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Journal of Baltic Studies

ISSN: 0162-9778 (Print) 1751-7877 (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rbal20

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To cite this article: Liina Lukas (2011) Estonian Folklore as A Source of Baltic-German Poetry, Journal of Baltic Studies, 42:4, 491-510, DOI: 10.1080/01629778.2011.621738

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/01629778.2011.621738

Journal of Baltic Studies
Vol. 42, No. 4, December 2011, pp. 491–510

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ESTONIAN FOLKLORE AS A SOURCE OF BALTIC-GERMAN POETRY

Liina Lukas

Estonian folk tales form a common element in Estonian and Baltic-German (lyro)epic poetry. Baltic-German interest in Estonian folkloric heritage originated in the eighteenth century, when J. G. Herder first encouraged the collection of Estonian and Latvian folk songs. Systematic collection began in the 1830s, and peaked in the Estonian language area with the Estonian epic *Kalevipoeg* (1857–1861). Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald implemented this epic, but it was also influenced by many collectors and adaptors and was published in both German and Estonian. The myths of Friedrich Robert Faehlmann, presented in the Learned Estonian Society between 1840 and 1852, have had the biggest influence on the German-speaking audience. Literary adaptations of folk tales quickly found their way into journals, newspapers, poetry collections, and anthologies, often in the popular form of a ballad. This paper seeks to explore the role of Estonian folklore in Baltic-German lyroepic poetry.

Keywords: Baltic-German poetry; Estonian folklore; German-Estonian relations

Wer liebe für seine Heimath hegt,
Auch ihre Sagen im Herzen trägt.
(Hedda von Schmid 1889, p. 157)

Introduction

In the nineteenth century, Estonian and Latvian folklore became an important source of Baltic-German literature and art (most notably in the works of Fr. Schlater and F. L. v. Maydell). Until recently, the Baltic-German literary history discourse had not

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ISSN 0162-9778 (print)/ISSN 1751-7877 (online)
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01629778.2011.621738

noticed or considered such productive borrowing important. The Baltic-German contribution to collecting and studying Estonian and Latvian folklore has been acknowledged, but a reverse direction in this cultural exchange has remained unnoticed in Baltic-German and Estonian literary historical writing. Arthur Behrsing's *History of Baltic Literature* (*Grundriss einer Geschichte der baltischen Dichtung*; Behrsing 1928) opens with a promising review of Estonian folklore, but does not mention its productive reception in literature. Gero von Wilpert's *History of Baltic-German Literature* (*Deutschbaltische Literaturgeschichte*; Wilpert 2005), which is the newest treatment of this topic, contains only a few sentences about Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald's folklore collection, seemingly not realizing the scope of this work and its relevance to Baltic-German culture.

The study of Baltic-German, Estonian, and Latvian cultural relations requires a comparative approach, which has thus far been missing in the research of older Baltic literatures. In German studies, Baltic-German literature has been treated in the context of German literature. Armin von Ungern-Sternberg emphasizes a regional aspect in his study about Baltic as 'narrated region' (*Erzählregionen. Überlegungen zu literarischen Räumen mit Blick auf die deutsche Literatur des Baltikums, das Baltikum und die deutsche Literatur*; Ungern-Sternberg 2003) and underlines the need for treating the literature of the Baltic countries as an entity, regardless of its language or genre. However, he still focuses on German-language literature and considers Baltic-German literature merely as a part of German literature, comparable to East-Prussian, German, or even Austrian literature. He does not view local cultures as potentially influencial factors or carriers of the continuity of traditions.

To accept the linguistic diversity of the Baltic countries, German studies have to overcome some internal barriers. A monoethnic-linguistic approach does not allow for adequate description and interpretation of some specific features of the Baltic literary field.

On the other hand, although the development of Estonian and Latvian literatures depended on Baltic-German literature, neither Estonian nor Latvian historiography has considered Baltic-German literature as its own, although for entirely different ideological reasons. Calls for 'much closer study of German-language literature and spiritual life as the background for Estonian literary history' (Annist 1938, p. 989) remained unanswered until Estonia regained independence, when its cultural heritage could be re-examined regardless of different ideologies.

In Estonia, Jaan Undusk has pioneered new interpretations of Baltic-German literature, discussing Baltic-German culture as one source of Estonian identity (Undusk 1995a, 1998, 1999) and sketching the typology of Estonian-German literary relations (Undusk 1992, 1995b). Under his direction, the Under and Tuglas Literature Center of the Estonian Academy of Sciences has become an important research center of Baltic-German culture. In Tartu, the Digital Text Repository for Older Estonian Literature,[1] carried out jointly by the Institute of Cultural Research and Fine Arts of the University of Tartu and the University of Tartu Library, proceeded from a similar geo-cultural conception that treats Estonian literary history in its multicultural context and in communication with texts published in other languages in the Baltic countries.

In my own research, I treat literary life in the Baltic countries, up to the end of the nineteenth century, as a unified multilingual literary field and consider Baltic-

German literature as a part of this field (see Lukas 2006, 2008, 2009). This paper focuses on cultural communication and textual interrelations within different languages, as this remains a rarely explored area.

The first common feature of Estonian (Latvian) and Baltic-German literatures is their homeland, with its own local stories and histories. How is this familiar landscape recreated in Estonian (Latvian) and Baltic-German literature? How are local histories told? How large is the common element in the local histories of Estonian (Latvian) and Baltic-German communities? In which ways are local legends presented in Estonian and Baltic-German literatures? The discussion in this paper was inspired by these questions.

In this paper, I will attempt to clarify the role of Estonian folklore in Baltic-German poetry. My research is based on Baltic-German journals, as well as poetry collections, anthologies, and almanacs. Some of them are accessible in the Digital Text Repository for Older Estonian Literature, EEVA. I have discovered numerous references to Estonian and Latvian folklore that have not yet been covered by other researchers. I seek to demonstrate that there was a growing interest in Estonian and Latvian cultural heritage among Baltic-German writers during the nineteenth century, and a desire to use it productively. I first give an historical overview of scholarly interest in Estonian (and Latvian) folklore. I then examine the use of Estonian folklore in Baltic-German poetry, indicating its formal models. Finally, I list the folkloric motifs most used by Baltic-German literature and attempt to clarify the reasons for their popularity. I focus mainly on motifs originating from Estonian folklore, while also drawing Latvian parallels.

Interest in Folklore in the Baltic Countries

Baltic-German interest in Estonian and Latvian folklore goes back to the eighteenth century when Johann Gottfried Herder requested that the first campaign of collecting Estonian and Latvian folk songs be organized. With the help of August Wilhelm Hupel, Herder received 79 Latvian and 8 Estonian folk songs together with their German translations in 1777–1778, which he intended to include in his collection of folklore *Volkslieder nebst untermischten anderen Stücken* (1778–1779).[2] In addition to German translations of some excerpts from Estonian wedding songs (Herder 1779, pp. 99–101, 111–3) and a lament *Klage über die Tyrannen der Leibeigenen* (pp. 99–101), Herder also published one lyroepic song, a so-called *Brother's War Song* (*Lied vom Kriege*; Herder 1779, p. 237). This happened to be the first Estonian lyroepic song to acquire international publicity (and probably the most famous Estonian folk song of all, thanks to Hella Wuolijoki's poem and its German translator, Bertold Brecht; see Kitching 1982). In introducing Estonian songs, Herder mainly relied on Hupel's observations. However, while Hupel called folk songs 'old hags' spawn' and saw no aesthetic value in them, Herder found in them spontaneous poetic talent (Herder 1779, p. 87) and presented them, together with songs of other peoples, as the purest type of poetry. Thus, Herder brought Estonian folklore into the limelight of world literature and presented it as a serious and worthwhile piece of cultural heritage.

Starting from that time, other translations of folk songs were published in some well-known German magazines. For example, Christian Hieronymus Justus Schlegel

published the article *Volksgedichte der Esthnischen Nation* in the magazine *Der Teutsche Merkur* in 1787, describing Estonian folk songs in a Herderian key as 'simple poems about nature, the fruits of a fragile and often tormented soul' (Schlegel 1787, p. 233) and admiring their 'delicacy of sentiment, their most vivid language of nature and the salty alkali of sarcasm' (p. 254). The songs could hardly compare with those authored by a bard like Ossian, but at some moments, their genuineness could even have been compared with Ovid (p. 241). To prove his argument, Schlegel presented 13 translations of Estonian folk songs along with some original pieces, adding his own poetic interpretations and ethnographic explanations.

In the first decades of the nineteenth century, the magazine *Beträge zur genauern Kenntniß der ehstnischen Sprache* (1813–1832), published by Johann Heinrich Rosenplänter in Pärnu, became the forum for introducing Estonian folk songs, publishing more than 100 of them. Collecting folk songs gained impetus in the 1830s and 1840s in connection with the activity of the Learned Estonian Society (*Gelehrte Estnische Gesellschaft*, founded in Tartu in 1838) and *Estländische Literärische Gesellschaft* (founded in Tallinn in 1842), and annotated scholarly publications were issued (Kreutzwald & Neus 1854; Neus 1850–1852). Rudiments of epic poetry were searched for with special attentiveness. This interest peaked with the publication of the Estonian epic *Kalevipoeg* (published simultaneously in Estonian and German in 1857–1861), which was adapted from folklore and written in imitation of older folk song verse by Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald, who had received material and inspiration from many other folklore collectors.

The re-evaluation of other folkloric heritage went hand in hand with the interest in folk songs. By the end of the eighteenth century, a disapproving attitude toward Estonian pagan customs (Boecler 1684; Gutslaff 1644) had changed to an ethnographic and folkloric interest (Hupel 1774–1782; Scherwinzky 1788; Schlegel 1819). Systematic collection of Estonian folk tales, inspired by the works of the Brothers Grimm (*Deutsche Sagen* 1816–1818; *Deutsche Mythologie* 1935) in Germany, began in the 1830s. The construction of Estonian mythology was assisted by Kristian Jaak Peterson's translation of Kristfrid Ganander's *Mythologia Fennica*, which was published with the translator's comparative commentaries concerning Estonian folk belief in the magazine *Beiträge* in 1822 (Peterson 1822). The literary potential of Peterson's reconstruction was great. Based on this, Friedrich Robert Faehlmann presented his Estonian myths at the Learned Estonian Society between 1840 and 1852. These works have provided plenty of subject matter for both Baltic-German and Estonian literature.

The magazine *Das Inland* (1836–1863) in Tartu was devoted to local history and published writings on Estonian and Latvian folk tales and translations of folk poetry (by Heinrich Neus, Georg Julius von Schultz-Bertram, Eduard Pabst, Nikolai von Rehbinder, Gustav Heinrich Schüdlöffel, and others). Several legends by Kreutzwald, later published in an Estonian-language collection *Ancient Estonian Folk Tales* (*Eesti-rahwa Ennemuistsed jutud ja Wanad laulud*, 1860–1864), were first printed in *Das Inland* in the German language. The works of Eduard Pabst (Pabst 1856), Carl Russwurm (Russwurm 1856, 1861), and Harry Jannsen (Jannsen 1881–1888) also brought Estonian legends into the limelight for the German-speaking public. At the turn of the century, popular collections of Baltic folk tales were issued in German: *Livländisches*

Sagenbuch (Bienemann 1897) and *Märchen und Sagen* (Löwis of Menar 1916). Literary adaptations of folk songs and folk tales quickly found their way to magazines, newspapers, calendars, collections, and anthologies of poetry, often in the popular ballad form.

Kunstballade and *Regilaul* (Old Estonian Folk Song)

Two traditions have to be taken into account when discussing the Baltic-German ballad. First, the Estonian folk ballad: the later and better-preserved layer of old folk song that was enthusiastically collected in the nineteenth century with the hope of using it to reconstruct the Estonians' mythology and to create a heroic epic. The Estonian folk song is *regilaul* (regisong): the poetic system of Baltic-Finnic peoples that is characterized by the verse's trochaic rhythm with four stresses (*regivärss*, named also the Kalevala-meter or *runo*-verse) and a persistent, distinct use of alliteration in tandem with parallelism. The *regilaul* is not rhymed (Sarv 2008, p. 171).

Simultaneous with the collection of folk songs was their translation into German, which required insight into the means of expression and structure of *regilaul* and necessitated the finding of suitable tools in the German language. In the nineteenth century, *regivärss* was considered to be a syllabic-accentual trochaic tetrameter, and its quantitative nature remained unnoticed. Therefore, the German-language translations attempted to fit *regivärss* into clearly trochaic verses, making it more monotonous when compared with the original. Several Baltic-German poets presented translations or adaptations of folk poetry in their collections of poems.

Another undoubtedly more important model can be found in the German literary ballad (*Kunstballade*) and in the meaning this genre achieved in the works of the authors of German *Storm and Stress* (*Sturm und Drang*) and its later shape developed by German Romanticism. Corresponding to Herder's requirements for popularity, this genre borrowed the folk ballad's formal simplicity and mythical view of the world as its model. G. A. Bürger's *Leonore*, created in this spirit, achieved all-European popularity and was well known in the Baltic area as well. Together with the rise of folk poetry's popularity, especially after the publication of a collection *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (compiled by Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano, 1801–1806), the ballad became popular and remained so throughout the nineteenth century. The real ballad boom, however, occurred in Germany during the *Biedermeier* era when it became a real 'German genre', often drawing its subjects from popular collections of folk legends. This form of ballad also appeared in collections of poetry published in the Baltic region.

Estonian Literary Ballad

Some clarifying remarks are in order about the development of the Estonian-language literary ballad, which took shape after the German model (for more, see Merilai 1991, 2003). The Estonian-language ballad of the nineteenth century was mostly an adaptation of German examples (Claudius, Bürger, Schiller, Goethe, Uhland, Heine; later also Lenau, Chamisso, Eichendorff). A translation of Bürger's *Leonore* is an

important marker of the beginning of the history of Estonian. Around 1850, F. R. Kreutzwald wrote his first Estonian-language ballad *Koit ja Hämarik* (*Dawn and Dusk*), using formal methods of Estonian old folk song (*regivärss*). From then on, Estonian authors of ballads, instead of German poetry, more and more often turned to folklore and to folk ballad which had, side by side with the translated literary ballad and under its influence, been living its own life. Jakob Hurt carried the central role in the 'literarization' of the folk ballad; he was the initiator of a campaign to collect folklore that recorded about 50,000 folk songs (Hurt 1875–1886, 1904–1907). Many authors (Jaan Bergmann, Matthias Johann Eisen, Jakob Tamm, Jakob Liiv, Karl Eduard Sööt, and others) used the example of folk ballads and folkloric themes in their (lyro)epic poetry. Poetic innovations of *Noor-Eesti* (*Young Estonia*) raised the ballad to a new level: Villem Grünthal-Ridala's *Toomas and Mai* and Gustav Suits's *Lapse sünd* (*Birth of a Child*, 1922) are, according to folklorists, the most successful imitations of *regivärss* in Estonian poetry (Mirov 2006, p. 571). The rise of the ballad at the end of the 1920s was also facilitated by the translations of Eino Leino's *Helka-Hymns* and several of his ballads into Estonian by August Annist. This rise peaked with Marie Under's collection of ballads *Õnnevarjutus* (*Eclipse of Happiness*, 1929), where folkloric subjects (but not the form) occupy a central position.

Baltic-German Ballad

I now return to the main topic of this paper – Baltic-German poetry. The first texts of Baltic-German ballads date back to 1779 and appeared in a poetry almanac *Ehstländische poetische Blumenlese für das Jahr 1779*, edited by Sophie Albrecht and Fr. G. Arvelius. In the early nineteenth century, ballads can be found in several almanacs, collections, and literary magazines published in this area (e.g. *Livona*, *Inländisches Museum*, *Inländischer Dichtergarten*). These are mostly romantic ballads about unhappy love, set in a romantic, timeless background and placeless landscape without any historical or locational element. Some of them were written on the themes of Scandinavian or German legends.

The first ballads written on themes borrowed from Estonian folklore (excluding the earlier translations of Estonian folklore) were published in the 1830s in relation with a new scientific interest in folk heritage. We can find some of them in the literary magazine *Der Refraktor* (1836–1837). The first, written by an anonymous author, is a poem *Die Elfentochter. Eine estnische Sage* (*Elfsdaughter. An Estonian Folk Legend*; *Der Refraktor* 1836, pp. 261–2). The poem is based on an Estonian popular lyroepic song *A Bride of a Star* or *A Song about Salme*, the theme later known as a part of Estonian national epic *Kalevipoeg*. This is a story about the wooing of Salme by different astral bodies. In the ballad of *Der Refraktor*, a shepherd finds a girl child of heavenly origin on a pasture and brings her up. The child is wooed by the sun, the moon, and a star, and she chooses the last. In Estonian folk heritage, Salme's origin is much more earthly – she hatches from a hen's egg – but in this German-language poem she is 'romanticized' to be a daughter of an elf, who comes from the heavens and later returns there, waves her hand back from the moon every evening, and makes young men who gaze at the moon lovesick.

The poem's editor notes that adaptations of Estonian folk tales are very welcome and will be published in as authentic form as possible (*Der Refraktor* 1836, p. 261). Indeed, we already find new pieces in the next issue: *Die Räuberhöhle bei Tischert. Estnische Volkssage* (*A Robbers' Cave near Tiskre. An Estonian Folk Tale*; *Der Refraktor* 1836, pp. 277–9), written by Roman von Budberg-Boenningshausen from Estonia, a poet of some acclaim also in Germany,[3] and *Junker Heins. Zum Theil nach einer Ehstnischen Volkssage* (*Der Refraktor* 1837, pp. 293–4), written by Karl Friedrich von der Borg, a poet and active participant in the Tartu literary life.

The local legends-based poems flourished most in the magazine *Das Inland*.[4] The year of 1846 can well be called the year of the Baltic-German ballad. It was introduced by K. H. von Busse's poem *Die Sage in Livland* (*The Legend in Livonia*, *Das Inland* 1846, No. 38, pp. 909–10, Blg. B) which proclaims:

Dies muß ein Land der Sagen sein,
An Emma's Strom, an Belts Gestein!
Das Wasser rauscht am Waldesrand
Blau flutend hin zum Meeresstrand.
(. . .)
Doch ob man auch Gesichte schaut,
Die Sage wird nur wenig laut.
Was ist's, daß sie so wenig spricht,
Da überall sich zeigt Gesicht?[5]

As if in answer to Busse's lament, a number of local legends-based ballads were published the same year (by F. R. Kreutzwald, K. H. von Busse (alias Heinrich Blindner), O. Dreistern, Eduard Pabst, Minna von Mädler, Theodor Rutenberg, Robert Falck, P. Otto, and others). An anthology *Balladen und Lieder* was published in Tartu in 1846 (Balladen und Lieder 1846), which contained poems by Jegór von Sivers, Reinhold Schellbach, Konstantin Theodor Glitzsch, Andreas Wilhelm von Wittorf, and Karl Walfried von Stern. The most prolific Baltic author of ballads in the mid-nineteenth century was Andreas Wilhelm von Wittorf, who published a collection *Baltische Sagen und Märchen* in 1859.

At the turn of the century, the ballad flourished again. Such authors as Helene von Engelhardt (Engelhardt 1900), Victor von Andrejanoff (Andrejanoff 1895), Otto von Schilling (Schilling 1907, 1912), Leopold von Schroeder (1894, 1906), Peter Zoege von Manteuffel (Zoege von Manteuffel 1922), Hedda von Schmid (Schmid 1889, 1984), Gustav von Hirschheydt (Hirschheydt 1934), Gertrud von den Brincken (Brincken 1918, 1920, 1924), and others also used the genre of Baltic ballad.

The Motifs of Estonian Folk Legends in Baltic-German Poetry

The main type of the Baltic-German local legends-based ballad is the historical ballad, which draws its themes from Baltic chronicles and telling about castles, manors, churches, and their ruins, about the noble persons who lived in those buildings, and about their heroic deeds (see Lukas 2009). But the other type takes its themes from Estonian and Latvian oral tradition. It is often impossible to identify clearly the source

of a legend – many motifs from the chronicles took root in folk tradition over the course of time and, on the other hand, chroniclers offered old legends as the historical truth (for example, the story told by Henry of Livonia about the siege of Bewern Castle by Estonians and about their succumbing due to the power of a songa plot that was extremely popular among Baltic-German poets (see Lukas 2009, p. 118)). Thus, we cannot explore the authenticity of folklore, although many of these songs have been performed and taken as authentic.

The following motifs of Estonian folk tales were most utilized in the Baltic-German ballad.

Regi-verse ballads as a model[6]

A number of Baltic-German intellectuals translated folk songs, but imitations of *regivärss* can be more rarely found in the work of Baltic-German poets. Most authors used verse forms of German poetry. The meter of the *regivärss* in the shape as it was known in the theory of the time (four-foot trochaic alliterated verse without end rhyme) probably seemed to be too primitive to be used as a poetic means of expression; possibilities for alliteration were smaller in German than in Estonian (as confirmed by the translator of *Kalevipoeg* into German, Carl Reinthal; see Kreutzwald 1857, p. XVI, and Schultz-Bertram 1870, p. 9), and conventional German ballad meters were preferred. The earliest imitations of *regi*-verse can be found among the legacy of a well-known Tartu poet and university lecturer Carl Petersen: two adaptations of Estonian folk songs, *Klage der Tochter* and *Klage um den Bruder* (published posthumously, Petersen 1846).

The first strophe of the poem *Klage um den Bruder. Dem Ehstnischen nachgebildet* reads as follows:

Hatte drei geliebte Brüder,
Sandte den ersten Heerde hüthen,
Sandte den zweiten Beeren lesen,
Sandte den dritten Fische fangen.

Heim kehr jener aus der Hüthung,
Heim der andre mit den Beeren,
Heim der dritte nicht vom Bache.[7]
(. . .)

We can recognize the folk family ballad *Drowned Brother*, which tells the tale of three brothers who had been sent to a trip, the youngest of whom disappeared while fishing. The sister searched for her brother, and later heard from the Moon of his drowning.

Petersen's other imitation of regi-verse, *Klage der Tochter*, is an adaptation of a widespread folk song about an orphan weeping at the grave of her parents, begging her mother to rise from the grave and prepare a dowry for her. Petersen successfully manages to capture the meter and other characteristics of the runo-verse (repetitions, alliteration, parallelism, absence of end rhyme, division into strophes of different lengths).

We can also find both motifs used by Petersen in the work of Jegór von Sivers (*Der verlorene Bruder*, Sivers 1853; *Brautlied einer Waisen*, Sivers 1853, pp. 148–51). Among Sivers's regi-verse adaptations we again find the story well known to the

German audience about the wooing of Salme (*Die Brautwerbung*). It sounds as follows (Sivers 1853, p. 145):

War einmal ein junges Weibchen,
Ging hinaus die Herde hüten.
Fand ein Huhn im Wiesengrase,
Trug es sorgsam mit nach Hause.
Aus dem Hühnchen ward ein Mägdlein,
Ward die schöne zarte Salme.[8]

The most remarkable imitations of folk songs in German were created by Georg Julius von Schultz-Bertram in his Estonian epics *Ilmatar, eine Commedia turanica* (1870, 1200 verses) and the unpublished *Warawaatja*. A discussion of these epic fantasies, full of folkloric and pseudo-folkloric elements, is beyond the scope of this paper (see more in Saagpakk 2009).

Schultz-Bertram's example was followed, in a more lyrical key, by Leopold von Schroeder, a lecturer at the University of Tartu, a well-known Indologist, and a scholar of Estonian mythology. His collection of poetry (*Gedichte*, 1889) contains, in addition to regi-verse adaptations of Faehlmann's myths (see below), original works imitating regi-verse (the poems *Der Sänger*, *Sturm*, *Johannisabend*, and *Schnarrwachtel*).

Legends about giants

Although folk tales about *Kalevipoeg* received constant attention from the Learned Estonian Society – they were published in the magazine *Das Inland*, and the epic *Kalevipoeg* was published in two languages in 1857–1861 – these tales did not inspire German poets. An Estonian heroic giant who fought the 'iron men' (symbolizing German crusaders!) was probably not seen as a hero fit for Baltic-German poetry. However, there is a poem about another Estonian giant hero, Big Tõll from the Island of Saaremaa, who brought happiness and success to his people but withdrew his favor after his help was misused (the theme was used by Christian Eduard Pabst, *Suremees*, 1856).

Faehlmann's myths

The largest number of poems were reworkings of Faehlmann's myths, and published in German in the proceedings of the Learned Estonian Society in 1840–1852. The favorite motif has been the romantic fairy tale of Dusk and Dawn (*Koit ja Hämarik*), who, having had to remain an eternal bridal couple, were allowed to embrace and kiss only once a year on Midsummer Night. Faehlmann published this tale in 1844 (Faehlmann 1844), and next year, in 1845, the magazine *Das Inland* published the first ballad on Dawn and Dusk (*Koit und Ämmarik, Morgenroth und Abendroth*, 1845, H. 43, pp. 741–3), written by a well-known Baltic-German poet Minna von Mädler:

Kennst du in Allvaters Hallen
Kennst du jene Leuchte nicht?
Siehe, Purpurstrahlen wallen,

Wo erlosch ihr goldnes Licht.

Eben kaum zur Ruh' gegangen,
Lächelnd noch im Widerschein,
Tritt sie schon mit vollem Prangen
In das Thor des Ostens ein.

Weiβt du, wessen Hand die Sonne
Aufnimmt und zur Ruhe bringt,
Wenn nach ihrem Lauf der Wonne
Sie ermüdet niedersinkt?

Weiβt du, wessen Hand entzündet
Wieder ihr erlosch'nes Licht,
Daβ ihr Himmelsgang verkündet
Von der treubewahrten Pflicht?[9]

Minna von Mädler retold Faehlmann's prose text using the widespread popular German ballad form, wherein the ballad is divided into similar four-line cross-rhymed strophes that alternately contain four-feet and three-feet verses. Five years later, Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald wrote an Estonian-language ballad on the same theme using the formal means of the regi-verse (although not yet the alliterative verse that he later used when writing *Kalevipoeg*):

Kas sa tunned valgustavat
Tuletungalt taara tares?
Praegu peitis pilve põue
Päike silmad puhkamaie,
Udu kaissu unistama.
Läänest, kuhu valgus langes,
Kannetakse ehakumal
Kustund küünal ida kambri,
Kust meil kuldne elupaiste
Teisel päeval taeva tõuseb.
Kas ehk tunned kanget käppa,
Kelle pihu peites päikest
Punetes viis puhkamaie?
On sul tuttav teine ori,
Kes meil' kuldse elupaiste
Hommikul pann'd põlema?[10]

Among Baltic-German poets, it was Leopold von Schroeder, who later followed Kreutzwald's example and attempted to model his more than 100-strophe-long epic poem *Koit und Aemmarik. Eine estnische Sage* on the Estonian runo-verse:

Kennst du wohl des Nordens Nächte?
Jene wonnevollen Stunden,
Wenn der Sommer ist erschienen,
Wenn am fernen Himmelssaume

Abendrot und Morgenröte
Liebend sich die Hände reichen,
In dem Brautkuss sich umfangen?[11]
(Schroeder 1889, pp. 92–3)

After Schroeder, Baltic-German writers Gregor von Glasenapp (Glasenapp 1907) and Nikolai Anderson (Anderson 1905) and the Estonian poet and folklorist Matthias Johann Eisen (Eisen 1884) have used this motif, preferring the pattern of *Kunstballade*; but later, the myth probably felt too old fashioned romantic to inspire the modern poetry.[12] Another popular motif borrowed from Faehlmann (published in *VerhGEG*, Bd. 1, H. 1. 1840, pp. 38–47, and Bd. 2, H. 4. 1852, pp. 72–6) was the tale about the god of song, Vanemuine. Faehlmann has two myths about Vanemuine. One tells of the god of song who gave his singing voice to all living beings. The second legend is about the departure of the god of song after his song was interrupted by a bitter and sarcastic song of a hunchback hag, who sings of her once-blossoming youth and many suitors. J. von Sivers used both tales (*Wannemunnes erster Sang* and *Wannemunnes letzter Sang*) in 1846 with a note that the motif originated from oral tradition, as did L. von Schroder (*Wannemuines Sang*, 1889) in the form of regi-verse.

Kreutzwald's ancient folk tales

In addition to Faehlmann's myths, F. R. Kreutzwald's *Ancient Estonian Folk Tales*, first published in German in the magazine *Das Inland*, also mediated Estonian folk heritage to Germans. Kreutzwald and Georg Julius von Schultz-Bertram narrate an internationally well-known tale about a building master Olev, who was the seventh master to undertake the building of the spire of the St. Olav's Church in Tallinn. When he climbed the completed spire to afix a cockerel-shaped figure to its top, he fell down just as his six predecessors had done. Soon after, several poems on this motif written by Georg Julius von Schultz-Bertram, Eduard Pabst, and Andreas Wilhelm von Wittorf appeared in the *Das Inland*. Later, Mia Munier-Wroblewski also based a work on Kreutzwald's version of this folk tale. The Estonian poet M. J. Eisen has also paid attention to this tale (*Olev*; Eisen 1884).

Another *literary* legend from *Ancient Estonian Folk Tales* is the story of a young lady who was drowned in Lake Porkuni by her brother because of her forbidden love affair. This story explains the strange light on the lake at night. Kreutzwald wrote the first German-language version of the ballad (*Das Fräulein von Borkholm*, 1836). Marie Under based her Estonian-language ballad *Porkuni preili* (*Young Lady from Porkuni*, 1929) on Kreutzwald's work. The Baltic-German literary tradition, however, links a similar story with the young lady of Võrtsjärve and Rannu manors, Barbara von Tiesenhusen, also described by Baltic chroniclers (Balthasar Russow and Johann Renner) and poets. Eduard Pabst wrote a German-language ballad on the theme (*Der Ritter von Randen und seine arme Schwester*, 1855). This motif, having originated from the chronicles, started an independent life in Estonian folk heritage and became separated from concrete historical circumstances (for the historical background and literary adaptations of the story, see Kreem & Lukas 2008).

Kreutzwald introduced the story of the nightmare (about a man who reveals his wife's mysterious origin to her, and the wife runs away, abandoning her husband and

children) to Estonian and Baltic-German poets. Reinhold Schellbach wrote a ballad using this motif (*Der Alp. Ehstnische Sage*, 1846). This was probably the model for Jaan Bergmann's Estonian-language ballad on the same theme from 1901. Let us compare the first strophe:

Schellbach:
Mein Weib, mein Weib, wie ging es zu,
Daß heute dreimal lachtest Du?
Was ich sonst nimmer an dir gesehn,
O sprich, mein Weib, wie ist's gescheh'n?[13]

Bergmann:
Mu naine, mu naine, miks naersid nii
Kolm korda kirikus valjusti?
Sui muidu on ikka tõsine meel,
Ei olnudki enne sa naernud veel![14]

Such transfer of motifs (Kreutzwald–Schellbach–Bergmann) is clear confirmation that cultural borrowing was a mutual and widespread practice among different national groups in the Baltic area. Up to the end of the nineteenth century, the area formed one unified literary field where the authors and readers moved between languages when necessary.

Traveling lakes

The first Estonian folk tale to achieve international fame was the story about the origin of Lake Võrtsjärv and the disappearance of Lake Emujärv, published by Jacob Grimm in his *German Mythology* in 1835 (Grimm 1843, p. 565). Grimm refers to a poem, published by the German philologist Friedrich Thiersch in 1809, under the title *Mährlein von der Wanderung des See Eim. Esthländische Sage* (Thiersch 1809, pp. 179–84). Grimm noticed the abundance of folk tales related to different bodies of water in Estonian oral tradition.

Lakes as the locations of sunken cities, castles, or churches are an internationally known motif, which can be found in Estonian and Latvian oral tradition as well. For example, an oft-noticed (Kreutzwald 1838; Masing 1821) tale about Valgejärv (Blankensee) in Helme Parish, where a manor was told to have sunken after a wedding party, is a very balladic story. In *Das Inland*, O. Dreistern used this in his ballad *Die Hochzeit zu Marienburg*, in which a brother and a sister who had paid gold to get a church's blessing for their sin, were wed at the Marienburg castle. Nature avenged this unnatural act with endless rain, drowning the castle together with the wedding party:

Unendlicher Regen ergiesst sich herab –
Die Erde eröffnet ein weites Grab –
Vergebens Rufen! Die Burg versinkt;
Der geschändete Boden sie dürstend verschlingt –
Ein tiefer See nur kündet uns heut
Wo einst sie gestanden in Herrlichkeit.[15]
(Dreistern 1846)

Eisen used the same motif in Estonian poetry (*Valgjärve sünd / Birth of Lake Valgjärv*; Eisen 1884).

Numerous folk tales about church bells that were submerged in lakes in the hope of saving them from enemies have also found their way into Baltic-German ballads. In 1854, Eduard Pabst published in the *Das Inland* a similar story related to Lake Sääre on the Island of Saaremaa, and illustrated it with a poem on the theme. In his ballad *Glocken-See*, Andreas Wilhelm von Wittorf linked the motif with the Carnikava church in Latvia: a beggar, taking a nap on a forest lake shore, hears the ringing of a bell hidden in the lake and tells the villagers about it. When the story reaches the ears of the manor lord, who wants to haul the bell out of the lake, the bell escapes with angry ringing never to be found again. In Hedda von Schmid's poem *Bei Sternberg in St. Martens*, a church bell is submerged in the bottomless River of Läänemaa County, Estonia. Among Estonian poets, M. J. Eisen has used the same motif (*Kadunud kell / The Lost Bell*, 1884).

The Estonian folk tale published by the Brothers Grimm is about traveling bodies of water: a motif not known in German mythology but present in Estonian and Latvian oral tradition in many different versions and in relation to many lakes (Eisen 1920). Most often, the reasons why lakes change their locations include pollution or the moral guilt of local people. In Estonian literature, Kreutzwald introduced this motif in his *Ancient Estonian Folk Tales*. In his story *Paigast läinud järveke* (*A Small Lake That Moved Away*), a lake left its bed because it had become angry about a false promise a young lord of a manor had made to a farm girl: 'Rather this lake flow out of its bed than I should abandon you'. The disappearance of the lake reveals the frivolity of that nobleman's promise. The Estonian poets Matthias Johann Eisen (*Walewanne / A False Oarth*, 1884) and Marie Under (*Ränd av järv / A Traveling Lake*, 1929) have proceeded from Kreutzwald's interpretation and written ballads on this motif.

Baltic-German poets have based their ballads on other versions of this motif. In Baltic-German poetry, the same motif can be found in Victor von Andrejanoff's ballad *Der fliegende See* about the origin of Lake Sepene in Courland. Only the cattle-herding children were, thanks to their beautiful singing, able to escape the flood caused by the lake. The flight of the lake (lakes fly in most of these folk tales) is described in very sensuous images:

Da mit lauten Donnerschlägen
Niederrauscht ein mächt'ger Regen:
Fische, Muscheln, Frösche, Quallen,
Schilf und Seegras niederfallen,
Und die Wolke aus der Höh'
Senkt sich nieder, — wird zum See.[16]
(Andrejanoff 1895, pp. 179–80)

Hedda von Schmid used the motif of a traveling lake in her long epic poem *Am Astjärw. Eine livländische Sage* (1889). Her *leitmotif*, given as an independent romantic ballad in the introduction of this poem of several parts, is a story of a lake elf who was abandoned by her lover and who decided to leave the unhappy place together with her lake:

Mit meinem See entweiche ich zur Stund',
Ich trage ihn hinweg in meinem Schleier;

Von hier, wo Bruch der Treue schnöd' geübt,
Entfliehe ich mit meiner blauen Welle,
Wo kein Erinn'rungshauch mein Dasein trübt,
Da breite ich sie aus an schön'rer Stelle![17]
(Schmid 1889, p. 16)

Hedda von Schmid ties together several legends in her poem: an explanatory folk tale about a traveling lake and a sunken city; an internationally known romantic fairy tale about a mermaid who lives in a lake and seduces men; and a historical legend about events related with the Burtneck Castle, mentioned by the chroniclers. The poet's fantasy interwove history and myths.

The same trend is characteristic also of the legend collections of that time (i.e. Bienemann 1897). Baltic-German, Estonian, and Latvian oral and written heritages – historical and folk legends – are synthesized into a unified Baltic place-related history.

Conclusion

Estonian folk tales and legends constitute a common element in Estonian and Baltic-German (lyro)epic poetry. Baltic-German intellectuals became familiar with folk legends via the proceedings of the Learned Estonian Society and the magazine *Das Inland*. These tales quickly found their way into Baltic-German poetry. Estonian folkloric themes were most often used in poetry in the 1840s–1850s. In the late nineteenth century, at the peak of Estonian national awakening, the Baltic-German ballad was more often based on Baltic chronicles and historical writings, but the writing of poems based on folk legends still continued (local publishers of calendars were especially keen on such works). What were the Baltic-Germans looking for in Estonian folklore? In her 'Livonian legend' *Am Astjärw* (Schmid 1889), poet Hedda von Schmid gave reasons for her interest in folk tradition:

Wer liebe für seine Heimath hegt,
Auch ihre Sagen im Herzen trägt.[18]
(Schmid 1889, p. 157)

'Folk tales deepen the sense of home. That is why Estonian and Latvian folk tales are more than a trinket for us, the Baltic-Germans' (Stern 1935, p. 8). Such was the aim of Carl von Stern and Lutz Mackensen in publishing Estonian folk legends. Thus, the knowledge about Estonian and Latvian heritage was a part of *Heimatsinn*, or a sense of home. *Heimatstimmen*, *Heimatbuch*, *Heimatarbeit*, *Heimatkunde*, *Heimatbildung*, *Heimatschutz*: as the emigration of Baltic-Germans increased toward the end of the nineteenth century, these notions became more prevalent in the German-language literature of the Baltic region. Homeland had to be preserved through a sense of home. But the notion of home needed revision, as it had begun to encompass more than just the German-speaking Baltic area. We could guess at the need for widening the cultural identity in relation to the idea of a common homeland.

Folk songs and folk legends seemed to be timeless archives, a garner of stories and motifs, where authors picked suitable pieces at their whims. Faehlmann and Kreutzwald – the main mediators of folkloric themes – knew how to make them

attractive to their public. Kreutzwald was accused of using 'stylistic loans from German romanticists' by Estonian critics (see Annist 1966, p. 25), but, undoubtedly, they made Estonian folk tradition more understandable for the Baltic-German audience. Indeed, compared with the social character of Estonian folk ballads and later of Estonian literary ballads, we can see that Baltic-German authors preferred romantic, fairy tale, or pseudo-folkloric themes (like Faehlmann's myths, Kreutzwald's fairy tales) that perfectly met the post-Romanticist *Biedermeier* taste.

The study on the Baltic-German poetry shows that Baltic-German literature is not such a 'closed society' (*geschlossene Gesellschaft*) as its recent history would suggest (Wilpert 2005, p. 19). Cultural communication in Baltic countries did not flow in only one direction (from German to Estonian), but both ways. Baltic-German and Estonian literatures are linked more closely than can be perceived by the respective literary histories. Productive relations and parallels can be found not in the mainstream, but in more secret paths that do not necessarily lead to the manor house or a parsonage. These paths are truly worth discovering.

Notes

1 http://www.utlib.ee/ekollekt/eeva

2 About Herder's activities in collecting folklore, see Jürjo 2004, pp. 398–406.

3 Budberg-Boenningshausen was related to a literary society *Tunnel über der Spree*, founded in Berlin in 1827, among whose members were a number of well-known writers (Theodor Fontaine, Emmanuel Geibel, Felix Dahn, Gottfried Keller, Theodor Storm, and others). The society was devoted to writing ballads. Budberg-Boenningshausen was active also in the Baltic-German literary life; he was a member of the Courland Society for Literature and Art (*Kurländische Gesellschaft für Literatur und Kunst*), gave talks on German literature (on Uhland, Lenau, Kerner, Heine, and others), and intended to start publishing a local literary magazine *Beiträge zur Geschichte und Literatur der Ostseeprovinzen*.

4 Between 1831 and 1836, Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald wrote his German-language ballads based on local legends: *Das Fräulein von Borkholm*, *Kalew's Sohn*, *Das Abenteuer vom Sänger und der schönen Grafentochter zu Wesenberg*, *Die Entstehung der Teufelshöhle*, and *Die Belagerung von Bewerin im Jahre 1207* – only the last one of them was printed (*Das Inland* 1846, No. 22, p. 529).

5 This is the land of legends,
On the banks of the Emajõgi River, on the cliffs of the Baltic Sea!
The water is gurgling at the edge of the wood,
Flowing, blue, to the seashore./
But why do we hear so little about the legend,
Why does it speak so little,
Although it can be seen everywhere?

6 I do not discuss translations of *regilaul* that were issued in academic publications and in the press (translated by H. Neus and C. Reinthal), but only the poems that the authors had included in their collections as adaptions under their own name, meaning the songs that do not claim authenticity.

7 A sister had three brothers,
She sent the first one to mind the cattle,
She sent the second one to pick berries,
She sent the third one fishing.
The first brother came back from the pasture,
The second one returned from picking berries,
But the third one did not come back from the stream.

8 Once upon there was a young woman,
She went to the pasture with her herd.
She found a hen on the pasture
And carefully took it home.
The small hen became a young girl,
Grew up to be a beautiful lithe girl called Salme.

9 Do you know who illuminates Grandfather's chambers?
Look, purple rays are falling in the place
Where his golden glow was just extinguished.
He has just retired,
Still smiling in the counterglow,
But soon he will, in full brilliance, again enter the eastern gates.
Do you know whose hand receives the Sun and takes it to rest
When it rolls down, tired, after its happy journey?
Do you know whose hand rekindles the extinguished light
So that his walk in the heavens testifies to his truthfully fulfilled duty?

10 Do you know the light-giving
Torch in Taara's house?
Now the bosom of a cloud hid
The Sun's eyes to let them rest,
Dream in the embrace of fog.
From the West, where the light fell,
On the last light of sunset
The stubbed candle is carried
To the chamber of the East,
From where the golden light of life
Rises to the sky the next day.
Do you happen to know the strong hand,
Whose palm, hiding the sun,
Took it, reddening, to rest?
Is the other slave familiar to you,
Who lighted the golden life-light
Again in the morning?

11 Do you know the nordic nights?
These blissful hours
When summer has arrived
And in the far-away sky,
Dawn and dusk
Reach their hands out in love to each other,
Embracing and kissing.

12 Edzard Schaper still used this motif later (Schaper 1934–1935, pp. 25–6).

13 My wife, my wife, how did it come
That you laughed out three times today?
I've never seen you doing this,
Tell me, my wife, what has happened to you?
14 My wife, my wife, why did you laugh so
Three times out loud in a church?
You usually are always serious,
You have never even laughed before!
15 The unending rain falls down –
A wide chasm opens in the ground –
Futile cries! The castle is sinking;
The desecrated ground grimly swallows it –
Today, only a deep lake testifies to the place
Where it once stood in its full glory.
16 Suddenly, together with loud rumbling thunder
The powerful rainfall is released:
Fishes, shells, frogs, jellyfish,
Reeds and seagrass break and crumble,
And a cloud sinks down from high above
And becomes a lake.
17 Together with my lake, I will depart at once,
I will carry it away in my veil;
Away from here, where the trust was broken,
I will escape together with my blue waters
To a place, where the haze of memories does not darken my existence,
There, I will spread it out in a more beautiful place!
18 One who loves his homeland
Holds its legends dear to his heart.

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