Journal of Baltic Studies

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

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Merili Metsvahi

To cite this article: Merili Metsvahi (2016) Description of the peasants' sexual behavior in August Wilhelm Hupel's *Topographical Messages* in the context of the history of the Estonian family, Journal of Baltic Studies, 47:3, 301-323, DOI: 10.1080/01629778.2015.1127266

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/01629778.2015.1127266

Published online: 04 Jan 2016.

JOURNAL OF BALTIC STUDIES, 2016
VOL. 47, NO. 3, 301–323
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01629778.2015.1127266

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Description of the peasants' sexual behavior in August Wilhelm Hupel's *Topographical Messages* in the context of the history of the Estonian family

Merili Metsvahi

Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore, University of Tartu, Tartu, Estonia

ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to introduce the work of August Wilhem Hupel, a Baltic German author of the 18th century. The article focuses on the sections in his most voluminous work *Topographische Nachrichten von Lief- und Ehstland* (1774–1782) that describe Estonian peasants' sexuality. Hupel's writings belong to the sources of the history of the Estonian family, a field that has been rediscovered at the beginning of the 21st century. Thanks to the work of Marika Mägi and Nils Blomkvist, a new paradigm for research in this field has been opened up. This article adheres to that paradigm.

ARTICLE HISTORY Received 7 May 2015; Accepted 8 June 2015

KEYWORDS Estonian family history; sexuality; ethnography; peasants' life in the 18th century; Baltic German intellectuals

Introduction

In the early 13th century, German-speaking crusaders colonized the territory of present-day Estonia. From then until 1939, when the Baltic Germans were called back to their 'historical homeland,' Estonia was subject to the impact of German culture. Even at the times when the Estonian territory was ruled by Sweden, Poland, or Russia, the German nobility maintained their privileges and local power. Peasants of Estonian descent, who formed a majority of the inhabitants, spoke a language different from that of their rulers and oppressors. This linguistic separation entailed a cultural distance liable to breed 'othering' stereotypical notions on both sides. In the peasant folklore, stories demonizing the Baltic German landed gentry were popular (see, e.g., Valk 2001). Yet even the Germans – who were able to speak Estonian – felt the need to create a difference between themselves and the Estonians. The period of agrarian and social reforms, lasting from the late 18th to the middle of the 19th century, was therefore a period of excessive stereotyping with many authors depicting Estonians as savage heathens (see Plath 2008, 40).

Due to the social distance and the tendency of higher social strata to 'other' those from lower social strata, there were few intellectuals willing or able to grasp the world of the peasants. One such rare intellectual, August Wilhelm Hupel, studied the life of

CONTACT Merili Metsvahi merili.metsvahi@ut.ee Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore, University of Tartu, Ülikooli 18, Tartu, 50090, Estonia

Estonian and Livonian peasants[1] more closely than any of his contemporary authors. This article highlights a minor part of the studies conducted by Hupel, one of the key figures of the Enlightenment in Livonia. I will examine his four-volume work *Topographische Nachrichten von Lief- und Ehstland*, which presents the most detailed and reliable description of the life of Livonian peasants written in the 18th century. I will concentrate on the parts where Hupel discusses the Estonian peasants' sexual behavior and associated topics. Hupel has more to say on this subject than any of the earlier authors.

Only in the last few decades have Hupel's descriptions of sexual behavior inspired closer discussion and research. In his comprehensive monograph[2] of Hupel, which draws on an awe-inspiring number of sources, the historian Indrek Jürjo has written a separate chapter on the treatment of sexuality in Hupel's writings (see Jürjo 2004, 269–75). Jürjo appreciates Hupel's ethnological approach to the subject of the sexual behavior of peasants, considering it free of moralizing and completely different from the mentality common among the contemporary clergy (Jürjo 2004, 272).

The subchapter 'The sexual exoticism of August Wilhelm Hupel' in the article 'Libertine literature and the erotic of the Baltic enlightenment' by Ulrike Plath, Professor of Baltic German History and Culture at Tallinn University (2014), is comparable in volume to Jürjo's abovementioned chapter. Plath notes that in his treatment of sexuality that Hupel took a path approximating both libertine literature and the medical discourse of sexuality (Plath 2014, 300–01). On one hand, Plath approves of Hupel's methods for collecting information about the peasants' sexual life, similar to the methods used by modern ethnologists (Plath 2014, 305). On the other hand, she emphasizes that Hupel's depictions of sexuality were part of the othering colonial discourse, which helped maintain the social order of the Baltic provinces (Plath 2014, 306).

The option suggested by Plath – to interpret Hupel's descriptions as a manifestation of colonial discourse (Plath 2008, 43) – does not match the objectives of my research. I intend to make use of Hupel's descriptions in approaching the ethnographical reality of his time,[3] as his descriptions in their objectivity present a picture quite comparable to those provided in subsequent research by ethnologists and scholars of folklore in later periods.

Hupel's descriptions are especially valuable owing to the scarcity of source material about the history of the Estonian family. Nevertheless, the scarcity of available sources is not a sufficient explanation why research into history of the family (with historical demography as the sole exception, see, e.g., Palli 2008) has not been widely undertaken until the 21st century. Archaeologist Marika Mägi has published an authoritative paper on the history of the Estonian family, which undermines the notion that a strictly patriarchal regime has been prevalent in Estonia since prehistoric times (Mägi 2009). Mägi has convincingly argued that this notion, which was introduced by Baltic German historians and was predominant throughout the 20th century, is not accurate (Mägi 2009, 81). In the 13th century, the status of Estonian women in society seems to have been considerably higher than in the second half of the 19th century.

I propose in this study to continue Mägi's commendable initiative to acquaint readers with sources of history of the Estonian family. Whereas Mägi, Plath, and Jürjo have mostly referred to Hupel's other works, I intend to examine the *Topographical Messages*. As the descriptions I highlight are inseparable from the author and his life, I will begin the first chapter with a brief outline of Hupel's life and work, referring mostly to Indrek Jürjo's monograph.[4]

The life of August Wilhelm Hupel

A.W. Hupel was born on 25 February 1737 in the town of Buttelstedt in the Duchy of Saxe-Weimar (Sachsen-Weimar) to a clergyman's family; his father was a minister and his mother came from a nobleman's family (Jürjo 2004, 31). Hupel's education began at home; beginning in 1748, he was a student of the Weimar Secondary School and continued his studies in Jena University from 1754 to 1757 (Jürjo 2004, 32–4). Young Hupel first decided to study medicine but changed his mind at his father's insistence after having been at the University for sometime and having attended only lectures on philosophy. Hupel's next choice was to study theology, applying himself steadily also to other subjects including natural sciences, mathematics, and French, Italian, and English (Jürjo 2004, 34; Bartlitz 1983, 195).

Hupel's encyclopedic mind had its roots in his student years, despite the fact that the University of Jena remained in the shadow of the modern neighboring universities of Leipzig, Halle, and Göttingen at the time. Several excellent professors in Jena left their mark on Hupel, of whom Professor Joachim Georg Darjes from the Chair of Politics and Ethics stands out. Darjes, who used creative teaching methods and urged the students to offer their opinions, was an extremely popular professor at the time. The Faculty of Theology on the other hand did not capture Hupel's interest for long. Hupel, who had a pronounced distance for Lutheran orthodoxy later in life, was profoundly shaped by his time as a student at the University of Jena (Jürjo 2004, 34–7).

Hupel had already graduated by the age of 20 and immediately began to look for a position. It was common at the time for young theology candidates to begin their career as a *Hofmeister* (tutor). Hupel was offered two positions, one in Silesia and one in Livonia. An average of 70 or 80 relatively well-paid tutor posts were vacated annually in Estonia and Livonia, and the tutors there could expect not only better wages but also a higher social status than in Germany. So Hupel preferred to start his career as a tutor in Livonia like many other intellectuals from Germany who found their way to the Baltic provinces, and started their career in the same way there in the 18th century (Jürjo 2004, 37–40).

While being a tutor, Hupel started to look for a post as a minister. While the average tutoring period was three years for local theology candidates and six years for immigrants (in the 18th-century Livonia, more than half of the Livonian clergy consisted of immigrants), Hupel was fortunate and found a post as a minister exceptionally fast. After being in Livonia for only two years, in September 1759, he successfully took his Candidate's degree in Theology in Riga. Soon after, he was offered a minister's post in Äksi. About a month after his ordination, on 17 March 1760, he married Christine Elisabeth Dehn, widow of the previous Äksi Minister. Christine was 10 years his senior and had four children from two previous marriages. With the former minister's household, Hupel also assumed the former minister's debts. In 1761, they had a son who was christened August Wilhelm after his father. The fact that several high-ranking persons were invited to act as godparents shows that Hupel had soon gained recognition in his new office. Hupel's wife died two months after the birth of their son. In 1762, the son, who had been ailing since his birth, also passed away (Jürjo 2004, 41–3).

Beginning in 1763, Hupel worked as the Minister of Põltsamaa. He stayed in this parish, where the German population was more numerous than in the surrounding

parishes, for 40 years, shaping it 'into one of the intellectual hubs of Estonia and Livonia for some time in the last decades of the 18th century' (Viires 2005, 242, see also Laugaste 1963, 309). His move to Põltsamaa coincided with his second marriage to Barbara Christine von Spandekau, a woman 14 years his senior. This union was not happy. From surviving correspondence, it is evident that Hupel's studies partly also served as an escape from the unhappiness in his family life (Jürjo 2004, 97). On 15 January 1765, another son was born christened as August Christian. August Christian died in the same year, still in infancy. Hupel's second wife died in 1794 (Jürjo 2004, 45).

Hupel is known to have supported his widowed mother who was living near Leipzig. After the mother's death, Hupel waived his right to inheritance for the benefit of his brothers living in Germany (Jürjo 2004, 60–1). This was due to his wealth and natural kind-heartedness. According to Jürjo, Hupel was one of the wealthiest among the literati of the Baltic Provinces (Jürjo 2004, 59). In Hupel's service records, as well as in the correspondence of his contemporaries, his character and activities were deemed worthy of praise. For example, the Enlightenment man and publicist J.J. von Jannau describes Hupel as 'an exceptionally kind-hearted man' in a private letter sent to an anonymous addressee (Jürjo 2004, 66).

Hupel resigned on 30 December 1804.[5] On the same day, heads of the Livonian clergy submitted an application to the Governor General to dignify the meritorious minister. On 7 March 1805, the leader of Russian Empire – to which Estonia belonged at the time – Alexander I, who on an earlier trip to Livonia had met with the renowned clergyman, appointed him to Consistorial Counselor. It has been mentioned that a visit to Hupel, one of Livonia's celebrities, was part of the cultural program for several visitors to these parts in the late 18th century (Jürjo 2004, 85).

In May 1805, Hupel moved to Paide, one of the smallest towns of Estonia and Livonia at the time (Jürjo 2004, 107). In 1811, he wrote in a letter to Superintendent Karl Gottlob Sonntag about his life in Paide: 'Being in tolerable good health, I spend my days partly reading, partly rendering small services; also, I exhort visiting friends to doubt the daily accounts of recent events that often circulate among people' (Jürjo 2004, 108). Most likely due to his modesty or his cautious nature, Hupel ordered the executors of his will to 'burn all his manuscripts without exception' on 30 March 1818 (Jürjo 2004,113). The executor followed his orders to the letter. Jürjo writes: 'We may but imagine all the treasures of topography and cultural history, along with the voluminous correspondence that had piled up in the drawers throughout the years, fed to the flames once and for all' (Jürjo 2004, 113). Hupel died on 6 January 1819. He was buried in the vicinity of Paide and his grave fell into neglect long ago, making it impossible to discover its site today (Jürjo 2004, 114).

A.W. Hupel's work and research

Hupel's foremost duties were those of a minister. His primary task was to prepare and deliver sermons. He had to hold services in both German and Estonian; the German service typically immediately followed the Estonian, but was much shorter (see Hupel 1777, 97). The baptisms,[6] weddings, funerals, and communion to the members of his congregation were equally important. However, it is known, that in isolated villages with poor roads, peasants often baptized their own children, who were later blessed by the minister in church (Hupel 1777, 98). Twice a year, the minister was to give catechetic instruction to children approaching confirmation

age. Hupel gave this instruction to peasant children in winter and to German children in summer. Furthermore, before a wedding, each young couple was to receive so-called bride-and-groom counseling (Jürjo 2004, 63). Hupel also had to perform these couples counseling sessions. A Livonian minister's other duties included keeping church records (Hupel 1777, 105; Jürjo 2004, 172), visiting the diseased (Hupel 1777, 103), visiting the congregation members (Hupel 1777, 105, see also Jürjo 2004, 65), and visiting the schools of his parish (Hupel 1777, 104). As the Põltsamaa parish was considerably larger than Livonian average – both geographically and in number of inhabitants – the visits were extremely time-consuming for Hupel (Jürjo 2004, 64, 46).

Hupel excelled in his duties as Minister. He did always more than his official duties required (Jürjo 2004, 65). His heartfelt commitment to pastoral work is obvious from the accounts of his contemporaries (e.g. 'a paragon of a good minister in every respect,' see Jürjo 2004, 66), as well as the frequent offers he received to follow a clerical career. By 1773, he was offered the highest position in the Lutheran hierarchy in Estonia – that of the Head Pastor of the Tallinn Cathedral. He declined the offer, as well as other prestigious positions offered in Riga and St. Petersburg. In 1798, Hupel renounced even the absolute summit in any Livonian minister's career – the post of the General Superintendent of Livonia (Jürjo 2004, 60–2).

Although Hupel had considerable accomplishments in several fields,[7] it is his literary activities that deserve the central place in his bibliography (Jürjo 2004, 97). The number of works written, composed, edited, and translated by Hupel exceeds 60 (Vihma 1969, 220).

Before having published any of his own writings, Hupel translated works by other authors. By 1766, he translated Peter Ernst Wilde's popular medical journal '*Lühhike öppetus*' [*A Brief Instruction*] from German to Estonian (Jürjo 2004, 367), which remained the sole Estonian-language journal in the 18th century (a total of 41 issues were published, Jürjo 2004, 216–17). This translation along with the translation of Wilde's other popular medical journal '*Arsti ramat nende juhhatamiseks, kes tahtwad többed ärra-arwada ning parrandada*' [*A Medical Book for Those Wishing to Recognize and Remedy Maladies*] were the forerunners of Estonian popular science literature (Jürjo 2004, 368). Hupel had acquired his Estonian mainly from communication with Estonian-speaking members of his congregation (Bartlitz 1983, 199), explaining why linguists have considered the translations' vocabulary to be idiomatic and nuanced (Jürjo 2004, 367).

As all the intellectuals were German speaking in Livonia and Estonia at that time – Estonian was the language of the peasants only – Hupel was the most significant researcher of the Estonian language and vocabulary in the late 18th century. (Jürjo 2004, 367). His '*Estnische Sprachlehre für beide Hauptdialekten den revalschen und den dörptschen; nebst einem vollständigen Wörterbuch*' *[Estonian Language Textbook for Both Main Dialects, Reval and Dorpat; and a Complete Dictionary*, 1780], containing a grammar of Estonian as well as Estonian-German and German-Estonian dictionaries, added little to the accomplishments of his predecessors. Its novelty was in the fact that Hupel was the first ever to bring the Northern and Southern dialects of the Estonian language between the same cover (Jürjo 2004, 379–81). His textbook was more comprehensive than earlier publications of the same kind and was later diligently used by 'several generations of students of the Estonian language' (Jürjo 2004, 407). In 1804, Hupel completed the amended manuscript for the second edition

(published first in 1818), which contained more vocabulary words (20,000). Vocabulary was, in fact, the forte of Hupel's language studies (Jürjo 2004, 383–84).

Hupel was also interested in the vocabulary of the Baltic Germans. In 1795b, as a result of many years' collection work, he published a long article '*Idiotikon der deutschen Sprache in Lief- und Ehstland*' ['Idioticon of the German spoken in Livonia and Estonia'], which was also published as a separate book containing about 2,500 vocabulary words. This book is a valuable source for scholars of Baltic German culture and language history (Jürjo 2004, 417).

In 1778, Hupel sent some folk songs to Johann Gottfried Herder – the most influential and most widely known representative of German intellectual history of the 18th century – who had approached him directly with this request. Hupel had collected the songs with the help of friends and acquaintances. All in all, Herder received 79 Latvian and Estonian folk songs via Hupel (Jürjo 2004, 398–400).

In the early 1770s, Hupel founded a reading society in Põltsamaa, engaging all educated readers in the neighborhood (Jürjo 2004, 84). He ordered books from Germany through Riga publisher Johann Friedrich Hartknoth, so that the reading society kept up-to-date with the latest publications also being read by readers in Germany (Jürjo 2004, 95, 123). Thousands of books circulated in the society – most of them on history, politics, and geography, but there were also newspapers and magazines (Jürjo 2004, 127–28, 135). The Põltsamaa Reading Society was active for almost 30 years. Then Paul I ascended to the Imperial throne of Russia, and his reactionary policies finished the reading society's activities (Jürjo 2004, 141).

Hupel contributed considerably to journals and magazines published in the Baltic Provinces, in Germany, and in St. Petersburg. In 1781, he founded a magazine of his own: *Nordische Miscellaneen* [*The Nordic Miscellanea*], with its sequel, *Neue Nordische Miscellaneen* [*New Nordic Miscellanea*], appeared for the next 18 years. Hupel's journal can be considered a territorial publication (Jürjo 2004, 233). Hupel himself published a third of the total articles (Jürjo 2004, 239).

Besides writing articles for his own and other magazines, Hupel also acted as a reviewer for several scientific articles to be published in Germany. A considerable amount of the articles he reviewed were dedicated to the issue of Russia. As a response to erroneous ideas about Russia in many books by foreign authors, as well as the widespread derogatory and disdainful attitude toward Russia, Hupel published a comprehensive two-volume work *Versuch der Staatsverfassung des Russischen Reichs darzustellen* [*An Attempt to Depict the Social Order in the Russian Empire*] (Jürjo 2004, 334) between 1791 and 1793. In this book, Hupel presents himself as an 'unconditionally loyal citizen of the Russian Empire' (Jürjo 2004, 335), praising the government, politics, and the socioeconomic situation in Russia (Jürjo 2004, 355). By and large, Hupel was a literary figure who shared the outlook of the Berlin Enlightenment – he was extremely liberal in matters of religion and sought to avoid political criticism (Jürjo 2004, 431).

Topographische Nachrichten von Lief- und Ehstland

The four-volume work *Topographische Nachrichten von Lief- und Ehstland* (1774; 1777; 1782; 1789) can be considered Hupel's magnum opus, mostly modeled on Anton Friedrich Büsching's *Neue Erdbeschreibung* [*The New Earth Description*], a popular work that was progressive for its time and started beginning in 1754. Unlike his

predecessors, Büsching obtained material for his publications from widespread correspondence covering entire Europe (Jürjo 2004, 147–48).

Among Hupel's own work, *An das Lief- und Ehstländische Publikum* [*To the Livonian and Estonian Audience*], published anonymously in Riga in 1772, can be seen as a forerunner to the *Topographical Messages* (Jürjo 2004, 149). In this book, Hupel provides a critical survey of the situation in Livonia and Estonia and proposes several reforms, though he refrains from any principal rearrangement of the estates in the Estonian and Livonian society (Jürjo 2004, 431). In the *Topographical Messages*, the tone of critical publicism is less pronounced than in *An das Lief- und Ehstländische Publikum*, and the topics approached in the latter are discussed much more extensively (Jürjo 2004, 153).

Although Hupel initially planned to publish the *Topographical Messages* in two volumes, he ended up with three volumes (Jürjo 2004, 154). A major part of the first volume is dedicated to the topographical description of Livonia and Estonia including towns, counties, and parishes. In addition, Hupel discusses the topics related to nature, climate, state and estate institutions, and the inhabitants.

Hupel's second volume is the most significant for cultural and social history. A major part of the volume deals with economic matters. Hupel admonishes the landlords to treat their peasants better, describes domestic animals, agricultural work, and much more. Hupel provides a detailed description of trade in major Baltic harbor cities and a survey of proto-industrialization. He also offers a closer view of the three estates – noblemen, peasants, and the clergy (Jürjo 2004, 155–58). Although Hupel himself did not attribute much significance to the descriptions of peasants in his writings, it is this part of the work that later has become an important, much-cited text (Jürjo 2004, 156), although is not yet available either in English or in Estonian. In this article, I focus mostly on the descriptions of peasant life in the second volume.

Hupel received information for the *Topographical Messages* mostly from correspondence with contributors. In his introduction to Volume II, Hupel provides the name, status, and addresses of 53 contributors. Jürjo has succeeded in tracking down 36 more correspondents. In fact, the number of contributors was considerably larger than 89. Most correspondents were ministers (34 among them can be identified), followed by noblemen (nine of them women), officials, Town Councilors, merchants, schoolteachers, and a physician (Jürjo 2004, 167–68). There were more contributors from Livonia than from Estonia, more from the country than from the cities, and many more (68 among them can be identified) from the Estonian-speaking than from the Latvian-speaking territory (Jürjo 2004, 168).

Finding contributors and organizing their deliveries required enormous work from Hupel: he not only wrote letters, but also visited people at home and, for the third volume, printed his appeals and questionnaires. Hupel had 400 copies of an advertisement '*Avertissement und Bitt an alle Herren Lief- und Ehstländer*' ['Advertisement and Appeal to All Estonian and Livonian Gentlemen'] printed in Riga in 1777, where he asked 'patriotic-minded men' to let him know about 'things that are noteworthy or in need of improvement at their place of residence' (Jürjo 2004, 168). Above all, he turned to ministers, whom he provided with a questionnaire about their parishes. In addition to asking Hartknoch to spread the advertisement and doing the same himself, Hupel sent it to several ministers' home addresses in a letter and published it in the advertising papers of Riga and Tallinn (Jürjo 2004, 169). Several of Hupel's friends and acquaintances tried to find him contributors among noblemen (Jürjo 2004,

170). In some cases, Hupel met resistance: either fearing extra work or on religious considerations, the ministers regarded Hupel's work as pointless. Fortunately, though, a helpful nobleman willing to contribute to Hupel's research could be found in almost every parish (Jürjo 2004, 171).

Hupel and the topic of sexuality

The topic of sexuality comes into focus in Hupel's first publications, though these have almost no connection to the Baltic provinces. In the first half of the 1770s, Hupel published four works approaching philosophy on popular level, some of them anonymously and some under his own name. The first addressed religious tolerance. The next three works discussed the philosophical aspects of procreation, a topic that a broader circle of Enlightenment thinkers also took interest in (Jürjo 2004, 419). *Vom Zweck der Ehen, ein Versuch, die Heurath der Castraten und die Trennung unglücklicher Ehen zu* vertheidigen [*On the Purpose of Marriages, an Attempt to Defend the Marriage of Castrates, and the Divorce of Unhappy Marriages*] (Riga, 1771) and *Origenes oder von der Verschneidung, über Matth. 19. V. 10–12. Ein Versuch, zur Ehrenrettung einiger gering geachteten Verschnittenen* [*Origenes, or On Castration, on Matthew 19. 5. 10–12, An Attempt to Vindicate the Honour of Some Despised Castrates*] address issues of sexual ethics (Jürjo 2004, 97–98, 418–19). In the fourth treatise *Anmerkungen und Zweifel über die gewöhnlichen Lehrsätze vom Wesen der menschlichen und der thierischen Seele* [*Remarks and Doubts on Customary Notions of the Essence of Human and Animal Soul*], Hupel is also fascinated by matters related to sexuality (see Jürjo 2004, 431). According to Jürjo, *Anmerkungen und Zweifel*… 'is amazing in its openness of spirit, and lack of consideration for Biblical dogmas' and 'shows Hupel as an educated and very well-read man' (Jürjo 2004, 428).

These works, representing popular philosophy borne by the spirit of Enlightenment, have been neglected by Baltic historians and Jürjo is the first Estonian scholar to have drawn attention to them (Jürjo 2004, 419; Viires 2005, 242). However, these popular philosophy works have been studied by scholars of the German language and literature, who believe that both *Von den Zweck*… and *Origenes*[8] have had an impact on the famous *Sturm und Drang* poet and playwright Jacob Michael Reinhold Lenz (Jürjo 2004, 425–26).

One of the terms that Lenz likely borrowed from Hupel's early works is conjugal 'assistance.' Hupel namely gainsaid the earlier Christian notion, which saw procreation as the only purpose of marriage. In his writing *Vom Zweck der Ehen*…, he provides the following brief definition of marriage: 'The purpose of marriage is to give assistance for each other's welfare' (Hupel 1771, 79). According to Hupel, 'assistance' (*Hülfleistung*) also means mutual satisfaction of the sexual drive. Hupel substantiates his claims both with Biblical quotes (Hupel 1771, 79) and the 'common sense' of Livonian peasants: 'If you ask a Livonian peasant why he wants to marry, he will reply that he needs a helper who would assist him: do the washing, sew clothes. Without pretense, he follows Nature, his simplicity is his wisdom' (Hupel 1771, 71–2).

Hupel's attitude to matters of sexuality is much more liberal than that displayed by many of his contemporaries: 'Compared to Darjes, his professor at the University, who denounced sexual intercourse during pregnancy as "fornication," Hupel is much more liberal, and does not consider sexual intercourse with a pregnant or infertile spouse to be fornication' (Jürjo 2004, 420–21; Hupel 1771, 82).

Hupel also had liberal views on the matter of divorce. He wrote that unhappy marriages should not be held together by force. Hupel was against the obligation of marriage after engagement and argued for facilitation of the divorce procedures (Jürjo 2004, 421). These attitudes also reflect his own experience. Jürjo has, on several occasions, alluded to associations between Hupel's philosophy and his private life,[9] while almost failing to point out that his views simultaneously must have been also shaped by observation of the lives of his parishioners, as well as emotions and ideas born from communication with them. From court records and other sources, it is evident that there existed a considerable gap between the peasants' way of life and the sexual morality of the church. On many occasions, the serfs escaped, abandoning their wives who then found another man to cohabit with (see, e.g., Jürjo 2004, 71). The divorce procedures were extremely complicated and expensive; official divorces were therefore rare in Estonia and Livonia in the 18th century (Jürjo 2004, 72). As minister, Hupel had to follow strict clerical rules and often found himself in a difficult situation: the desires of the members of his congregation did not conform to the rules of the Church. The Livonian consistory records contain a great number of such cases. On several occasions, Hupel attempted to fend for the members of his congregation, asking for permission to marry two people committed to each other, while the Livonian Consistory prohibited the marriage on the grounds of adultery. Instead, the Consistory required Hupel to turn to secular court instances to 'make an end to the improper union' (Jürjo 2004, 70). There was also an instance when, to the contrary, Hupel was forced to marry a couple against his better knowledge who had separated after their engagement (Jürjo 2004, 72).

Hupel's interest in matters related to sexuality was not unknown to his contemporaries. For instance, Johann Martin Hehn, Rector of Tartu Town School, wrote to Tartu scholar Friedrich Konrad Gadebusch that he had recognized the author of the anonymous treatise *Anmerkungen und Zweifel…* mostly from his 'favorite idea on the procreation of Man' (Jürjo 2004, 440).

Hupel described the sexual life of Estonians in his work *Topographische Nachrichten*, especially in Volume II, as well as in articles published in his journal, such as '*Ueber den Werth der Jungfrauschaft under Ehsten und Letten*' ['On the Value of Virginity Among Estonians and Latvians'] (1791), '*Ueber das Hauben der ehstnischen Dirnen*' ['On the Capping of Estonian Maidens'] (1795a), '*Fragen über den Anlass zum Kindermord, in Lief- und Ehstland*' [The Occurrence of Infanticide in Livonia and Estonia] (1790), and '*Ueber die Heirath zwischen solchen Personen die vorher miteinander Ehebruch getrieben haben*' ['On Marrying Persons Who Have Committed Adultery Together'] (1791). Previous studies have mostly highlighted the first of those articles, which addressed the topic of virginity.

Hupel was inspired to address the topic of virginity after reading the analysis of professor Christoph Meiners in the article '*Ueber die Begriffe verschiedener Völker von dem Werthe der Jungfrauschaft*' ['The Notions of Different Nationalities on the Value of Virginity'], published in *Göttingisches Historisches Magasin* in 1787 (Meiners 1787). In his article, Meiners contrasted the mentality of the Slavs, Tartars, Kyrgyz, Chuvash, Chechen, Poles, Moldovans, Valachians, and Celts, with the attitudes of the Mongols, Kamchadals, Lapps, native American peoples, Africans, Hottentots, and Southern Asians. The latter group, he asserts, despise virginity, and offer their wives to Europeans so that they could be deflowered (Meiners 1787; see also Plath 2014, 301–02). Hupel complements Meiners' treatise with original ethnographic material,

pointing out that the idea of virginity is unknown to Estonians and Latvians. Hupel convincingly proves that the idea of virginity has no cultural significance for Estonians and Latvians, nor do they understand it to be a physiological fact.[10] Hupel's remark that Estonian married women – especially elderly married women – are not shy to discuss such topics also points to egalitarian gender relations between Estonians: 'You can learn things from them that you would not dare ask or even desire to know, but of virginity and how to recognize it, they know nothing' (Hupel 1791, 291).

Descriptions of the sexual life of Estonian peasants in *Topographische Nachrichten*

Considering Hupel's interest for the topics of sexuality and sexual ethics, it is no wonder that he takes up the subject also in his voluminous *Topographical Messages*, a work attempting to address all aspects of the lives of people representing different estates. I will proceed to make a survey of the aspects of sexual life that Hupel discusses in *Topographical Messages*, while omitting his treatment of wedding and celebration customs, which also include sexual motives (see, e.g., Hupel 1777, 174–75, 192, 1774, 156–57; see also Kruusberg, Aleksander 1920, 18), due to the limited space of this article.

The treatment of extramarital sexual relationships in Hupel's works mostly concerns young unmarried people, as after marriage – or in fact, after a pregnancy had been discovered – couples were deeply devoted to each other (Hupel 1777, 138). Yet before marriage, no strict sexual restraints were known. Hupel especially considers Estonians (when compared to Latvians) to be of a voluptuous disposition (Hupel 1777, 136). Estonians see nothing shameful in sexual intercourse, he writes (Hupel 1777, 136, 1774, 514). The fact that people sleep in stables, barns, and haylofts during the summer months offers a wonderful opportunity for sexual intercourse. Many situations involving outdoor labor – with no one keeping an eye on young people – are also conducive to sexual intercourse. Finding a girl asleep in a boy's arms is nothing to be ashamed of for Estonian peasants. When asked about it, they reply that there is nothing evil in it as this is the custom. (Hupel 1777, 136) There is also no social stigma with sleeping side by side when two individuals are tired and in need of rest (Hupel 1777, 137).

For a girl, it is almost an honor to have had intercourse with a young man. Some girls use all kinds of tricks to ensure a young man's company for the night (Hupel 1777, 137). Nevertheless, it is considered indecent to have intercourse with a German or a Russian, as this might arouse suspicions, but those who never have had intercourse deserve no special respect (*ist auch nicht sonderlich geachtet*) (Hupel 1777, 137; see also Hupel 1774, 515).

Young girls can be identified from married women by their bare head. As soon as a pregnancy is discovered, they will be capped and from then on be called married women (*Weiber*). Hupel relates about old maids who confess to being pregnant because they want to get 'under the cap,' and belong with the women. Other women tell the minister that they are not pregnant, and therefore think of themselves as chaste,[11] but still ask to be capped, partly to avoid being called old maids, and partly to escape working at the manor, as capped women could not be required to do that. For the same reason, several women long for an illegitimate child (Hupel 1777, 137).

Very few parents are dismayed when their unmarried daughter gets pregnant (Hupel 1777, 136). In Hupel's opinion, it is not easy for women to discover their own pregnancy; it is often the mother or the housekeeper who notices it when women are washing. When a pregnancy is discovered, the father is immediately informed and 'if the parents have nothing against him (some parents would rather keep their daughter at home as a whore if the boy does not look like a useful son in law), a marriage is proposed.' After that, the girl is capped by her mother or in her mother's presence. This process occurs even when one of the parties does not consent to the marriage (Hupel 1777, 137). Hupel states that capping on the pretext of pregnancy prevents infanticides (Hupel 1777, 137–38). His opinion was contrary to the opinion expressed by the officials, who first regarded the capping of single mothers to be one of the reasons that could lead peasants to infanticide. But as it came out later, Hupel had been right when he argued that it rather prevents infanticides (although he admitted that the main reason for infanticide was the extreme poverty of Estonian peasants). When the regulation was introduced in 1792 that prohibited the capping of unmarried pregnant women and commanded to take off the cap from the single mothers, it could not be implemented in many parishes, because of the reaction of the people who were very much against this new regulation and who regarded it shameful for a woman when she had a child in her lap to be bare headed. So the church officials and the people found a compromise in the 19th century, and single mothers started to wear a different cap than married women from that time (Hupel 1791, 564–567; Mägi 2009, 94).

Consistory court records reveal that young people often had intercourse for quite a long period without becoming pregnant (Hupel 1777, 137; see also Hupel 1774, 514). Many couples used the method of *coitus interruptus* (which Hupel calls onanism) to avoid becoming pregnant (Hupel 1774, 514, 1777, 137; see also Jürjo 2004, 271). This method is how Estonians had so few children born out of wedlock. For instance, in the Põltsamaa parish in 1771, 260 Estonian and 12 German children were born. Five of the Estonian children were born out of wedlock compared to one German child (Hupel 1777, 27). In the Duchy of Livonia, it was the duty of churchwardens to keep an eye on unmarried women and report their pregnancy to the minister (Hupel 1777, 138). If an unmarried woman had a difficult delivery, the old women surrounding her would ask about the child's real father, as it was believed that an honest confession would alleviate the throes. The question was often followed by an earnest confession. If the pains continued, the father would be called to the spot and told to hold the parturient woman on his lap, which was supposed to bring relief. Both Estonian and German married couples belonging to different estates used this method (Hupel 1777, 138).

Hupel also writes that the very Germans who exhaust Estonians with work and despise them so much seek the highest pleasures in the bosom of peasant girls (Hupel 1777, 124). Thus, many a nobleman's slaves may have been conceived either by himself or his father (Hupel 1777, 124). Hupel also mentions the case of a nobleman who had the habit of asking maids to come and wash in the sauna and to have a sexual intercourse with them there. In this case, a slave girl stabbed her master in the sauna, having previously warned him that she would kill him if he was aggressive toward her (Hupel 1777, 138). Hupel adds that a peasant boy with the same intentions in the same situation might not have met the same fate.

Marriage between individuals of the same blood relation was abhorred among the peasants (Hupel 1777, 138).[12] Yet men often married a woman impregnated by another man, if this man was not a Russian or a German (Hupel 1777, 138). If a single woman with a child was a good worker, she easily found a husband (Hupel 1774, 516). Intercourse with Germans was feared as pregnancy would be undesirable.

Sometimes one could hear of girls seeking sexual embraces by the age of 13, while marriage could occur already by age 16 (Hupel 1777, 138). Estonian men were considered sexually mature at the age of 17 and women by the age of 15. Women were still fertile at the age of 46, sometimes even as old as 50 (Hupel 1777, 19).

The French abbé Chappe d'Auteroche had allegedly written about Russia that as parents and children slept in the same room, sexual intercourse must have taken place in the children's presence. This notion, which Hupel deems fantastical, is quite appropriate for a traveler wishing to relate of outlandish circumstances in Hupel's opinion (Hupel 1777, 139). With reference to J.J. Volkmann's work *Nachrichten von Italien* [*Messages from Italy*], Hupel states that in hot weather, parents and children in Napoli sleep side to side naked in the same chamber, but this is still hardly likely to lead to sexual intercourse between the parents in the presence of children (Hupel 1777, 139). In Livonia, peasants sleep with the whole family in the dwelling's sole heated room, with the wife and the husband on a higher platform serving as a bed. People would cover themselves with clothes, not a special blanket, as the Latvians do. Children and servants sleep on the floor, on top of the oven, or on a board on the bars under the roof (otherwise used for drying grain). In summer, though, all sleep in different places, in the warehouse or the cowshed. At such places, it would be easy to have intercourse without being witnessed. Love is even made outdoors and in the fields where there are no witnesses (Hupel 1777, 139).

Regarding punishment for sexual misconduct, Hupel writes that in earlier times, fornication (premarital sex) and adultery were punished with a fine or a flogging, involving penitence in the church (Hupel 1774, 515). This meant that the offending couple had to sit in a special pillory in the church, visible to all churchgoers.[13] In 1764, though, this chastisement was replaced – reasonably in Hupel's opinion – with fines. The fine depended on the status of the offenders and whether they were married or not. Peasants, both male and female, had to pay one ruble if they were married, and 50 kopecks if they were not (Hupel 1774, 515). In case of peasants, the fine could be replaced by flogging (Hupel 1774, 515). The ulterior motive behind the milder punishment was to diminish the number of infanticides. Hupel claims that the Estonians believe the slaughter of one's own offspring to be a most abhorrent crime and were aware that it was punishable by law. For that reason, there were neighborhoods where no infanticides have ever occurred (Hupel 1774, 517). In other neighborhoods, though, there have been infanticides, the main motive for crime being extreme poverty (Hupel 1774, 516). Some ministers have introduced rules stating that the biological father must give something to the girl: either three *Tonne* (a measure equal to about 133 liters) of grain, a cow, or three rubles. In most cases, though, the ministers tried, by explaining the laws of Moses (the 'ten commandments') to make young men marry the girl in question (Hupel 1774, 517). There was also a special punishment for the betrothed who had had intercourse during engagement. The betrothed were punished by the church with a fine of 80 kopecks, or one ruble in some parishes (Hupel 1774, 517). If the bride tried to hide her pregnancy and come bareheaded to the wedding, she had to pay an additional fine of two thalers in silver coins for the misuse

of a chaste maiden's bridal attribute. The ministers often overlooked this offense, according to Hupel. In fact, virtually every couple had had intercourse prior to the wedding, so the fines were only applied to those who were exposed by pregnancy too soon before the wedding (Hupel 1774, 518).

Hupel writes that bestiality was practiced, but the occurrences were less and less frequent (Hupel 1774, 517, 1777, 138–39). It is mostly young men and cattle that are involved (Hupel 1774, 517). Married, as well as single, men practice bestiality. He mentions a man who had proceeded to an animal directly after having had intercourse with his wife (Hupel 1777, 139). Hupel believes that this crime will disappear as the education level increases, and that it had already disappeared in several parishes (Hupel 1774, 517).[14]

Previous research into the history of the Estonian family

One of the reasons why scholars first turned to Hupel's descriptions of sexual life in the 21st century[15] is their exceptional content. Until the late 18th to early 19th century, no other author had presented a survey of the sexuality of Estonian peasants that would even remotely have paralleled Hupel's descriptions in richness of ethnographical detail.[16] Most authors had addressed these topics much more briefly, and often from a stranger's perspective, without closer understanding of the local circumstances.

Therefore, several historical sources contain information that later researchers have only been able to interpret in an emphatically patriarchal context. For example, Sebastian Münster in *Cosmographey*,[17] a work published in 1544 (Laugaste 1963, 24), and Christian Kelch in his *History of Livonia*, published in 1695, write about the wedding custom involving a violent abduction of the bride (Kelch [1695] 2004, 30). Although some observations on women's independence and considerable right of self-determination[18] can be found in mediaeval or early modern writings, the prevalent interpretational framework in Estonian research has, until quite recently, favored the notion of women subjected to the dominance of men in every conceivable respect.

Even the comprehensive survey on Estonian wedding customs published in 1973 includes the dubious piece of information that in ancient Estonian society, men either bought or 'plucked' (i.e. abducted) a girl of their liking to get a wife (Tedre 1973, 9). In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, convincing proof has been presented to establish that abduction of women was unknown to Estonians in both the ancient and the prehistoric periods (Mägi 2009, 89–90; Järs 1993, 11–4). Still, a girl could be 'plucked' by her own consent, if the parents had not agreed to the marriage (Järs 1993, 12; see also von Luce 1827, 72–4).

A great deal of historical information about Estonian peasant women would have also allowed for interpretation in the context of matriarchal theory that emerged in the West in the second half of the 19th century in the framework of an evolutionary approach to culture (see Eller 2006). Yet, it seems that Friedrich Engels' work *Origin of the Family, Private Property, and State*, which was based on Bachofen and Morgan's matriarchal theory and translated into Estonian by 1935, met with a muted response in Estonia.[19] The Estonian translation of Engels's book told of Celts, native Indian tribes, Pacific Islanders, and many American Indians traditionally having enjoyed great premarital sexual freedom, and American Indian women without any shame regarding

their illegitimate children (Engels 1958, 33–63). In those familiar with the works of Hupel and other authors describing the Estonians' sexual behavior, this information should have evoked associations with the sexual behavior of Estonians. However, I am not aware of any such reference to Engels.

The picture of the history of the Estonian family that has been presented is full of contradictions. On one hand, these contradictions are a result of the failure of the describers of peasant life to look at the local circumstances in a broader context and not through the lens of their own patriarchal culture of origin. Another reason for the contradictions is the western European orientation of the research discourse, which has left little latitude to the voices of researchers contesting the Baltic German historians' 19th-century claim of the perpetuity of patriarchal order in this region thus far. Therefore, contradictory opinions about the history of family can be found even today. In the comprehensive work *Seksuaalsus Eestis* [*Sexuality in Estonia*], sentences about patriarchal (and bride-abducting) social order, on one hand, and on the egalitarian society, on the other hand, can stand side by side:

> In the early 16th century Johannes IV Kievel, the Archbishop of Hapsal, forbade the abduction of women on pain of death, but the tradition continued nevertheless for many decades to come. Although gender roles here and in the surrounding regions have been similar, there has been no major gender opposition in Estonia. (Rammul 2006, 14)

The fact that far from all information about the sexual life and customs of Estonian peasants could fit into the pattern of a strongly patriarchal society can be one of the reasons why no researcher in nearly a century has ventured to assemble all known material about the history of the Estonian family in a single book. The only discussions of the history of the family published as complete works are by two amateur historians from the early 20th century: *Eesti armuilmast* ['On the Estonians' World of Love'] by Märt Raud (1915), of which a slightly amended version *Eesti perekond aegade voolus* [*The Estonian Family in Changing Times*] was published in 1961 after Raud's emigration to Sweden; and Aleksander Kruusberg's *Esiisade enneajalooline õigus I* [*The Prehistoric Law of our Ancestors*, Vol. I, 1920].[20] Both Kruusberg's and Raud's writings present an ambivalent picture of the Estonian family and sexuality. Despite all their shortcomings (see, e.g., Kirss 2004, 140–41), these works render a survey of part of the sources available to a researcher of the history of the family when read with necessary source criticism and keeping in mind that many notions prevalent in research at the time they were written are now outdated.

It should be pointed out that the initial purpose of Märt Raud's work was not scholarly but rather practical and ethical. As a school headmaster, he became involved in a heated argument with the Minister of Kadrina about the leisure activities of the local young people. Among other things, Raud and the minister disagreed upon whether *simmans* (village dances) were conducive to *ööhulkumine* (nightly roamings, boys' night visits to girls).[21] The minister, worried about the morals of young people, informed Raud that unfortunately, '…there were mothers in the neighborhood who were happy about boys sleeping with their daughters' (Raud 1961, 9).[22] In the light of what Raud himself, at the age of 24, had experienced and heard from his parents, the minister's words felt like aspersing the young people to him. Raud went on to compile a 50-page remonstrance *Küla kiiged* ['Village Swings'], which he sent to the amateur historian Villem Reiman for review in 1905. Reiman praised the young man's work, but thought it to be too long to be published in a newspaper, while being too short for a

separate book. He advised Raud to collect more lore on the subject. Raud compiled a questionnaire about popular entertainment and family traditions and set up a correspondence with several contributors to the newspaper *Postimees*. In 1909, he took extended leave from customary work to go 'travelling around his country' in order to check questionable information and interview elderly people. Just as Hupel, Raud also notes that it is easy for a male interviewer to talk to elderly women: 'This convinced me that elderly people, also women, were prepared to discuss even the most intimate matters freely, when you had won their trust and started the conversation in the right key' (Raud 1961, 11). The material Raud collected is of great interest, although presented in a highly moralizing context.

Kruusberg, unlike Raud and Hupel, had no network of correspondents supplying him with information; besides information from written sources, he also made use of cases he himself had seen or heard of. Reading Kruusberg's work, we should keep in mind that at the time, an evolutionist approach to culture was predominant in Estonia.

Hupel's descriptions of sexuality in the context of research into the history of the Estonian family

If Hupel's descriptions of the sexual life of Estonians seem somewhat impervious to interpretation within the paradigm presuming that the society had remained patriarchal from ancient times to this day and age, they fit smoothly into the new paradigm of research into the history of the Estonian family started by Marika Mägi. In her research, Mägi partly follows the work of the Swedish historian Nils Blomkvist, who has suggested that before the 13th century, the social order in the territory of present Estonia was both matrilineal and matrilocal.

Blomkvist's research strongly relies on historical legal sources, most importantly on a document previously largely neglected by historians, a law code from the early 13th century, the so-called Livonian-Latgalian law (see Blomkvist 2005, 182–94). This document, in Low German, was first written for the Livs in 1212 after the Livonian uprising and the Christian baptism of the Livs. Ten years later, the same law code was adapted to the Latgals, although the text may have been slightly abridged. According to the Livonian Chronicle of Henry, a written law code was valid among Estonians from 1214; this must have been the same law or a slightly altered version. Unfortunately, the code that applied to Estonians from 1214 has not been preserved. What has been preserved – in the form of a 16th-century transcript – is the Livonian-Latgalian law recorded in the 1220s, which contains three provisions only conceivable in the context of a matrilineal and matrilocal society. For example:

> Then a man takes a wife. He shall then let all his goods follow his woman. If he wishes to leave her, he will lose arable land and goods. And his sons and daughters shall possess them. To prevent the son[23] from taking the inheritance away, it will be given to the daughters and the mother. (Clause 10; Blomkvist 2005, 184)

The fact that a transfer from matrilineal to patrilineal inheritance system took place in the 13th century is corroborated by the Curonian law, recorded in 1267, which built on the earlier code written for Livs, but several clauses had been added. The clause on marriage confirmed that the man's property was transferred to the wife, but that did not include his fields, pastures, or beehives. This text already stipulates the male offspring's prerogative to inherit: The sons shall ensure their sisters' dowry, and '…

only if there are no sons, does all property go to the widow, who may keep it with her daughters, as long as she "remains without a man"' (Blomkvist 2005, 191–92; see also Nazarova 1979, 191–92; Mägi 2009, 84). Evidently, a transfer from matrilocality to patrilocality took place sometime in the 13th century – after the marriage, the husband no longer moved in with the wife's family; women started moving to their husband's household instead.

Blomkvist considers it significant that up to the 14th–16th century, no legislation applying to the peasants of Old Livonia refers to the family or systems of inheritance (Blomkvist 2005, 196–97). Blomkvist believes that those matters have not been mentioned because they were not regulated in written form in the early Middle Ages so as to leave the peasants freedom of choice, as the old customs and traditions had still survived. Disregard for the regulation of inheritance, a matter of the utmost importance for the society, is a rare occurrence, and the laws applying to vassals and townspeople did not fail to address these issues.[24] The next law applicable to peasants that includes rules of inheritance is the Peasants' Law of Saare and Lääne Counties from the early 17th century. This code established the prerogative of male line of successors, and both husband's and wife's right to divorce. Even according to this law, women had more extensive legal rights than was common for western European women at the time, although compared to the first half of the 13th century, women's rights had decreased considerably (see Blomkvist 2005, 197).

The legal-historical information confirming women's strong position in past Estonian societies is corroborated by archaeological knowledge of ancient societies, several linguistical sources (including toponyms[25]), the earlier strata of folklore[26] (see also Metsvahi 2013a, b, 2014, 2015), and sources describing the wedding and other customs of Estonians and the Baltic Finns in general (see Mägi 2009, 94–95). If the Baltic tribes and Scandinavians (the latter to a lesser extent) used to bury many gender-specific items along with the dead, the Estonian grave goods were mostly gender-neutral. It was also not uncommon to bury items associated with the opposite sex in the graves[27] of both male and female dead. Such grave goods bespeak of egalitarian gender relations in the society. The fact that the grave goods of Estonian and Livonian women were usually richer than those buried along with men also points to the stronger position of women in the society (Mägi 2013a, 184).

It is an interesting archaeological fact, and significant in the present context, that among Estonians, the tradition of collective cremation was still prevalent as late as the 12th century (Mägi 2013b, 113, for further information on cremations, see Lang 2011). The transition from collective to individual burial sites in most of Europe, including Scandinavia and among the Baltic tribes, took place mostly during the late Stone Age. Thus, the collective cremation burial tradition was rare in Europe at the time. Collective burials bespeak of the collective power structure of the society, which is characteristic of several matrilineal societies (e.g. Fuchs 1987, 24; see also Divale 1984, 1).

It has also been pointed out that *The Chronicle of Livonia* contains references to the author's (Henry of Livonia) observations that among Estonians and Livs, power is seldom concentrated in a single person (Mägi 2013a, 186). The nature of sister–brother relationships, different from that common in Western Europe, and prevailing for many centuries also after the Christianization (see Metsvahi 2014, 2015), also points to a collective social order, as does the Pope's letter sent to Livonia in 1201, which gave the locals who were still too superficially acquainted with Christianity permission to

contract marriages according to their specific notion of kinship. These marriages can be referred as Levirate marriages and are based on the custom, deeply rooted on the east coast of the Baltic Sea, that after a man's death, the wife would marry his brother (see Brundage 1973).

When considering gender relations, the words used to categorize the world at different times also gain significance. Hupel's observation that the idea of *virginity*, and the category of virgin in its conventional sense, was unknown to the 18th-century peasants has already been mentioned. The word *neitsi(t)* (virgin) meant a young unmarried German woman of the bourgeoisie, but was never used by peasants referring to themselves (Hupel 1791, 287). Like the term *neitsi*, the term *noorik* has also changed its meaning in the course of time. It has always marked the social status of a woman, but while it was used to denote a young married but childless woman in the 19th and 20th centuries, it referred to a daughterless married woman or an unmarried girl in earlier times (Mägi 2009, 94). It should also be mentioned that as late as in the early 20th century, the word *märsa*, denoting a single young man having a love affair with a young unmarried woman, was still in use. As far as I could detect, the word was always used by women to denote the boyfriends of their female friends. In a letter written by a Kihnu girl in 1917, she reports to his boyfriend who was in the army about the new *märsa*s of the girls from their village (see Vesik 2005, 80). The fact that no term existed to denote a similar status of women[28] that would have been used by men seems to refer to a world described rather in feminine terms.

Gender roles were indeed considerably transformed in the 13th century and the following centuries, yet there were spheres where women retained their dominant position. Sexual life was one of them. In many matrilineal societies, there are no major restrictions affecting a woman's sexuality (see Hallpike 2011, 194; Hua 2001; Stone 2010, 132; George-Kanentiio 2000, 68). If kinship and inheritance systems are matrilineal, no one except the woman herself and her family (her brother or her mother's brother[29]) need to have control over a woman's sexuality or partners.

It is true that the matrilineal social order was replaced by the patrilineal social order in Estonia during the 13th century, which gradually augmented the husband's role. However, for a considerable time, the patrilineal and patrilocal extended families retained several traits formerly common to the matrilineal and local extended families. Living conditions were one reason for that. Every year, before the new crops were gathered, there was a threat of famine (see Seppel 2008), and the enslaved peasants were cut off from any kind of trade relationships. Living under those conditions obviously 'preserved' certain relation patterns in the family. It was first in the second half of the 19th century that the first momentous changes took place in the society; famines disappeared, capitalist social relations evolved, and peasants were able to buy their farms as real estate. In this more 'modern' context, regulation of the peasants' inheritance gained enormously in importance. This brought along major changes in the family, including a shift toward increased patriarchy. The latter certainly involved changes in sexual behavior in most regions of Estonia.

The 18th century was still characterized by sexual behavior of the 'old type,' meaning considerable sexual independence for the woman. This is reflected not just by descriptions of the peasants rendered by Hupel and others, but also in the court records of the time, which seem to point to egalitarian gender relations among the 18th-century peasants. It is namely evident that in the middle of the 18th century, western Estonian village girls never brought rape charges against local youths, but

only against strangers arriving from outside Estonia, especially soldiers (Laur 2008). Obviously, strangers with a different ethnic background were not familiar with the local sexual behavior patterns and could have behaved in ways that offended the local norms. Naturally, fascinating information[30] on gender relations can be found also in the 19th-century court records, a territory unexplored by historians thus far.

Conclusions

This article throws light on some modest fractions of A.W. Hupel's writings, specifically those discussing matters related to sexuality. His more specific treatments of capping, virginity, extramarital sexual relations, and infanticide, which under scrutiny would yield ample material for a more exhaustive treatment of the topic of sexuality, are not included here.

It is for the researcher to decide where the line between sexual and nonsexual topics is to be drawn. I have not addressed the parts of *Topographische Nachrichten* that describe the Estonian custom of both sexes washing naked in the sauna simultaneously, the habit of women in some parts of the country (until about 40 years prior to Hupel's writing) to wear a shirt that leaves the breasts bare (Hupel 1774, 15, 1777, 166), or the fact that the peasants found nothing indecent in seeing a member of the opposite sex naked (Hupel 1774, 514, 1777, 166), as these matters are not directly related to the topic of sexuality. Furthermore, earlier studies of Hupel's texts have highlighted the subject of nakedness repeatedly. Ulrike Plath writes:

> His [Hupel's] conclusions are indeed taking the matter to far. With his study, he defines Estonians and Latvians as standing outside the Western cultural space, making them out even more outlandish than the Mongol peoples, who at least understand the notion of virginity. Hupel does not merely exoticize the Estonians to the cultural antipodes of the Germans, which were in accordance with the anthropological discourse of the time, but even subordinates them to the Germans sexually. Estonians, although constantly surrounded by nakedness, were still unable to use it as a sexually charged stimulus. (Plath 2014, 305)

In my opinion, it is not Hupel but Plath herself who is taking matters too far. Placing Hupel's works in the framework of colonial literature obscures part of their implications. The implications relevant to the present treatment of the subject would be better suited within ethnological discourse, although Hupel wrote his works at a time when the national (research) discourse did not yet exist. Jakob Hurt, whose network of correspondents for collecting folklore was very similar to Hupel's and even functioned in a somewhat similar manner, emerged as a researcher first a hundred years later.

Therefore, Hupel's descriptions of sexuality should be considered outside this constraining framework of modern research. I agree with the assessment of earlier Hupel researchers that in his descriptions, Hupel remained true to the fact.[31] As an observer of the peasants' life and circumstances, he had a clear and focused eye, at times prejudiced, but in general amazingly insightful. Hupel writes that it is impossible to discern what is original to Estonians and Latvians, as the two peoples' customs and traditions have throughout the ages been subject to impacts from other peoples, and also, the Estonians of Hupel's time have a considerable amount of German, Swedish, and Russian blood in their veins (Hupel 1777, 123–24). Also his observations on the differences of Estonians and Latvians (e.g. pointing out that no Latvian would ever go to the sauna naked with a member of the opposite sex, as is common for Estonians; Hupel 1777, 166) reveal keen powers of observation. Moreover, Hupel's observations

on the Estonian-German mutual cultural impact are of great interest. For example, in the Baltic German usage, the word used to denote kissing was 'Mund geben,' a literal translation from the Estonian phrase 'suud andma,' rather than 'küssen' (Hupel 1795b, 157; see also Jürjo 2004, 372). The fact that the notion of virginity was somewhat familiar only to Estonians employed as servants in the manor might serve as an example of a cultural impact in the opposite (German-Estonian) direction (Hupel 1791, 296–97).

Hupel's descriptions of the life and sexual behavior of Estonian peasants are certainly an abundant source for scholars studying the history of the Estonian family – a field that has lain fallow for a long time and been rediscovered only in the first decades of the 21st century.

Notes

1. In the 18th–19th centuries, Livonia (Now northern Latvia and southern Estonia), Estonia, and Courland were the Baltic Provinces of the Russian Empire.
2. In 2005, a committee consisting of historians elected this monograph to be the best Estonian-language historical publication in 2004.
3. Ulrike Plath does not deny the existence of that reality: 'cultural and alterity concepts have a specific reality background' (Plath 2008, 56–57), but her research does not aim to analyze it.
4. Jürjo's monograph on Hupel has been published in Estonian (Jürjo 2004) and also in German (Jürjo 2006).
5. His workload as minister had been considerably relieved in 1796, when a curate was employed to assist him (Jürjo 2004, 102).
6. In the 1770s, Hupel had to baptize as many as 300 peasant children and 10–20 German children annually (Jürjo 2004, 64).
7. On his activities as promoter of culture and cultural contacts and distributor of books, visits to schools, support to Põltsamaa parish school, launching the Girls' School, establishment of Clerical Widows Fund, and his encouragement to reading societies, etc. (Jürjo 2004, 76, 79–80, 82, 99).
8. *Origenes* was also published in Paul Englisch's comprehensive work *Geschichte der erotischen Liteatur* (*History of Erotic Literature*) in 1927 (Plath 2014, 301).
9. In his work *Anmerkungen und Zweifel…*, Hupel introduces a theory that a child's intellect and character depend on the parents' mood and manner during the conception. Jürjo points out parallels with his private life in the example Hupel brings to explain his theory:

   > A great mind, the prodigy of his era, in the small hours finally extracts himself from scholarly pursuits; his heavy eyelids call the tired body to rest. In bed, the wife awakens from her tender slumber; fretfully, she rubs her eyes and curses the husband's long nights of study. The man comforts her. Both of them drowsy, the man being tired, the woman not fully mollified, they conceive a child at a moment like that: Already in advance, it can be predicted that the child will be languid, fretful, and not worthy of his father's genius. (Jürjo 2004, 431)

10. Yet Hupel claims that Estonian maidens are already 'open' (not physiologically virgins) in early age. According to his information, this might be have to do with autoerotic practices, or the girls being 'opened' by the mother, or the 'dirty' childhood games involving children touching each other. Still, Hupel has no definitive explanation to the 'openness' of Estonian girls, and supposes that it remains for the future scientists and doctors to find out (Hupel 1791, 294–95).
11. Hupel explains the concept of 'cleanliness,' which is close to the notion of 'chastitiy' in his article 'Ueber den Werth der Jungfrauschaft' (Hupel 1791, 280–81); neither has any connotations to the notion of virginity.
12. Different notions of exogamy and endogamy among Estonians and Germans resulted in a cultural conflict and folktales were spread to alleviate it, including the tale of a lord of the manor being married to his own sister, and the chaos that followed (see Metsvahi 2014).

13. It is known from other sources that pillories and stocks were introduced in 1641. Yet the first certain record of stocks being used is from 1684. Yet in case of minor offenses, it was allowed to substitute a fee for public shaming (Eisen 1914, 183–85; see also Hupel 1795a, 561).
14. On bestiality, see more in Ird (2014).
15. Also researchers' interest in Hupel was awoken quite recently – first in the late 20th century (Viires 2005, 241).
16. Jürjo writes: 'With his objectivist and scholarly determination, Hupel renders a treatment both true to the facts and reliable, more valuable for a historian than the publicist accomplishments of more radically-minded Enlightenment thinkers' (Jürjo 2004, 479).
17. The German scholar Sebastian Münster had never visited Livonia. In 100 years, 44 editions of his work were published in different European languages (Laugaste 1963, 290).
18. I will limit myself to a few examples. In his work '*Wahrheit und Muthmassung*' von Luce writes, on the basis of notices from Saaremaa, that an Estonian man will love his wife even more if she brings with her a proper dowry and an illegitimate child (see von Luce 1827, 78). Kelch writes: '…widows wishing to remarry, having chosen someone they lust after, ride themselves to propose the marriage, taking along a bottle of liquor' (Kelch [1695] (2004), 21). It is interesting to note how a sentence can be interpreted in two diametrically opposite ways. The story in the beginning of *The Chronicle of Henry of Livonia*, the most important describer of the 13th century, of the women around a dying Livonian at first not allowing him to be baptized, has been read as a proof of polygamy, but also as an example of the considerable power Livonian women enjoyed in their extended families (see Mägi 2009, 81).
19. The reprints of the translation of this work continued to appear in the Soviet time (1946, 1958 and 1980), and since 2011, a digitalized version of the translation is available on the webpage www.marxists.org.
20. Kirke's (2008) *Võim ja seksuaalsus* [*Power and Sexuality*] and Luhaäär's (2005) *Eesti erootika ajalugu. Eestlaste armuelu muinasajast tänapäevani* [*History of Estonian Erotic. Estonians' Love Life from Ancient Times to the Present Day*] also make pretenses to address this sphere. Yet, as the author's voice in both publications sounds even less scholarly than Raud's or Kruusberg's, both are compilations of quotes from different authors rather than independent works.
21. The custom of boys visiting girls at night (*ehalkäimine*) continued throughout the 19th century and in some regions even into the 20th century. On summer evenings, a group of boys gathered and started walking between farms where there were girls. At each farm, one of them was left behind, to spend the night with a girl from that farm. In summertime, girls mostly slept in warehouses. The boys would all walk through the village and each girl got a companion for the night. In the morning, the boys gathered again and went home. Those visits were a way for young people to get more closely acquainted (Tedre 2008, 315). Kalkun (2011, 142) notes that the more night visitors a girl had, the higher her prestige.
22. Also other sources contain similar claims. Holzmayer writes in '*Osiliana*' about the celebration of the eve of St. Mary's visitation (2 July) on the island of Muhu, when – as was the case on Midsummer Eve – all girls had to have 'a sleeper by their side.' The girls spurned by the boys are devastated and 'the mothers of the favoured girls praise the reputation and the good qualities of their daughters' (Holzmayer 1872, 64–5).
23. I am grateful to Jürgen Beyer who drew my attention to the obscurity of the script that enables the words daughter/daughters or son/sons to be read either in singular or in plural throughout this quote. The confusion in the transcript of this 16th-century record preserved to this day may have resulted from the unique nature of the text and its dissimilarity to any legal texts familiar to the transcribers, who may therefore not have understood its contents fully.
24. Even those were rare in the German and Scandinavian context, as sister and brother received an equal share of the inheritance, and after the sisters' death, the inheritance returned to the brothers (correspondence with Marika Mägi, 14 December 2014).
25. For example, the Finnish linguist Kaija Mallat has found that Finnish toponyms beginning with various stems denoting a woman (*Ämmän-*) usually denote larger topographical objects. Of the two waterfalls not far from each other – *Ämmänkoski and Ukonkoski* – the former, whose name begins with a feminine word *ämmä*, is larger than the one whose name begins with the word *ukko* denoting a man. Mallat herself offers no explanation to this or any other similar examples (Mallat 2007, 133–34).

26. Researchers of old folk songs have pointed out that in old runic songs about sexual relations it is often the woman, not the man, who takes the initiative, and that representations of female genitals, not present in the folklore of western European countries, are quite frequent in Estonian folklore. (Kalkun and Sarv 2014).
27. Although collective burials were still predominant in Estonia as late as the 12th century, individual burials became more common in several regions of Estonia by the 10th century. These and the following conclusions have been made on the basis of individual burial finds.
28. Mark Soosaar suggests that the word means 'a boy or girl having a pre-marital love affair' (see Vesik 2005, 95), but making inquiries during my fieldwork on the island of Kihnu in 2011, I found that all locals familiar with the word at all knew it to denote a young man. I was told that the word was no longer used, and also that before marriage, a girl might have had one or several *märsa*'s (in succession).
29. The etymology of the word *onu* (Finnish *eno*, Sami *eanu*), denoting the mother's brother, seems to point to the importance of the mother's brother in the Estonian society in the past. This word (unlike the word *lell*, which denotes the father's brother) is derived from the adjective *enä*, meaning 'great' or 'big,' which has Finno-Ugric or even Uralic origins and has been preserved in several stems in the Estonian language, including the comparative *enam* (more) (Metsmägi, Sedrik, and Soosaar 2012, 61).
30. I will render just a brief extract from the records of Tori Parish Court: '*Seepeale üttelnd siis Mats Langvits, et nad mitme mehega selle lapse valmis teinud. Ka Endrek Kera kiitlend ennast tüdreku juures käind olevat*.' (To that, Mats Langvits had said that they had been several men making that baby. Also Endrek Kera boasted that he had been with that girl.) (Estonian Historical Archives, Fund 4527, nim. 1, s. 4, 427: 22.15 (1874)).
31. Thus, Indrek Jürjo, the best expert on all sources related to Hupel, has good reasons to write: 'In a broader temproal perspective, the enlightened minister's neutral, almost scientific and unprejudiced attitude to sexual matters is entirely different both from the earlier generation's Lutheran-orthodox and pietist mentality and the mindset of Victorian ministers, who made sexuality into an almost total taboo' (Jürjo 2004, 272).

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Funding

The article has been supported by the institutional research project ' Tradition, creativity and society: minorities and alternative discourses' [grant number IUT2-43] and the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund (Center of Excellence in Cultural Theory).
The article and the citations have been translated by Aet Varik.

Notes on contributor

Merili Metsvahi (PhD) is a senior researcher at the Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore, University of Tartu, Estonia. She has published more than 30 scientific articles. Her research interests are narration and folk narratives, Estonian fairy tales, fieldwork in folklore, werewolf legends and witch trials in Estonia, Estonian family history, and women in Estonian folklore.

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