subsequently, during the Soviet occupation of the Baltic countries, the "European" or "Western" past of the Baltic lands became important as a counterbalance to Sovietization and Russification – and in 2001, the statue of Albert, removed and lost during the First World War, was restored in the once again independent Latvia. In 1995, the first post-Soviet president of Estonia, Lennart Meri (1929–2006), created the "Order of the Cross of Terra Mariana" as the highest decoration for foreigners who rendered exceptional services to Estonia. "Terra Mariana," a medieval designation of Livonia,[61] underlines the historical Europeanness of Estonia; it met with public controversy as a kind of self-colonization, however.[62] In Viipuri, as a symbol of its Swedish-Finnish past, the statue of Tyrgils Knutsson was removed in 1948 after the Soviet conquest of the town but was restored in 1993 as a sign of its "Europeanness."[63]

Asking what really "did" the modern memory of medieval persons, a broad answer might be that the creative arts, from belles-letters to television series, have over the long term been the most effective method. However, regimes can occasionally have some influence steering the arts, by means of funding and censorship. Direct, bureaucratic attempts to create and manage the pantheon of heroes, including erecting public monuments and naming streets, have seen very limited success. The adaptability of the hero is important: his or her ability to be transformed according to changes in society and politics. Probably the best example is Russian Prince Alexander Yaroslavich, known as "Nevsky" (d. 1263).[64] In the 19th century, he served mainly as the saintly namesake of Russian emperors. The Russian émigré authors of the 1920s and 1930s pivoted his figure, making him the semi-mystical embodiment of Orthodox Russia as a Eurasian, non-European empire. In the Soviet Union, Alexander was presented as a totally secular nationalist Russian hero, fighting against Germans in the 1930s and 1940s and against "the West" from the 1950s on. Starting during the late 1980s, the nationalist, religious, and political facets of

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61 Anti Selart, "Kiriklik võim Liivimaa poliitikas," in *Eesti kiriku- ja religioonilugu. Õpik kõrgkoolidele*, ed. Riho Altnurme (Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, 2018): 63–74, 69–70.

62 Kristina Jõekalda, "Mothers of the Land," in this volume. Mikko Lagerspetz, "The Cross of Virgin Mary's Land: A Study in the Construction of Estonia's 'Return to Europe'," *Idäntutkimus* 3–4 (1999): 17–28.

63 Anna Ripatti, "State, Race, and Colonization," in this volume. "Torkkeli Knuutinpojan patsas," Wikipedia (online), https://fi.wikipedia.org/wiki/Torkkeli_Knuutinpojan_patsas.

64 Frithjof Benjamin Schenk, *Aleksandr Nevskij: Heiliger – Fürst – Nationalheld. Eine Erinnerungsfigur im russischen kulturellen Gedächtnis (1263–2000)* (Köln: Böhlau, 2004); Anti Selart, "Der Krieg Russlands gegen die "NATO des 13. Jahrhunderts". Altlivländische Geschichte in den politischen Parolen des 21. Jahrhunderts," in *Das mittelalterliche Livland und sein historisches Erbe / Medieval Livonia and Its Historical Legacy*, ed. Ilgvars Misāns et al. (Marburg: Herder-Institut, 2022): 105–26.

the representation of Alexander Nevsky have fused together, creating a central propagandistic, officially venerated medieval hero by the 2000s. Nobody can count the number of Alexander Nevsky monuments erected in Russia during the last decade.[65] On a much smaller scale, in Estonian and Latvian culture, the real and fictional heroes of the crusading period of the 12th and 13th centuries represented social protest against the Baltic German elite during the period in which the nations were being formed in the 19th century as well as in the interwar period. For the Soviet regime, the anti-German aspect was acceptable; at the same time, Lembitu, Imanta, and others quietly also personified the idea of national independence. Since the 1990s, in free Latvia and Estonia, they have lost much of their previous role, as anti-German sentiment has long since lost its relevance. That the predominantly stable and democratic development of a society delegitimizes heroes from the past is also confirmed by the examples of Finland, Sweden, and Denmark during the last decades.

The shared heritage of the Baltic Sea area is, in fact, the abundance of controversies regarding the cults of saints and heroes, indicating the complexity and multiculturality of the Baltic Sea region past and present. According to one definition, saints are "witnesses to the Other."[66] Whereas medieval saints were witnesses to the divine world, modern heroes and saints-transformed-into-heroes are witnesses to the human past as a kind of ideal world. What is ideal in the human past, however, is often controversial, and as society changes and the once-relevant ideal loses its meaning, the hero becomes an insignificant relic.

Name transfer, according to the schema saint > church > street, has preserved traces of the medieval cult of saints in European towns to this day,[67] even if the average visitor to a historic town centre does not realize the origin of urban toponyms. The person who named the fast-food stand in Danish Odense using the street and square name "Benedikt Grillen" probably did not realize that its burgers had anything to do with Prince Benedict Svendsen, killed in 1086 not far from the kiosk – a phenomenon labelled "secondary medievalism" by Steffen Hope.[68] The loss of knowledge about local history[69] transforms the saints and heroes of the past into bare names with no special meaning. The same is true of the

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65 Aleksandr I. Filyushkin, "Kogda i zachem stali stavit' pamyatniki istoricheskim personazham Drevnei Rusi?," *Paleorosiya. Drevnyaya Rus' vo vremeni, v lichnostyakh, v ideyakh* 7 (2017): 382–97, 387–90.

66 Willem Frijhoff, "Witnesses to the Other: Incarnate Longings – Saints and Heroes, Idols and Models," *Studia Liturgica* 34 (2004): 1–25, 25.

67 Steffen Hope, "Saints and Urban Medievalism," in this volume.

68 Steffen Hope, "Saints and Urban Medievalism."

69 Jan Rüdiger, "The Bold/Bald Count."

coats of arms of medieval origin that feature saints or their attributes.[70] In 1967, during the Soviet occupation of Latvia, the originally medieval coat of arms of the city of Riga was remodelled, and the cross and crown were removed from the shield. The keys remained,[71] however, because obviously nobody realized their original religious meaning as the symbol of St Peter.

The cultural de-homogenization of European societies has certainly limited the chances of heroes and saints surviving as shared national figures of identification or ideal role models. Regarding the heroes, modern "historical culture is not dialogical but solipsistic,"[72] and contrasting historical interpretations and essentially conflicting heroes can coexist side by side in media, as monuments, or as street names. The Middle Ages witnessed the development of heroes into saints;[73] secular modernity changed the saints into heroes. The difference between the two categories is not always substantial, however.[74]

70 Steffen Hope, "Saints and Urban Medievalism."

71 "Rīgas ģerbonis," Wikipedia (online), https://lv.wikipedia.org/wiki/R%C4%ABgas_%C4%A3erbonis.

72 Jan Rüdiger, "The Bold/Bald Count."

73 *Sakralität und Heldentum*, ed. Felix Heinzer et al. (Würzburg: Ergon, 2017).

74 Alfons Brüning, "Heilige, Helden, Krieger – zwischen Religion und Ideologie: Epilog," in *Die Militarisierung der Heiligen in Vormoderne und Moderne*, ed. Lilija Berezhnaja (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2020): 309–26.

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