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## **COLLECTING PIECES OF HISTORY: THE LATEST DISCOVERIES OF ESTONIAN MANORIAL ARCHITECTURE FROM THE CITY OF MARBURG**

Estonian manorial architecture – and manorial culture in general – is a topic that has captured the hearts of many ever since the inventory of manor ensembles compiled between 1976 and 1980. This undertaking, which was unique in the European context at the time, was brought to life on the initiative of Helmi Üprus (1911–1978), who was one of the most prominent figures in heritage protection and art historical research in Estonia. By documenting manor ensembles nationwide, Üprus's was one of those whose preliminary work laid the foundation for later conclusions, leading to the emergence of multiple topics that, decade by decade, engaged new scholars in exploring the field. Yet as the monographs and research papers published in recent years clearly show, the subject today is far from fully explored. Many aspects, which a decade ago might have seemed answered, have recently been put in a different light, or even rewritten.<sup>1</sup> Some of this is due to new discoveries associated with in-depth research in

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1 For example, professor emeritus Juhan Maiste has proposed a new theory about the general appearance of manor houses during the Swedish time in Estonia. In doing so, he essentially overturns the current understanding of the era. See more in *Eesti mõisad ja lossid. II. Aadlikultuuri seitse aastasada* (Tallinn: Varrak, 2023).

situ, some simply to a previous lack of interest in certain topics, some to changes in methodology and some to a fresh look at the subject.<sup>2</sup>

As interesting as the topic of manors is in all its aspects, the socio-political events of the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have left a lasting mark on the research process itself, which has continued to present certain obstacles to art historians today. Although archives in Estonia are full of handwritten documents, notebooks, printed texts, photographs and architectural drawings, not all the sources that could provide valuable information on the subject have survived. Many noble estates with their libraries, artefacts and document cabinets were burned during the uprising in 1905 or destroyed by the subsequent two world wars. The young Republic of Estonia tried to save as many valuable treasures as possible during the War of Independence (1918–1920), yet intentionally or unintentionally some of the manor houses were damaged by soldiers.<sup>3</sup> These great losses were added to by the *Umsiedlung* (resettlement) in 1939 and in subsequent years, during which many valuables and numerous archive materials were taken when the Baltic-German nobility left the region. A considerable proportion of material assets and documents ended up in Poland in the city of Poznań with the rest moved to various parts of Germany or later distributed and sold to neighbouring countries.

To address research gaps, it is therefore often necessary to look beyond local sources to search for remaining materials that could help answer some questions related to the manorial past. While there are many places in Europe that deserve a visit, one of the most valuable destinations for scholars interested in manorial history is the town of Marburg. This picturesque city is home to the Philipps University (Philipps-Universität Marburg), one of Germany's oldest universities, and its world-renowned photo archive The Foto Marburg Image Archive (Bildarchiv Foto Marburg – Dokumentationszentrum für Kunstgeschichte), which houses over 2.5 million original photographs, among which two large photo collections directly related to the

2 Read more about the current state of research on Baltic manorial culture in the recently published collection of articles *Mõisa fenomen Balti kultuuriloos. Vaatenurki üle uurimisväljade* (Tallinn: TLÜ Kirjastus, 2025), where Kristina Jõekalda and Linda Kaljundi draw conclusions on the topic in the introduction.

3 See more: Mati Raal, *Mõisate kadunud hiilgus. Eestimaa mõisainterjööride lugu* (Tallinn: Eesti raamatutüükikoda, 2016).

Baltics can be found. Equally important in the research of manorial history is the Herder Institute (Herder-Institut für historische Ostmitteleuropaforschung – Institut der Leibniz-Gemeinschaft), which offers annual grants for on-site research to scholars interested in the history of Eastern and East Central Europe.<sup>4</sup>

As a recipient of a research fellowship from the Herder Institute last year, I had the opportunity to explore both the numerous collections of the Institute and the Philipps University's photo archive to collect materials for my doctoral research on Estonian wooden manor houses. In this article, I will primarily focus on presenting my discoveries from these well-known institutions, particularly those relating to the main subject of my dissertation, which has up until recently received relatively little attention in art history writing,<sup>5</sup> while also highlighting other fascinating discoveries on the topic. In doing so, I hope to draw attention to some research questions related to the manorial era that require further exploration, and encourage others who have not yet visited Marburg to do so.

## THE HERDER INSTITUTE

The Herder Institute – now one of the largest research centres in Germany – was founded in 1950 by a group of scholars who sought to continue their research at a time when returning to the former German or German-speaking regions from which they originated, or with which they had academic connections, was after the Second World War no longer possible.<sup>6</sup> Spurred by the horrors and devastation of the War, the newly founded association and the re-established historical commissions sought to preserve historical and cultural memory in order to prevent the recurrence of past atrocities. From the outset, the Institute combined the collecting of research

4 The first short overview of the Herder Institute and its collections can be found from Krista Kodres' article "Herder instituudist Marburgis, eesti kunstiajaloo ja 'Eesti kunsti ajaloost'", *Sirp*, 12/10/2001, 10.

5 Elis Pärn, "Wooden Manor Houses in Estonia 1700–1850: From Archaic Traditions to Modern Ideas", *Baltic Journal of Art History*, 24 (2022), 47–80. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.12697/BJAH.2022.24.02> [accessed 01/08/2025].

6 Among the founding members were also two Baltic-German scholars, Paul Johansen (1901–1965) and Hellmuth Weiss (1900–1992). Weiss became head of the library and later director of the Institute. Thekla Kleindienst, *Die Entwicklung der bundesdeutschen Osteuropaforschung im Spannungsfeld zwischen Wissenschaft und Politik* (Marburg: Verlag Herder-Institut), 2009, 65.

materials with active efforts to promote the significance of its work by establishing links with research centres and universities across Germany, organising public lectures and seminars and publishing a scholarly journal (*Zeitschrift für Ostforschung*, now *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung*) for a wider audience.<sup>7</sup> A decade later, as the political tension slowly began to ease, the opportunity to engage with the regions under study marked the Herder Institute's gradual move away from the ethnocentric historical research on German-speaking lands towards a more nuanced and inclusive analysis of East Europe's diverse past. These developments were, of course, later greatly accelerated by the collapse of the Soviet regime, which also changed the direction of the institution's research activities much more international in their direction. In addition to its original focus on Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Kaliningrad, exploration of the interrelations between neighbouring countries (Austria, Hungary, Belarus and Ukraine) has become equally as important in a comparative pan-European context.<sup>8</sup> This approach has resulted in numerous international projects, conferences, summer schools, seminars, exhibitions and large-scale scholarly works,<sup>9</sup> which in turn has made the Institute a European leader in the study of Eastern Europe.

According to the historian Erich Keyser (1893–1968), one of the founders of the institute, the research centre succeeded in gathering an impressive collection of books, historical maps, newspapers, paintings and drawings within just two years of its establishment.<sup>10</sup> Today, the number of holdings reflects not only the Herder Institute's scholarly activities, but also the complex historical developments of the past seventy-five years, which have turned the institute into

7 Erich Keyser, "Der Johann Gottfried Herder-Forschungsrat und das Johann Gottfried Herder-Institut", *Zeitschrift für Ostforschung*, Nr. 1 (1952), 103–106.

8 Herder Institute, "About us", <https://www.herder-institut.de/en/about-us/> [accessed 01/08/2025].

9 The best known of these are perhaps the volumes published as *Dehio: Handbuch der Kunstdenkmäler in Polen*, which scholars in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have recently sought to parallel; and the Baltic-German Dictionary (*Deutschbaltisches Wörterbuch*), which is a joint project involving the Institute and the Department of German Studies at the University of Tartu.

10 Keyser, "Der Johann Gottfried Herder-Forschungsrat und das Johann Gottfried Herder-Institut", 104. Today the Herder Institute houses nearly 5 million articles, 520,000 bibliographical units, 622,500 photographs, 46,000 maps, 23,000 publications and about 1,100 linear metres of newspapers with over 1,300 meters of archive material. See: Herder Institute, "Central Description of the Collections of the Herder Institute", [https://www.herder-institut.de/en/holdings\\_en/](https://www.herder-institut.de/en/holdings_en/) [accessed 01/08/2025].

a repository for numerous archives and private collections. As much of the material relates to the Baltic countries, the research centre is naturally of particular value to anyone studying Estonian, Latvian or Lithuanian topics. For art history-related projects, there are over 50 collections from all over Eastern Europe, among which thousands of photographs of Baltic towns, manors, villages and other works of art can be found. The collection of Baron Friedrich von Wolff (1883–1943), whose manor photos once formed a large proportion of the Baltic Monuments Archive (Baltisches Denkmäler-Archiv), is well known and widely used among scholars. As interesting are the photographs collected by the Baltic-German antiquarian Harro von Hirschheydt (1925–2017) and architectural historian Paul Campe (1885–1960), although both are only partially digitised and most of what they contain is related to architectural monuments in present-day Latvia. Attention should also be paid to the collection of the architect Erich Böckler (1904–1990), who also managed to preserve many historical graphics, prints and maps of the region.<sup>11</sup> Numerous photographs from the interwar period and the aftermath of the Second World War can be found in the archives of photographer Haro Schumacher (1905–1981) and journalist Karl Hintzer (1895–1967)<sup>12</sup>, which have so far found only moderate use in Estonian history writing. Since Hintzer also photographed the life of exiles, his work could be used for further research on the topic of *Umsiedlung*.<sup>13</sup>

The document collection at the Herder Institute encompasses a similarly broad array of materials organised into categories such as personal and family archives, institutions, societies, and government agencies, yet unlike the photo archive, the focus of the archive documents department is mainly on the Baltics, which makes the Institute the largest archive of regional history outside the countries themselves. Undoubtedly, one of the biggest collections

11 Paul Campe's notes and documents are available at the Document Department at the Herder Institute. Material relating to Erich Böckler Stiftung is equally fascinating.

12 A small part of the collection is housed in the Estonian Film Archive, although Hinzer's photographs can also be found in other Estonian museums. Herder Institute, "Ausgewählte Bestände des Bildarchivs", <https://www.herder-institut.de/bestaende-des-bildarchivs/> [accessed 01/08/2025].

13 Dietmar Popp, "Baltica-Bestände im Bildarchiv", *Entdeckungen. Ein Blog zu Ostmitteleuropa*, <https://www.herder-institut.de/blog/2016/12/07/baltica-bestände-im-bildarchiv/> [accessed 01/08/2025].

at the Institute is from the Association of the Four Baltic Noble Corporations (Verband der Baltischen Ritterschaften e.V.), which has been connected to the research centre since its founding.<sup>14</sup> Much other material on the topic of manors is held in separate family funds, of which the largest archives belong to the descendants of the Blankenhagen, Campenhausen, Engelhardt, Grote, Hoyningen-Huene, Krusenstjern, Liphart, Mellin and Nolcken families, although related documents can also be found elsewhere that are not related to a specific institution or family. The personal archives mainly contain working materials related to Baltic-German scholars<sup>15</sup> and founders of institution, alongside which is a quite vast variety of archive sources from the former Baltic manor estates and their last owners.

More broadly connected to the region are the archival materials of the former merchant guilds in Tartu and Riga, the latter supplemented by microfilm produced by German archival commissions and coordinated by the Publication Office (Publikationsstelle) in Berlin-Dahlem under the supervision of the Reich Ministry of the Interior (Reichsministerium des Innern), with assistance from local German-Baltic historians. These materials, of which around 750,000 of the original 800,000 microfilm images still exist, provide an opportunity to engage with archive sources that have not survived in their original form. In addition to the guilds' archive holdings in Riga, microfilmed copies are also available in various archival repositories in Estonia and Latvia, including the archives of the Baltic Knighthoods, the Swedish and Russian Governors-General, and higher regional courts.<sup>16</sup> Since the project began in Latvia, further material was captured in the Courland Ducal Archive (Kurländisches Herzogliches Archiv), the Courland Provincial Museum (Kurländisches Provinzialmuseum), and the Society for History and Archaeology (Gesellschaft für

14 Due to the lack of space, the fund was held at the Hesse State Archive until 2006. Manfred von Boetticher, "Umzug der Archivalien der Baltischen Ritterschaften ins Herder-Institut in Marburg", *Nachrichtenblatt der Baltischen Ritterschaften*, 48. Jg., H. 2 (2006), 48.

15 Of particular importance from an art historical standpoint is the archive of Paul Campe, whose notes and collected materials, which also include architects and craftspeople in the Baltics, are very impressive. Based on these notes, a lexicon (*Lexikon liv- und kurländischer Baumeister, Bauhandwerker und Baugestalter von 1400–1850*) was published in the 1950s.

16 Best known of these are perhaps the soul revision lists from Livonia and Courland.

Geschichte und Altertumskunde).<sup>17</sup> A little more than a decade ago, the Herder Institute made a large proportion of these copies accessible online in co-operation with the Estonian National Archive and the Latvian National Archive as part of the Hereditas Baltica project, which also includes other Baltic archival holdings and is accessible via the official websites of both archives.<sup>18</sup>

## FINDINGS

When researching manors located in present-day Estonia, the Herder Institute's document collection provides hundreds of valuable sources, many of which have already been published in books and articles. As not all scholars specialising in manorial history have visited Marburg, a considerable amount of material remains to be analysed. Similarly to archives in Tallinn and Tartu, the Institute's holdings range from estate purchases, ownership matters, and financial accounts to documents focusing on families and individuals.

When it comes to manors with wooden main buildings, most of the written sources are concerned with management of the estate (expenses, overviews of the estate's condition, border disputes, lease agreements and inheritance matters) and genealogical material, which means that relatively little can be found on the topic of construction. However, this is something that has been repeatedly pointed out by Estonian architectural historians<sup>19</sup>, making us once again think about how and under what circumstances Baltic – especially wooden – manor houses were built. After all, the building of noble residences was a private matter, and the process was not always well documented.

17 According to Wilhelm Lenz, the microfilms were first held in Berlin and then transferred to Poznań. Towards the end of the Second World War, they were taken to the Grasleben potash mine for safekeeping, from where they were transferred via Göttingen to Marburg. Wilhelm Lenz, "Die Baltischen Archivfilme im Herder-Institut in Marburg", *Journal of Baltic Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (1990), 312.

18 As of summer 2025, the list of holdings from the Carl Schirren Society (Carl Schirren Gesellschaft) can also be found in the Herder Institute's archive portal. The Society, which is situated in Lüneburg, is home to archive materials relating to the Baltic-Germans, with a focus on individuals, certain families and the Baltic German student corporations.

19 For example, Juhan Maiste, *Eesti mõisad ja lossid. I. Aadlikultuuri seitse aastasada* (Tallinn: Varrak, 2022), 84; Ants Hein, *Eesti mõisaarhitektuur historitsismist juugendini* (Tallinn: Hattorpe, 2003), 12.

There are some archive materials that allow us to make conclusions on the further development of some wooden residences. The first example that deserves to be mentioned is the manor in Äntu (Ger. Engdes), of which a document with construction dates of several outbuildings and the last renovation phase of the main building can be found.<sup>20</sup> Other manors on which there is information are mainly documented by visual sources such as photographs, maps (Leedi Ger. Ledis) and plans of manorial ensembles (for example Puka Ger. Pucka, Körgepalu Ger. Hohenheide, Kassinurme Ger. Kassinorm, Päinurme Ger. Assik), all of which were later reconstructed by family descendants.<sup>21</sup> Information on these estates is particularly valuable, since there is not always much material available in Estonian archives about smaller manors, especially if not much remains of the manorial ensemble in the landscape today. Although some previously unseen photographs of several estates (for example Kareda Ger. Karridahl or Kangruselja Ger. Kangern) can be found, the most eye-catching visual without a doubt is the watercolour of Navesti (Ger. Nawwast), painted by Hermann Theodor von Hoyningen-Huene (1813–1880) in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The history of the building has been to some extent dealt with,<sup>22</sup> yet von Hoyningen-Huene's painting allows new conclusions to be drawn before renovation to the building, which was carried out in the spirit of historicism.<sup>23</sup>

Much more fascinating material, from which almost the full story of Vaeküla (Ger. Wayküll) manor can be reconstructed, is held by the descendants of the Schubert family. The family history, written by Friedrich Karl Iwan von Schubert (1883–1979), the last owner of the estate, is, in this regard, of great help because he not only analyses the family's genealogy and the formation of the fideicommissum, but also highlights the family members' interest in agricultural,

20 Herder Institute, Marburg, Document Collection [Dokumentesammlung des Herder-Instituts], DSHI 100 Harpe 026. Brieflade von Engdes im Lederumschlag. Besitztitel 1687–1939, "Walter Harpe'se kuuluva, Viru maal, Vao vallas end. Äntu mõisas asuva kinnis- ja vallasvara nimikiri. Koostatud 25. oktoobril 1939", 83–93.

21 The garden was redesigned around the year 1900 using a plan made by Walter von Engelhardt. DSHI 190 Livland 085, 3. Fotos von Rekonstruktionen der Anlagen der Güter der Familie v. Samson-Himmelstjerna Kassinorm, Hohenheide und Bockenhof.

22 Ants Hein has written a short overview of the manor's history in his book *Viljandimaa mõisad* (Viljandi: Hattorpe 1999).

23 DSHI 110 Hoyningen-Huene 363, 1. Farbige Ansicht des Gutes Nawwast, Foto (Original zur Zeit bei Frank [Alt-Ottenhof]).



FIG. 1. WATERCOLOUR OF NAVESTI MANOR, PAINTED BY THEODOR VON HOYNINGEN-HUENE. HERDER INSTITUTE, MARBURG, DOCUMENT COLLECTION, DSHI 110 HOYNINGEN-HUENE 363/1.

horticultural and architectural practices. In addition to the sketches in notebooks documenting the construction of ancillary buildings, the reconstruction plans by Friedrich Ferdinand Modi (1839–1901) are also worth noting, as they allow conclusions to be drawn on the appearance of the main building's façade immediately prior to the rebuilding carried out in the 1880s.<sup>24</sup> In connection with the renovation, Friedrich von Schubert's writing offers a commentary, which not only provides an overview of future plans, but also showcases the family's affection for their estate:

*The act of extending the house was not very successful. My father [Nikolai Reinhold von Schubert] was a very practical builder, but unfortunately, he had no sense of style and neither did his master builder, Modi. So, they built a single stone box with just a single tin roof and a large glass porch.... I didn't change much when I took over the place. But in the beginning, it was my heart's desire to redesign the building using a style that would restore the old style of the building. Unfortunately, later political developments*

24 DSHI 190 Estland 76, 42–43. Material betr. Nobilitierung der Familie v. Schubert.

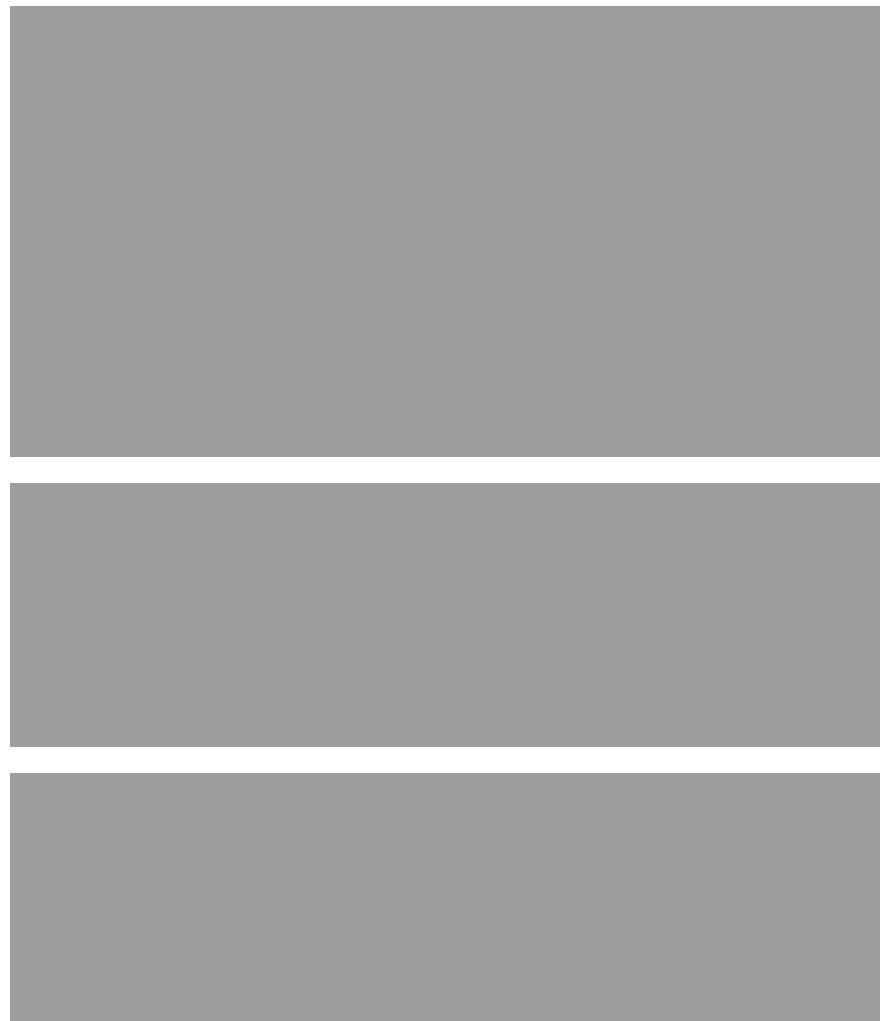


FIG. 2A–C. RECONSTRUCTION PLANS FOR THE VAEKÜLA MANOR HOUSE BY FRIEDRICH MODI. DSHI 190 ESTLAND 76/42–43.

prevented me from doing that. But I must add one thing – the building's disharmonious appearance did not affect the harmony between the people living there. I don't know of any family where life was as harmonious as it was in my parents' house.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> DSHI 190 Estland 081-01. Friedrich von Schubert, *Beitrag zur Geschichte der Familie von Schubert ihrer Herkunft, ihrer Güter und ihres Wirkens in Deutschland, Estland und Russland nach Deutschen, estländischen und russischen amtlichen und privaten Quellen* (Talheim, Kreis Heilbronn, 1967), 75.

Overall, the Herder Institute holds more extensive material on larger estates, covering a broader range of culturally and historically significant topics. From an architectural historical perspective, the most significant finds are first and foremost inventories, of which there are several examples. While the extensive overview compiled about Palmse (Ger. Palms) in the 1720s has already appeared in research,<sup>26</sup> two others, such as the documents on Luua (Ger. Ludenhof) and Kuremaa (Ger. Jensel) from the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, open new ways for further research.<sup>27</sup> Particularly detailed is the inventory of Lustivere (Ger. Lustifer) from 1866–1870, which lists all the works undertaken in agriculture, horticulture and construction by the landlord Carl Georg von Wahl (1805–1876) for the improvement of the estate.<sup>28</sup> Because the construction of a new historicist building began in the early 1870s, it can provide more clarity on questions related to the construction and furnishing of the new building. References to the production of bricks and roof tiles can be found in the accounts of smaller households belonging to Raadi (Ger. Ratshof) manor, which are probably related to the construction of the new main building in the 1840s.<sup>29</sup> Among the extensive material on Tuhala (Ger. Toal) there is a document referring to the construction of a new farm building in 1794, which likewise deserves closer attention.

Overviews of art collections, such as a list of copperplate engravings or paintings, are primarily found among archive material linked to the art enthusiast Liphart family, yet this is something that has already been thoroughly dealt with in Estonian art history writing. More noteworthy is to note that the Herder Institute holds a copy of the catalogue for Carl Georg von Wahl's library, with the original preserved in the Estonian National Archive. Although the book

<sup>26</sup> Ants Hein included information from the inventory in his book about Palmse, *Palmse: ein Herrenhof in Estland* (Tallinn: Hattorp, 1996). The Palmse materials also include an undated inventory from Arbavere (*Arbafer*) and other economic accounts related to the manor. See: DSHI 190 Estland 257. *Vermögensangelegenheiten des Gutes Arbafer. (Brieflade Palms). Verpfändungen, Erbfall, Verkaufsurkunde, Rechtstreit um Holzgerechtsame in Palms, Festlegung der Grenze zu Fonal. Inventare* (19. Jh., 1846).

<sup>27</sup> One of the most interesting finds for researchers studying the social aspects of manor life is the handwritten cookbook of Luua and Kuremaa, which contains many recipes from the Oettingen households. Similarly, the reconstruction of the grave plans in the family burial place in Kuramaa can be found. DSHI 190 Livland 33, 4. *Güter und Familienfriedhöfe. Enthält: Alte Dokumente betr.: Wissust, Ludenhof, Kersel, Jensel, Dorpat, Hallist [...].*

<sup>28</sup> DSHI 190 Livland FA Wahl 246, Urkunden (z.T mit Siegeln). Darin: Kauf-, Beleih- und Erbakte Lustifer betreffend (ab 1730), 142–144.

<sup>29</sup> DSHI 110 Liphart I 13. Gut Rathshoff 1832–94.

collection used to consist only of political works, it is rare in the Baltic context and deserves to be analysed more thoroughly in the future.<sup>30</sup>

In terms of visual material, there are two voluminous photo albums, the first of which belongs to the descendants of the Oettingen family from Luua and the second to the Wahl family from Lustivere. Both albums contain numerous unseen views of the main building, as well as the park, economic buildings and the broader landscape around the estate. Among the Liphart family material one can find a hand-drawn plan for the construction of a Neo-Gothic ice cellar, which belongs to the oeuvre of Carl von Liphart (1808–1891).<sup>31</sup> His materials also include a calendar and a diary, both of which contain salutations, drawings and poems from friends and family members. Similar memorabilia exists among the Wahl material, where Eduard Leo von Wahl (1883–1965) states how during the turbulent times of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the diary he received from his great aunt reminded him of the peaceful times of the past.<sup>32</sup> These artefacts are therefore not only interesting from an art historical perspective, but also for their symbolic value.

Naturally, a fair number of biographies and memories can also be spotted among the materials of bigger estates. To name a few, Heinrich von Grote (1872–1946) writes about his time in Kaagjärve (Ger. Kawershof), painting a very vivid picture of his surroundings during his childhood.<sup>33</sup> Memories of the Nasackin family from Valkla (Ger. Wayküll) add to this, but in addition to life in the Baltics there are long descriptions of life in Wachau castle near Dresden, where the family moved after the 1870s. Interwoven with these are references to Gustav Georg von Nasackin's (1803–1876) daughter Anna and activities in Piibe (Ger. Piep) manor.<sup>34</sup>

30 DSHI 190 Livland FA Wahl 275. Kopien: Bücherkatalog der Bibliothek des Herren Carl Georg von Wahl zu Lustifer. Anno 1828.

31 DSHI 110 Liphart II 3–4. Zeichnung (Grundriss & Aufriss) des Gartenhauses von C. von Liphart in Dorpat (Grundriss des Eiskellers, Grundriss des ersten Stocks, Grundriss des oberen Stocks).

32 DSHI 190 Livland FA Wahl 138. Kleines Büchlein "Anno 1816 – Ol. v. Wahl" mit verschiedenen Materialien (Zeichnungen, Aquarelle, kurze Texte, gepresste Pflanzen). Handschriftl. Vermerkungen.

33 DSHI 110 Grote 0663. Heinrich von Grote, "Meine Lebenschronik. Original und maschinenschriftliche Abschrift" (Köln, 1964).

34 DSHI 110 Krusenstjern 544. Ines v. Baer: Erinnerungen an die Familie von Nasacken.

## THE FOTO MARBURG IMAGE ARCHIVE AND GEORG VON KRUSENSTJERN'S PHOTO COLLECTIONS

Compared to the Herder Institute, the history of the Foto Marburg Image Archive can be traced back to the year 1913, when art historian Richard Hamann (1879–1961) began his professorship at Philipps University. As was the case in many other European universities at the time, the art history seminar, which was still in the process of developing into a fully independent academic department, had challenges with its apparatus. Hamann, who had completed his habilitation under the famous Swiss art historian Heinrich Wölfflin (1864–1945), set out to remedy the issue by collecting photographs for education and research purposes. His ambitions, however, went beyond a simple educational collection: he envisioned a proper photographic archive that would serve not only his colleagues and students, but also the broader scholarly community.<sup>35</sup>

To implement his idea, Hamann quickly started organising expeditions abroad systematically to photograph architectural monuments<sup>36</sup> and acquire images from other well-known establishments. A precise annotation system and dating of the photos was particularly important to him, as this was not always followed in other art history departments at the time. Although the seminar's photographic archive soon became known as Foto Marburg, an important milestone in the reinforcement of its institutional independence came in 1927, when the art history department moved to the so-called jubilee building (*Jubiläumsbau*), which allowed everything needed for art historical research – museum, photo lab, archive, library – to be combined under one roof. This laid the groundwork for a separate research institute, which was officially recognized by the Prussian state a few years later as the central documentation center (*Preußisches Forschungsinstitut für Kunstgeschichte*).<sup>37</sup>

35 A complete overview of Hamann's activities can be found in Angela Matyssek's book *Kunstgeschichte als fotografische Praxis. Richard Hamann und Foto Marburg* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, Verlag 2009).

36 For example, Hamann and his students made expeditions to Greece with the university's archaeology professor Paul Jacobsthal (1880–1957) to capture systematically the archaeological sites of Athens, Delphi and Olympia. Similarly, they photographed monuments in southern France in the 1920s. Deutsches Dokumentationszentrum für Kunstgeschichte – Bildarchiv Foto Marburg, "Fotokampagnen Griechenland – Richard Hamann", <https://www.uni-marburg.de/de/fotomarburg/bestaende/uebernahmen/fotokampagnen-griechenland-richard-hamann> [accessed 01/08/2025].

37 In 1922, Hamann had also founded a publishing house (Deutscher Kunstverlag) to showcase the research activities of scholars at the department. Most of the publications were based on the department's photographic collection and aimed at a wider audience. Kunstgeschichtliches Institut, "Geschichte des Kunsts geschichtlichen Instituts der Philipps-Universität Marburg", <https://www.uni-marburg.de/de/fb09/khi/institutsgeschichte> [accessed 01/08/2025].

By the 1930s, the Foto Marburg Archive was well-known in Europe. According to art historian Eero Kangor, who has written numerous articles about the photographic collections of the Cabinet of Art History at the University of Tartu, photographs were ordered from Foto Marburg on more than two occasions.<sup>38</sup> Under the changed political regime, not much changed in Foto Marburg's activities, although it was tasked with capturing the occupied territories during World War II, which massively increased its archive.<sup>39</sup> After the war, it kept on functioning as an independent facility, until about a decade later when it was officially integrated to the university. Despite formal incorporation, its identity as a leading archival research centre did not change and over the past 60 years the Foto Marburg Image Archive has shown great innovation in database development and digitisation, having collaborated with many large libraries and universities.<sup>40</sup>

As already mentioned, two collections at the Foto Marburg Image Archive relate to architectural monuments in the Baltics. The first of these is linked to the photo campaign of 1940, when almost 7,000 photographs of architectural monuments of German origin were taken by Hamann's son Richard Hamann-MacLean (1908–2000) and his supervisee and colleague Otto Kletzl (1897–1945).<sup>41</sup> As well as major cities, they managed to photograph many manor houses, giving valuable views of manorial ensembles just as they appeared in the

38 Photographs from Foto Marburg were also ordered by Professor Armin Tuulse in the 1940s. Eero Kangor, *Fotode dateerimise ja atribueerimise probleeme Tartu Ülikooli kunstiajaloolises fotokogus* (Tartu: Tartu Ülikool, 2009), 68.

39 By 1949, the photographic department owned around 250,000 photos. Deutsches Dokumentationszentrum für Kunstgeschichte – Bildarchiv Foto Marburg, "Wege zur Moderne – Richard Hamann als Sammler", <https://www.uni-marburg.de/de/fotomarburg/forschung/ausstellungen/richard-hamann-als-sammler> [accessed 01/08/2025].

40 For example, Foto Marburg is also home to photographs related to the DEHIO Handbook web portal. See more at: "Fotodokumentation der bedeutenden Kunstdenkmäler in Thüringen, Westfalen und Brandenburg auf Grundlage des von Georg Dehio begründeten 'Handbuch der deutschen Kunstdenkmäler'", <https://www.uni-marburg.de/de/fotomarburg/bestaende/fotokampagnen/dehio-nrw-und-brandenburg> [accessed 01/08/2025].

41 Richard Hamann-MacLean took part in the seminar's expeditions as a young student. He later became the seminar's professor, taking up the position from his father. In 1967, he started his professorship at Mainz University. "Richard Hamann-Mac Lean Nachlass", <https://www.uni-marburg.de/de/fotomarburg/bestaende/uebernahmen/hamann-mac-lean> [accessed 01/08/2025]. Otto Kletzl received a position in Poznan in 1940, but unfortunately died there as a prisoner of war in 1945. Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon, "Kletzl, Otto (1897–1945), Kunsthistoriker", [https://www.biographien.ac.at/oebl/oebl\\_K/Kletzl\\_Otto\\_1897\\_1945.xml](https://www.biographien.ac.at/oebl/oebl_K/Kletzl_Otto_1897_1945.xml) [accessed 01/08/2025].

early years of World War II.<sup>42</sup> A collection with an even stronger and more direct connection to the Baltics is Georg Friedrich Benedikt von Krusenstjern's (1899–1989) *Baltisches Heimatbildarchiv*, with over 15,000 photographs of historical views of Baltic manorial ensembles and cities. Although originally part of the same archival corpus, an almost equally extensive collection of portraits of the Baltic-German nobility complements the homeland photos.<sup>43</sup>

Among researchers interested in art historical topics, the story of Georg von Krusenstjern's collections is quite well known,<sup>44</sup> nevertheless, the details once again make it important to draw attention to the formation of these holdings. According to an article written by the author himself, his interest in capturing and preserving his homeland's history was directly linked to the turbulent times at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when he found two large portfolios, one with 100 watercolour portraits and the other with 100 drawings of manor houses, in an antiquarian bookshop in Tartu. As he received no institutional support to purchase the artefacts, he had them photographed. A decade later he was asked by Moritz Alexander Georg von Maydell (1869–1945) to work as a genealogist for the matriculation committee of the Estonian non-profit association the *Estländischer Gemeinnütziger Verband*, the successor organisation to the Estonian Knighthood. During this period he started collecting books, archive documents and photographs of Baltic-Germans for the genealogical handbook of the nobility. As he considered it essential to establish a proper genealogical archive, he began to pay closer attention to the photographs, recording not only their existence but also describing their colours and the individuals depicted. In

42 Photographs from local photographers were also purchased. Deutsches Dokumentationszentrum für Kunstgeschichte – Bildarchiv Foto Marburg, "Fotokampagne Baltikum 1940", <https://www.uni-marburg.de/de/fotomarburg/bestaende/uebernahmen/fotokampagne-baltikum-1940> [accessed 12/04/2025].

43 The material, which had long been deposited in the State Archive of Hesse, was transferred to the Bildarchiv Foto Marburg in 1981 by the Association of the Four Baltic Noble Corporations and can now only be consulted in the institution's reading room. Most of the *Baltikum Index* image documentation project's collections were transferred to microfiche in 2006, which can also be viewed at the Herder Institute. Heiner Baron von Hoyningen-Huene, "Die Archiv- und Bibliotheksbestände der Baltischen Ritterschaften und des Verbandes", *Verband der Baltischen Ritterschaften 1949–1999* (Limburg: C. A. Starke Verlag, 1999), 438.

44 For example, Mati Raal devotes several pages to introducing the Krusenstjern collection in his book on manor interiors. The book also contains over 100 photographs from Krusenstjern's original collection in Marburg. See more: Raal, *Mõisate kadunud hiilgus. Eestimaa mõisainterjööride lugu*, 15–17.

addition, he had some portraits in noblemen's homes photographed, while other photographs were obtained from old albums.<sup>45</sup>

Around the same time that Georg von Krusenstjern took up his post, he managed to visit his relatives in Sweden, where he saw "a new monograph on the topic". Since there were no works published at that time about Swedish manors, the book he was referring to was probably *Herrgårdar i Finland* (1928–1930), written by Professor Gabriel Nikander. Compared to *Das baltische Herrenhaus*, which appeared essentially at the same time, this publication drew attention to all the Finnish manor houses, which gave Georg von Krusenstjern an idea to start doing preparatory work for a similar new book, "in which all the estates of Livonia, Estonia and Courland should be considered, regardless of whether they had an architecturally stylish old manor house, a modern eyesore (*Shauergebilde*), or a simple, cosy old wooden house".<sup>46</sup> In order to realise this idea, he began collecting photographs of each Baltic manorial ensemble, ensuring that the documentation ranged from the *cour d'honneur* to images of family graves. Additionally, he paid attention to acquiring floor plans and maps and started collecting verbal information related to the history of each place. Alongside his own efforts, more thorough historical research was carried out by his colleague Ernst von Maydell (1888–1960).<sup>47</sup> Although Georg von Krusenstjern started photographing manors himself, he had a good relationship with Friedrich von Wolff, from whom he acquired many of his duplicates. Assistance also came from Estonian manor owner Jakob Kurberg's grandson Erik Thomson (1915–1990), who was the owner of Einmanni (Ger. Korps) manor at the time, and colleagues in Tartu, among whom he mentions the historian Helmuth Speer (1906–1996) by name. Photos of Courland were received from Friedrich Theodor Paul von der Osten-Sacken (1880–1934), who had previously been the Estonian Knighthood's archivist.

45 The largest collections were from Pahlen family in Palmse (Ger. Palms) and the Derfelden family from Kloodi (Ger. Peuth) manor.

46 Georg von Krusenstjern, "Die Odyssee meiner Bildersammlung", *Nachrichtenblatt der baltischen Ritterschaften*, Heft 2-10. Jahrgang (2) (1968), 5–8.

47 Equally noteworthy from this period are the handwritten summaries of the Baltic-German genealogist Alfred von Hansen (1900–1983), who was primarily interested in the manor as a cultural and historical phenomenon. Dorothee M. Goeze, Peter Wörster, "Von Gütern, Gutsherren und Bauern – Ein Beitrag zur Gütergeschichte Estlands", *Entdeckungen. Ein Blog zu Ostmitteleuropa*, <https://www.herder-institut.de/blog/2009/05/30/von-guetern-gutsherren-und-bauern/> [accessed 15/06/2025].

The matriculation committee's collections, which expanded steadily over time, were frequently studied by scholars, including Estonian historians engaged in the preparation of a comprehensive history of Estonia during the 1930s.<sup>48</sup> Georg von Krusenstjern himself considered the need for illustrative material to be the primary reason why the collections were not permitted to leave the country in 1939.<sup>49</sup> However, the actual confiscation of the assets was linked to a decision by the Ministry of Education, who found it necessary to make copies of materials relevant to the preservation of Estonian history for future generations. To this end, the local photographer Eduard Selleke (1885–1976) was commissioned in 1940 to photograph both portrait and manor images.<sup>50</sup> These photographs were subsequently deposited at the Estonian National Museum (ERM) and the Institute of Art History at the University of Tartu.<sup>51</sup> Today, some of the copies are preserved in the Krusenstjern family archive at the Estonian National Archives, while approximately 2,000 original portrait photographs are held in the matriculation committee's archival funds.

After the confiscation of his assets, Georg von Krusenstjern was left with a portion of the genealogical material, which he was allowed to take to Berlin.<sup>52</sup> Students at the cathedral school (Ger. Domschule zu Reval) managed to steal some of the photos and send them to Poznań, although they disappeared later in circumstances that are unclear.<sup>53</sup> In 1941 Krusenstjern became affiliated with the Reichsleiter Rosenberg Taskforce (Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg), which allowed him to travel back to the

48 This was the all-encompassing series titled *Eesti ajalugu I–III*, ed. by Hans Kruus (Tartu: Eesti Kirjanduse Selts, 1935–1940).

49 Krusenstjern, "Die Odyssee meiner Bildersammlung", 6.

50 Information received from Riina Reinvelt via email.

51 National Archives of Estonia [Rahvusarhiiv, RA], EAA.1414.2.54, G. von Krusenstjerni portreede kogu, matriklikomisjoni originaalportree- ja mõisafotode kogu nimistu. 1938 (?). I would like to thank Sven Lepa at the Estonian National Archive for this reference. However, today, there do not appear to be any negatives from that period in the Department of Art History.

52 These materials were stored in Berlin, in the Baltic Family archives, which was a branch of the German Foreign Institute in Stuttgart. Krusenstjern states in his article, that he was deputy director at that time. Krusenstjern, "Die Odyssee meiner Bildersammlung", 6–7.

53 Ibid.

Baltics and resume his earlier genealogical work.<sup>54</sup> During this period, he not only managed to get his collection back, but also acquired more photographs.<sup>55</sup> Thanks to his acquaintance Erich Keyser, Krusenstjern's assets were then placed in bomb-proof storage at the Central Archives of the Jewish Communities in Berlin, although after bombing on February 5<sup>th</sup> 1945, half of the collection was evacuated to a potash mine in Staßfurt. After the war ended, the possibility of receiving his photographs seemed impossible, until he discovered from a newspaper advert that some cultural treasures from abandoned places had been carried to the vacant rooms in the East Berlin Ethnological Museum. One of Krusenstjern's friends, whom he does not name, managed to make a deal with Paul Langheinrich (1895–1979), who was the operating force behind rescuing the assets. One by one, he arranged for small packages filled with photographs to be taken from East to West Berlin. Sometime later an acquaintance helped Krusenstjern retrieve the rest of the collection, which had been transferred to the East Berlin State Library. These too were sent in packages to him in Munich, where he continued to collect photographs, obtaining many of his pictures through donations and bequests.

In Munich, where he lived for the rest of his life, Georg von Krusenstjern continued to work on genealogy, sending photocopies to publications on the topic<sup>56</sup> and starting to compile the Krusenstjern family archive, which can today be seen at the Herder Institute alongside the books he acquired from the Estonian Knighthood.<sup>57</sup> In addition to hundreds of archive documents, there

<sup>54</sup> During this time, he worked closely with his colleague Helmuth Speer. Together they collected information on cultural treasures and cultural property in the region. Lengthy paragraphs can also be found on damage caused during wartime. See more, Malle Salupere, "Georg von Krusenstjern ja tema tegevus Alfred Rosenbergi Einsatzstab'i (1941–1942)", *Kultuuriloolisi vaatlusi Tartu teljel* (Tartu: Ilmamaa, 2012), 179–209.

<sup>55</sup> According to Krusenstjern, he was helped by Hellmuth Weiss. Krusenstjern, "Die Odyssee meiner Bildersammlung", 7. It seems that at that time he also received some of the copies made by Eduard Selleke. RA, EAA.1414.2.54, 78.

<sup>56</sup> For example, he was involved with the biographical lexicon of the Baltic-Germans, the "Deutschbaltisches Biographisches Lexicon 1710–1960" (Köln; Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1970). Henning von Wistinghausen, *Revali ja Peterburi vahel. Eestimaalaste mälestusi kahest sajandist* (Tallinn: Argo, 2016, 2022), 116.

<sup>57</sup> In 1968, Krusenstjern put the library up for sale and the Association of the Four Baltic Noble Corporations bought it with the support of private buyers. In 1989, the library found its place in the German Noble Archive in Marburg. The part that stayed in Darmstadt arrived in the city in 1991. Additionally, the Herder Institute houses materials of the Baltic Landeswehr collected by Maydell and Krusenstjern.

are glass negatives and photos and photo albums, from which additions to the image collection at the Foto Marburg Photo Archive can be found. Particularly interesting is the photo album of Järlepa (*Jerlep*), where there are many previously unseen photographs of the estate.<sup>58</sup>

### "HEIMATBILDER"

Since Krusenstjern's homeland photos were only partly copied, the original collection at the Foto Marburg Image Archive offers many surprises that are particularly important for researching wooden manor houses. Firstly, it is worth mentioning that there are photographs of several archaic looking manor houses that no longer exist. The oldest looking of them is a wide log house with a flat roof on a low foundation in Kurna (Ger. Cournal), which the author said belonged to the then-owner Estonian District Administrator and Swedish Field Marshal Otto Wilhelm von Fersen (1623–1703). Although the claim should be controlled through archival research, Krusenstjern himself did not rule out the possibility of it being one of the few buildings that survived the Northern War.<sup>59</sup> With less massive dimensions are the manor houses of Tori (Ger. Torri, Kirchspiel Turgel) and Vatku (Ger. Wattküll), which probably date to a slightly later period. The photo of the former manor house in Alatskivi (Ger. Alatskiwwi) is also noteworthy as it was a wooden building with partially half-timbered side walls. Additionally, the photo album from Järlepa manor held at the Herder Institute includes a photograph of an old building that might have been an earlier noble estate building.<sup>60</sup>

Among the collection are some photos of wooden residences that were burned down in 1905. Although the appearance of the previous main building in Luiste (Ger. Luiste) has already been described by several authors, there are photographs in Krusenstjern's collection that offer a better overview of its appearance and dimensions. More eye-catching are the photos of Halinga (Ger. Hallick) manor house, which showcase a well-proportioned residential building from the

<sup>58</sup> DSHI 110 Krusenstjern 576. Photo album: Jerlepalbum.

<sup>59</sup> Image Archive Foto Marburg [Bildarchiv Foto Marburg], Fmd1281122.

<sup>60</sup> DSHI 110 Krusenstjern 576, Photo album: Jerlepalbum, 15.



FIG. 3. OLD WOODEN RESIDENCE IN KURNA. IMAGE ARCHIVE FOTO MARBURG, FMD128118.



FIG. 4. HALF-TIMBERED MANOR HOUSE IN ALATSKIVI, DEMOLISHED IN 1870 TO MAKE WAY FOR A NEW BUILDING. IMAGE ARCHIVE FOTO MARBURG, FMI278061.



FIG. 5. WOODEN RESIDENCE AT HALINGA MANOR. IMAGE ARCHIVE FOTO MARBURG, FMI278270.

first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>61</sup> Differences in architectural detail between the two floors indicate a later reconstruction, during which the main building was modernised with neoclassical elements. This find not only diversifies the current knowledge of wooden manor houses but also adds another interesting example to the list of buildings that could be seen in Estonia in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The manor house in Paeküla (Ger. Paenküll) is also worth mentioning as it burned down in 1900, yet sadly the new limestone building erected in its place did not stay in place very long either as it was set on fire only five years later by revolutionaries.<sup>62</sup>

Naturally, Krusenstjern's collecting principles allow conclusions to be drawn on the former glory of many buildings that are today ruins, have been rebuilt or have fallen into decay. Numerous photographs of manor houses allow for the examination of former balconies

61 There was also a photograph of an oil painting depicting the old wooden residence in Krusenstjern's collection. Fmd1278268.

62 Fmd1278059.

and verandas,<sup>63</sup> as well as detailed wood carvings<sup>64</sup> and window cornices<sup>65</sup>. Together, these elements testify to the craftsmanship of the builders involved in the construction of wooden manor houses. Photographs of Räägu (Ger. Hohenheim) and Koila (Ger. Koil) are particularly noteworthy, as the latter depicts a building that differs from the photocopy preserved at the Estonian National Museum.<sup>66</sup> In Krusenstjern's original collection there is a photograph from 1900 in which the rear façade of Koila manor house is decorated with half-columns, of which the two in the middle support a balcony. The balcony door is a neogothic window, which in the copy found in Estonia from 1938 bears a historicist decoration. Similarly, columns also supported a balcony on the rear façade in Räägu, which was in later decades turned into a closed veranda. Originally, the former main house in Kõrgepalu (Ger. Hohenheide) was a simple building in old Baltic forms, yet the photograph in Krusenstjern's collection shows that there was also a portico on the building's garden façade. New photos documenting the demolition of the Palupera (Ger. Palloper) Neogothic tower and the slow disintegration of Rohu (Ger. Rocht) main building can also be found.<sup>67</sup>

Among the photographs taken of old paintings and drawings there are quite many depictions of the wooden manor houses that preceded stone buildings, although many of these (for example Vanamõisa Ger. Altenhof in Kirchspiel Haljala, Puumetsa Ger. Piometz) exist as copies at the Estonian National Archive and the Estonian National Museum. One photo not previously known is of a drawing of Vana-Keskküla (Ger. Gross-Keskküll in Kirchspiel Leal), which draws the viewer's attention to a medium-sized residence with pilasters and triangular gables on each window. Unseen, too, is the old drawing of Paasiku (Ger. Pasik) manor house, which was a simple wooden building with a high half-hipped roof. Krusenstjern

63 For example, at Leebiku (Ger. Abenkat), Erra (Ger. Erras), Sõmeru (Ger. Neu-Sommerhusen), Kõnnu (Ger. Könnu), Kurtna (Ger. Kurtna), Kivijärve (Ger. Kibbigerw), Saduküla (Ger. Saddoküll), Eidapere (Ger. Eidaperre), and Kiideva (Ger. Kiwidepäh).

64 The manor house in Rõuge (Ger. Rauge) comes to mind here.

65 Manor houses in Tõdva-Kõnnu (Ger. Kündes) and Pärnamaa (Ger. Pernama) deserve to be highlighted.

66 National Museum of Estonia [Eesti Rahva Muuseum, ERM] Fk 887:581, "Koila mõis (Koil), härrastemaja 1938. Simuna khk".

67 Fmdl279157-61.



FIG. 6. DRAWING OF THE MANOR HOUSE IN KESKKÜLA. IMAGE ARCHIVE FOTO MARBURG, FMD1281143.

had also managed to photograph a watercolour painting of the manor ensemble in Porkuni (Ger. Borkholm) dating back to the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which was later donated to the Estonian National Museum by a Rennenkampff family member.<sup>68</sup>

So far, the interior photographs from Krusenstjern's collection have received the most attention and have been widely published; however, many of these images are associated with better-known estates. It is therefore noteworthy that the collection includes a high number of photographs of wooden manors, depicting spacious and comfortably furnished living environments with fine furniture, portraits, and works of art. Interior photos at Kavastu (Ger. Kawast) and Kuru (Ger. Kurro) manors are particularly charming, of which only a few copies exist in Estonian museums. Some of the most fascinating interior photographs are undoubtedly those of Vaeküla and Äntu, which complement archival documents held at the Herder Institute. In two photographs of the great hall at Vaeküla, it is possible to identify paintings by old masters mentioned by Friedrich von

68 ERM K 3818, "Porkuni mõis".

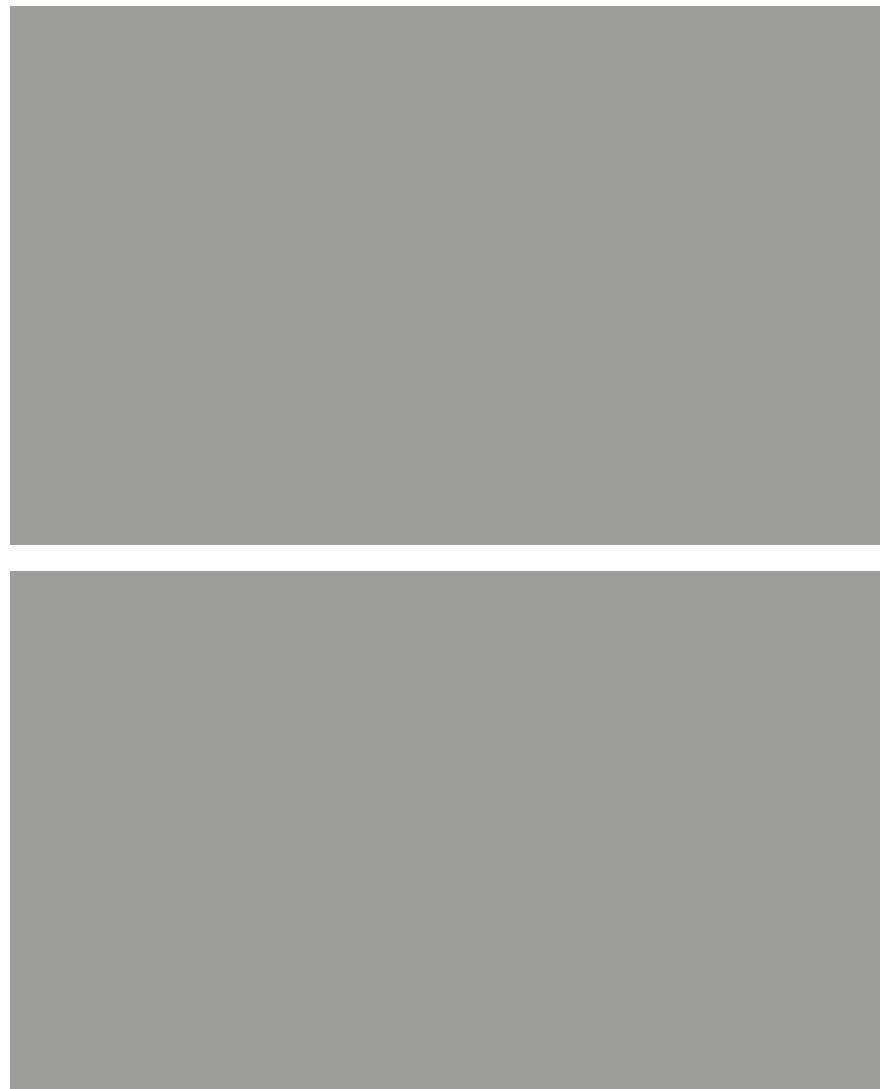


FIG. 7A-B. LARGE HALL IN VAEKÜLA, WITH PAINTINGS BY OLD MASTERS HANGING ON THE WALLS. IMAGE ARCHIVE FOTO MARBURG, FMD1281161-62.

Schubert in his memoirs.<sup>69</sup> A photograph of the fireplace room at Äntu manor reveals an Art Nouveau fireplace, providing clear evidence of

69 DSHI 190 Estland 081-01. Friedrich von Schubert, *Beitrag zur Geschichte der Familie von Schubert ihrer Herkunft, ihrer Güter und ihres Wirkens in Deutschland, Estland und Russland nach Deutschen, estländischen und russischen amtlichen und privaten Quellen*, 42.



FIG. 8. PHOTOGRAPH OF THE SALON IN THE MANOR HOUSE AT ESNA, TAKEN C. 1880. IMAGE ARCHIVE FOTO MARBURG, FM1276665.

the last renovation, as documented in the Herder Institute archives. Additionally, there is a photograph of the great hall and a photocopy of an oil painting showing the idyllic life of the summer months in the countryside with a veranda overgrown with plants.<sup>70</sup>

Very eye catching are the historicist wallpapers, of which there are plenty of examples in Krusenstjern's collection to use for further research on the topic. Among the wooden manor houses photos of Esna (Ger. Orrisaar), Kuusiku (Ger. Saage) and Tolli (Ger. Pargenthal) stand out. Tolli is notably important since there are no known photographs of the interiors of the current or previous building, the latter of which was set on fire by revolutionaries. Pictures of the burned town residence in Krusenstjern's collection show the richness of the historicist rooms, parquet patterns and personal items placed on small tables. In comparison, the interiors of Esna and Kuusiku were much simpler, yet the photograph of the latter allows us to

70 Foto Marburg Image Archive, Fk 1.278.045.



FIG. 9. STAIRCASE IN PADA MANOR, WITH EGON VON SCHILLING, PHOTOGRAPHED IN 1907. IMAGE ARCHIVE FOTO MARBURG, FM1276970.

glimpse the winter garden, which went through a renovation before World War I, thereafter fitting in perfectly with the grand hall.<sup>71</sup>

Among larger and better-known estates, there are some newly identified photographs of salons at Ohtu (Ger. Ocht), Saastna (Ger. Sastama) and Vääna (Ger. Faehna), which allow for additional analysis of art collections. The most surprising photographs of interiors are of the manor house at Pada (Ger. Paddas), which is believed to have been built according to the sketches by the French architect Jean Baptiste de la Mothe (1729–1800).<sup>72</sup> Tragically the building was destroyed by fire in 1917, photographs collected by Georg von Krusenstjern and taken approximately ten years earlier enable the reconstruction and analysis of several rooms, including the great hall, the gentleman's

71 ERM Fk 887: 837, "Kuusiku mõis (Saage), interjöör enne sõda. Rapla khk".

72 This was mentioned by pastor August Wilhelm Hupel in the third volume of *Topographische Nachrichten von Lief- und Ehsland* (Riga: Johann Friedrich Hartknoch, 1782) and later brought to Estonian art history writing by art historian Voldemar Vaga. See more: Voldemar Vaga, *Vene arhitektide ja skulptorite teoseid baroki- ja klassitsismiajajärgust Eestis* (Tartu: Teaduslik Kirjandus, 1947), 9.



FIG. 10. SALON IN THE MANOR HOUSE AT PADA. FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: EGON VON SCHILLING, OLGA ANNA PAULINE AND CONSTANTIN VON ROSEN, ALF, LILIA, AND ALFRED VON SCHILLING. PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN IN 1907. IMAGE ARCHIVE FOTO MARBURG, FM1278556.

writing room, three salons, and the upper stair hall above the grand staircase.<sup>73</sup> Although all the rooms deserve to be further analysed, the most striking is the salon decorated with massive murals, which at a first glance appears to be depicting an idealised scene with ancient ruins. However, the attentive observer will soon recognise a familiar scene with the gardens of Tsarskoye Selo and the so-called Cameron gallery, which was designed by Scotsman Charles Cameron (1745–1812). Additional references regarding dating and authorship should naturally be sought from various archival sources, but it is very likely that the work was finished in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when the owner was still privy councillor Otto Magnus von Stackelberg (1736–1800), who had close relations with the court of empress Catherine the Great. The technical quality of the work still makes us question whether it belongs to a later period when

73 The attentive observer can see a painting of Otto Magnus in one of the salon photos. A copy of this portrait can be found in the Estonian National Archive. RA, EAA.1862.2.20.98, Otto Magnus von Stackelberg, repro Pada mõisas asunud gobeläänist.



FIG. 11. GREAT HALL IN THE VANA-VIRTSU MANOR HOUSE, WITH BARON FREYTAG-LORINGHOVEN. IMAGE ARCHIVE FOTO MARBURG, FMD1281155.

the manor house was under the ownership of Peter August Friedrich von Manteuffel (1768–1842). It is much easier to identify the model used as the basis for painting the gallery, which is a graphic sheet made in 1792 by the engraver Johann Christoph de Mayr (or Mayer, 1764–1812),<sup>74</sup> who arrived in Russia at the invitation of the Russian Academy of Sciences only a few years earlier. Initially circulating only among the upper classes, this engraving became one of the most popular views of Cameron's gallery in the first half of the 19th century. A few decades later it could have been found in *Views of St. Petersburg* (1816–1828) by Russian cultural figure Pavel Svinin (1787–1839).<sup>75</sup> Because of the similarities between the engraving and the murals it is possible that the owner purchased either a copy of the original graphic sheet or Svinin's book and gave it to his painter to use as an example.

Greater attention should also be paid to the former hall in the Vana-Virtsu (Ger. Alt-Werder) manor house, of which numerous

<sup>74</sup> Hermitage Museum, "Mayr, Iogann Khristof (1764–1812), Vid Kameronovoi galerei v Tsarskom Sele", <https://www.hermitagemuseum.org/digital-collection/1627209?lng=ru> [accessed 01/08/2025].

<sup>75</sup> See more: Pavel Svinin, *Dostopamiatnosti Sanktpeterburga i ego okrestnosti. Sochinenie Pavla Svin'ina* (Sanktpeterburg: V tipografi V. Plavil'shchikova, 1816–1828), [https://rusneb.ru/catalog/000199\\_000009\\_005435994/](https://rusneb.ru/catalog/000199_000009_005435994/) [accessed 01/08/2025].



FIG. 12. SAUNA AND BIRDHOUSE IN THE MANORIAL ENSEMBLE AT RASINA. IMAGE ARCHIVE FOTO MARBURG, FMD1281106.



FIG. 13. CATTLE BARN (GER. VIEHBURG) AT RASINA MANOR. IMAGE ARCHIVE FOTO MARBURG, FMD1281108.

photographs exist in Krusenstjern's collection. These, together with the two other photographs from the Estonian National Museum, allow us to construct the entire programme of the room, which not only highlights the former charm of wooden manor houses,



FIG. 14. GREENHOUSE AT EINMANNI MANOR; HILDEGARD KURBERG. IMAGE ARCHIVE FOTO MARBURG, FMD1281158.

but also draws attention to some of the finest 18th century pastoral wall paintings in Estonia. Large rectangular spaces painted with landscapes, framed by a dentil cornice and pearl ribbons, are joined by supra-ports above the doors. Here there are mythological figures, dressed in light clothing, depicting virtues or ancient deities. The murals have been mentioned a few times in Estonian literature, but not fully analysed, probably due to a lack of relevant additional material. Close-ups of the murals shed a light on the details and finishes of the paintings, which may also help in finding examples in prints or paintings.<sup>76</sup>

Thematically, the last fascinating discoveries within Georg von Krusenstjern's collection to mention consist of photographs related to manor ensembles and the practical aspects of everyday life, of which several hundred copies are already preserved in Estonia. Naturally

<sup>76</sup> In his book *Der Stein von Werder* (Hamburg: Christian Wegner Verlag, 1940) Jakob Johann von Üxküll mentions how the paintings were the work of a Flemish painter. Juhan Maiste has proposed that these may have been the work of Gottlieb Welte, yet there seems to be no further proof of his activities in Virtsu. Juhan Maiste, *Eestimaa mõisad* (Tallinn: Kunst, 1996), 157.

there are numerous additions, such as garden views (for example in Vana-Viritsu, Kivijärve, Loodi Ger. Kersel, and Vaeküla) and views of the broader landscape (Viitina Ger. Kosse, and Türi-Alliku Ger. Allenküll). New photos of old distilleries (for example in Kurna and Aruküla Ger. Arroküll in Kirchspiel St. Johannis), outbuildings (Päinurme), greenhouses (in Einmanni), and wells with wooden decorations (Karkuse Ger. Karkus, and Einmanni) can also be found. It merits attention that there are over 40 noteworthy photographs of the manor in Rasina (Ger. Rasin) and a smaller estate that was once economically connected to it. From a cultural-historical perspective it is important to add that the last owners of the manor can also be found in some of these photos, although this was clearly related to the fact that Krusenstjern's first wife was Gertrud Mathilda von Minding<sup>77</sup>, whose father Karl Bernhard Ernst had purchased the estate in 1879.<sup>78</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The historiography of Estonian manorial architecture began in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century with Heinrich Pirang's monograph *Das baltische Herrenhaus* (1926–1930), the first systematic study of the topic. While the work was well received by the public and approached manor houses from multiple perspectives, it was evident that further, more in-depth research would be required. After several decades during which the subject received little scholarly attention, the topic finally regained momentum in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and has remained an active field of study ever since. While successive studies have significantly expanded the understanding of the manorial period, many aspects of this architectural heritage remain to be explored.

The complex history of the region has scattered material evidence across Europe, requiring researchers to collect and connect fragments preserved in many different locations, a process that also contributes to the particular appeal of the subject. In this context, Marburg stands out as one of the most rewarding destinations for anyone interested in manorial architecture. Both the Herder Institute and Foto Marburg

<sup>77</sup> The couple's wedding photograph can be found in Krusenstjern's collection at the RA, EAA.1414.2.165, 2.

<sup>78</sup> *Kinnistute register*, [ra.ee/apps/kinnistud/index.php/et/kinnistud/view?id=9343](http://ra.ee/apps/kinnistud/index.php/et/kinnistud/view?id=9343) [accessed 05/05/2025].

offer invaluable collections, where photographs often serve as the only surviving witnesses to building practices, especially in the case of wooden manor houses. Such sources resonate with the intellectual momentum of the pictorial turn, which has underscored the interpretive and evidentiary value of visual materials in historical research.

Thus, the history of Estonian manorial architecture continues to be written as a collaborative and evolving endeavour. Each contribution not only deepens our understanding of the manorial past but also demonstrates that the very act of piecing together this fragmented history remains as meaningful and captivating as the discoveries themselves.

**ELIS PÄRN:** COLLECTING PIECES OF HISTORY: THE LATEST DISCOVERIES OF ESTONIAN MANORIAL ARCHITECTURE FROM THE CITY OF MARBURG

**KEYWORDS:** HERDER INSTITUTE; FOTO MARBURG IMAGE ARCHIVE; ESTONIAN MANORIAL ARCHITECTURE; WOODEN MANOR HOUSES; GEORG VON KRUSENSTJERN; HISTORICAL PHOTOGRAPHS

### SUMMARY

One of the most important research topics in Estonian art history writing is manorial architecture, which Estonian researchers have actively focused on for the last couple of decades. While substantial progress has been made, the last few years have challenged previously known results, brought new perspectives, and introduced new research questions that await further investigation. Research on the manorial period nevertheless continues to be constrained by the fragmented historical development of the region, which has resulted in a considerable portion of relevant source material – particularly that related to Baltic-German culture – being preserved outside Estonia. In this context, the city of Marburg in Germany stands out as a place where two world-renowned research centres – the Herder Institute and the Foto Marburg Image Archive – hold material related to the topic complements, and in some cases expands, the sources already available in Estonia.

Based on research conducted during a fellowship at the Herder Institute at the end of 2024, this article provides an overview of Baltic-related collections held at both institutions and presents recent discoveries concerning Estonian manorial architecture, with a particular focus on wooden manor houses, which has been a relatively under researched topic for decades. Drawing on previously underexplored archive and visual sources – particularly historical photographs from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century –, the article addresses several questions related to noble residences, associated economic buildings, interiors: to the ensembles as a whole. In doing so, attention is drawn to several manors and buildings that have been destroyed, on which there is no material evidence in Estonia. This brings to the fore buildings that were not previously known to research on the topic. In addition, the article pays attention to other related material, such as libraries and memorabilia, and to the memories that await researchers, thus emphasising the methodological value of combining compatible material from both institutions for future research.

### CV

**Elis Pärn** is a Doctoral student and a Junior Research Fellow at the Department of Art History at the University of Tartu. Her academic research work is dedicated to Estonian wooden manor houses from the 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, with a current emphasis on the ‘golden era’ of Baltic manorial architecture. In addition, she is a member of the European Manor and Castle Network (ENCOUNTER), which connects manorial researchers and other cultural institutions who share an interest in research and interpretation of manor and country house history in a wider regional context.

