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***Kunstschutz* in Estonia: Some Perspectives for Research**

The context in which one can research the history of heritage preservation in the Baltic region during the 1910s is complicated. It is composed of many parallel scenarios and quick changes between different stately formations, each with their own legal regulations: the Russian Empire, its *Ostseeprovinzen*, the unrecognised Commune of the Working People, as well as the unrecognised United Baltic Duchy (*Vereinigtes Baltisches Herzogtum*), Germany in 1917–18, and thereafter the independent nation-states of Estonia and Latvia.

One approach would be to focus on the Russian perspective, through the University of Tartu, where there were attempts to restructure it as both a German and as a Russian university; it has been an Estonian national university since 1919. This is interesting in the context of this project because of the evacuation of the University, along with its art collections, to Voronezh in 1915. The collections were to be returned according to the Tartu Peace Treaty of 1920 (and some of them were between then and 1934), but the majority remains in Voronezh (including hundreds of Egyptian relics, Greek vases, West European paintings etc...).

From the German perspective, a possible focus for my research during this project might be Baron Friedrich Wolff's photo collection of the condition of Baltic manor houses. It was compiled during 1910s–20s, in cooperation with the Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Altertumskunde zu Riga and later by the Chair of Art History at the University of Tartu (collection of ca. 4600 entries today in Herder-Institut, Marburg). It was hoped at the time that a *Baltisches Denkmäler-Archiv* might be established using the collection as a starting point.

I also want to inquire into Georg Dehio's activities in promoting the narratives of Baltic colonialism during WW I, as well as publications such as *Die Deutschen Ostseeprovinzen Russlands geschichtlich, kulturell und wirtschaftlich dargestellt von Kennern der baltischen Provinzen* (Berlin 1915).

From the Estonian perspective, additional archival research about the two 'art protection committees' (*kunstikaitsetoimkond*) that were active during 1919–21 (the Estonian War of Independence immediately following World War I) needs to be carried out, one in Northern

and the other in Southern Estonia. I am especially intrigued by the role of visual artists in them: the committees were coordinated by the artist Kristjan Raud, and participating artists called from the front included Aleksander Krims, Aleksander Mülber, Balder Tomasberg, Roman Nymann, Nikolai Triik, Johannes Einsild, Ado Vabbe, Hanno Kompus, and architect Edgar Johan Kuusik. It is not yet clear how much these built on the German campaigns of inventorisation and *Kunstschutz* activities etc.



German soldier in front of Hellamaa church, Muhu Island, 1917–18. Saaremaa Museum (Wikimedia Commons)

During this project, my most essential task will be to detect the direct points of contact with the German *Kunstschutz* movement and its protagonists. Thus far, I have been able to establish that there was correspondence between Paul Clemen and two Riga-based scholars of the region: art historian Wilhelm Neumann and archivist Arnold Feuereisen. Both were well connected: Neumann is known to have participated in the annual *Tag für Denkmalpflege* in 1909–12, and perhaps later; Feuereisen took part in the archaeology congresses at least until 1914.

However the Estonian archive information system produces no results to search terms such as *Kunstschutz*, *Kriegsdenkmalpflege*, *Kriegstagung*, *Landeskundliche Kommission*, *Zentralstelle für Auslandsdienst*, or for figures such as Clemen or Otto Grautoff. Although preliminary research exists about the topics described above, in-depth archival research (mainly in the Estonian National Archives and Tallinn City Archives) is waiting to be undertaken.