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Balten und ihre Bauten: Local and national in the 19th-century Baltic heritage discourse

My dissertation aims to address Baltic German identity construction via the history of local architecture during the long 19th century from multiple aspects: visual art, art history writing and practical heritage conservation. My working title is *Balten und ihre Bauten: Local and national in the 19th-century Baltic heritage discourse*, referring to the 1903 book *Riga und seine Bauten* (and indirectly also to Hans Belting's *Deutschen und ihre Kunst*, 1992). Most of it concentrates on what is now Estonia, although I constantly bring parallels with southern Livonian cases in today's Latvia and the 'German lands' elsewhere.

I conduct research on my dissertation in the so-called article-style format, i.e. each 'chapter' in the final thesis is in fact a previously published journal article. This far, I have published three, which will constitute the first chapters of the thesis (full texts and publication details available here: <https://artun.academia.edu/KristinaJoekalda>) in the following order:

1. Baltic Heritage and Picturesque Ruins: Visual Art as a Means of 'Inventing' the Local;
2. Art History in Nineteenth-Century Estonia? Scholarly Endeavours in the Context of an Emerging Discipline;
3. Baltic Identity via German Heritage? Seeking Baltic German Art in the Nineteenth Century.

From the visual representation of Baltic architectural heritage ever since Romanticism in the first one, I move on to detecting the earliest deliberate attempts at writing art history in the second article, especially outside the university (learned societies, independent scholars), and analyse these texts from the point of view of identity construction and nationalist endeavours in the third article (which is part of the special issue *Debating German Heritage: Art History and Nationalism during the Long Nineteenth Century* of the journal *Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi / Studies on Art and Architecture*. that I edited with prof. Krista Kodres).

I am currently working on two further articles: the fourth one will be on similar issues with regard to heritage conservation, while the final one will discuss the relationship between Baltic German and early Estonian approaches towards the local architectural heritage. These will be contextualised and woven together in the long introductory chapter.

My focus is on the concept of heritage, including the relationship between the field of heritage studies and art history. In other words, I am interested in how the heritage of architecture has been represented in different media: from visual representation, I move on to narrative representation and its full-size representation in the real world. Or even more briefly: from image to word to practice.

With regard to the theoretical background of my work, I might say that I am researching how memory – but also knowledge and particular approaches – are constructed. I lean on accounts on the construction of heritage, history and nation, such as those by Jan and Aleida Assmann, Stephen Bann, Stefan Berger, Joep Leerssen.

On the local level, several scholars have paved the way for such kind of research, most importantly my two supervisors prof. Krista Kodres on the history of local art historiography and prof. Ulrike Plath on various aspects of Baltic Germandom.

The nature of my topic is historiographical, therefore my sources are mainly art historical texts (early monographs and scholarly articles), supported by visual material in the form of photographs, prints and paintings. Also the history of heritage conservation interests me mostly via the reports written by architects and historians involved that indicate the motivation for such works (I shall not engage in discussion over the technical details or particular decisions in the conservation process). I concentrate on some key figures, such as the archivist and historian Gotthard von Hansen (1821–1900) in Tallinn, or the productive art historian and architect Wilhelm Neumann (1849–1919) in Riga.