

Heritage for the Public?

The *Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Altertumskunde* in Riga and the Protection of Architectural Monuments in the Baltic Provinces, 1834–1914

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The paper deals with the activities of architectural heritage protection carried out in the Baltic provinces during the long nineteenth century within the social and political context of the age. The preconditions for these activities are briefly examined, with the focus on the work performed in the field of conceptual ideas and practical measures taken to identify and preserve significant historic buildings following the actual trends of the day, as well as considering the specific circumstances characteristic to the Baltic provinces in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The protection of architectural heritage was linked to the development of ethnic nationalism in the late Russian Empire, expressed mainly in the activities of Baltic German voluntary associations dealing with local history and architecture, and laying the foundations for a modern approach to architectural heritage protection in present-day Estonia and Latvia. This paper is devoted to architectural heritage protection activities carried out by the *Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Altertumskunde der Ostseeprovinzen Russlands*, founded in 1834 in Riga, an association for local history studies that became the most influential public institution working in the field of historical research in the three Baltic provinces during the long nineteenth century.

Introduction

The history of cultural heritage protection is a field of interdisciplinary research. All kinds of heritage protection activities are related to constructing historical concepts, leading to the incorporation of cultural heritage into the political and ideological affairs of the day. The social, political and cultural history have had direct impacts on the practice of heritage preservation, and are thus equally relevant for studying the activities of the Society for History and Antiquities Research of the Eastern Provinces of Russia (GGA, *Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Altertumskunde der Ostseeprovinzen Russlands*). The protection of cultural heritage reflects the

importance attributed to this task by society itself. Therefore, social aspects are decisive in the field of preserving objects of cultural and historical value: the goal set for these activities is to fulfil the social demand by exploring and retaining the evidence of the past. The necessity of social communities to justify their sense of cultural identity has often led to perceiving objects of cultural heritage as monuments of national importance.¹ The destruction or preservation of these monuments reshapes the social memory of communities,² and thus the changes in public opinion that occur over time are highly essential when studying the history of interpreting this heritage.

During the long nineteenth century there was a trend of gradually increasing activity in the field of monument protection, expressed in the registration and conservation of historic buildings across Europe. The fundamentals of the contemporary heritage protection system were laid, establishing legal provisions and institutions, as well as setting standards for creating the inventory and classification of historic buildings. At the core of heritage protection lies the question of the evaluation of objects' worth, deriving from certain selection standards and the whole notion of cultural monuments. Viewed historically, the following standards have been accepted to designate an object as worthy of becoming a monument of architecture: 1) the constructive features of the building; 2) the memorial or symbolic value of the building as related to some historical fact or person; and 3) the historical and artistic value of the building, the significance of which lies in its status as an authentic historical source.³ Around 1900, this somewhat purist definition of how historic buildings become architectural monuments was typical of discussions regarding protection and restoration measures, and this was also the case in the Baltic provinces of Estonia (Estland, i.e. the northern part of the later Republic of Estonia), Livonia (Livland, i.e. southern Estonia and northern Latvia) and Courland (Kurland, i.e. south-western Latvia).

The historical value attributed to a monument of architecture was to be derived from the believed uniqueness of the building, i.e. from its special structural features and its aesthetic quality.⁴ Both the emergence of nationalism and the threat posed to traditional landscapes by industrialisation caused a nostalgic and conservative attitude towards the past, shared in various social contexts of the age. A number of discussions concerning the concept and evaluation of architectural monuments emerged consequently among architects, art historians and lawyers involved in the process of heritage protection. These discussions resulted in increasing the weight of the social and historical value of a monument (without rejecting the already existing notions of memorial and artistic value). The social value of an object was seen to surpass the significance of the memorial value, because the objects were often

1 See D. Lowenthal, *Past is a Foreign Country*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, pp. 35–73.

2 W. Speitkamp, *Die Verwaltung der Geschichte. Denkmalpflege und Staat in Deutschland 1871–1933*. (Kritische Studien zur Geschichtswissenschaft 114.) Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996, pp. 12–17.

3 See J. Jokilehto, *A History of Architectural Conservation*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1999, pp. 295–301.

4 T. Breuer, *Die Baudenkmäler und ihre Erfassung. Ausführliche Darstellung aus der Sicht des Kunsthistorikers. – Schutz und Pflege von Baudenkmälern in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Ein Handbuch*. Eds. A. Gebeßler, W. Ebel. Cologne: Kohlhammer, 1980, pp. 22–57.

perceived as legitimating the national culture, rather than being mere reminders of a particular event or individual of the past.⁵

In the question whether to preserve the original substance of a given building *per se*, or whether the decision to approve stylistic restoration methods should be left to the supervising architect in each particular case, such architects as Heinrich Pirang (1876–1936)⁶ and Wilhelm von Stryk (1864–1928)⁷ adopted a rather radical paradigm, opposing the more modest and flexible views of the art historian and architect Wilhelm Neumann (1849–1919) in the late nineteenth century⁸. Besides the professional discussions, however, heritage became a matter of public interest during this era. In the Baltic provinces, then a territory with a particular multicultural milieu and historical background within the Russian Empire, the question of architectural heritage aroused passions, as it had in other parts of Europe around that time. These were further intensified by the constant competition between different ethnic communities: the Baltic Germans, representing the local nobility, were striving to maintain regional autonomy; Russian officials, representing the central administration, were pursuing a unification policy; and the national movements of Estonians and Latvians were aspiring for their own ethno-cultural autonomy, based partly on the construction of a national history perspective.⁹ Each of these parties demanded a certain interpretation of heritage issues, having an impact also on the registration and conservation of historic buildings.

Recognition of historic buildings

Historic buildings, later regarded as monuments of architecture, gradually became objects of public interest in the Baltic provinces during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (fig. 1). This was primarily led by individual enthusiasts following the trends of romanticism in their compiled volumes of descriptions and visual materials, including various data on historic buildings. The first ‘antiquarians’ engaged in more or less systematic studies of cultural heritage, covering pre-historical sites and artefacts, significant natural sights, and historic buildings or ruins of medieval castles. These antiquarians originated from the *litterati*: a group of educated middle-class members, most of them working as teachers or state officials. Among the most active heritage enthusiasts were Johann Christoph Brotze (1742–1823), a pedagogue at the Riga Imperial Lyceum,¹⁰ and his friends and assistants in Estonia, e.g. the architect Johann Wilhelm Krause (1757–1828) and the pastor

5 H. Boockmann, *Denkmäler. Eine Utopie des 19. Jahrhunderts.* – H. Boockmann, *Wege ins Mittelalter. Historische Aufsätze.* Eds. D. Neitzert, U. Israel, E. Schubert. Munich: Beck, 2000, pp. 359–373.

6 H. Pirang, *Denkmalpflege.* – *Arbeiten des Ersten Baltischen Historikertages zu Riga 1908.* Riga: Löffler, 1909, pp. 219–220.

7 W. von Stryk, *Zum Denkmalschutz.* – *Arbeiten des Ersten Baltischen...*, p. 216.

8 W. Neumann, *Die Erhaltung unserer Denkmäler.* – *Baltische Monatsschrift* 1888, vol. 35, p. 354.

9 A. Plakans, *A Concise History of the Baltic States.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, pp. 170–265; A. Kappeler, *Russland als Vielvölkerreich. Entstehung – Geschichte – Zerfall.* Munich: Beck, 2001, pp. 233–267.

10 J. C. Brotze, *Zīmējumi un apraksti [Drawings and their descriptions].* 4 vols. Eds. T. Zeids et al. Riga: Zinātne, 1992–2004.

Eduard Philipp Körber (1770–1850). From the point of view of art history, their main contribution was creating a remarkable collection of drawings and descriptions of various heritage objects from the Baltic provinces.¹¹

The next stage was reached in the early nineteenth century, when Brotze's contemporary, the agriculturist and land surveyor Andreas von Löwis of Menar (1777–1839), published one of the first systematic accounts of the architectural monuments in the provinces of Estonia and Livonia. He used the term 'monuments of antiquity' in its proper sense, referring to evidence of material culture inherited from the past and linked to the history of Livonia. His book¹² appeared in two parts, in 1821 and 1827, and focused mainly on medieval castles, as was typical in the age of romanticism.

Meanwhile, the first attempts at recognition and assessment of historic buildings began on the institutional level: in 1827 Emperor Nicholas I passed a decree (указ) on gathering information about historic buildings, along with a prohibition on destroying them. A kind of conditional methodology for the registration, measurement and inventory of architectural monuments was approved. In practice, the protection of architectural heritage depended on specific individuals and associations. When the administration of the province of Livonia was asked to appoint some civil servants to prepare an inventory of historic buildings according to this decree, however, the request was denied. The reason given was that it would be quite an impossible task because of the lack of human resources: in order to find the people needed, the administration would have had to stop all the essential land survey work in the province at that time.¹³

In the late 1820s an album compiled by Marquis Filippo Paulucci (1779–1849) reproduced plans and facades of sixty-six historic buildings (medieval castles and ruins, abbeys and churches), covering the three Baltic provinces: twenty objects from Courland, thirty-two objects from Livonia and fourteen objects from Estonia.¹⁴ The album depicted the architectural objects merely as parts of the landscape, but it still provided general plans and layouts of the buildings, and for several decades the album remained the only inventory of historic buildings that included objects from all three Baltic provinces. In the late nineteenth century, however, a regional

11 Körber also created his own collection, which is housed in the Estonian Literary Museum in Tartu. According to Krause's memoirs, his cooperation with Brotze began around 1790, probably when Krause visited Riga for eight days. At least twenty-three original drawings made by Krause and dated from 1790 to 1796 are included in Brotze's collection; these drawings depict landscapes and country cemeteries, as well as scenes from manors and from the town of Alūksne (Marienburg) in Livonia, and were made within this period of time. These pictures were sent to Brotze as gifts on various occasions. Brotze made several copies of Krause's drawings, with some slightly notable differences from the originals in the depictions of buildings and their surroundings. These copies are preserved in collections of Krause's works at the University of Tartu and the Art Museum of Estonia in Tallinn. Krause's authorship of the drawings included in Brotze's volumes was confirmed in notes made by Brotze himself in some cases, or by subsequent investigators of Brotze's collection during the nineteenth century (M. Auns, Johans Vilhelms Krauze un Latvija. Dažas epizodes [Johann Wilhelm Krause and Latvia: Some episodes]. - *Latvijas Vēstures Institūta Žurnāls* 2000, no. 2, pp. 34–52).

12 A. von Löwis of Menar, *Denkmäler aus der Vorzeit Liv- und Ehstlands*. 2 vols. Riga, Dorpat: Meinshausen, 1821–1827.

13 A. Feuereisen, *Die Anfänge des Denkmalschutzes in Schweden und Livland. - Arbeiten des Ersten Baltischen...*, p. 247.

14 *Livonijas piļu attēli no markīza Pauluči albuma / Abbildungen der livländischen Burgen im Album der Marquis Paulucci*. Ed. I. Ose. Riga: Institut für Geschichte Lettlands, 2008, pp. 25–37.



Baltic provinces in the late nineteenth century. Reproduction from the fifth edition of *Meyers Konversations-Lexikon* (1893-1897).

Public domain: Wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Meyerbaltikum.jpg> (accessed 20 June 2014).



2.

Emblem of the *Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Altertumskunde der Ostseeprovinzen Russlands*.
Reproduction from J. Stradiņš, *Zinātnes un augstskolu sākotne Latvijā* [The beginnings of science and higher education in Latvia]. Riga: Latvijas vestures institute apgāds, 2009, p. 364.



3.

Portal of the Uellenbrock house in Riga. Drawing by Wilhelm Bockslaff, late nineteenth century. Reproduction from *Rīga kā Latvijas galvas pilsēta* [Riga as the capital of Latvia]. Eds. T. Liventāls, V. Sadovskis. Riga: Rīgas Pilsētas Valde, 1932, p. 64.



4.

The Uellenbrock portal, removed to 22 Jauniela (Neustrasse) in Riga.

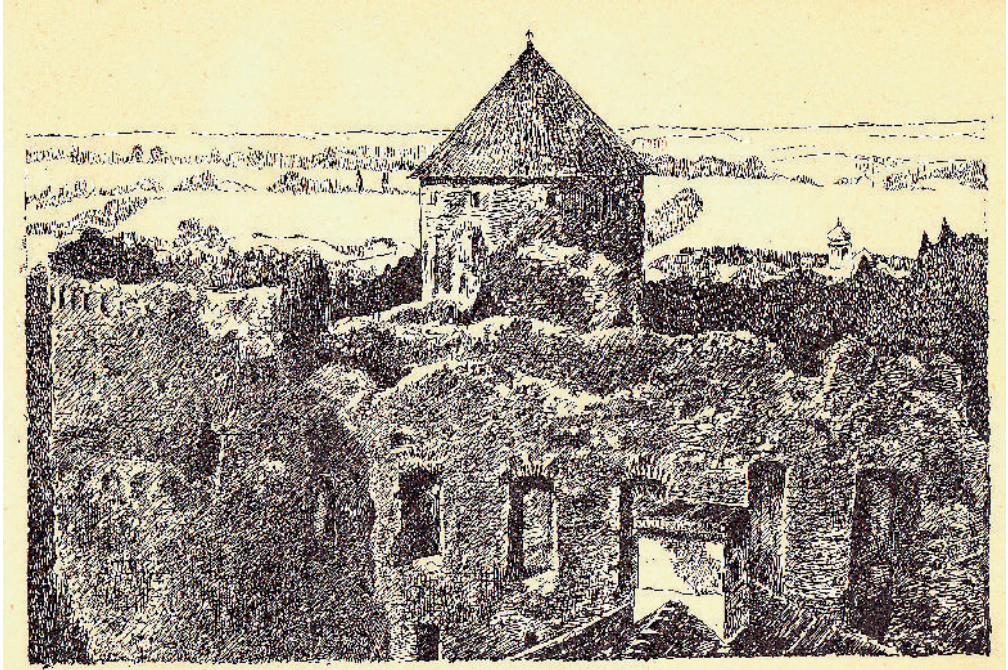
Photo by A. Dogadkins.

Reproduction from A. Birzenieks. Vecās Rīgas portāli / Порталы старой Риги. Rīga: LPSR ZA, 1955, p. 11.



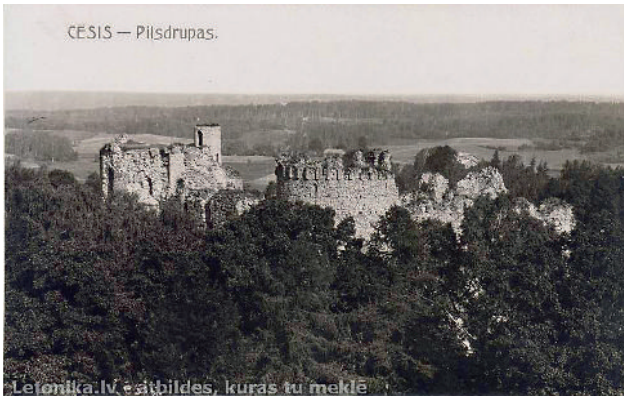
5.

The Uellenbrock portal at 22 Jauniela in 2013.
Photo by Mārtiņš Mintauris.



6.

Proposal for the conservation of the western tower of the Cēsis (Wenden) medieval castle. Architect Hermann Seuberlich (ca. 1912). Latvian State Historical Archives, coll. 4038, inv. 1, no. 86, p. 13.



7.

Ruins of the medieval castle in Cēsis; postcard from the 1920s. Reproduction from Letonika, <http://www.letonika.lv/groups/default.aspx?cid=993040&r=1101173&lid=993040&q=&h=585> (accessed 20 June 2014).

approach towards architectural heritage was re-established by art historians dealing with historic buildings in all three provinces¹⁵, or dealing with particular townscape issues¹⁶.

Although there was a lack of both a legal framework and institutions responsible for the protection of cultural heritage objects in the Russian Empire, associations for local history studies in the nineteenth century were the core groups that made the protection of cultural heritage possible on a regional scale across the country, and their efforts ranged from enthusiastic amateurism to near professionalism at times.¹⁷ The philologist Wilhelm Schlau (1886–1978) recounted that from 1802 to 1911 thirteen associations dealing with local history were established in the Baltic provinces.¹⁸ These were the very first public institutions to undertake systematic protection and investigation of architectural heritage, and they were especially active from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards. Due to the social and political circumstances characteristic of this region¹⁹, these associations were dominated by notable Baltic German representatives²⁰. Some of the most prominent figures, who frequently discussed problems regarding the inventory and conservation of historic buildings, were the architect Wilhelm Bockslaff (1858–1945) and the historians Hermann von Bruiningk (1849–1927), Arnold Feuereisen (1868–1943) and Karl von Löwis of Menar (1855–1930). Increased attempts at the registration and investigation of historic buildings in the Baltic provinces were linked with the development of associations for local history studies.

Institutions and activities in the protection of architectural heritage

The GGA, founded on 1 September 1834 in Riga, became a centre for both studies of local history and the protection of heritage in the Baltic provinces,²¹ especially from the 1880s onwards (fig. 2). With its main focus on the investigation and protection of historic buildings, the GGA generated new initiatives and proposals on several technical aspects in the field, mostly following the example of German efforts²² of

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

16 K. von Löwis of Menar, *Die städtische Profanarchitektur der Gothik, der Renaissance und des Barocco in Riga, Reval und Narva*. Lübeck: Nöhring, 1892.

17 On the social and political context of Baltic associations during the long nineteenth century, see J. Bradley, *Voluntary Associations in Tsarist Russia: Science, Patriotism, and Civil Society*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009.

18 W. Schlau, *Die Kurländische Gesellschaft für Literatur und Kunst und das Kurländische Provinzialmuseum zu Mitau*. – *Baltische Hefte* 1968, no. 14, pp. 6–7.

19 See, for instance, G. von Pistohlkors, *Das 'Baltische Gebiet' des Russischen Reiches (1860–1914)*. – *Deutsche Geschichte im Osten Europas*. Vol. 3, *Baltische Länder*. Ed. G. von Pistohlkors. Berlin: Siedler, 1994, pp. 363–450.

20 C. Redlich, *30 Jahre Denkmalpflege der Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Altertumskunde in Riga 1884–1914*. – *Jahrbuch des baltischen Deutschtums* 1982, vol. 29, pp. 40–54.

21 See P. Wörster, *Einige Bemerkungen zur Arbeit der Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Altertumskunde in Riga*. – *Das Dommuseum in Riga. Ein Haus für Wissenschaft und Kunst / Doma muzejs Rīgā: Templis zinātnēi un mākslai*. Ed. I. Celmiņa, M. Romang. Marburg: Herder-Institut, 2001, pp. 30–36.

22 See W. Speitkamp, *Heritage Preservation, Nationalism and the Reconstruction of Historical Monuments in Germany during the Long Nineteenth Century* in this volume.

that time. Although the GGA operated in all three provinces, approaching them as one region having distinct historical qualities, here the focus will mainly be on examples in Livonia and Courland.

These activities were linked to the competition between the Baltic German, Latvian and Russian communities, which expressed their political and cultural aspirations, as mentioned above. It should be pointed out that the sense of belonging to a specific ethnic community was not clearly expressed among the Baltic Germans until the mid-nineteenth century. Instead, regional belonging prevailed: identification with the particular province an individual or family came from was considered more essential than ethnic belonging.²³ However, the politicisation of everyday life and cultural activities during the second half of the nineteenth century led to the emergence of ethnocentric self-description in the Baltic German community in regard to its history, which was perceived as the very foundation of the community's existence. This was reflected not least in the historic buildings as material evidence of their history in the Baltic region.²⁴ Needless to say, the tensions between communities had an effect on the protection of architectural heritage, creating places of memory deriving from the particular interpretation of local history.

The very core of heritage protection is an impartial attitude towards the objects in question, a treatment detached from every possible bias of political, ethnic or social origin regarding the provenance of cultural heritage. This principle, relying on an academic and a humanistic ethos, was also declared in the statutes of the GGA in 1834, which set out three general tasks for the society: 1) promoting the study of history and the protection of the monuments of antiquity; 2) serving science through source editions and scholarly publications; and 3) collecting antiquities and making them available to the public in order to advance the interest in, and knowledge of, the local past.²⁵

As the Baltic German archaeologist and historian Clara Redlich (1908–1992) noted in 1960, initially the GGA had no intention of stressing particular 'German/Baltic German issues' or dissociating itself from the other ethnic communities of the region. This was declared in a call published in December 1835, appealing to 'all learned residents of the Baltic provinces who are not yet members of the Association' and who might be interested in fulfilling its tasks.²⁶ Was the GGA indeed protecting architectural heritage primarily because of its supposed relevance for the public in general? Or did their focus on historic buildings derive from the fact that these represented the legacy of German culture in the Baltics?

A growing cognizance of the historical value possessed by the buildings of Old Riga became apparent during the period from 1857 to 1864, when there were extensive discussions concerning the system of fortifications around Riga. At this time the

23 U. von Hirschhausen, *Die Grenzen der Gemeinsamkeit. Deutsche, Letten, Russen und Juden in Riga 1860–1914.* (Kritische Studien zur Geschichtswissenschaft 172.) Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006, p. 343. See also U. Plath, *Heimat: Rethinking Baltic German Spaces of Belonging* in this volume.

24 M. Garleff, *Aspekte der deutschbaltischen Geschichtsschreibung in der 2. Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts.* – *Journal of Baltic Studies* 1978, vol. 9 (4), pp. 339–353.

25 Latvian State Historical Archives (Latvijas Valsts vēstures arhīvs, LVVA), coll. 4038 (Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Altertumskunde zu Riga), inv. 1, no. 2, p. 51.

26 C. Redlich, *Das Rigasche Dommuseum (1834–1936).* – *Baltische Hefte* 1960, vol. 6, p. 163.

local daily newspapers published articles²⁷ hailing the great perspectives now open for Riga's further development and prosperity, as well as calls to protect the city's historical heritage. Special attention was paid to medieval churches in particular.²⁸ In the proceedings (*Sitzungsberichte*) of the GGA, issued from 1874, different aspects were taken into account. Among various types of papers, short reports on the conditions, protection and registration of historic buildings were published.

Until the last quarter of the nineteenth century the GGA's activity in the field of architectural heritage was fairly modest. Among the first remarks concerning this subject in the annual proceedings of the GGA were those of December 1877, when Georg Berkholz (1817–1886), the president of GGA and head of the city library of Riga, noted that rapid course of changes taking place in the cultural milieu of the Baltic provinces made exactly the present moment suitable for saving particular monuments inherited from the past, as well as for a coherent study of the local history to preserve elements to meet present and future needs.²⁹

In response to growing concern about the historical legacy of the Baltic provinces among the learned society members, many of whom expressed their concerns in newspapers, several steps were taken by the GGA from the 1880s onwards. One of these was a comprehensive exhibition of cultural and historical antiquities in Riga (1883)³⁰, which received wide public attention³¹. The exhibition became a stimulus for establishing an association for the reconstruction of the Riga cathedral, the *Dombau-Verein*, in 1885. This enterprise lasted for some twenty-five years and was led by three successive architects.³² It was the activity of this association that brought about the first conceptual debate on the goals and methodology of architectural restoration. This public debate took place between Reinhold Guleke (1834–1927), then a scholar of architecture at the University of Tartu (Dorpat), and Wilhelm Neumann, an architect and art historian in Riga. Guleke made a proposal to arrange a full-scale reconstruction of the cathedral, according to the principles of stylistic restoration set down by the famous French architect-restorer Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc. Guleke's preference was to follow the presumed intention of medieval builders, reconstructing among other things the two gothic towers at the main entrance.³³ His idea of reconstruction was condemned by Neumann,³⁴ who stated that the restoration is obliged to preserve the cathedral in its original form as much as possible.

27 P. von Hardenack, Die Neugestaltung Riga's und Pietät für historischen Boden. – Rigasche Stadtblätter 1863, no. 20, pp. 183–185; no. 21, pp. 191–193.

28 B. Becker, Die alten Kirchen in Riga. – Notizblatt des Technischen Vereins zu Riga 1867, no. 6, pp. 81–92; no. 7, pp. 97–105.

29 425. Versammlung. Oeffentliche Jahresversammlung am 6. December 1877. – Sitzungsberichte der Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Alterthumskunde der Ostseeprovinzen Russlands aus dem Jahre 1877. Riga: Häcker, 1878, p. 41.

30 Katalog der Rigaschen culturhistorischen Ausstellung. Riga, 1883.

31 F. Bienemann, Aus der Ferne. – Baltische Monatsschrift 1883, vol. 30, p. 598.

32 See Rechenschaftsbericht der Abtheilung der Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Altertumskunde für den Rigaschen Dombau für das Jahr 1885. Riga: Häcker, 1886. See also those for the years 1886–1910. Cf. W. Neumann, Der Dom zu St. Marien in Riga. Baugeschichte und Baubeschreibung. Riga: Löffler, 1912.

33 R. Guleke, Der Dom zu Riga. – Baltische Monatsschrift 1884, vol. 31, pp. 553–600.

34 W. Neumann, Der Dom zu Riga und seine Wiederherstellung. – Baltische Monatsschrift 1885, vol. 32, pp. 417–426.

During the period of the reconstruction of the Riga cathedral (1885–1910), the *Dombau-Verein* became a forum for the most notable Baltic German architects to share their opinions and discuss issues of architectural restoration. Not least importantly the initiative of the *Dombau-Verein* led to establishing the first contacts with German professionals in 1891, namely with Conrad Steinbrecht (1849–1923), who led the reconstruction work at the Malbork (Marienburg) castle of the Teutonic Order in Prussia. Interaction with German colleagues included sharing photographs of the process of reconstructing medieval building complexes.³⁵ The consequences of the debates on the preservation and conservation of heritage had an effect reaching beyond the particular activities³⁶ related to the cathedral in Riga itself. In 1888 Neumann published an article that can be seen as path-breaking and decisive for further developments in this field, providing a conceptual analysis of problems related to the protection of cultural, particularly architectural, heritage in the Baltic provinces.

In 1888, Karl von Löwis of Menar proposed paying more attention to other historic churches in Riga, and this proposal was repeated in 1896, demanding an institution (*Amt-Protectorat*) that would be in charge of preserving historic buildings, i.e. medieval castles, churches and particular objects of civil architecture in Riga and Livonia.³⁷ In both cases, this initiative was forwarded by his colleagues at *Dombau-Verein* to the GGA due to the greater competency of the latter, but this failed to lead to any action. However, Karl von Löwis of Menar decided to return to this idea once again with yet another appeal in 1909, suggesting to the GGA that it establish the *Verein für Denkmalschutz in Livland*. This time his proposal was accepted *pro memoria* after a discussion took place at the GGA proceedings.³⁸ The lack of further developments in this direction, however, was linked to the fact that in 1908 there had already been a resolution issued at the first conference of Baltic historians (*Baltischer Historikertag*) to arrange a special Commission for Heritage Preservation (*Kommission für Denkmalpflege*), including representatives of both the GGA and the Riga Society of Architects (*Rigasche Architekten-Verein*, established in 1889).³⁹ The Commission for Heritage Preservation should be regarded as the first institution devoted to the protection of cultural heritage in present-day Latvia and Estonia.

The Commission for Heritage Preservation started its work in 1909, housed in the Riga Cathedral Museum (*Rigasche Dommuseum*). It was led by Neumann until his death in 1919. The outbreak of World War I led to a shut-down of significant activities of the commission in 1915. Short as it was, the period between 1910 and 1914 was significant in regard to activities carried out merely for investigation and registration of historic buildings. Following up on suggestions made before, Neumann decided to focus on preparing a systematic inventory of sacral architecture and art

35 558. Versammlung am 11. September 1891. – Sitzungsberichte der GGA 1891, pp. 82–83.

36 A comprehensive assessment of these activities has been provided by E. Grosmane, *Der Paradigmenwechsel in der Rekonstruktion des Rigaer Domes um die Jahrhundertwende 1900. – Architektur und bildende Kunst im Baltikum um 1900*. Eds. E. Grosmane et al. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1999, pp. 39–49.

37 LVVA, coll. 4038, inv. 1, no. 87, pp. 5–6.

38 723. Versammlung am 13. Mai 1909. – Sitzungsberichte der GGA 1909, p. 28.

39 Protokolle des I Baltischen Historikertages 15./28.–17./30. April 1908. – *Arbeiten des Ersten Baltischen...*, pp. ix–x.

objects in the Baltic provinces. He also drew up a lecture course on heritage issues in the Faculty of Theology at the University of Tartu.⁴⁰ This decision was important because determinations of what was to be protected were still rather vague. The first registration campaign of 'historical and architectural monuments' was carried out by the Russian interior ministry between 1901 and 1905. These monuments included various antiquities, buildings and constructions (*древних памятников, зданий и сооружений*); 88 monuments of architecture were identified in Livonia, 25 in Courland and 36 in Estonia. Across the Russian Empire, 2456 monuments of architecture had been placed on this list.⁴¹ Clearly, additional information was needed besides a list.

Inventory of objects and Baltic identity

The first call to establish a systematic inventory of historic buildings in the Baltic provinces had come in 1888, again from Neumann. He regarded this inventory as an essential, indeed indispensable, step towards effective protection of architectural heritage, and felt that it should be taken as soon as possible. Thus he proposed creating a topographic and alphabetical register of monuments to record objects by their locations and denominations. The next step, according to Neumann, would be the creation of a detailed monument archive, including descriptions, images and planning schemes of historic buildings.⁴² Although this suggestion was supported by Neumann's colleagues at the GGA almost immediately,⁴³ it took more than twenty years for practical results to be realised. This presumably was due to financial reasons, for neither the GGA nor other associations involved in this assignment had the means to fulfil it by themselves without grants or other outside support.

An attempt was made to collect information on objects of sacral art and architecture in the Baltic provinces by sending a detailed questionnaire to local parishes. This action followed the example of an inventory system of monuments established by the art historian Georg Gottfried Dehio, who was born in Tallinn (Reval) and worked in Germany since 1877, when he also became a corresponding member of the GGA.⁴⁴ Over the period from 1911 to 1913 this action resulted in the collection of data on two hundred and ten Protestant churches and their historical furnishings in the three provinces; yet the response was less than expected, especially from Courland. Unlike the situation in Estonia and Livonia, where the preliminary efforts gained wide support from the *Ritterschaften* (i.e. the Baltic German nobility corporations), the Protestant (i.e. Evangelical-Lutheran) Church administration in Courland refused to cooperate, claiming that the clergy were already overloaded

40 W. Neumann, Erster Bericht der Kommission für Denkmalpflege. – Sitzungsberichte der GGA 1910, pp. 304–305.

41 Охрана памятников истории и культуры в России (XVIII – начало XX вв.). Сборник документов. Ed. Л. Г. Бескровный. Moscow, 1978, pp. 338–348.

42 W. Neumann, Die Erhaltung unserer Denkmäler, pp. 355–357.

43 537. Versammlung am 8. März 1889. – Sitzungsberichte der GGA 1889, p. 28.

44 W. Neumann, Bericht über das Ergebnis der Enquête der kirchlichen Altertümer in Liv-, Est- und Kurland. – Sitzungsberichte der GGA 1912, pp. 395–396.

with obligations to prepare various accounts of their activities.⁴⁵ The inventory was not finished until the outbreak of World War I, and the collection of data was deliberately destroyed by the Latvian Bolsheviks in the early spring of 1919, during the short period of their dictatorship in Riga.⁴⁶ However, the church inventory materials gathered from parishes in Estonia have been preserved in the collection of the Estonian History Museum.

Along with this inventory, Neumann published the brief *Merkbüchlein zur Denkmalpflege auf dem Lande*, covering basic questions regarding the protection of cultural heritage. This handbook included an introduction to the history of local art and architecture, as well as a brief explanation of the most common terms linked to sacral buildings and their interiors.⁴⁷ This methodology was approved by the Commission for Heritage Preservation as a way to inform and educate the clergy in country parishes, whom the heritage preservation activists had to rely on in one way or the other. Neumann's handbook also had distinct educational value in that it gave general conceptions of the protection of cultural heritage. For instance, the main task of heritage protection, according to Neumann, was to preserve the historic building, as a piece of art, in its most intact condition, 'not disturbing the links a monument has to its surroundings and preserving the specific qualities of the given object'.⁴⁸

According to Neumann's conception, declared in this publication, the protection of cultural heritage should include various types of objects and actions: 1) the ruins of medieval castles requiring proper conservation and care; 2) the inventory and preservation of 'pagan hill forts' (*heidnische Burgberge*), which should be investigated only by professional archaeologists; 3) the protection of local geological objects of special importance, along with flora and fauna, as particular complexes of natural history; and 4) the preservation of traditional crafts and occupations, especially those related to building activities, so as to promote the long delayed protection of ethnographic material culture objects.⁴⁹ It is important to mention here that the concept proposed by Neumann in 1911 very closely followed the guidelines set out by the German League for Homeland Protection (*Deutscher Bund Heimatschutz*) in Dresden in 1904.⁵⁰ This is not particularly surprising considering the internal and external factors that enabled such a practice.

It is quite evident that the general ethos of heritage protection activities in the German-speaking world was rooted primarily in the movement of *Heimatkunde*, which emerged in Germany in the 1880s and reached its peak around 1910. *Heimatkunde* was intended to gain public support by focusing mostly on middle-class

45 W. Neumann, Über die Ergebnisse der in Liv- und Estland veranstalteten Enquête über kirchliche Denkmäler. – Arbeiten des Zweiten Baltischen Historikertages zu Reval 1912. Reval: Kluge, 1932, pp. 163–172. Compare also to the final account of the inventory: W. Neumann, Bericht über das Ergebnis der Enquête..., p. 395.

46 LVVA, coll. 4038, inv. 1, no. 4, p. 17.

47 W. Neumann, *Merkbüchlein zur Denkmalpflege auf dem Lande*. Riga: Häcker, 1911.

48 W. Neumann, *Merkbüchlein zur Denkmalpflege auf dem Lande*, p. 7.

49 W. Neumann, *Merkbüchlein zur Denkmalpflege auf dem Lande*, pp. 45–46.

50 N. Huse, *Denkmalpflege und Heimatschutz*. – *Denkmalpflege. Deutsche Texte aus drei Jahrhunderten*. Ed. N. Huse. Munich: Beck, 2006, p. 152.

intellectuals, artists, school teachers and so on. The social milieu supporting the monument protection movement in the Baltic provinces was similar. Starting in the late 1880s, the golden age of *Heimatkunde* here occurred in the first decade of the twentieth century.⁵¹ In this regard, Neumann's instructions for country parish keepers relied heavily on publications of the most popular authors of the day, including Paul Schultze-Naumburg and Paul Clemen, and followed the core concepts of *Heimatsbewegung*, which was widespread in Germany. As these concepts gradually changed from a romantic admiration of antiquity to a more nationalistic perception of history, the possibility arose that one day local history associations might abandon the rather impartial stance they had originally created for themselves.

Along with the growing pressure of the unification policy enforced by the Russian administration in the Baltic provinces from the late 1870s onwards, the tendency of cultural self-isolation among the Baltic Germans became more explicit. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the political representatives of the Baltic German community promoted activities of different learned bodies involving the studies of their local history and culture, while taking this as a legal opportunity to support the maintenance of their positions in the region. Since the GGA was dominated by Baltic Germans, the heritage protection activities undertaken were associated with them, with an emphasis on taking care of 'their' heritage first and foremost.

However, this trend did not result in a narrow nationalistic interpretation of regional cultural heritage. In fact, starting with the first efforts to establish a central museum of cultural history in Riga in 1886,⁵² a conception was sustained in the early twentieth century that stimulated the investigation and preservation of the region's ethnographic heritage. This idea almost became a reality in 1910, when the Riga Society of Architects developed a plan for an ethnographic open-air museum to be founded in Riga to preserve the evidence of Estonian and Latvian folk traditions in crafts and buildings.⁵³ On 10 March 1910 a meeting was held by the Riga Society of Architects, led by Pirang and attended by some of the leading Latvian architects of the time, including Eižens Laube (1880–1967) and Augusts Malvess (1878–1951), then representing the Riga Polytechnical Institute (now the Riga Technical University). The structure of the ethnographic museum suggested by the architect Karl Reissner included two main exhibitions: the 'city' and the 'countryside', which were to be divided into Latvian and Estonian sections. Both countryside sections were to include ten branches or thematic subdivisions covering different aspects of peasant material culture in Latvia and Estonia. Among them were vernacular buildings and household objects, crafts and agriculture, transport vehicles, folk costumes, and traditions, religious life and beliefs (the subdivision on pre-history was supposed to include ancient pagan sites). Reissner also noted that the museum in Riga should

51 See *Heimatstimmen. Ein baltisches Jahrbuch*. 5 vols. (Vol. 4–5: *Heimatstimmen. Ein baltisches Hausbuch*.) Eds. C. Hunnius, V. Wittrock. Reval: Kluge; Leipzig: Hartmann, 1904–1912.

52 A. Buchholtz, *Ein baltisches culturhistorisches Museum*. – *Sitzungsberichte der GGA 1886*, pp. 122–140.

53 A. Jansons, *Brīvdabas muzeja pirmās skices* [The first sketches for an open-air museum]. – *Dabas un vēstures kalendārs 1989*. Riga: Zinātne, 1988, p. 243. This is a short description of archival materials kept at LVVA, coll. 2748 (Riga Society of Architects), inv. 21, no. 1, p. 1; no. 8, pp. 152–153; no. 21, p. 29.

follow the example of the famous Skansen in Stockholm, to which architects from Riga had paid a special visit in 1909. The municipality of Riga was ready to provide territory for the museum, yet costs of the project turned out to be too high at that time for public associations to manage, and the museum was not realised.

With regard to the international connections of the GGA, reports by its members on international meetings both within the Russian Empire and abroad clearly describe this branch of the society's activities. For example, in 1905 the lawyer Woldemar Baron von Mengden (1867–1939) represented the GGA at the first International Congress of Archaeology in Athens. Mengden did not deliver a paper; his mission was to gain information on the latest trends in the field of heritage protection and the conservation methodology of ruined historic buildings.⁵⁴ A similar purpose was evident when the GGA sent its representative, the historian Arnold Feuereisen, to the All-Russian Archaeological Congresses (the fourteenth congress at Chernihiv (Chernigov) in 1908, and the fifteenth at Novgorod in 1911).⁵⁵ Neumann participated in several German conferences on monument conservation, e.g. *Tag für Denkmalpflege*, organised by the *Gesamtverein der deutschen Geschichts- und Altertumsvereine*. Neumann's papers dealt with preserving the historical structure and landscape of cities. His later accounts of the meetings held in Trier⁵⁶, Danzig (Gdańsk)⁵⁷, Salzburg⁵⁸ and Dresden⁵⁹ were clearly informative and useful in the development of conceptual and practical issues of architectural heritage protection in the local milieu.

A demand to take more active steps for the protection of Baltic architectural heritage was raised at the turn of the twentieth century, in response to construction activities that endangered the preservation of historic structures. The architect Julius August von Hagen (1829–1909), chairman of the Riga Society of Architects⁶⁰, and the prominent historian Hermann von Bruiningk (1849–1927), leader of the GGA⁶¹, repeatedly warned about these problems. Around 1900 a depository of architectural details preserved from demolished historic buildings in Old Riga was arranged in the building no. 22 Jauniela (Neustrasse; fig. 3, 4 and 5) near the *Dommuseum*.⁶² Unfortunately, there were no instruments available to address the situation of historic buildings in the city and the countryside, except for the good will of builders and landowners. The Commission for Heritage Preservation only planned to start a systematic inventory of architectural monuments in the Old

54 W. von Mengden, Bericht über den Ersten Internationalen Archäologischen Kongress in Athen im April 1905. – Sitzungsberichte der GGA 1905, pp. 101–112.

55 See A. Feuereisen, Bericht über den XIV. Archäologischen Kongress zu Tschernigow. – Sitzungsberichte der GGA 1908, pp. 128–141; A. Feuereisen, Der XV. Archäologische Kongress in Novgorod. – Sitzungsberichte der GGA 1911, pp. 299–323.

56 W. Neumann, Der Tag für Denkmalpflege in Trier am 23. und 24. September 1909. – Sitzungsberichte der GGA 1909, pp. 42–48.

57 W. Neumann, Der XI. Tag für Denkmalpflege in Danzig. – Sitzungsberichte der GGA 1910, pp. 154–160.

58 W. Neumann, Die Erhaltung des Kerns alter Städte. – Sitzungsberichte der GGA 1911, pp. 347–349.

59 W. Neumann, Eine Aufforderung vom Ausschuss der II. gemeinsamen Tagung für Denkmalpflege und Heimatschutz in Dresden am 25.–26. September. – Sitzungsberichte der GGA 1913, pp. 84–85.

60 537. Versammlung am 8. März 1889. – Sitzungsberichte der GGA 1889, p. 28.

61 581. Versammlung am 12. Januar 1894. – Sitzungsberichte der GGA 1894, p. 8.

62 Ю. М. Васильев, Рига. Памятники зодчества. Рига: Лиесма, 1971, p. 170.

Town of Riga in 1911⁶³, while the Riga Society of Architects arranged a special collection of photographs and surveys of historic buildings beginning in 1904, focusing on manors, which were heavily damaged during the uprisings in Estonia and Livonia in 1905 and 1906⁶⁴. By 1911 information on approximately three hundred architectural monuments in Riga had been gathered in this collection.⁶⁵

As in other European countries at that time, architectural conservation activities in the Baltic provinces involved a compromise between firmly declared theoretical principles, and the demands and restrictions of everyday life.⁶⁶ There was an unsteady balance between the traditional approach, which more or less relied on the imitation of specific characteristics of historic architecture, and the approach proposed by disciples of scientific restoration, which supported the principle of 'conservation, not restoration' (*konservieren, nicht restaurieren* – a slogan proposed by Dehio⁶⁷). The results of restoration projects carried out on historic buildings actually depended on the compromise arranged by the architect, who had to reconcile the demand to accommodate the monument to proper use while preserving its authentic historical value. Efforts to increase public awareness of the need for the protection of historic townscape resulted in several books on the urban architecture of Livonia and Estonia,⁶⁸ commissioned by the *Estländische Literarische Gesellschaft* and GGA. These publications were not monument inventories in the proper sense of the word, but descriptions of notable buildings from the perspective of contemporary art historians.

The conservation practice of architectural heritage was affected by two opposite conceptions advanced around 1900, resulting from the famous Heidelberg castle debate.⁶⁹ Discussion between individuals representing these conceptions also had a socio-cultural subtext, reaching beyond merely professional issues of conservation methodology. Briefly, Dehio called for the preservation of a monument solely as the embodiment of national spirit, with an emphasis on its political connotations. In contrast, another notable art historian of the day, Alois Riegl, the founder of a modern heritage protection system in Austria-Hungary at the turn of the century, expressed his rather sophisticated theory of the cultural and historical values inherent in heritage objects.⁷⁰ A gulf was also caused by distinctions characteristic of the situation of the dynamic German Empire, with its aspirations for the status of a world power, and the multi-ethnic Dual Monarchy, with its need to find com-

63 747. (Jahres-)Sitzung am 5. Dezember 1911. – Sitzungsberichte der GGA 1911, pp. 431–432. According to other investigations, the commission decided to create its own archive in 1910 already, see H. Pirang, *Das baltische Herrenhaus*. Vol. 1, *Die älteste Zeit bis um 1750*. Riga: Jonck und Poliewsky, 1926, p. 1.

64 B. von Bock, H. Seuberlich, *Gedenkschrift zum 25-jährigen Jubiläum des Architektenvereins zu Riga, 1889–1914*. Riga: Jonck und Poliewsky, 1914, p. 15.

65 743. Sitzung am 11. Mai 1911. – Sitzungsberichte der GGA 1911, p. 259.

66 A. Hubel, *Denkmalpflege. Geschichte, Themen, Aufgaben*. Eine Einführung. Stuttgart: Reclam, 2006, pp. 58–72.

67 G. Dehio, *Was wird aus dem Heidelberger Schloss werden?* [1901]. – *Denkmalpflege*, pp. 108–115.

68 W. Neumann, *Das mittelalterliche Riga*. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der norddeutschen Baukunst. Berlin: Springer, 1892; K. von Löwis of Menar, *Die städtische Profanarchitektur...*

69 *Denkmalpflege*, pp. 124–149.

70 For a summary of the discussion held between Dehio and Riegl, see *Konservieren oder restaurieren? Zur Diskussion über Aufgaben, Ziele und Probleme der Denkmalpflege um die Jahrhundertwende*. Ed. M. Wohlleben. Zürich: Verlag der Fachvereine, 1989.

promise settlements between different parts of society in order to hold it together.⁷¹ Dehio's conception gained increasing favour in the following years, marking the increasing influence of the ideology of the nation-state.

In this context, it is worth looking at the motivation for the protection of architectural heritage in the Baltic provinces from a political perspective. Competition between the Latvian nationalist movement on the one side, supporting the social and cultural emancipation of Latvians from the 1860s onwards, and the Baltic German elite on the other, who defended the traditional, conservative social structure of estates, led to problems in the local political milieu.⁷² This conservatism among the Baltic German community had a political dimension in that it offered a way to maintain the status quo in the period of growing Russification, which began in 1883. However, it would be a mistake to attribute the heritage protection activities of the GGA and other professional associations solely to political motivations. Heritage protection remained dependent on public support. No actual steps were taken, although the rights provided (at least *pro forma*) by the local autonomy status would have allowed to establish a central institution for heritage protection in the Baltic provinces, e.g. by following the example of the *Landeskonservator* practice accepted in Prussia.

The same feature of particularism is to be seen when comparing the attitudes towards heritage issues in the Latvian community at that time. Both intellectuals and professional architects of Latvian origin remained relatively distant from issues of architectural heritage. Latvian architects were able to express national identity through art nouveau, using some decorative patterns and ethnographic ornaments taken from vernacular architecture and national costumes. These elements were applied as symbols of the national spirit in the contemporary architecture.⁷³ The 'ethnographic' side of these buildings became a subject of academic studies only during World War I, mostly by such architects as Aleksandrs Vanags (1873–1919)⁷⁴ and Pauls Kundziņš (1888–1983)⁷⁵, the latter becoming the chief expert in architecture at the national Heritage Board of Latvia during the inter-war period.

Although the vernacular architecture of Latvia⁷⁶ and Estonia⁷⁷ had already been addressed by several Baltic German scholars, the situation was far from any close cooperation between representatives of the different communities, at least in the

71 M. S. Falser, Zum 100. Todesjahr von Alois Riegl, 2005. – *kunsttexte.de* 2006, no. 1, pp. 1–15, <http://edoc.hu-berlin.de/kunsttexte/download/denk/falser2.pdf> (accessed 1 May 2014).

72 K. Wohlfart, Der Rigaer Letten Verein und die lettische Nationalbewegung von 1868 bis 1905. (Materialien und Studien zur Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung 14.) Marburg: Herder-Institut, 2006.

73 J. Howard, Style and Patronage in Latvian Architecture and Design in the Debut-de-siecle Period. – *Jugendstils. Laiks un telpa. Baltijas jūras valstis 19. un 20. gs. mijā / Art Nouveau: Time and Space: The Baltic Sea Countries at the Turn of the 20th Century*. Ed. S. Grosa. Riga: Jumava, 1999, pp. 25–39.

74 A. Wanag, Das Gehöft und das Wohnhaus des Letten. – *Livland-Estland Ausstellung. Zur Einführung in die Arbeitsgebiete der Ausstellung*. Ed. E. Stieda. Berlin: Hermann, 1918, pp. 55–58. Based on a manuscript Vanags prepared during World War I.

75 P. Kundziņš, Mūsu sirmā lauku būvniecība [Our ancient rural buildings]. – *Jaunā Latvija* 1918, no. 7, pp. 478–491; no. 8, pp. 553–556.

76 A. Bielenstein, Die Holzbauten und Holzgeräte der Letten. Ein Beitrag zur Ethnographie, Culturgeschichte und Archaeologie der Völker Russlands im Westgebiet. 2 vols. Petrograd, 1907, 1918.

77 See H. Werner, Rünos Bauernkunst. – *Jahrbuch für bildende Kunst in den Ostseeprovinzen*. Vol. 3. Riga: Architektenverein zu Riga, 1909, pp. 7–24. Cf. J. Gahlnbäck, Baltische Volkskunst. – *Arbeiten des Zweiten Baltischen...*, pp. 217–224.

case of Latvian and Baltic German relationships. This was the case especially after the riots of 1905, which involved violent ethnic confrontation. This resulted in a kind of split between 'our' (i.e. vernacular or ethnographic) and 'alien' architecture in Latvia, mainly involving Baltic Germans. From the point of view of constructing a Latvian narrative of national history the 'alien' architecture was regarded as a less important part of the cultural heritage. (The experience of the Soviet occupation caused some psychological changes to this approach and made the architectural heritage, country manor centres included, in a way more familiar to Latvian intellectuals and the general public, since these objects were re-discovered as testimonies of the contribution to the European or 'Western' traditions in architecture.)

Conclusion

In the Baltic provinces, the basic principles of the restoration of historic buildings were adopted on a conceptual level as soon as they were designed in Europe, and more quickly and accurately than in the rest of the Russian Empire.⁷⁸ The members of the GGA and Riga Society of Architects engaged in the protection of cultural heritage were well-informed about the latest international developments in the field. In contrast to their counterparts elsewhere in Russia, e.g. the experts from the Moscow Archaeology Society, who had only advisory functions in the restoration and maintenance projects carried out on historical buildings⁷⁹, the GGA had the right to initiate and monitor these activities in practice⁸⁰. Both associations succeeded in making society *au fait* with the ideas and notions of the cultural heritage protection movement at the beginning of the twentieth century, especially in terms of the need to preserve architectural monuments. It should also be noted that this trend did not result simply in a narrow nationalistic interpretation of the regional cultural heritage.

The opportunity for the GGA to meet the urgent demands for the protection of architectural heritage in the Baltic provinces depended on their ability to find the wherewithal for activities, usually performed by governmental institutions elsewhere in Europe. The conservation and restoration of historic buildings entailed considerable expenses reaching far beyond the limits that any association could afford to spend, so organisations had to appeal for support from institutions and private individuals who owned historic buildings. These appeals were frequently rejected, though, as was the case with the failed attempt of the GGA from 1903 to 1914 to solicit funds needed for the planned conservation of one tower of the medieval castle of Cēsis (Wenden; fig. 6 and 7).⁸¹ In terms of public support, according to

78 See the report by Julius von Hagen about the first Congress of Russian Architects in 1892, where he participated as a kind of observer, quoting the responses on the issue shared by his colleagues from St. Petersburg and Moscow: LVVA, coll. 2748, inv. 1, no. 86, p. 28.

79 Памятники архитектуры в дореволюционной России. Очерки истории архитектурной реставрации. Ed. A. С. Щенкова. Moscow: Терра-Книжный клуб, 2002, p. 184.

80 Verhandlungen der Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Altertumskunde, betreffend die Organisation der Denkmalpflege. Riga: Häcker, 1906, pp. 5-7.

81 LVVA, coll. 4038, inv. 1, no. 86, pp. 1-39.

Neumann, 'far too often the public response on heritage protection sees the people engaged in it as merely sharing the public's own distraction and amusement'.⁸²

The Baltic German experts in architectural heritage were quite aware of existing problems, such as the large (and gradually increasing) lack of both human and material resources for long-term activities, as reflected in a critical report on daily issues for the GGA meeting in 1891 submitted by Karl von Löwis of Menar.⁸³ In 1913 there were 456 active members in the GGA⁸⁴ and 56 members in the Riga Society of Architects⁸⁵. Thus, in contrast to the major theoretical and conceptual contribution to the development of restoration activities in the whole Russian Empire, the conservation practice was far more modest. The conservation of historic buildings was substantially limited due to the lack of both a legal framework and the resources necessary for maintenance and restoration projects on historic buildings. In terms of financial resources, the peak was reached around 1914.⁸⁶

Proposals made beginning in 1903 by the members of the GGA and the Riga Society of Architects to introduce legal provisions for the protection of cultural heritage in the Russian Empire were welcomed by their colleagues from the Imperial Archaeological Commission (*Императорская археологическая комиссия*) in St. Petersburg and by the members of the Imperial Moscow Archaeological Society (*Императорское Московское археологическое общество*), yet they were not implemented due to bureaucratic reasons.⁸⁷ The Baltic German heritage activists, mainly historians, architects and technicians, actually became the founders of a modern approach to the protection of architectural heritage in the Russian Empire, but their activities were limited.

The proclamation of the Republic of Latvia (as well as in Estonia⁸⁸) in 1918 provided the opportunity to establish goals within the culture policy of the new-born nation-state, as well as to implement the means to achieve those goals. In the first years following the end of World War I, the opportunity for Baltic German organisations to take action for the protection of cultural heritage in Latvia was limited by several circumstances. Economic constraints and a decrease in the number of Baltic Germans affected their activities considerably compared to the pre-war level. Moreover, there was a certain sense of political resentment present in the Baltic German community after 1919 because of the steps taken by the authorities of the Republic of Latvia to eliminate the position of the Baltic Germans as the *de facto*

82 W. Neumann, Bericht über das Ergebnis der Enquête..., p. 395.

83 LVVA, coll. 4038, inv. 1, no. 87, p. 6.

84 A. Feuereisen, Die Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Altertumskunde zu Riga vor und nach dem Weltkriege. - Kalender und Jahrbuch des deutschen Elternverbandes in Lettland 1924. Riga: Jonck und Poliewsky, 1923, p. 66.

85 B. Bock, H. Seuberlich, Gedenkschrift..., p. 10.

86 W. Neumann, Denkmalschutz und Denkmalpflege in den baltischen Provinzen Liv-, Est- und Kurland. - Baltische Studien zur Archäologie und Geschichte. Berlin: Reimer, 1914, p. 293.

87 H. Pirang, Die gesetzliche Regelung der Denkmalpflege. - Arbeiten des Zweiten Baltischen..., pp. 173-182.

88 See K. Jõekalda, Eesti aja muinsuskaitse rahvuslikkus/rahvalikkus. Muinsuspedagoogika ja 'võõras' arhitektuur aastatel 1918-1940 [Nationalism and populism in the heritage protection of inter-war Republic of Estonia: Heritage pedagogy and 'alien' architecture in the period 1918-1940]. - Mälu. Ed. A. Randla. (Eesti Kunstiakadeemia toimetised 20. Muinsuskaitse ja restaureerimise osakonna väljaanded 5.) Tallinn, 2011, pp. 73-139.

dominant group in the country, and to reduce their status to that of an ordinary ethnic minority.

As a result, political confrontation between the Latvians and the Baltic Germans paved the way for recriminations, frequently expressed among the Latvians by denying the qualities of cultural heritage formerly attributed to the Baltic Germans and their history.⁸⁹ It is a paradox of history that the Latvian organisations engaged in monument protection were successful in adopting ideas borrowed from the movement of local history studies, the same *Heimatkunde* advertised by the Baltic German publicists and historians since the late nineteenth century. This was due to the concept shared by both major communities that the protection of cultural heritage was part of their own national history.

Consequently, the answer to the question posed in the title of this paper is negative: the architectural heritage 'discovered' in the Baltic provinces during the long nineteenth century never really became a public benefit in the way it was intended. Rather, heritage turned into a component of ideological concepts associated with the political agenda of nationalism, mixed with relevant academic achievements in the field of art history and material culture studies related to architecture in the eastern Baltic region.

89 H. Šimkuva, Cultural and Historical Heritage of Baltic Germans in Latvia: Research Results and Prospects. - The Baltic States at Historical Crossroads: Political, Economic and Legal Problems in the Context of the International Co-operation at the Beginning of the 21st Century. Ed. T. Jundzis. Riga: Latvian Academy of Sciences, 2001, p. 407.