

Johann Gottfried Herder and the Latvian Voice

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Ph.D.

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2008

Dzimtene (Motherland) 1901

How should I describe my motherland?

High mountains and steep waterfalls

Those may wrap other lands in silver flowing ribbons,

She has none.

One would not find magnificent and splendid panoramas.

She has few roses, and her nettles sharply sting.

And yet—in exile far away from home,

Each day dawns and sets as if in tears,

Beyond the grey and heavy fog-filled clouds,

She is a far-off isle of light —

I see her entwined with stars.

Aspazija

(Elza Rozenberga, 1865—1943)

INTRODUCTION

A leading thinker and critic of the Enlightenment era in Europe, Johann Gottfried Herder (1744—1803) wrote prolifically on comparative philology, oral poetry and its translation. These facets of his scholarship define the international anthology that he entitled *Volkslieder nebst untermischten andern Stücken [Folksongs with other Miscellaneous Pieces]* and published anonymously in two volumes (1778-79).¹ Implicit in Herder's neologism, which is usually translated as "folksongs," is a breadth of meanings, although, as will be seen below, the interdisciplinary nature of Herder's work is prone to conflicting interpretations. Given the example of the present work, Herder's concept has spanned many disciplinary boundaries, such as Latvian cultural history, European ethnology, German literary theory and history, ethnomusicology, folkloristics, historiography, aesthetics, and philosophy.

The early chapters of this work will consider the defining features of a "folksong" that unfold not only in Herder's published works and unpublished

¹ See Illustration 12. *Volkslieder*, (Leipzig, in der Weygandischen Buchhandlung. *Erster Theil*, 1778; *Zweiter Theil*, 1779). All future citations from Herder will refer to *Herders Sämmtliche Werke (SW)* herausgegeben von Bernhard Suphan, Carl Redlich, Reinhold Steig [u. a.] in 33 Bd. (Berlin: Wiedmann'sche Buchhandlung. Reissued Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1967-68): *Alte Volkslieder (1773-74)*, *Volkslieder*, poetical works and manuscripts, edited by Carl Redlich, comprise SW, XXV. The reader may consult *Werke in zehn Bänden*, a recent series of Herder's selected works, in which the volumes are edited and catalogued individually (Frankfurt am Main: Bibliothek Deutscher Klassiker, 1985-2000). See for example *Volkslieder*, Gaier, 1990.

correspondence, but also pertain to his biographical circumstances in Riga, Bückeberg, and Weimar, which these sources encapsulate. Above all, Herder's conceptualization presents an idealized view of oral poetry that is part of the immediate present, and distinct from mechanical and lifeless words upon paper. To a certain degree, which will be debated in this work, Herder's early career reflects the methods and practices of his close association with the Baltic German Lutheran clergy, whose observations of Latvian parishioners approximate the practices of present-day ethnography. It is debatable whether this prevailing influence also laid the groundwork for Herder's conceptualization of a "folksong" (see Chapter Three).

Nonetheless, Herder searched for a culturally representative sample of verses and texts for publication with difficulty, being reliant upon the fieldwork observation, description, and interpretative history of his correspondents and contacts in Baltic Russian territory. Despite the delays and difficulties in his correspondence, Herder eventually would gain the local, experiential knowledge of his Lutheran colleagues in the Latvian-speaking regions of Tsarist Russia – among whom, it should be added, he may have imparted the meaning of the *Volkslied*. In the process of grouping culturally representative examples Herder categorized verses in the primary Baltic languages of Latvian and Lithuanian. He appended readings on Latvian group songs, round dances, games, and ritual processions (*SW XXV*, 391-7). Yet it is not generally known that several Latvian fragments of verse within the published collection of his *Volkslieder* examples are sung today. Having roots in the familial and ritual song cycles of the peasantry, they testify to a remarkable continuity.² Comparable ethnographic styles of ritual singing became widespread in

² Of the seventy-nine Latvian verses that are listed in Herder's posthumous papers

the modern era, for example, during the folklore revival movement (*folkloras kustība*) that achieved prominence during the final decade of the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic (see Chapter Five). Latvians adapted into performance practice an older layer of declamatory singing, thereby resurrecting national symbols and values, which were derivative of their early national history. The present ethnographic fieldwork inquiry (which I define as the collection of data, their analysis, and representation) pertains to Latvian families and communities, who have preserved their dialectal and regional folksong traditions. From 2000 to 2007 the author, a participant observer in this setting, gathered personal life history narratives in order to explore the meaning of cultural individuality according to language, dialect, and musical culture among *kopa* members.³

In Chapters Five and Six I discuss aspects of a day-to-day chronicle of qualitative fieldwork analysis that is based entirely on participant observation and membership within numerous domestic contexts and informal performance settings of the *kopas*.⁴ In this dynamic research exchange my role varied from the marginal observer, on the one hand, to the full commitment of an active musician, who attempted to learn of the *kopa's* musical interpretation of familial customs and calendar holidays.⁵ Returning to the frame of Herder's philosophical ideas, the

approximately one quarter have been maintained in Latvian singing traditions. On Herder's *Nachlass* see Chapter Three. In regard to Latvian orthography, texts dating from the nineteenth century have been transcribed from an older (pre-1908) phonetic German system of spelling and Gothic lettering. I have adhered to the modern system of orthographic reforms, in which single Roman letters, diacritics, and macrons indicate vowel length. See Arturs Ozols, *Veclatviešu rakstu valoda*, 1965, 17-18; Anna Bergmane and Aina Blinkena, *Latviešu raksības attīstība*, 1986, 80-172.

³ On Herder's notion of "community," see Berlin, 2006, 236.

⁴ On the diverse membership roles in field research see Adler and Adler, 1987, 36.

⁵ The field study was the equivalent of eight research trips, October 2000 to

regional *kopa* arguably shares attributes of the *Volk*, who bear the distinguishing characteristics of a family, community, or societal group: “every *Volk* has a mission, a peculiar contribution, which it is equipped to perform,” according to Sir Isaiah Berlin’s influential interpretation.⁶

It may be useful to review the etymological context of the term “*kopa*,” whose root is cognate with the Latvian adverb “*kopā*” (“together”). A folk arts administrator from the University of Latvia explained that a “group-like song” (“*kopīga dziesma*”) is “concrete, pertinent, and topical,” rather than being overtly national, Romantic, or illusory.⁷ Because they attain aesthetic standards of performance unity, the *kopa* may be envisaged as an anonymous collective voice that is perfectly in tune, “*saskaņots kopums*.” In a recent demonstration on the expanse of Rīga’s vast Cathedral Square a programme of street festivities was held on 18 August 2001 to commemorate the eight hundredth anniversary of the founding of the city. The recurring *kopīga dziesma*, *Rīga iešu es, māmiņa* (“I’m going to Rīga, dear mother”) became a prominent means of organizing the day’s festivities. Secondary school students from the Ropaži district near Rīga (*kopa Pērkonītis*) presented the *kopīga dziesma*, which became their staple repertoire. Although the Centre for Ethnic Culture, University of Latvia, prepared a model recording of the folksong (see listing of sound recordings), the thematic presentations varied freely according to their age

November 2007, and incorporates many forms of communications to the author, which intervened. Recorded interviews constitute seven hours, and videocopies of Hi 8 films constitute 140 minutes. See Appendices.

⁶ Berlin, 2006, 226. There are numerous references to the *Volk* in Herder’s collected works, among the earliest of which he formulated in Riga in *Über die neuere deutsche Litteratur*, Riga: bey Joh. Friedrich Hartknoch, 1766, Herder, SW, I, 392. On the concepts of the *Volk* and *Volkslieder* see also Baumann, 2006, 183, Bernard, 1965, 73-75, and Chapter Three *passim*.

⁷ Interview with Ernests Spīčs, Centre for Ethnic Culture, University of Latvia, 29

and background of the *kopa* participants.⁸

The International Folk Music Council (or IFMC), a product of the post-war era, produced a statement of purpose in 1954 that distinguished folk music repertoires according to their affinity with the past. Supplementing a belief in the continuity of folksong was a statement on defining the creative individual and the group, but particularly the community that determines the form or forms in which the music survives.⁹ A shift away from this methodology, involving a greater number of studies of individual and ethnic group singing and the parameters that have shaped folksong scholarship.¹⁰ Members implemented reforms in 1982 from which the renamed body, the International Council for Traditional Music,¹¹ promoted the music of groups, large and small, which share and generate traditions.¹² This development has underscored the need to re-evaluate the “folksong,” and to substitute new concepts.

With the neologism *Gruppenlied* (“group song”), whose main features pertained to the song repertoires of small social groups and the primary significance

July 2003.

⁸ Grauzdiņa, 2003, 43. See Sound Recordings Composite: File 1 Vidzeme R1 *Skandinieki, Rīgā iešu es māmiņa* (Rīga’s 800th anniversary year), a group repertoire CD and study aid for the children’s and youth’s traditional cultural project *Pulkā eimu, pulkā teku*, 2001. See also Vidzeme R2 *Pērkonītis*, Ropaži district near Rīga. Please note that for dates prior to 1900 I employ the German spelling “Riga,” and thereafter “Rīga.”

⁹ International Folk Music Council, 1954, cited in Bohlman, 1988, xiv-xviii. Cecil Sharp’s concept has been criticized for being idealist; see, for example the opposing socialist theories in: Dave Harker, *Fakesong: the Manufacture of British ‘Folksong’ 1700 to the Present Day*, 1985; Ian Watson, *Song and Democratic Culture in Britain*, 1983.

¹⁰ Numerous studies of balladry fall into this category. See, for example, Porter 2000a, and Jaremko-Porter 2007.

¹¹ Bohlman, 1988, xiii.

¹² Bohlman, 1999, 21.

of face-to-face communications, German sociologist Ernst Klusen called for a radical re-evaluation of the definition of a “folksong.” Proposing an alternate meaning, Klusen noted the ability of certain songs to serve a specific group or occasion, thus disputing Herder’s abstract idealization of the “folksong” on the grounds that it was no longer applicable to contemporary urban identities.¹³ The organization of the Latvian *kopa*, and its rendition of a *kopīga dziesma*, is analogous to Klusen’s definition of “group songs” or *Gruppenlieder*, particularly because these terms share common roots in the anti-establishment protest songs of the 1970s, and illustrate the changing connotations of Herder’s *Volkslied*.

Frameworks of Ethnography

The interpretative framework in Chapters Two and Three will reconsider of Herder’s aesthetics and beliefs during the years of his research into oral poetry and its conceptualization. Baltic German scholars writing at the turn of the nineteenth century, and into the late 1930s,¹⁴ have studied Herder’s role in Riga in the context of German literary developments.¹⁵ It should be added that while recent titles attest to the interest in the popular philosophers of the late eighteenth century, the erratic prose of J. G. Hamann and J. G. Herder is not often available in translation.¹⁶

¹³ The “small group” canon is defined in Bohlman, 1988, 111; Klusen, 1967, 1969.

¹⁴ In 2007 the Latvian Folklore Archives in Rīga issued *Greznas dziesmas*, an unpublished monograph of Ludis Bērziņš [1942]. It contains a critical listing of Latvian song texts within Herder’s posthumous papers, and documentary readings on the Latvian content of *Volkslieder Band II* (1779).

¹⁵ I refer to Clark, for example, who places an overview of Herder’s Riga years within the context of discussing the German literary school in Berlin; Gillies, 1945, interpolates a brief sub-section entitled “Riga,” pp. 14-16.

¹⁶ In 2007, for example, Cambridge University Press has published translations with critical commentaries by Kenneth Haynes of J. G. Hamann’s writings dating from

In the years directly following his departure from Riga Herder's writings expressed a historical comprehension of other cultures that was unprecedented among his peers in the German Enlightenment.¹⁷ Within the prize-winning essay *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache* ("Essay on the Origin of Language"), which he composed in 1770 and published in Berlin in 1772,¹⁸ he added objectives regarding the necessity of direct experience as a means of knowing others. Dispelling the notion of a universal or divine origin of language, his essay explored the acquisition of one's mother tongue and other learnt social behaviors within specified environmental factors including "climate, water and air, food and drink" (*Clima, Luft und Wasser, Speise und Trank*).¹⁹

On the basis of Herder's biographical association with the port city of Riga, where he witnessed extremes of social inequity and other adverse effects of Baltic German colonization, it is possible to infer that the young schoolmaster perceived the brutal nature of cultural difference with humanist compassion. Drawing on his experiential knowledge of Baltic provincial lands, then part of the Tsarist Russian Empire, Herder ascribed importance to the study of Europe's marginal and suppressed languages and cultures:

The coast of the entire Baltic Sea consists in part of peoples whose *natural heritage*, the essential nature of their language and their way of thinking, is not known as well as their history. *Der Rand der ganzen Ostsee zum Theil*

1759 to 1786.

¹⁷ On Herder's expression of *Einfühlung* and his empathy for other cultures, see Nisbet, 1999, 116.

¹⁸ On the prize-winning essay on language that Herder submitted to the Royal Academy of Berlin, 1769-70, see Herder, *SW*, V, 147. The translation is from Zammito, 2002, 344.

*besteht aus Völkern deren Geschichte gewiss noch aufgeklärter ist, als ihre Naturgeschichte, die wahre Kunde ihrer Sprache und Denkart.*²⁰

Appearing as an introductory text to the second part of *Alte Volkslieder*, the manuscript collection that dates from 1773-74 that was unpublished in Herder's lifetime, the essay *On the Similarity of Medieval English and German Poetry (Von Ähnlichkeit der mittlern englischen und deutschen Dichtkunst)* mall national groups on the outskirts of Europe – the Wends, Slavs, East Prussians, Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, Frisians (*Wenden, Slaven, Alt Preussen, Litthauen, Letten, Esthen, Friesen*). Yet these nations possessed a history that was dispersed among generic types of oral literatures – folksongs, myths, and folk tales (*Volkslieder, Mythologien, Märchen*). In compiling a collection of song texts that had been derived and written from “the mouths of singers,” Herder stipulated, “Their songs are the archive of the people (*Ihre Gesänge sind das Archiv des Volks*).”²¹

Admittedly, it may be revolutionary to propose Riga as the birthplace of “Herderian” notions (see Chapter Two), yet nearly all of Herder's book-length studies were published here and became widely influential in Europe. In comparison, there exists only sporadic primary documentation that would substantiate Herder's powerful impressions of Latvian peasant culture. Modern scholarship contends that the young Herder observed Midsummer rites of *Jāņi* when he visited the manorial

¹⁹ *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache* 1772, Herder, *SW*, V, 12.

¹⁹ The quoted passage is taken from “Lieder fremder Völker,” Herder's preface to *Alte Volkslieder Zweiter Theil, Viertes Buch*; Herder, *SW*, XXV, 83; see also Chapter Three of this work. The citation is cited and discussed in Haym, 1954, 731; Nisbet, 1999, 117, Wolff, 1994: 310-11, and a Latvian translation of the excerpt is found in Buceniece, 1995, 196-7. Herder's original text and the English translation are placed together on the page in order to highlight their value as source readings.

²⁰ The essay is published in the *Deutsches Museum, Zweiter Band*, (November

estate of Gravenheide on the shore of Lake Jugla (*Jägelsee*) near Riga, on the twenty-third of June of 1765;²² moreover, he had ample opportunities to experience the singing of Latvian peasants during his journeys into the countryside, or perhaps even in Riga (see Chapter Two).²³ Baltic German and Latvian sources generally agree when they point to Herder's stay at Gravenheide as his probable initiation into Latvian folk poetry. Subsections within Chapters Two and Three provide an assessment and critical reconstruction of biographical events, correspondence, and writings that have yielded a characterization of Herder as a guest at the Gravenheide country estate, and, more broadly, as a philosopher of Livland. These threads of his experience and knowledge of Baltic lands arguably shaped Herder's understanding of song collecting. The evidence rests on Herder's writings that range from the 1773 essay *Extract from Correspondence about Ossian and Songs of Ancient People*, on the one hand, to the publication of the *Volkslieder* volumes in 1778-9. In particular, these insights are contained in the correspondence and publications, from which he determined the selection of the examples and the accompanying documentation.

An emergent voice in the rebellious literary current of *Sturm und Drang* ("Storm and Stress"), Herder prepared the foundation for an awakening of German folklore scholarship beginning in the 1770s. Yet in writing and editing a manifesto of

1777), Herder, *SW*, IX, 532-3; see also Chapter Three.

²¹ After 1700 the Julian Old Style Calendar was positioned eleven days behind the Continental Gregorian Calendar; the dates conforming to the former will be indicated as (O.S.).

²² This is the opinion of historian Edgars Dunsdorfs, 1961, 112, citing Friedrich Meinecke, 1959, 367. Richard Bauman has considered the importance of Herder's travels "from Riga into the countryside," the actual scant historical documentation cannot ascertain what took place at these localities; see "Language, Poetry, and *Volk* in Eighteenth-Century Germany: Johann Gottfried Herder's Construction of Tradition," 2003, p. 174.

this literary movement,²⁴ *Extract from Correspondence about Ossian and Songs of Ancient Peoples*, he wrote about first-hand experiences in a different land; moreover, the narrative episodes of this recollection are intertwined with his detailed conceptualization of the *Volkslieder*. In an autobiographical narrative, which marks a rarity in Herder's writings, he confessed to "the genesis of his enthusiasm" resulting from repeated hearings and customary gatherings of remarkably lively singers. It may be imperative, therefore, to reconsider where Herder's interest in living folk poetry grew – either within the illustrious intellectual circles of Riga and its environs, or during his occasional travels to Baltic German manorial estates in the provincial countryside of Livonia, or in the Duchy of Kurland. Although the nature of Latvian influence in the compilation of the *Volkslieder* has been explored in research of the Baltic German and Latvian literati, beginning in the 1920s and 1930s, this question nevertheless has remained obscure in the broader international scholarship of Herder.

It would appear that Herder accumulated widely variegated folksong manuscripts from 1770 to 1778, suggesting that his study was not dependent upon a single nationality or song culture, be it German or Baltic.²⁵ But his aesthetics arguably did not subsume national criteria. He openly appropriated the published essays of his colleagues in the Lutheran clergy, for these individuals had valuable experiential knowledge of the singers at first hand:²⁶

²⁴ The essay, which he wrote in 1771, and published in 1773, was part of *Von deutscher Art und Kunst: Einige fliegende Blätter (On German Character and Art: A Collection of Broadshets)*.

²⁵ See Gaskill, 1996, 271; idem, 2003, 97.

²⁶ Herder, *SW*, XXV, 83. The ethnographic pursuits of Herder's ministerial colleagues are presented in Chapter Three; see also Bernhard Suphan, "Die Rigischen Gelehrten Beiträge und Herders Anteil an denselben," *Zeitschrift für Deutsche Philologie* VI (Halle, 1875), 49-53.

Und doch leben überall Geistliche, denen es Beruf ist, ihre Sprache, Sitten, Denkart, alte Vorurtheile und Gebräuche zu studieren! And yet everywhere there are clerics, whose business it should be to study their [the common people's] languages, customs, and ways of thinking, ancient prejudices, and habits!

Despite the flawed attempts at transliteration and Latvian spellings of his Lutheran brethren (see Chapter Three), Herder's small sample expanded the international horizons of an obscure peasant song culture. The Latvian sub-division in the *Volkslieder*, and inclusion of the culture and history of the region in several of Herder's key essays, became influential role models for Latvian folksong scholars. Their monumental collections, in turn, largely defined the nineteenth-century movement of national awakening (see Chapter Four).²⁷

Whereas archival research into the age of feudal barons was not a recurring feature of Soviet historiography, Latvian émigrés following World War II, notably Andrejs Johansons (see 1975), produced comprehensive histories of Baltic German culture. Their work represents a continuation of Latvian scholarship during the inter-war Wilsonian republic of Latvia that was established in 1918.

On the two-hundredth anniversary of Herder's death (18 December 2003) Herder's works inspired a renewed outpouring of translations, conferences, writings, exhibits, and creative theatrical performances.²⁸ Celebrating Herder's legacy in that year several of Rīga's institutes sponsored a joint conference pertaining to Herder-

²⁷ On Herder's sphere of influence in Riga and its environs see Chapters Three and Four.

²⁸ See Astrauskas, 2005, and the collected essays *Ideen und Ideale: Johann Gottfried*

related materials in the collections of literature and art in the Dom (Cathedral), the Lutheran Academy, the Museum of History and Navigation of the City of Rīga (founded in 1773), and the holdings of smaller private collections.²⁹

Baltic German scholars of the inter-war period developed a stock of source readings in research that mirrored the importance of Herder's residency and his alleged experience of Latvian song culture. Support of the Latvian Republic for these topics had been granted to a small minority of Baltic Germans, who retained a degree of intellectual freedom and cultural autonomy until their forced repatriation in 1939. With the founding of the *Herder-Institut (Institutum Herderianum Rigense)*, and its parent organization, the *Herder-Gesellschaft*, German conferences, exchanges, and proceedings (*Abhandlungen*) became an integral part of Rīga's academic community.³⁰ Representing the apogee of literary scholarship within this propitious inter-war intellectual climate, the poet and philologist Ludis Bērziņš authored a definitive evaluation of Latvian texts³¹ – of seventy-eight verses the majority are quatrains – housed in the compendium of Herder's posthumous papers at the

Herder in Ost und West, edited by Peter Andraschke and Helmut Loos.

²⁹ Ščegoliņina et al. 2005.

³⁰ After 1920 the term *Deutschbalten* was used to designate the Baltic German colony. The series entitled *Abhandlungen des Herder-Instituts zu Riga* contains source materials for the study of Herder in Riga. After 1928 these transactions were issued jointly with the Herder society (*Abhandlungen der Herder-Gesellschaft und das Herder-Instituts zu Rīga*). The *Herder-Institut* re-opened in 1993 to provide private tuition in German. See "Herdera sabiedrība," *Latvijas konversācijas vārdnīca* 6, 1933, 11736-7. Kurt Stavenhagen, "Herder in Riga," *Abhandlungen des Herder Instituts*, 1925; see also Hiden, 2004, 99.

³¹ The Latvian Folklore Archives in Rīga has granted access to a revised edition of the book-length manuscript by Ludis Bērziņš [1942] on Herder's *Nachlass*, an unpublished monograph that was written during World War II. See Bērziņš [1942], 2007. Bērziņš had published portions of the work in the essay "Atrakta tautas dzeja," *Filologu biedrības raksti XIII*, 1933, 114-51.

Prussian State library in Berlin (1933).³² The Baltic German historian Leonid Arbusow (Jr.) enlarged the critical commentary to this listing in 1953, when his essay formed a large section of Herder's *Festschrift*, the publication that was organized in East Germany to mark the one hundred and fiftieth year of his death.

A prolific scholar and interpreter of Herder's thought (Sir) Isaiah Berlin (1909—1997) had been honoured as a (French Enlightenment) *philosophe* of the twentieth century.³³ Yet Berlin, who dedicated the bulk of his writings to Johann Georg Hamann and to his student, Johann Gottfried Herder, chose to publicize those philosophical writings that unfolded “against the current” of mainstream eighteenth-century rationalist thought (see Chapter Two). Furthermore, as a historian of ideas and political theorist, Berlin obtained a historical perspective on modern Soviet affairs at the point of their dissolution during the late 1980s.³⁴ He proposed to apply Herder's metaphysical term *Volksgeist* – by which he evoked a unified sense of belonging to an ethnic group or nation – to the post-Soviet transitional years. Berlin argued in defense of ethnic nationalist discord, which had reacted against the suppression of native cultures and languages.³⁵ In Rīga and in Vilnius the withdrawal

³² The compendium contains the transcribed texts of seventy-nine verses; the majority of these are paired with German translations, and there is a single melody in staff notation.

³³ J. L. Sherniss, introduction to Berlin's posthumous essays (see Berlin, 2006). Henry Hardy, of Wolfson College at Oxford University, compiled and edited seventeen monographs of Berlin's writings, of which the following are pertinent to Herder's epoch: *Against the Current: Essays in the History of Ideas*, New York: Viking Press, 1979; *The Magus of the North: J.G. Hamann and the Origins of Irrationalism*. London: Murray, 1993; *Three Critics of the Enlightenment: Vico, Hamann, Herder*, London: Pimlico, 2000 (incorporating *The Magus of the North*, 1993; *Political Ideas in the Romantic Age: Their Rise and Influence upon Modern Thought*), London: Chatto & Windus; <http://berlin.wolf.ox.ac.uk>.

³⁴ See Michael Ignatieff's biography of Berlin: Ignatieff, 1998, 134-69.

³⁵ Gardels, 1991, 19.

of Soviet personnel in January 1991 was accompanied by the death of innocent bystanders. Thereafter, ethnic and constitutional conflicts escalated on a large scale.³⁶ Language policies regulating the rights of citizenship within the Russian and Slavic *diaspora* were at the root of tensions in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania (see Chapter Seven). This political strife during the post-Soviet transition is at the root of Herder's concept of *Bildung*, which implies the necessity of a positive regeneration of the nation's cultural and linguistic heritage.³⁷ These salient points are found in Herder's writings upon his arrival in Nantes from Riga in the summer of 1769:

No human being, country, nation or national history, no state is identical with any other, so it follows that the true, the beautiful, and the good in them [is] not identical either. *Kein Mensch, kein Land, kein Volk, keine Geschichte des Volks, kein Staat ist dem andern gleich, folglich auch das Wahre, Schöne und Gute in ihnen nicht gleich.*³⁸

Herder theorized that any given time a community possessed a unique environment or "climate" (*Klima*) that nurtured creativity.³⁹ The structure of the present work, which attempts to demonstrate this dictum, connects episodes of Latvian national history, in which public debate has been inseparable from creative expression: during the late nineteenth century national awakening (Chapter Four), and at end of the Soviet occupation of the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic (Chapter Five). An

³⁶ This unrest ranged from the former Asian Republics (Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan), to the Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia), and to Moldova and Ukraine along the Black Sea. See *Managing Conflict in the Former Soviet Union: Russian/American Perspectives*. Edited by Alexei Arbatov, Abram Chayes, Antonia Handler Chayes, and Lara Olson, Boston: MIT Press, 1997.

³⁷ *Briefe zu Beforderung der Humanität (Letters for the Advancement of Humanity)* 1796, Herder, *SW*, XVIII, 57 (*Brief 88*). See Chapters Four and Seven.

³⁸ Herder, 1769, *Einzelne Blätter zum Journal der Reise* (Nantes). In *SW*, IV, 472.

analysis of the current era of independence (Chapters Six, Seven) focuses on the cultural particularity of groups and communities, employing Herder's writings as the basis of the concluding discussion.

In his voyage from Riga, Herder viewed the receding coast of the Baltic Sea along the Tsarist province of Livland and the Duchy of Kurland⁴⁰ as a starting point for an expansive personal journal, a work that he had no intention of publishing, but which represented a culminating point of his residency in Riga. Published posthumously, *Journal meiner Reise* revealed his radical views on political affairs, social crises, and injustices, all of which would remain insoluble in his lifetime. Nevertheless, Herder envisaged returning in the guise of a political reformer who would alleviate the oppression of the Kurish people, as well as that of the Slavs. Of paramount importance to the resolution of these recurring thoughts in his later years was the publication of the historical treatise, *Ideas for a Philosophical History of Mankind*, his unfinished four-volume masterpiece dating from 1784 to 1791.⁴¹

In the wake of his momentous departure Herder's writings conveyed the personal views and humanist reflections that would estrange him from the Enlightenment mainstream. Precisely because of this transformation, American anthropologists have looked to Herder as a visionary, "the complete cultural anthropologist of his age,"⁴² who foreshadowed the main components of modern

³⁹ Bohlman, 1988, 104, Bohlman 1999, 21.

⁴⁰ In defining the "Baltic" lands of Herder's day, for the purposes of this work the common territorial divisions pertain to the Russian province or *gubernija* of Livland (or the Latinized name of Livonia), incorporating part of modern Latvia and Estonia, and to the *gubernija* of Kurland, formerly (to 1795) the Duchy of Kurland.

⁴¹ *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* IV, Book XVI, Section IV: *Slavische Völker*, and Section II: *Finnen, Letten und Preussen*; SW, XIV.

⁴² Forster, 2002, viii; Zammito, 2002, 344.

empirical research in the social sciences. His "Essay on the Origin of Language" (1770-72), from which I quote below, outlines an approach to understanding the individuality of languages and cultures:

He (the author) was at pains to collect accurate data from the human soul, human organization, the structure of all old and primitive languages, and from the whole economy of the human race and to prove his principle in such a way as the most certain philosophical truth can be proven. *Er (der Verfasser) befliss sich lieber, veste Data aus der Menschlichen Seele, der Menschlichen Organisation, dem Bau aller alten und wilden Sprachen, und der ganze Haushaltung des Menschlichen Geschlechts zu sammeln, und seinen Satz so zu beweisen, wie die festeste philosophische Wahrheit bewiesen werden kann.*⁴³

Herder's studies in language, history, and folk poetry may be understood as a point of origin for the discipline of ethnography and the broader comparative framework of ethnology. The latter gained prominence in the mid-nineteenth century with the founding of learned ethnological societies in Paris (1839), in America (1842), in London (1843), and Italy (1871). Representing a later development, a formal "ethnographic method" entered into the modern university curricula where it became integrated into the tasks of comparative ethnology, linguistics, anthropology, folkloristics, and ethnomusicology. To summarize, the principal tenet of the ethnographic method, according to the *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, (1972), is "to make direct observations of behavior," or more succinctly

⁴³ *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache* (1772) Herder, SW, V, 147; Zammito, 2002, 344.

“the detailed description of single cultures” (2006).⁴⁴ The later chapters of this thesis are devoted to the application of this method to the study of the *kopas*.

Fieldwork in a Herderian Past

The phases of the qualitative research process – collecting data, their classification, and their analysis – were undertaken during the course of eight research trips. The overall structure of visits reflected the local history of the *kopas* that I wished to incorporate in the study. Specifically, I followed a pattern of membership that reflected the history of individuals, their degree of involvement, and their ties to the founding group, the *Skandinieki*. Thus, the search led me to Rīga, Drusti, Druviena, and Limbaži (in the province of Vidzeme), to Jelgava and Zaļenieku *pagasts* (Zemgale), to Kolka, and Mazirbe (northern Kurzeme), and to Makašāni and Rēzekne (Latgale) – from October 2000 to November 2007. It should be noted, however, that in the present-day dispersion of practitioner groups of *kopas* and their surrounding communities they are more equally distributed among all twenty-six official districts (*rajoni*) and the seven largest townships of the Republic of Latvia. The mainstream development is in the hands of some two hundred folklore groups who are bound to the historical heritage of their parish district and larger ethnographic region or province (*novads*). These folklore and folksong (*daina*) traditions are highly variegated according to locality, for the *kopas* have instilled an awareness of the distinctive regional characteristics of singing.

Apart from conducting fieldwork interviews and recordings, for the duration of my trips I resided in Rīga, where I perceived the ethnic complexities of my host

⁴⁴ Porter, 2006, 182,

society in the context of daily existence – when commuting, shopping, or reading newspapers. I established links between several provincial townships, rural parish districts, and remote farmsteads, thus embarking upon a trusting and reciprocal relationship with eleven regional *kopas*. On two occasions with Jelgava's *Dimzēns* I sang and played the *kokle*, or joined in the folk dancing. Relying upon my knowledge of Ukrainian, I also learned about the ethnographic singers and dancers at the Russian secondary school in Rīga, whose tenets of authenticity – of faithfulness to their essential nature – equally pertain to the ideals of Herder at issue (see Chapter Seven). The scope of the ethnography was enlarged continually by personal communication, after my departure, from the Latvian Folklore Archives, from leaders and participants of the *kopas*, as well as from the resident Russian folklore ensemble, *Iljinskaja pjatnica*.⁴⁵

The re-establishment of Latvian independence in 1991 signified a renewed basis for *kopa* participation among families and communities. In February of 2007 folklore specialists and arts administrators, who comprise the coordinating body for national *kopa* competitions and festivals at the Centre for Ethnic Culture (EKC), University of Latvia in Rīga, registered some two hundred children's and youth groups (*bērnu un jauniešu folkloras kopas*), with an additional number of unregistered groups.⁴⁶ By way of comparison, the *Baltica* international folklore festival in July 2006, the work of Rīga's National Centre for Traditional and Performing Arts, contained one hundred adult or parent *kopas*, whose presentations

⁴⁵ Romanization of the Russian Cyrillic alphabet follows the International Scholarly System, also known as the method of scientific transliteration.

⁴⁶ The total count should entail an estimated fifty *kopas* that had not registered at the University of Latvia's Centre for Ethnic Culture (EKC) Rīga; interviews with

accentuated standards of regional differentiation.⁴⁷ Within specified districts (*rajoni*) in each of the four Latvian provinces (*novadi*) there are, on average, some fifty small groups of individuals and families that have adopted a common affiliation under the rubric of the *kopa*.⁴⁸ A growing policy of regionalism reflects the tendency of the national culture of commemoration – of festivals, holidays, and urban performance venues – to display the rich diversity within the *kopa* network.⁴⁹ Because the emergence of new groups has been concentrated in the seven largest cities and townships, the scheduling of educational and community folklore programs or events has become part of the daily pattern of circulating and dwelling in these cities. The folksong (*daina*) traditions are taught methodically and maintained through schedules, while new groups have evolved from schools and organizations for children and youth. During public evaluations that take place at regional and national levels, a “successful” group (*kopa*) or song is measured against Latvian content and artistry. The influx of new members is juxtaposed with an older (pre-Soviet) tradition of rural ethnographic ensembles, an inheritance of the inter-war period of Latvian independence; additionally, *kopa* members interact with folk dance groups of diverse

Ernests Spīčs on 5 February 2007 and 6 July 2007.

⁴⁷ Latvia’s official districts and civic parishes are administered within the legislative governing body the *Saeima*: within the four provinces of Latvia there are thirty-two districts (*rajoni*), and seven administrative townships: Rīga, with a population of 731,762, followed by Daugavpils, Liepāja, Jelgava, Jūrmala, Ventspils, Rēzekne (estimates of 1 January 2005). The estimated population of Latvia on 1 January 2005 was 2,351,400 according to *The Europa World Year Book*, volume two, 2006, pp. 2664-2682; *The Statistical Yearbook of Latvia (Latvijas Statistikas Gadagrāmata 2006)*, 45, of the Central Statistical Bureau (*Latvijas Republikas Centrālā statistikas pārvalde*) provides a lower estimate, of 2,294,590.

⁴⁸ EKC, University of Latvia, Rīga, 6 July 2007.

⁴⁹ The revival of instrumental traditions has been an adjunct to the *kopa* network of events and performances. The scientific reconstruction of folk instruments such as the bagpipe (*dūdas*), the native zither (*kokle*), on the basis of national collections and museum holdings, will not be considered in detail here. See, for example,

educational, occupational and regional backgrounds.

In annual festivals and competitions, when the local traditions are transplanted to Rīga or to the historic performance site on the hill of Turaida (*Turaidas kalns*) above the Gauja river valley, talented groups and their leaders may be awarded national folklore honors (*balvas*) and state funding. Yet it should be added that within my purview of weekly meetings, these contain spontaneous elements in which repertoires are shared regardless of national influence and policy.⁵⁰ It is possible to characterize the vocal excerpts and examples in this work, and in the accompanying sound recordings, as familiar, practical, and functional. For this reason, the ethos of the music departs from prominent Romantic imagery and religious or national symbolism, as well as from composed arrangements and instructions, since these parameters usually define local secular and church choirs.

The primary focus of the qualitative fieldwork exploration has been to gather personal documents, local histories, and regional definitions pertaining to *kopa* identities. In addition, in an offshoot of the *kopa* movement, certain groups reconstruct music and culture on the basis of mythology, prehistory, and medieval history. The opening historical overview (Chapter One) will consider the evidence of traditional singing within a pagan religious context, according to the perspective of Latvians who have cleansed and revived natural holy sites with painstaking and detailed knowledge, often entailing music and the intonation of conjuring words.

The use of ethnographic dialects and regional singing mannerisms sets most

Muktupāvels, 2002.

⁵⁰ Recordings made at a group meeting of the *kopa Dimzēns* in Jelgava, 9 February 2007; see Composite of Sound Recordings, File Zemgale.

kopa activities apart from the surrounding mainstream culture, as they are isolated within the predominantly female craft of composing and declaiming texts from memory. This and other recurring themes relating to familial groupings are reflected in the organization of fieldwork data on the life of the *kopa* in Chapter Six. These preparations for singing are not limited to locating texts and melodies in the principal scholarly folksong collections.⁵¹ Rather, declamatory and improvisatory songs have been obtained by their study of ordinary rural people – “declaimers” (*teicēji*), who may compose formulaic texts from memory in response to the occasion at hand.

On the basis of their pronounced expression of ethnic consciousness, the larger urban *kopas* are poised on a fragile boundary between the reality of the present day, on the one hand, and the memory of anti-Soviet acts, in which their political views became prominently displayed, on the other. These individuals may be seen as the victors in a struggle for a national culture that was on the threshold of extinction. The organizational growth of the *kopa* has taken place mainly in Latvian cities, where tightly knit families and small community and educational groups succeeded in offsetting Russian language and culture (see Chapter Five).

In view of the economic hardships that continued during the decade of the post-communist transition in the 1990s, the Russian anthropologist Valery Tishkov equated the rise of folklore re-enactments with the thriving industry of therapeutic

⁵¹ The *kopas* rely upon the collections of texts and melodies of Andrejs Jurjāns, 1894-1926, *Latvju tautas mūzikas materiāli* (Musical materials of the Latvian People), six volumes; Emīlis Melngailis, 1951-1953, *Latviešu mūzikas folkloras materiāli* (Materials of Latvian musical folklore), three volumes.

astrologers and healers.⁵² In a parallel fashion, Latvians have intensified their perception of the “lands” which, in their metaphysical connotation – *zeme* – is synonymous with the veneration of one’s homeland. Forming a common reference point in narratives that delineate a critical episode of life history, the significance of *zeme* implicitly underpins patterns of resettlement, when one’s return to rural habitats is seen as a resolution to personal cultural identity. The formation of the *kopa*, in turn, is an important means of supporting folklore activities in rural areas (see Chapter Six).⁵³ Apart from the heterogeneous composition of the larger multicultural cities, the sparse population density of Latvia contains, on average, only thirty-seven inhabitants to one square kilometre.⁵⁴ The Baltic minority populations of Finno-Ugric Livonian and Catholic Latgalians, whose language, history, culture, and status diverge significantly from Latvian standards, strongly maintain their ethnic boundaries. Although the heritage of the Slavic minority populace does not lie within the scope of this work, their problematic need for cultural representation in Latvian cities will be considered in the concluding chapter. But the principal aim of this fieldwork study is to explain the consciousness of a popular social movement of ethnic Latvians, whose ideals are firmly rooted in the past of their native homeland.

Participants in the folklore movement have offered personal life history narratives, which center on the decisive turning point of the “singing revolution”

⁵² Norwegian anthropologist Frederik Barth devoted a monograph to the definition of ethnic boundaries (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969); Russian anthropologist Valery Tishkov, 1994, 450, cites it.

⁵³ A significant exception to these criteria has been my research within the Russian community in Rīga at the Russian secondary school (*Rīgas Krievu ģimnāzija*), where a pedagogical folklore centre has been located since 1990 for students of “authentic folklore” – folk dancers and singers of the popular ensemble *Iljinskaja pjatņica* – whom I interviewed and filmed in May 2002.

(Latvian: *dziesmotā revolūcija*) from 1987 to 1990 (see Chapter Five). Their lives attest to remarkable qualities of dignity, resilience, and spontaneous humor that arose in the face of economic hardships and political harassment. Although the majority of the *kopas* emerged after 1990, the largest among them commemorated its thirtieth year in 2006. Reflecting a commitment to preserve the Livonian ethnic minority language and culture, this *kopa*, the *Skandinieki*, began as a “group of friends” (*draugu kopa*), a formation that coincided with the patriotic holiday of remembrance *Lāčplēša diena* (Day of the Bear Slayer, 11 November 1976).⁵⁵ In Chapters Five and Six I attempt to reconstruct the dispersion of former participants in order to understand how new groups have arisen. Overall, the *kopa Skandinieki* has retained a popular standing to the present day, as this work amply attests.

The continuation of the folklore movement of the late 1980s is evidently still practised among a larger national network. In Chapter Six I assemble qualitative data that elicits the common motives for participation, as the narrators have expressed them. These principal themes expound on prominent and recurring symbolism within traditional calendar festivities, regional folkloric variation, and the divergent voices of the ethnic minority of the Livonians and the Catholic minority of Latgalians. In the changing ethos of national holidays, the singing competitions and song festivals of the *kopas* maintain an emphasis upon regional particularity. Several spoken dialects designate these ethnographic cultures, which are bounded by Middle Latvian (and its Kuronian and Semigallian sub-dialects), eastern High Latvian (and its Selonian and Latgalian sub-dialects), and the Livonian-Tamian or *tāmnieki* dialect

⁵⁴ Accessed in 2003: www.elb.lv/latvija--eiropa; Pilats, 2001, 4.

⁵⁵ *Lāčplēsis*, the highest military order of the Latvian government, was founded in

that is spoken in regions of northern Kurzeme and Vidzeme. In 2005 a demographic analyst from the Latvian Institute claimed that elderly Latvians from opposite sides of the country, because they maintain their dialects in speech, have difficulty in conversing.⁵⁶

It is possible to apply the exacting boundaries of regional dialects to classify the rich diversity of *kopa* events and presentations. On the basis of cultural and linguistic criteria a regional cultural policy has evolved since the early 1990s within the national organization of competitions and festivals. Their categorization and registration of the *kopas* conforms to the principal ethnographic areas of Vidzeme, Kurzeme, northern Kurzeme, Zemgale, the Latgalian-Selian region or southeastern Latvian highlands (*Sēlijas Augšzeme*), and Latgale.⁵⁷

Qualitative ethnography of the past twenty years has reflected the divergent patterns and practices of circulating and dwelling in urban contexts.⁵⁸ By adhering to qualitative means of inquiry within humanistic and sociological disciplines I have studied these groups according to their own terms, appropriating their strong orientation to the family as the source of music-making, and to the day-by-day chronicle of the traditional agrarian calendar.

Methodologies for the analysis of descriptive or qualitative field data have

1919.

⁵⁶ According to the published research findings of the Latvian Institute five hundred sub-dialects of Latvian have been documented, although only an estimated one hundred sub-dialects are still spoken (see Ilmārs Mežs, 2005).

⁵⁷ For the Spring 2007 festival for children and youth the Centre for Ethnic Culture at the University of Latvia highlighted the points of ethnic and regional contrast in the participation of the Latgalian-Selian region of the southeastern highlands, thirty-four *kopas*), of five separate regions in Vidzeme (twenty-four *kopas*), of four regions of Kurzeme (thirty-eight *kopas*), and of two regions in Zemgale (fifteen *kopas*).

evolved according to criteria governing interviews and observations, and to the shifting roles of individual researchers.⁵⁹ The forerunner of this era, Bronislaw Malinowski, who began ethnographic research in Africa during World War I, established the importance of a personal research diary. Since the publication of James Clifford's essays on ethnographic authority (1986) qualitative anthropologists have studied the exchange of dialogues that arise between the ethnographer and the subjects of study. Methodologically, their most significant contributions lay in the use of open-ended or unstructured interviews, and in the development of participant observation, a period of intense social interaction in which the practitioner attains some degree of involvement and membership in the milieu of the subjects.⁶⁰ At the conclusion of the study the researcher is said to achieve a transformed view of the subject matter, and new personal insights, as this study confirms in Chapter Seven, which may be unexpected, and painful.⁶¹

During my first dialogues I encountered Latvian regional contrasts and loyalties that were exceptional to my experiential knowledge within the *diaspora* of revivalists' methods and practices. As a Latvian-American who directed an ensemble of *kokles* my perception of folklore traditions had been dependent upon pages of printed music or pedagogical method books.⁶² But this dependence on written scores was a defining factor in the education of Baltic émigré revivalists, whose folklore programmes successfully restored professional status to the national instrumentarium – of the Estonian *kannel*, the Latvian *kokle*, and the Lithuanian *kanklės*. Yet in the

⁵⁸ Clifford, 1988, 13;

⁵⁹ Clifford, 1986, Marcus and Fisher, 1986, Marcus, 1998.

⁶⁰ Adler and Adler, 1987, 10; Bogdan and Taylor, 1975, 4-5.

⁶¹ Adler and Adler, 1987, 86.

use of composed arrangements these folk revivals in the West differed markedly from the methods of rote learning and spontaneous expression that developed in *kopa* presentations since the mid-1970s. During a decade of ethnic unrest and national awakening, the *kopas* fell into a category of revivals that served to oppose mainstream culture in the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic (see Chapter Five).⁶³ Thus, their practical approach to communal leadership in the *kopa* may be exceptional in view of theories of modern cultural nationalism that pertain to “inventing traditions” or to resurrecting a distant and imagined folk.⁶⁴ Implicitly, the experience of learning by direct experience and imitation became cachet in the *kopa*, which subsequently developed unique tenets by which all members and affiliated sources were known to one another, there was a direct confluence between urban and rural singers, and that the immediacy of oral transmission would be retained in staging authentic singing traditions.

Appended to this thesis are a listing of fifty-eight sound recordings that vividly convey the regional contrasts and the musical parameters of this seven-year field study (see Appendices). These fieldwork documents are classified according to the locality of *kopas* within the city of Rīga, and the provinces of Vidzeme, Latgale, Zemgale, and Kurzeme; the ethnic minority community of Livonians within Kurzeme and Vidzeme is the subject of the final musical sub-category. For comparative purposes, I have added relevant archival and commercial recordings, some of which have been duplicated from the holdings of the Latvian Folklore

⁶² Jaremko-Porter, 2000, 97-99.

⁶³ Jaremko, 1983; Livingston, 1999.

⁶⁴ Pabriks and Purs, 2000, 37; Berlin, 1980, 338; Schöpflin, 1993, 23; Šmidchens, 1996, 191-2.

Archives and the Scottish and Celtic Studies Sound Archives. Thus, the historical dimension of song continuity is illustrated by the addition of song variants taken from older recordings. I have supplemented the listing of field and sound recordings with, first, transcripts of informal *kopa* meetings and formal occasions for singing, and, second, with a calendar-diary of events, dialogues, and observations.

Research Paradigms: East and West

It may be useful to enlarge upon the momentous changes that resulted from the restoration of the Republic of Latvia in August of 1991. Publishing documentation and photographs of Rīga in the international forum *Ethnologia Europaea* (1996) the findings of Danish ethnologist Pale Ove Christiansen were startling. Because few citizens of Rīga would willingly recount histories of the Soviet era Christiansen contended that Rīga's buildings had survived more permanently than the remains of its expressive oral and musical culture.⁶⁵ By drawing attention to jarring contrasts between the city's buildings and monuments as a metaphor for post-Soviet urban modernity, the ethnographer further proposed that the documentation would illustrate a common past among divergent ethnic groups.⁶⁶

In this context of architectural metaphor, it is understandable that the director of the *Theaterhaus Weimar*, which dramatized the life and work of Johann Gottfried Herder in 2003, would covet the use of the old central areas of Rīga – in his opinion they appeared unchanged since the eighteenth century.⁶⁷ Within the heritage of

⁶⁵ Christiansen, 1996, 143.

⁶⁶ Christiansen, 137.

⁶⁷ Klaviņa, 2003; Rozītis, 2003, the commentary of the theatrical director Janek Miller.

Gothic buildings that date from the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the prominent ensemble “Three Brothers” was rebuilt in the 1950s according to eighteenth-century drawings of Johann Christof Brotze (see Chapter Two). The renewal of Rīga’s German past is embodied in the restoration in 1999 of the ornate House of the Blackheads (*Melngalvju nams*), a merchants’ guild that existed in Riga and Reval from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries.⁶⁸ A greater number of ornamental buildings within the old city centre (*vecRīga*) and its environs are ascribed to *Jugendstil*, the German architectural style that flourished here between 1896 and 1913.

During research visits, when I lived centrally in Rīga, I perceived ethnic conflict and historical dissidence, impressions that have echoed the findings in the above-mentioned study. Almost daily I crossed the embankment of the Daugava River by the old *Akmens* or “Stone” bridge that adjoins an important site of Hanseatic glory and prestige, the former *Rathausplatz* (Latvian: *Rātslaukums*). This cross-section near to Red Riflemen’s Square (*Strēlnieku laukums*) has marked historical divisions within the city, for prominently situated on its broad expanse are statues of Lenin’s Latvian guard, who fought from 1917 to 1918. The Square is blocked by an imposing black steel structure, erected in 1970 but transformed by the Republic of Latvia into a museum that houses commemorative displays in honor of the victims of the Soviet Occupation (see Illustration Two).⁶⁹ Another monument to Lenin – the twenty-three storied building of the former Ministry of Agriculture – distorts Rīga’s historic panorama of Gothic church spires, whose iconography dates

⁶⁸ Hackman, 2003, 91.

⁶⁹ Christiansen, 1996, 143; Lieven, 1993, 14.

from the sixteenth century.⁷⁰ The twenty-storied former *Hotel Latvija* is situated across from the ornate Russian Orthodox Cathedral (a comparable *Hotel Lietuva* is found in Vilnius), while the distinctive new high-rise of Hansabanka's *Saules Akmens* (*Sun's Rock*) now dominates the Daugava River, and increasing congestion from housing development has paralyzed this main thoroughfare into the city. Not long after the restoration of the Latvian Republic in 1991, the efforts of conservation planning and the petitions of residents were ineffective in blocking plans for the first MacDonald's restaurant on a site near to the Freedom Monument (see Illustration One). A symbol of Latvian independence since 1935, the obelisk is guarded and adorned daily with wreaths and bouquets. A contemporary performance site has evolved in its shadow on an open site that is frequented by regional groups of traditional musicians and dancers.

In contrast with such ubiquitous architectural symbols of Soviet Latvia, the collective memory of individuals who lived under Soviet rule is sadly a lesser-known resource. Since the early 1990s, however, greater humanistic inquiry has led to inventive research changes. Academic foundations that were subject to Soviet institutional structuring, particularly anthropology, sociology, and the study of folklore, have restored Latvian-based studies in the course of restructuring disciplinary groupings and specializations. Academic conferences and exchanges with the West have facilitated the adoption of methodologies for observing and collecting ethnographic data and for its interpretation. Narrators, whom I have studied and recorded in Latvia from 2000-7, have related personal accounts of the

⁷⁰ This outline of Gothic church spires is an iconographical symbol of Riga; an engraving was printed in Sebastian Münster, *Cosmographia oder Beschreibung aller*

Soviet occupation, which contribute to this vital area of documentation. The potential resource of life histories has been a facet of Latvian academic work since 1992, when further insights have resulted from the restructuring of humanistic and social science disciplinary groupings and specializations.⁷¹ An initiative, for instance, to collect narrative biographical accounts of personal history and colloquial speech began in this year at the University of Latvia's Institute of Philosophy and Sociology. Its compelling case studies range across the research papers and supporting materials of private collections and projects of the Latvian *diaspora* – in the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Norway, Sweden, and Germany. The earliest recordings and narrations, which date from 1986, ranged across narratives, biographical anecdotes, lifestories, and other genres of oral lore, which are generally collected in annual expeditions. The program "*Dzīvesstāsts – Latvijā*" (Life Narratives in Latvia) explores the problematic of differing generations and social groupings among regions and districts comparatively (see Chapter Five).⁷² Archival materials have defined public relations issues, economic assistance, and avenues of understanding among multi-ethnic, regional, generational, and social groupings according to biographical anecdotes, stories, and other oral lore.⁷³ Beginning in 1999 the Centre for Ethnic Culture at the University of Latvia pioneered studies of contemporary

Länder, 1555, see Chapter One, Illustration Three.

⁷¹ The restructuring of Latvian academia has been ongoing since 1992, the year in which the University of Latvia launched a national oral history project (*Nacionālās mutvārdu vēstures projekts*) under the auspices of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology. Its secondary aim was to restore public relations and avenues of understanding.

⁷² Māra Zirnīte, *Latvijas mutvārdu vēstures spogulis, dzīvesstāsti, vēsture, kultūra, sabiedrība* [A mirror of Latvian oral history, narratives, history, culture and society (Rīga, 2007)]; see also Bela-Krūmiņa, 2003, 164; the annual summer expedition in 1996 recorded forty-one interviews, of an average duration from 1.5 to 2 hours, in the towns of Ērgli, Kuldīga, Turlava, Ruba, Jaunace, and Auce.

university student anecdotes and lore and from 2006 it solicited oral biographical accounts of individuals with respect to their careers.⁷⁴ Exploratory interview projects established within the National Oral History Archive have reached out to individuals, small groups, and communities, including émigré communities. An archive of personal life history narratives has grown from studies, which focus, for example, on one apartment building in Rīga (1997), to the study of the city's Ukrainian High School, whose students interviewed members of the ethnic minority community. Clearly, multifaceted research has enabled citizens and residents of Latvia to study themselves and their histories more fully.

Following the dissolution of the USSR journalists and academics in the West have appropriated ethnographic methods in order to individuals and events directly. A deluge of literatures embraced popular and journalistic topics related to cultural innovation and changing historical representations. In *Blood and Belonging* (1993) – perhaps the leading work of this genre – Russian-Canadian historian Michael Ignatieff, who drew on his travels and interviews in the Ukraine, exposed the strengths and shortcomings of key post-Communist political figures. An account of a journey through the Soviet Baltic Republics in the late 1980s, *The Singing Revolution* is an ethnography written from the viewpoint of a personal awakening, and in the eyes of the author whose family had emigrated from Estonia. The author interacted closely with Estonians who were on the verge of independence:

People asked me if I thought of myself as a real Estonian, a new-born nationalist [...] I wanted to say no, but that I cared about what happened to

⁷³ Bela-Krūmiņa, 2003, 164.

⁷⁴ Pakalns, 2002, 45.

all of the Baltic States because they had suffered so much in the past and their fate had not been just.⁷⁵

During an immersion into the activity of Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian ethnographic folklore ensembles in the early 1990s Latvian-American folklorist Guntis Šmidchens utilized anthropological fieldwork techniques of participant-observation. In his Ph.D. dissertation *A Baltic Music* (1997) he singled out factors that related to informal leadership roles and effective political protest within the Latvian *kopa*. Across Eastern Europe the politicization of the vernacular instilled rapidly changing cultural dynamics. The popular Ukrainian “alternative” festival *Chervona Ruta* (“The Red Rue”), which began in 1989, integrated disparate components of contemporary rock music, political speeches, religious processions and services, alongside the presentations of Ukrainian folklore ensembles.⁷⁶

Upon returning to Latvia in the 1990s Vieda Skultāns, an émigré scholar at the University of Bristol, collected individual biographical narratives as the principal objective of a field study among former Siberian exiles in the farming regions of the parish district of Drusti in central Vidzeme. The principal objective of her monograph *A Testimony of Lives* (1998) was to render a detailed textual analysis of painful experiences and thereby to elicit critical life episodes within the collective memory of these Latvians. These narratives demarcate historical frameworks of the inter-war period of national independence, the mass Soviet deportations of 1941 and 1949, and the era of Soviet occupation.

⁷⁵ Thomson, 1992, 6.

⁷⁶ Wanner, 1996.

Latvian folklorist Dace Bula employed a comparative analysis of newspaper texts from three differing historical periods in *Dziedātājtauta / Nation of Singers* (2000), a Ph.D. dissertation from the University of Latvia. These references in the national press indicate how the popular epithet developed in distinct ways. She compares the “New Latvians”⁷⁷ of the national awakening (c.1856-1880), the extreme political Right’s “New Nationalist” movement of the 1930s, and, in conclusion, her experience of post-Soviet scepticism and the loss of fundamental folkloric values during the financially troubled 1990s.⁷⁸ In this final section Bula reveals aspects of a “postcolonial” perspective (see Chapter Seven), in which she rejects, as “the Other,” models of American-style capitalism and popular culture.

As part of the scholarship of the post-Soviet transition Latvian academic folklorists and ethnomusicologists have studied biographical accounts of elderly declaimers and folklore practitioners, whose families did not migrate to cities.⁷⁹ These geographical locations exclude conflicting spaces that are defined by politics, for example, which are endemic to urban contexts.⁸⁰ This penchant to conduct fieldwork within natural may cultivate symbolic representations of a mythical and remote Latvian rural past. From my experience Latvian scholars, who have been

⁷⁷ The *jaunlatvieši* will be translated as “New Latvians” to denote the nationalist group that originated in the 1860s among a handful of students within Dorpat (Tartu) University; the usage of “Young Latvians” is correct semantically, but not historically, as the group was not comparable to the “Young Italians,” or to similar European groups that have a revolutionary connotation. Arnolds Spekke, 1951, follows the latter usage, which is criticized by Plakans, 1981, 277, citing the precedent of Svabe, 1958, *Latvijas vesture 1800--1914*, 362. In her study of the “Singing Nation” Bula, 2000, employs “Neo-Latvian.”

⁷⁸ Senn, 1990, Dreifelds, 1989 and 1996, Raun, 1991, Taagepera, 1993, and others.

⁷⁹ The tradition of spontaneously building a succession of verses with narrow melodic ambitus has survived among exceptional practitioners known as declaimers, or *teicēji*.

educated in Soviet institutes, have inherited a mistrust of formal cultural expression. Therefore the Latvian Folklore Archives within the Latvian Academy of Sciences still directs the main thrust of its research to the Latvian borderlands and coastal regions, and to rural farms and fishing communities.⁸¹ Poetic nostalgia for Rīga may be a lesser-explored aspect of the Latvian cultural outlook, although it is found more readily within the literary sphere of émigrés.⁸² The journal *Letonica* is founded on the folklore of rural areas, while their scope does not subsume urban contexts in which organizations such as the *kopas* interact with the surrounding community.

By way of contrast, Baltic research published in the West has uncovered an archetypal pattern among young Lithuanians, who are inclined to follow Western contacts and aspire to “get ahead.”⁸³ An Estonian survey measured individualization and progressive tendencies, which differ from the former Soviet collective world-view.⁸⁴ One could raise the objection, however, that perspectives relating to folklore heritage, have been less amenable to change, perhaps because foreign cultural products may be perceived as threats to Baltic national identity. Commodities of commercial world music, for example, may not be acceptable to serious academic research.⁸⁵ It may be possible to discern a national-based perspective that poses a challenge to the reception of Western ideas. When discussing the important

⁸⁰ Fischer and Grigorian, 1993, 123.

⁸¹ The Latvian Folklore Archives undertakes an annual extended summer expedition, which in 2000 focussed upon the remote Baltic Sea coast of northern Kurzeme; on the twelve historically unique fishing villages comprising the “Livonian coast” (*Līvōd Rānda*); see Erdmane, 2000.

⁸² Lieven, 1993, 35, citing Linards Tauns, whose poem is dedicated to Rīga’s sidewalks; see Valters Nollendorfs, 1974, “Rīga in the Lyric Poetry of the Postwar Latvian Generation,” *Journal of Baltic Studies* 5.

⁸³ Rindzevičiūte, 2003.

⁸⁴ Kalmus and Vihalemm, 2006, 114.

referendum of 20 September 2003 to enter the European Union, in one instance, a Latvian folklorist viewed the prospect with marked skepticism.⁸⁶ Another prominent Latvian scholar described the invasion of consumerism as being potentially harmful and confusing, for it placed the preservation of Latvian identity and values at risk.⁸⁷ Latvian academic and governmental policies sanction specific research objectives in fields such as folkloristics and ethnomusicology in which Latvian ethnicity is demarcated within a rural populace.⁸⁸ Thus, a post-Soviet inheritance of values may hinder research objectives in Russia and Eastern Europe. In *Perilous States* (1993), a compendium of interviews with social scientists who visited Eastern Europe and the successor states since 1991, an “archaic academy” prevailed. Western anthropologists situated at the Armenian Institute of Ethnography, positivistic outlook of their host institution, and they noted attitudes of isolationism, an anti-Western stance, and a fear of modernity as impediments to the research on identities and political perspectives.⁸⁹ A few exemplary Russian anthropologists have spoken out against the systematic paradigm of classification within their discipline.⁹⁰

A survey of Finnish ethnomusicologists mapped attitudes towards the important monograph *The Anthropology of Music* (1964) by the late American anthropologist Alan Merriam, which explored mainly African music in its relation to

⁸⁵ An essay by Polish ethnomusicologist Eva Dahlig, 1998.

⁸⁶ Aldis Pūtelis, Latvian Folklore Archives, Rīga.

⁸⁷ Bula, 2000, 186.

⁸⁸ Gellner, *State and Society in Soviet Thought*, 1988; see Valery Tishkov, 1994, 1999.

⁸⁹ Fischer and Grigorian, 1993. In the compiled essays Western social scientists evaluate their East European host academies.

⁹⁰ See Silverman, 1996, 61; Tishkov, 1992, 375; Durand, 1995, 327. The critique by Tishkov concluded that positivist thought pervaded post-socialist ethnography as well as the social sciences in Russia.

culture. Although the Finnish scholars read Merriam's contribution, the survey found that it had made little impact upon the scholarship of their native music.⁹¹ In a parallel occurrence in Poland, notwithstanding the cooperative research exchange that had been initiated by the late British ethnomusicologist John Blacking, several points of disagreement hindered the process of initiating academic exchanges. Polish hosts found difficulties in appropriating Blacking's notion of "humanly organized sound" – music that is intrinsic to human experience – because in their musical analyses they studied only the sound itself.⁹²

To conclude, Baltic scholars experienced a prolonged period of isolation that extended over forty years, in which time many Western ethnomusicological works – by John Blacking, Mantle Hood, Bruno Nettl, Alan Merriam, and others – were unobtainable. The lack of familiarity with well-known Western sources of scholarship, according to a prominent Latvian ethnomusicologist, began during the early 1990s.⁹³ Resuming this critique in 2006, Mārtiņš Boiko reiterated factors leading to this shortcoming: the insufficient attention given to popular music and jazz, the lack of new interdisciplinary projects such as those found in Western sociology and social anthropology, and finally the unsuccessful integration of Latvian research within Western scholarship.⁹⁴

The Living Past

The early portion of this work presents a fundamental exploration of Herder's

⁹¹ In the journal *Ethnomusicology*, see Richardson, 1994, 314.

⁹² See the essay of Anna Czekanowska, 2002, 54.

⁹³ Boiko, 1994, 53.

⁹⁴ Boiko, 2006, 22-23.

philosophical writings, which are linked to the development of the neologism “folksong” (*Volkslied*), but relate tangentially to his years among Latvians (1764 to 1769). The many excerpts that I quote in translation share a common purpose, which I would claim has been overlooked by Herder’s biographers and editors. Above all, in reference to the culminating four-volume treatise, *Ideas for a Philosophical History of Mankind* (1784-91), Herder bequeathed humanist values by which generations and nations of scholars in Russia and Eastern Europe would uphold their native languages and cultures. Representing the legacy of his thought at the outset of the twenty-first century is a small Latvian subculture of approximately three thousand practising exponents of regional and ritual ethnographic singing, and perhaps an additional ten to twenty thousand regular listeners, that professes to recover and re-enact the remains of their oral and material traditions, and indeed to meet the demands of this activity on a daily basis. These groups epitomize an understanding of the past that draws upon elaborate practices of folklore and ritual that may also enable them to explain a world-view of how the present came to be.

The challenge of the overall structure has been to connect the biographical and ethnographic field data on the *kopas*, on the one hand, to the profuse literature on Herder, on the other, in order to elicit a common ideological foundation. I have attempted to integrate these research areas and to enliven the presentation of cultural history (Chapters One to Four) by interpolating contemporary life histories of *kopa* members and their creative works at points of convergence – when the ethnography clarifies the norms of the Latvian *daina* (folksong) traditions. These references to the events and literatures surrounding the *kopa* are not jarring or intrusive, because *kopa* participants rarely perform outside of their community; they aspire to emulate other

singers directly and rely upon few, if any, documentary technologies (video, or tape recordings). The exposition of the historical sections is marked by episodes that allude to the present day. These include a discussion of a campaign, which was initiated in 2003, to offer instruction to Latvia's residents on the extensive St. John's Day ritual – a two-day national holiday held on 23-24 June (in Chapter Three). This organized pattern of re-enactments has become part of contemporary Latvian urban living. With the use of historical examples, the present work explores ongoing issues of cultural interpretation and renewal, which pertain to the colonial attitudes of intellectual interventions, for example, the power to narrate texts "from above." I propose in conclusion that the interpretation of cultural forms, which were rooted in the late eighteenth century, were immensely important to Herder's years in the Baltic German colony. Largely as a result of his prestige and influence by the early nineteenth century it became increasingly common for Latvian customs and ritual songs to be collected, published, and transformed from their transient oral state into the permanency of cultural artefacts.



Soviet-era postcards: (1) The Liberty Monument and (2) Red Riflemen's Square (*Strēlnieku laukums*) and the Occupation Museum



Soviet-era postcards: (1) The Liberty Monument and (2) Red Riflemen's Square (*Strēlnieku laukums*) and the Occupation Museum

The Historical Song Culture of the *Kopa*

Introduction

Few scholars of ethnography and related fields have focused on the documentation of history as an immediate requirement of conducting day-to-day fieldwork observations. Yet this groundbreaking effort has shown that fragmentary historical evidence may be unearthed from living beliefs, customs, and meanings.¹ At the forefront of this thinking Algirdas Julien Greimas (1917—1992), an influential linguist and semiotician, established an analytical school that was granted exceptional recognition in the Lithuanian SSR. Greimas theorized that residual pre-Christian cultural elements were insufficiently explored in collective agricultural tasks and holidays. From a corpus of living traditions – work songs, folk games, and dances – Greimas reconstructed a broader pagan world-view that juxtaposed cosmic, divine, and natural perspectives.² More recently, ethnomusicologist Rimantas Astrauskas has reviewed the theory of Greimas in relation to calendar ritual songs of southeast Lithuania, whose kinetic formulae (such as stamping feet or shouting), in

¹ The collection of essays *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology*, edited by Gregory F. Barz and Timothy J. Cooley (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997) has become a standard reference work for fieldwork studies, whose aim is to elucidate certain historical conditions. This approach is associated with the research publications of Philip V. Bohlman: see 1994, 1997, and 2000.

² Rimantas Astrauskas, 1999, 57, who cites A. Greimas, 1988, “Folkloras ir mitologija: metodo problemos,” *Kultūros barai* 12; and, *Tautos atminties beieškant*. Vilnius-Chicago, 1990.

the ancient Lithuanian mythic mentality symbolically projected the opposing heavenly and underground spheres.³ It should be added that a predecessor of Greimas, the renowned folklore classifier Vladimir Propp, in *Morphology of the Folktale* (1928), derived a typology of calendar customs and rites on the basis of social relationships that were inherent to the early roots of the Russian peasantry.⁴

The foregoing examples of modern folklore study and classification are arguably indebted to the prolific historical imagination of Johann Gottfried Herder, whose essays and letters, as they relate to his life in Riga, and to the Tsarist Russian province of Livland (1764—1769), will be considered in the following chapters. Firstly, in his inclination to pursue medieval topics, in *Yet Another Philosophy of History to the Formation of Humanity* (1774) he departed from the prevailing belief in reason and progress of his age. Moreover, with rich descriptions and imagery he was able to “breathe new life into the burial grounds of the past.”⁵ These new avenues of research required that others follow his intense immersion: “[to] enter into the age, into the direction and zone, into the whole of history, project yourself into it all” [*gehe in das Zeitalter, in die Himmelsgegend, die ganze Geschichte, fühle dich in alles hinein*].⁶

It is possible to characterize Herder’s scholarly output during the 1770s as centering upon the study of history; the invention of the “folksong” from 1773 to 1778 thereby falls into this context. In 1777 Herder singlemindedly justified his

³ Ibid, 63; Lange, 2005, 8-9.

⁴ Propp’s *Morfologiya skazki [Morphology of the folktale]*, Leningrad, 1928; see also *Russkie agrarnye prazdniki [Russian agrarian festivals]*, Leningrad, 1963.

⁵ Berlin, 2000, 19; on Berlin’s assessment see also the Introduction.

⁶ *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit. Beitrag zu vielen Beiträgen des Jahrhunderts*, 1774, Herder, SW, V, 503; cited in Pascal, 1951,

immersion into folksong collecting in an important essay. He compared his folksong collection to an archives containing insights into the “impression of a nation’s heart” and its “grammar and dictionary”:

All uncivilized people sing and act [...] Their songs are the archives of their people, the treasury of their knowledge, religion, theogony, and cosmogonies of their fathers’ deeds and of events in their history, an impression of a nation’s heart and an image of domestic life in joy and sorrow, in the marriage-bed and in the grave. *Alle unpolizirte Völker singen und handeln [...] Ihre Gesänge sind das Archiv des Volks, der Schatz ihrer Wissenschaft und Religion, ihrer Theogonie und Kosmogenien der Thaten ihrer Väter und der Begebenheiten ihrer Geschichte, Abdruck ihres Herzens, Bild ihres häuslichen Lebens in Freude und Leid, beim Brautbett und Grabe.*⁷

Ideas for a Philosophical History of Mankind, Herder’s exhaustive treatise of 1784-91, presents a later development of themes regarding the moral responsibility of scholars to recognize the historical development of distinct nations and cultures. In this treatise he poetically compares the essence of cultural distinctions and comparative origins to the organic growth of a tree, and to the permanent course of a river, metaphors which would illustrate their relative equality:

226.

⁷ Herder, *Von Ähnlichkeit der mittlern englischen und deutschen Dichtkunst, nebst verschiedenem das daraus folget* (On the Similarity of Medieval English and German Poetry, Together with Various Conclusions Resulting from This): introduction to the third chapter of *Alte Volkslieder*, 1773-74, Herder, *SW*, XXV, 82, and published separately in 1777, Herder, *SW*, IX, 532; see also Nisbet, 1999, 117; Pascal, 1951, 81; Wolff, 1994, 310-11, and in Latvian translation, Buceniece, 1995, 196-7. See also a similar statement in *Über die neuere deutsche Litteratur*, 1766-67, Herder, *SW*, II, 13.

Thus, every singular national character is deeply implanted in the oldest peoples [...] as a spring derives its component parts, its operative powers, and its flavor from the soil through which it flows, so the ancient characters of nations arose from family traits, from the climate, from the way of life and education, and from the early transactions and deeds peculiar to them. *Daher jene sonderbaren Nationalcharaktere, die von ältesten Völkern so tief eingesprägt, sich in allen ihren Wirkungen auf der Erde unverkennbar zeichnen. Wie eine Quelle von dem Boden, auf dem sie sich sammlete, Bestandtheile, Wirkungskräfte und Geschmack annimt; so entsprang der alte Charakter der Völker aus Geschlechtszügen der Himmelsgend, der Lebensart und Erziehung, aus den frühen Geschäften und Thaten, die diesem Volk eigen worden.*⁸

This passage reveals the degree to which Herder venerated national character, not as a nebulous construct, but as a product of specific aspects of the environment and climate – above all, the soil and the land.

In the discussion of Herder’s notion of “culture,” which is inherent to this chapter, I wish to clarify that it will be interpreted as “the shared knowledge, actions, and words that occur in small ethnic groupings.”⁹ To illustrate a present-day analogy, the insular qualities of contemporary Latvian ethnic consciousness may be a consequence of the restricted interaction of members who formed an anti-establishment folk revival movement during the late twentieth century. Anatol

⁸ *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit, Dritter Theil, Zwölftes Buch*, Herder, SW, XIV, 84.

⁹ This definition of culture is found in John van Maanen, *Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1988, 3-4.

Lieven, a London-based journalist who documented the emergent Baltic nations in the early 1990s, noted a striking pre-occupation with the past, which “displayed a habit of walking around in the present, and behaving as if it were alive.”¹⁰ Thus, he observed behaviours that were self-conscious or exaggerated, because for over half a century many Latvian ethnic traits had been mainly preserved within tightly knit family circles, or within educational or community groups, a tendency which clearly offset Latvian assimilation into official Soviet Russian channels of folklore expression (see Chapter Six).¹¹

Thus, it has been my experience in conversing with Latvians whom I have met and interviewed during my qualitative fieldwork procedures, that they convey independent and idiosyncratic attitudes, particularly in regard to the renewal of folklore. By creating an historical introduction to the work, this chapter will continue to explore historical factors of isolation and stability of the peoples who inhabited southeastern coastal regions of the Baltic Sea, and whose indigenous class of serfs was subject to late Christianization, only after the twelfth century. Yet the continuity and preservation of this peasant culture have been inseparable from the heritage of documentation, of music and texts, which are cited in religious interdictions and prohibitions. As will be demonstrated below, the historical development of language and nationality is an essential foundation for the present-day creativity, cultural dynamism, and renewal of the pre-Christian inheritance – of the folkloric, the musical, and the spiritual.

¹⁰ Anatol Lieven, 1993, *The Baltic Revolution: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Path to Independence*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

¹¹ See *Nordic Frontiers* 27, 1993, containing the essays of Pertti J. Anttonen, “Folklore, Modernity, and Postmodernism” and Orvar Löfgren, “The Cultural

1. An Ethos of Renewal

According to the narration of Latvians in my study, an impetus for archeological, historical, or religious reconstruction is often described in terms of the recent memory of the long Soviet occupation. This response to the oppressive cultural hegemony is synonymous with the freedom to pursue the full ethnographic restoration of local beliefs, attitudes and outlooks. In addition, during the past decade a growing number of Latvians have re-invented the pre-Christian religious heritage of their parish districts (*rajons*) and surrounding provinces (*novads*). Displaying a fastidious attention to precision, which may differ from pagan revival phenomena in the West,¹² they identify, document, and preserve “sacred sites” (*svētīvietas*). Forming the backbone of “pagan” worship (Latin *paganus*: “rustic, from the country”) are twenty-one rural sanctuaries clustered mainly within central Vidzeme. Venerated as “the oldest witnesses to history” the natural phenomena, such as rock formations, have been located on the banks of creeks, or in isolated forest clearings. They exhibit natural features that are alleged to be god-given; they may be unusually shaped piles of stones, stone structures, rocks, or boulders, upon which anthropomorphized and god-like markings are imposed.

In a twofold ritual followers release the inner forces from within the site, but also from within themselves. The rite of cleansing can be interpreted as a union of the ritual participants with the natural sites. They cultivate and decorate altars for baptisms, confirmations and weddings. Music and dance, particularly the balance represented by the physical chain of closing hands in a round dance, play an

Grammar of Nation-Building: The Nationalization of Nationalism.”

¹² Anthropologist David Lowenthal maintains that revival movements in the West

important role in these ceremonies; equally, singing or playing musical instruments may be more akin to a divine resonance than speaking. During transitional ritual segments practitioners may vary the instrumental timbres: the gentle *kokle* (zither) is reflective of human emotions, the bagpipes (*dūdas*) are said to impart strength, and the piercing birch-bark horns (*taures*) delineate ritual segments and boundaries.¹³

The contemporary Latvian folklore groups or *kopas*, that form the background to this chapter, not only absorb daily and seasonal regimes, but also the way of thinking of farm dwellers and workers, who represent a symbolic key to the past. Within an interpretive framework they have acquired local collective knowledge of songs, which pertain to an older stratum of calendar holidays, seasons, and farming occupations. As an intrepid indigenous researcher of Latgalian farming areas the director of the *kopa Grodi* claimed that he had absorbed an ethos of cyclical renewal in which “ancient thoughts explained present-day problems.”¹⁴

Ethnographic singing in the *kopa* may be defined according to the reproduction of older declaiming texts and melodies, which are usually taken directly from carriers of the folksong (*daina*) traditions.¹⁵ This small part of the activity of Marija Andiņa (b. 1955) was the focus of qualitative fieldwork undertaken in the Makašāni rural community that lies on the outskirts of Latgale’s provincial capital city of Rēzekne. In the course of dialogues, and by sharing personal documents,

display “rampant nostalgia” and “incomplete knowledge,” 1985, xxiv.

¹³ Daila Rotbaha, *Latvijas svētvietas un to ļaudis* [Latvian holy places and their people], Rīga: Jumava, 2006.

¹⁴ Andris Kapusts of *Grodi*, 1994, 17.

¹⁵ The *kopas* rely upon the collections of texts and melodies of Andrejs Jurjāns, 1894-1926, *Latvju tautas mūzikas materiāli* (Musical materials of the Latvian People), six volumes, and Emīlis Melngailis, 1951-1953, *Latviešu mūzikas folkloras materiāli* (Materials of Latvian musical folklore), three volumes.

Marija imparted the cultural representations “home” (*mājas*) and “farmstead” (*sēta*) according to the historic significance of her surroundings: “we have the same sun, sea, forest, and sky as our ancestors” (*mums ir tā pati saule, jūra, meži, debess, kā mūsu senčiem*).¹⁶ Marija’s creative folk heritage is channeled into a study of regional folk dance steps and rhythms in conjunction with traditional beliefs of healing. She imagines that the *kopa*’s songs and dances, the continuous linking of hands and rhythmic clapping, acquire relevance in the context of pantheistic beliefs:

Each presentation was enlivened by the whole group, either by clapping, by stamping feet, or by simply singing along, but that happens so organically that it attests to Marija’s bursting energy, and her joy of singing and music-making. *Katrā uzstāšanās tiek pavadīta ar kopīgu izdzīvošanu, gan sitot plaukstas, gan rībinot kājas, gan vienkārši dziedot līdzi, bet tas notiek tik organiski, to rosina Marijas plūstošā enerģija, dziedāšanas un muzicēšanas prieks.*¹⁷

These motions of round dances and refrain texts may not be comprehensible to the performers themselves, but their occurrence at exact intervals denotes a former cyclical unity.¹⁸

There is additional evidence of a larger neo-pagan movement, which is centered in the province of Vidzeme; for example, in the Limbaži *rajons* near to the eastern shore of the Gulf of Riga, three families of the farming and beekeeping

¹⁶ Marija Andiņa, 2002, *Nataki spēleiti bez skrimisteņa. (The spindle won’t turn without the sheave)*. Unpublished manuscript collection of songs from Latgale.

¹⁷ Mellēna, 1995.

¹⁸ For a review of the scholarship of cultural history and religion pertaining to the mythic and religious content of rites, games, and customs, see Astrauskas, 1999, 59.

community of Vidriži comprise the *kopa Delve*, a name conveying the playfulness of a “bear’s paw.” The focus of their activity is the study of the pagan calendar, from which they codify beliefs for ritual re-enactment. The members additionally weave and sew replicas of robes that the Finno-Ugric inhabitants of the region may have worn from the tenth to twelfth centuries. The *kopa Delve* professes to live according to the ceremonial feast days of the pagan solar calendar, allotting several days to prepare for the apex, the winter and summer solstices, but also the seasonal equinoxes. The foundation of their belief is expressed by means of seasonal rituals and their cyclical recurrence. *Delve* observes eight seasons that are measured at equal intervals, in which each season spans five nine-day weeks. Certain texts of the folksong or *dainas* cycle contain sun motifs and refer to the division of five weeks in a metaphor of the palm of the hand that is illustrated graphically in traditional circular ornaments:¹⁹

Saulītei pieci pirksti

The sun has five fingers

Pieci zelta gredzentiņi.

Five golden rings.

Delve have assembled words of magic and sorcery from the collection housed in the Latvian Folklore Archives, and a printed resource compiled by Kārlis Straubergs (1890—1962), *Latviešu buramie vārdi* (1939). In a composition entitled “Words of Fire” (*Uguns vārdi*), this *kopa* applies narrow-range declaiming melodies and the native instrumentarium of the sistrum (*trideksnis*) and zither (*kokle*) accompaniments to the dedication of a sacrificial hilltop fire.

¹⁹ On ritual calendar customs see Chapter Six. The ancient seasons of the Sun Year that begin after the Winter Solstice are Frost time, Snow crust time, Sap time, Bloom time, Hay time, Heath time, Mist time, and Ice time. Aina and Gvido Tobis, *Saules gads [The Solar Year: a Guide to the Solar Pagan Calendar]*, Rīga: Jumi, 1998.

According to Aina Tobe, the creative spark of *Delve* may be compared to the natural continuity of the river *Svētupe* (“Sacred River”), which flows inland from the *Svētciems* village at the Bay of Riga, through the town of *Limbaži*, and to the village of *Pāle*. The latter stretch is navigable, but below *Pāle* the river is swifter and narrower. As a natural metaphor for strength and endurance Aina imagines how these stages of the free-flowing *Svētupe* have remained torrential or stagnant throughout history; her personal beliefs derive from the knowledge that the *Svētupe* has never stopped.²⁰

2. The Dawn of History

Archaic motifs pertaining to music come to life in Latvian folktales and legends that enliven the contemporary network of storytelling events and competitions. Here children of the folklore *kopas* learn of legendary motifs: the disappearance of a bardic class of musicians or the sunken castle in Vidzeme’s Lake Burtnieks that is the resting place of their wisdom.²¹ Folkloric and ethnographic evidence is a tool in the scientific reconstruction of proto-historical musical instruments. Excavated from

²⁰ A co-founder of *Delve* Aina Tobe is a professional artist, author and illustrator of a guide to the solar calendar year *Saules gads*. A *svētnieks* or elder in the pagan religion Gvido Tobis officiates at family rites and calendar solstices. E-mail correspondences and telephone conversations 28 April 2007, 18 May 2007; interview with Aina Tobe, Limbaži, 8 July 2007. A parallel grouping of specialists of medieval art and music, *Senās vides darbnīca* is an “ancient environment workshop,” which is situated in central Vidzeme. They have reconstructed a ninth-century village, where they weave, forge metalwork, and specialize in the crafts and the music of the bagpipe (*dūdas*). See Illustration Eight.

²¹ Joachims Brauns of Bar-Ilan University cites Krišjānis Barons, the introduction of volume one of *Latvju dainas*, 1894, xxiii. See “*Instrumentālās muzicēšanas pirmsākumi Latvijas teritorijā*” (The Beginnings of Instrumental Music-making in the Territory of Latvia), in: *Joachims Brauns: Raksti-Studies-Schriften*, Rīga: Musica Baltica, 2002, 348.

the Semigallian tribal castle mound at Tērvete is a twelfth-century clay or stucco fragment of a tablet on which there is engraved a player of a cylindrical pipe, or possibly a bone flute (Latvian: *stabule*). Classed as older types of aerophones, bone whistles are predominant in prehistoric mounds – a specimen discovered near to Lake Ludza dates from the second or third millennium BC – but goat's horns (*āžragi*), and varieties of *stabule* (fipple flute, German: *Blockflöte*) having three to five holes and a pentatonic range, are regularly unearthed.²²

With the founding of Baltic German archaeological societies in the early nineteenth century the scholarship of Baltic antiquities and cultural history expanded under the auspices of the Courland Society for Literature and Art (*Kurländische Gesellschaft für Litteratur und Kunst*), that was established in Jelgava in 1816. After 1834, this scholarly work was supplemented by Riga's Society for History and Studies of Antiquity of the Russian Baltic Provinces (*Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Altertumskunde der Ostseeprovinzen Russlands*).²³ Etymological studies of Baltic river and place names, and other loan words, have established a proto-historical homeland of Baltic tribes,²⁴ extending eastwards to the Russian Pripet marshes near Moscow. At the start of the first millennium BC incursions and

²² The methods of studying the origins of Latvian musical instruments are reviewed in Braun, 1971, "Die Anfänge des Musikinstrumentenspiels in Lettland," *Musik des Ostens* 6. These interdisciplinary essays have been reprinted with English and German summaries: see Brauns 2002, and the introduction by Mārtiņš Boiko, *l- li*.

²³ This discussion of pre-historic song culture is based on readings in Ella Buceniece, *Ideju Vēsture*, 1995, Heinrichs Strods un Ināre Leinasare, *Latviešu etnogrāfija*, 1969, 5-86, and *Latvijas senākā vēsture 9 gt. pr. Kr. – 1200 g.*, Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 2001. Marija Gimbutas, the Professor of Indo-European Studies at the University of California, synthesized the study of archaeology, prehistory, early religions, and mythology in *The Balts* (New York: Praeger, 1963).

²⁴ East Baltic languages of Latvian, Lithuanian, and Latgalian predate the German Teutonic colonization of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (CE); Kuronians,

migrations to the Baltic Sea by the ancestors to modern Latvians, Lithuanians, and Estonians displaced the Finnic-Livonian inhabitants (Latvian: *lībieši* or *līvi*). That the Livonians have survived to this day as a small official minority in Latvia may be attributed in part to the post-Soviet revitalization of their language and traditional music; in 2002, for example, several young people of Livonian descent in the *kopa Kalajeng* have collected and developed the songs of their coastal fishing culture (see Chapter Six).

That few written historical accounts of Baltic lands are extant prior to the twelfth century AD may be attributed to the harsh landscape of dense forests, lakes and marshes. In *Germania* (98 BC) the Roman historian Tacitus writes of “gentle *Aistians*” (*Aistii, gentes Aestiorum*) and their wealth of crops, stock, furs, wax, honey, amber and bone ornaments, the basis of trading relations with the Greeks, the Scandinavian Vikings, and other cultures to the south and west. There is evidence of a unified Baltic “Corded Ware Culture”²⁵ of the first millennium BC, although the pattern of autonomous tribal regions prevails in the archaeological and linguistic evidence.

The seafaring tribe of Kuronians (or Couronians; Latin: *Kori*, Latvian: *Kurši*) warred with Danish and Swedish Viking groups. Written evidence of this struggle is found in the Chronicle of Rimbart (855), an account of the Kuronian castle *Saeborg* at Grobiņa, a Swedish settlement from 650 to 800. The inland Samogitians (to the south), and Semigallians, Selonians, and Latgallians of the Middle Iron Age,

Semigallians, and Selonians disappeared, or were assimilated by other tribes after the fourteenth century (CE).

²⁵ *Latvijas senākā vēsture 9 gt. pr. Kr. – 1200 g.* Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 2001, 441.

expanded hill-forts to form open settlements of single farmsteads and lake fortresses. The *Āraiši* lake fortress (that can be seen in modern Vidzeme) was in use from the ninth to the tenth centuries. By the thirteenth century castles or hill-forts became centers of jurisdiction for nine separate states, or “lands” (*terra*), whose governance of elders represented large or extended families (Latvian: *lielģimenes* or *dzimtas*). One can discern the historical formation of agrarian and solar cults within these archaeological remains. The recurring symbolic markings that are classed as “cleared fields” (swastikas) are indicative of the worship of natural phenomena.²⁶

The presence of German ships that entered the Daugava River in 1201 signaled an era of colonization of the Baltic lands, during which time German, Swedish, and Russian forces successively struggled for access to the Baltic Sea (*Dominium Maris Baltici*). Bishop Albert de Bekeshovede (Buxhöveden), the founder of the Order of the Brethren of the Sword, in 1202 began to build a confederation of bishoprics and principalities, whose centre lay in the Livonia, the region of the Finnic tribe of the Livonians (Finnic: *Līvõmō*); thus the “Livonian Order” served the Archbishopric of Riga.²⁷ The militant subjugators of the Baltic tribes maintained the legacy of the tenth-century Christian Crusader (*miles Christianus*) in the Middle East. The extensive defense of native Baltic warriors in the last Christian Crusade has been subject to documentation on the basis of firsthand reports in the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia (Latvian: *Indriķis*, 1187—after 1259). These depict poetry and music of the Lettgallian victory celebration at the castle of

²⁶ *Latvijas senākā vēsture 9 gt. pr. Kr. – 1200 g.* 2001, 456, 460.

²⁷ In 1237 the Knights of Our Lady colonized the West Baltic speakers – Galindians, Yotvingians, and Curonians – whose languages and cultures were suppressed and died out by the sixteenth century.

Beverīna in 1208. Resistance against Livonian and Teutonic Orders continued until the defeat of tribal kingdoms: of the Livonians (in 1207), the Selonians (in 1208), the Latgallians (in 1224), the Couronians (in 1267), and, at the end of the Teutonic conquest, the Semigallians (at the battle of Sidrabene in 1290). The rulers Viesturs and Namējs of the Semigallian hill fortress at Tērvete in Zemgale are mentioned in the Chronicle of Henry and other historical sources. Other thirteenth-century tribal chieftains (*virsaīši*) – Kuronian Lamekins and Latgallians Tāļivaldis and Visvaldis – are heroicized in early Latvian fiction, the work of Herder’s contemporary Garlieb Helwig Merkel (1769—1850)²⁸ and in Romantic national literatures and portraits of the nineteenth century (see Chapter Four). Latvians and Lithuanians commemorate the Semigallian victory in 1236 at the battle of *Šiauliai* (Latvian: *Vecsaule*) in a pan-Baltic Festival of unity, *Baltu Vienība*, which is held annually since 2000 on the twenty-second of September.

Having an expansive role in these acts of commemoration, a few specialized music ensembles have focused on reviving the history and culture of the pre-Christian era. The *kopa Vilki* (“Wolves”) began to develop a performance career by acquiring the personal song repertoires directly from former Latvian soldiers. By exhaustive research into military history, tactics, beliefs, tales, costumes, and foodways (see Chapter Five) they formed a musical chronicle of the Latvian soldiers’ way of life as it has evolved from the Iron Age (the ninth to twelfth centuries BC) to the end of the Soviet era of Latvian occupation. Their repertoire of folksong (*daina*)

²⁸ *Die Letten vorzüglich in Liefland am Ende des philosophischen Jahrhunderts: Ein Beitrag zur Völker- und Menschenkunde*, Leipzig: Heinrich Gräff, 1797; *Die Vorzeit Liefland: Ein Denkmal des Pfaffen- und Rittergeistes* (two volumes, Berlin, 1798-99). See Chapter Three.

texts contains a repository for pre-Christian motifs of alchemy and ritual customs for brewing beer, which are characteristic of the Bronze and Iron Ages of the Baltic region from the first millennium BC.²⁹

In devoting a decade of their music careers to the staging of early historic battles, as an “untapped means of self-expression,” the internationally renowned pagan metal band *Skyforger* has imaginatively interpreted the idioms of Baltic tribal warriors. They have reproduced specific dramatic episodes from the thirteenth-century Teutonic conquest of the Semigallian and the Kuronian tribes according to the sounds of folkloric and historic elements – battle cries, neighing, signaling drums and horns, and solo bagpipes.³⁰ Apart from the traditional musical elements – of single melodic lines and declamatory texts, canonic whistle blowing, lyrical solo renditions of the bagpipe (*dūdas*), zither (*kokle*), the mouth-organ (*vargans*), and unaccompanied singing – they are renowned for their metallic and programmatic re-enactments of violent thirteenth-century battles – “Battle of Saule, and Viestards’ Fight at Mežotne” (1998), “Sword Song” (2003), “Semgalls’ Warchant and Bloodfield” (1997, 2007).

²⁹ On the folklore *kopas Vilki*, *Vilkači*, and *Vilcenes*, see Illustration Six, and the Discography. On *Dzelzīm dzimu*, Rīga, Upe, 2000, in the *British Journal of Ethnomusicology*, see Jaremko-Porter, 2001, 142. Pīgozne-Brinkmane, 2006, has surveyed the “Late Iron Age re-enactors” in the province of Vidzeme.

3. Pre-Enlightenment Song Censure (1550—1750)

The victory of Russian Tsar Ivan IV (the Terrible) following the Livonian War (1558—1583) (German: *livländische Krieg*) brought about the collapse of the united ecclesiastic states of the Livonian confederation within the Holy Roman Empire.³¹ Because of the devastation, atrocities and outbreaks of the plague in this campaign the territory of Livonia lost nearly one half of its populace. As a further consequence Baltic German economic and social subjugation of Latvians increased under Russian and Polish hegemony. But throughout the history of the hereditary landed gentry of the Estonian, Livlandic, and Kurlandic colony, the *Ritterschaften*, which ended conclusively only in 1939, the Baltic German descendents of the medieval crusaders and missionaries represented a fraction – perhaps eight to ten percent of the native populace.³² The sociocultural divisions resulting from centuries of “colonization” distinguished the principal bearers of the German culture (*Kulturträger*) from the Latvian-, Livonian-, and Estonian-speaking populace, a typology in which the Latvian and Livonian inhabitants were classed as “non-Germans” (German: *die undeutsche Bevölkerung*, or *Undeutsche*) or as serfs (*Leibeigene*).

Indo-European classifications, handbooks, and grammars that proliferated in the early nineteenth century have bequeathed the conventional linguistic meanings of the terms “Baltic” and “Baltic peoples” (Latvian: *balti*, Lithuanian *baltai*, Latgalian *bolti*). These language studies produced scholars who collected indigenous folk literatures (songs, tales, sayings) in Latvian, Lithuanian, and Latgalian, as well as in

³⁰ Notes to *Skyforger Semigalls' Warchant*, 2007.

³¹ The derivation of the territory of Livonia is Finnic-Livonian (*Līvõmō*) in Latvian and Lithuanian the term is *Livonija*, and in German and Swedish – *Livland*.

³² Plakans, 1981, 448.

Old Prussian – which, until 1700, was the only remaining West Baltic language in the territory of (East) Prussia.³³ It should be added that the populace of towns and cities, in particular that of central Riga, spoke German until the first nation-state of the Republic of Latvia formalized its boundaries in 1918.³⁴

From the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries Church officials translated and disseminated practical works, catechisms and grammars in the dialects of the peasants (*Bauernsprache*). Merchants and traveling peoples who traded near to Riga and Jelgava were instrumental in disseminating the “low Latvian” or central dialect, but additional documents stem from the prominent tradition of folksongs that are sung in this dialect. Marginal dialects having pre-Christian roots have survived, however, despite the linguistic harmonization of the peasant languages. Records of the eastern highland (*Augšzeme* dialect) begin in eighteenth-century Catholic songbooks, as well as in nineteenth-century folksong texts. Second, there is a Livonian-influenced or Tamian dialect native to northern Kurzeme and western Vidzeme.³⁵ But with the succession of Lutheran liturgical publications, encompassing the sermons of Georg Mancelius (1593—1654, see below) and the

³³ The founding works of comparative Baltic linguistics include Georg Heinrich Ferdinand Nesselmann, on the West Baltic language of Old Prussian, *Die Sprache der alten Preussen an ihren Überresten erläutert*, 1845. Nesselmann collected and studied the language of Lithuanian folksongs, *Dainos: Littauische Volkslieder gesammelt, kritisch bearbeitet und metrisch übersetzt von G.H.F. Nesselmann, Georg Heinrich Ferdinand*, 1853. In Indo-European linguistics eminent Baltic researchers included Franz Bopp (1791—1867), *Vergleichende Grammatik des Sanskrit, Zend, Griechischen, Lateinischen, Litthauischen, Altslawischen, Gotischen und Deutschen* (Six parts, 1833—52), Karl Brugmann, *Grundriss der vergleichenden Grammatik der indogermanischen Sprachen*, 2nd ed., three volumes (1897—1916), and important grammatical treatise of August Schleicher, *Handbuch der litauischen Sprache*, 2 Bde. Weimar: H. Boehlau, 1857.

³⁴ Metuzāle-Kangere and Ozoliņš, 2005, 320.

³⁵ Anna Bergmane and Aina Blinkmane, *Latviešu rakstības attīstība (The*

Latvian translation of the New Testament by Ernst Glück (1683—1705), the peasant dialects gradually coalesced. A Latvian grammar, however, was not systematized until the publication of the mid eighteenth-century dictionaries and didactic works of Gottfried Friedrich Stender (1714—1796; see Chapter Three). Thus, the ecclesiastic doctrines that represent the early history of the literary language exist alongside the first documentation of the Latvian expressive culture of ritual dance and music.

From c.1580 to c.1700 prominent ritual customs of the non-German populace (*Undeutsche*) came to the attention of Renaissance scholars and representatives of Lutheran orthodoxy within the Duchy of Kurland and the Kingdom of Livonia (or Swedish Livonia, after 1562). The late Latvian philologist Ludis Bērziņš has conceded that the written evidence is sparse, amounting only to “one drop in the folksong ocean.”³⁶ Condemnatory accounts of ritual singing, of Lithuanians that “howl like wolves,” recur in liturgical documents. This negative perception of calendar rites and ceremonies is found in the chronicles of Maciej Strykowski (c.1547—1593), and the Lutheran Pietist pastor and poet of East Prussia Kristijonas Donelaitis (1714—1780).³⁷

Although he maintained a critical stance towards music and singing Hebrew scholar and cartographer Sebastian Münster (1489—1552) commented on the oppression and denigration of the serfs in the richly illustrated *Cosmographia oder Beschreibung aller Länder, aller Völcker, Herzschaften* (Basel, 1546, see

Development of Latvian Orthography), Rīga: Zinātne, 1986, 15.

³⁶ Bērziņš, 1933, 114.

³⁷ Astrauskas, 1999, 59.

³⁸ See Illustrations Three and Four. *Cosmographia* was published forty-six times from 1544 to 1650. See Muktupāvels, 2000, 504, Brauns, 2002, 4. Vītolīņš and Krasinska, 1972, 68-76, review the historical documents of the Reformation era in

Illustrations Three and Four), a geographical treatise of German lands of the Renaissance world. Münster added an early iconography of native instrumentalists to the enlarged second edition of the *Cosmographia* in 1550 (see Illustration Three). Devils and witches, who dance beside itinerant musicians of the hurdy-gurdy, lute, and bagpipes, embellish this engraving.³⁸ Sir Balthasar Rüssow (c.1535—1600) confirmed the widespread playing of bagpipes among Latvian serfs in an important chronicle dating from the late sixteenth century.³⁹

Historian Paul Einhorn (d. 1655), a high-ranking Lutheran superintendent in the Duchy of Kurland, at that time a fiefdom of Catholic Poland, formulated objections to Latvians whose strange behaviors lacked a Christian ethos. In his *Historia Lettica* Einhorn alluded to incessant singing of “polluted, unclean, and spiritually unsound songs day and night, without ever being at home”; perhaps ironically, he specified deities of an opposing religious pantheon within the surrounding nature:⁴⁰

Even today they invoke gods and goddesses; he who doubts it should listen to what they say, especially when going to work in the forest, fields or gardens, or when setting out on a journey; listen how they invoke and worship forest

the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

³⁹ The chronicler was a Lutheran pastor in Reval (Tallinn) of Estonian origin. *Chronica der Prouintz Lyfflandt*, Revaliensem, 1578, page 11 and 18. See Brauns, 2002, 4; Brüggermann, 2003, 265-82.

⁴⁰ See Latvian historian Arnolds Spekke, “Einhorna raksti par latviešiem,” *Senatne un Māksla* 4 (1937), 118; and *Latvijas senākā vēsture 9 gt. pr. Kr. – 1200 g.*, Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 2001, 427.

⁴¹ Paul Einhorn, Consistorial Superintendent of the Lutheran Church in the Duchy of Kurland, *Reformatio Gentis Letticae in Ducatu Curlandiae*, 1636. See Vītoliņš, 1969, 47-8.

gods and goddesses, the Mother of the Fields, the Mother or Goddess of Gardens, the Goddess of the Road; one should listen to the songs they sing to their gods in the way real hymns are sung (*peculiares hymnos Deorum*).⁴¹

Turning to peasant mummery and Yule log (*bluķa vakars*) processions Einhornn held them to be a sinful mockery of the solemn Christian observance of Christmas.

The ascent of orthodox Lutheranism, whose proponents disseminated translations of liturgical works into the central Latvian dialect, altered the language and social divisions of Latvian-speaking territory. In the Duchy of Kurland, Duke Gotthard Kettler condoned the issue in the Latvian vernacular of the *Evangelical Lutheran Catechism* (1586) and the *Undeutsche Psalms* (1587).⁴² Humanist thinking advanced within the writings of Renaissance scholar Georg Mancelius (1593—1654), whom modern scholars acknowledge as the founder of Latvian orthography and prose. Mancelius served Kurland's Duke Friedrich Kettler and became rector at the main Baltic German seat of learning at Dorpat (Tartu) University. A pastor's son from Mežmuiža (in the current province of Zemgale) Mancelius learned the language and customs of the Semigallian people, a background that is prominently reflected in his sermons and treatises.

Mancelius compiled the first German-Latvian dictionary *Phraseologia Lettica* (1638), followed in 1654 by *Lang-gewünschte lettische Postill*, a famous collection of sermons and simple dialogues composed in the Latvian language. On

⁴² For more on Mancelius see Buceniece, 1995, 10, 78-80. Mancelius became the Prorektor of the main Baltic German seat of learning at Dorpat (Tartu) University between 1632 and 1637. His *Catholic and Lutheran Catechisms* (1585 and 1586, respectively) are among the earliest printed Latvian texts, although the first printed

the Day of St. John the Baptist (*Am Tage Johannis des Täufers*) Mancelius preached against Latvian celebrants of the summer solstice who revered their rites and songs more than the Evangelical figure of John. Renouncing the customary adornment of oak garlands and “the dancing and leaping over a huge fire,” Mancelius concluded, “All these things resemble pagan idolatry.”⁴³ He prohibited the collecting of oak boughs for the customary use of decorating gates and houses, as it allegedly foretold the mortality and the abundance of the harvest. Nevertheless, the sermons of Mancelius comprise a vital insight into the Latvian culture, character, and work, as well as enriching the written language. In a reference to milling in *Phraseologia Lettica* (Riga, 1638) Mancelius cited a folksong (Latvian: *daina*) text for the tasks of milling: *Malu, malu visu rītu, suņam putas nesamalu* (I milled all morning, but did not mill the dog’s gruel). He added that Latvians were “proud and often ironical” and that the skills of girls were varied and unpredictable – from those who were fine millers to those who milled poorly.⁴⁴

Although Lutheran literatures greatly advanced the evolution of the Latvian language, there were few indications of a humanist outlook. Rather, the written word mirrored the instruments of oppression. During the Reformation era of the late sixteenth and the early seventeenth centuries Lutheran church officials punished allegations of magic, sorcery, and witchcraft. The first words of sorcery were

text in Latvian dates from 1525.

⁴³ *Lang-gewünschte lettische Postill: Das ist: kurtze und einfältige, jedoch schriftmässige Auslegung und Erklärung der Sontäglichen und vornehmsten Fest-Evangelien*, Riga, 1654, Bd. 2, 45-46; see Illustration Five.

⁴⁴ Mancelius may have borrowed the saying about milling “dog’s gruel” from regional Semigallian folksong texts and worksongs, where the epithet is common, see *Kopa Dimzēns*, Jelgava, (see Bibliography: Sound Recording Composite, File Four, Zemgale: Z1), *Mālu, mālu, visu dienu*, Arājs, 1985, 114.

recorded in 1584, but the burning of witches occurred earlier, in Grobiņa (in southwest Kurland) in 1559. It is not surprising therefore that a verse of a Latvian song text appeared in print as the outcome of an interrogation. Taking place in 1584 the subject, Jānis of Alūksne (German: Marienburg), confessed to the use of conjuring words for healing. Salt and water were commonly used to heal people and cattle, and to bestow magical powers in shielding recipients against disease or weapons. Latvian scholars have identified *daina* or folksong concordances in verse fragments and metrical scansion relating to the third line of the text.⁴⁵ The opening lines are addressed to an ironsmith, and may be interpreted as a formulaic command to unlock iron gates (*Dzelzeniek, trumelniek, Atslēdz dzelžu vārtu*). The third and fourth lines – *Nosakliedzi vanadziņi* (“hawks cry out”), *dzelzu vārti dārdēdami* (“rattling the iron gates”) – have magical connotations, but these lines reappear in folksong texts that have been collected and published in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Continuity is apparent in the classical symmetrical structure of the seventeenth-century text, which has remained common to folksongs of a much later historical period.⁴⁶

A history textbook of Livonian lands – *Syntagma de origine livonorum* – dating from 1632 or 1635 (see Illustration Six) – preserves the words of a Latvian traditional quatrain and the notation of a melody. The author Fredericus Menius (d. 1657 or 1659) was a Baltic German poet, and a minister of several parishes in

⁴⁵ *Selsenick, trummelnick, adtsle Selse warde*, Arājs, 1985, 10-12, citing Kārlis Straubergs, *Latviešu buramie vārdi*, Rīga, 1939. Present-day sorcerers and charmers in the eastern Latvian region of Latgale have been the focus of a study on Jesuit visitation chronicles of 1767; Lielbārdis, 2006.

Livland, who assumed the title of professor of history during the founding years of the University of Dorpat (Latvian: Tērbata). The melody is set in Renaissance diamond-head notation, but later variants have been documented that illustrate the remarkable continuity of the oral song tradition over three hundred years. In the mid-eighteenth century Pastor Gottfried Friedrich Stender collected and categorized this avowedly “dishonorable song” (*negoda dziesma*). Adding to his categorization of bawdy songs the folksong scholar Krišjānis Barons classified a close variant of the song text in the collection *Latvju dainas* (volume VI (1915): LD 34 388).⁴⁷ Research of the melody taken up in 1976 by Soviet-Latvian musicologist Jēkabs Vītoliņš has pointed to well-preserved traditional melodic elements: of the scansion into four syllabic lines, the melodic range spanning an interval of a sixth, the harmonic outline, and the symmetrical phrases and forms.⁴⁸

Mancelius, in the dictionary *Lettus*, fully annotated a work song for hand milling, or *cantilena ad molam* (Latvian: *maltuves dziesmas*), interpolating a transcription of the text by his contemporary, Christof Fürecker (Latin: Christiano Fureccerus, c. 1615—1684). Born into a German pastor’s family, Fürecker was an

⁴⁶ Arājs, 1985, 121; the full transcription is in Ozols, 1965, 63-64.

⁴⁷ On *Latvju dainas* see Chapter Four. The song texts which contain this line are classified within the folksong collection *Latvju dainas*, edited by Krišjānis Barons, six volumes, 1894-1915: LD 2570.

⁴⁸ The text of LD 34 388, in which the old orthography is preserved, begins: *Ak baltaja mahmulite, dohd man weenu kakeniht*; in current usage it reads: *Ak baltāja māmūlīte, dod man vienu kaķenīt* (“Oh my dear white mother, give me a little cat,”). References to the folksong tradition of this text are: Gottfried Friedrich Stender, *Pasakkas un Stahsti*, Jelgava, K. Litke, 1789, 190; on this see Johansons, 1975, 408, and Vītoliņš, 1976, 90-91. The full text is appended to Ludis Bērziņš, “Latviešu tautas dzēja Stendera un Herdera laikmetā,” *Filologu biedrības raksti*, 1933, 154-7; and reprinted in Bērziņš, 2007. The text is found online at the Latvian Folklore Archive’s website: http://www.lfk.lv/1632_lv.html. The full text of LD 34388 *Ai*

early composer of Lutheran hymns, who bequeathed important documents on the language and customs of seventeenth-century Kurland. His transcribed text contains a ritual invocation to enter “God’s barn” (*dieva klētiņa*), a reference to the indigenous Latvian God (*dievs*):⁴⁹

Cant: ad molam [cantilena ad molam: milling song]

Gan es malu maļamā *Yes I mill, what can be milled*

Vēl pieberu beramā. *I still pour what can be poured.*

To malīti samaļam, *I milled what can be milled,*

Kur mēs citu dabūjam? *Where can we find the rest?*

Iesim dievā klētiņā *Let’s go to God’s barn*

Tur mēs citu dabūjam. *There we will get more.*

The generic importance of these songs of milling is revealed in its close regional associations to the farming lands of Zemgale. This continuity is innate to the contemporary repertoire of the *kopa Dimzēns* in the provincial capital city of Jelgava. A young member Anita Jansone (b. 1987) chose a milling folksong, which contains the text recorded by Mancelius in 1638 (see above) *Malu, malu visu rītu, suņam putras nesamal*,⁵⁰ for a presentation at the Open-Air Ethnographic Museum outside

balta mahmulina, Dod man weenu kakeninu is listed in volume six of Krišjānis Barons, *Latvju dainas*, 1915, 2.

⁴⁹ Bērziņš, 1928, and idem, 1933, 114. The poet and translator who published under the Latinized name Christophorus Füreccerus compiled two song collections: *Kurzemes dziesmu grāmata*, and *Vidzemes dziesmu grāmata*, 1685; see Ludis Bērziņš, *Greznas dziesmas*, [1942], 2007, 51-52; see also Apkalns, 1977, 143; Spekke, 1951, 258.

⁵⁰ The example was recorded and transcribed in Jelgava by Jēkabs Vītoliņš, *Darba dziesmas [Work songs]*, Rīga: Latvijas Valsts izdevniecība, 1958. It is catalogued separately for use in *kopa* presentations of summer seasonal work songs. See Mellēna [et al] *Gadskārtu Grāmata, “Vasaras grāmata,”* 2004, 474.

of Riga. Barefoot, dressed in rags, and covered with dirt, Anita simulated milling chores as she declaimed (or *saukt*, “shouted”) this milling song to a wide international audience.⁵¹ This folksong (*daina*) had evidently been retained by means of oral traditions in Zemgale until 1931, when the folksong collector and musicologist Emilis Melngailis notated the tune from a Latvian traditional declaimer near Jelgava.⁵²

Renowned for its peace and stability, Swedish rule in Livonia (1562—1710) led to advances in printing, Latvian orthography, as well as the documentation of Latvian peasant life. These aspects of humanistic scholarship, which epitomized the reign of Gustav Karl XI (the Peasant King), were curtailed by the Swedish defeat in the Great Northern War (1700—1710), when the German and Lutheran realm known as the *Baltikum* once again, as in the Livonian Wars (1558—1582), succumbed to war, disease, and plague. Becoming the provinces of Livland (German: *Liefland*) and Estland (within present-day Estonia), this territory was ceded to the Russian Tsar, Peter the Great. In successive partitions of the Poland-Lithuanian Commonwealth the Russian Tsarist Empire in 1772 acquired Eastern Letgallia, which had been under Polish governance for two hundred years.⁵³ Living conditions deteriorated for Latvians, who experienced an increase in compulsory labor and the inducement of alcoholism; their overlords in the Baltic German gentry were granted greater authority by enlisting in the Russian Tsarist army. A closed corporation of circa three

⁵¹ In July 2004; see Bibliography: Sound Recording Composite, File 4 Z1; Discography CD of *Dimzēns* (2003).

⁵² Collected in Riga, from the declaimer Lavīze Alute, who was born in 1856 near Jelgava in Bukaiši.

⁵³ The Duchy of Kurland followed in 1795; its ducal lineage had been incorporated nominally as a suzerainty of Poland.

hundred noble families held a monopoly of the land,⁵⁴ whose colonized order condoned the bartering of serfs according to two classes:

Valnieki (the lower class of serfs who had no specific assigned duties) and their children are sometimes sold or traded for things – for horses, dogs, pipe bowls, and so forth. Peasants are better ware than the Negroes in the American colonies: a servant can be bought for thirty to fifty *roubles*, but a tradesman, cook, or a weaver costs up to about one hundred *roubles*.⁵⁵

In the changing political climate of the late eighteenth-century, Hupel's indictment against the politics of serfdom (*Leibeigenschaftspolitik*) was made in an atmosphere of open debate. With the immigration to Riga of a sizable German-speaking intellectual and professional class – of German and Prussian merchants, lawyers, pastors and teachers from Königsberg and adjacent regions in East Prussia,⁵⁶ Saxony, and Thuringia – literary and philosophical ideas developed in a Baltic regional counterpart to the Enlightenment era in Western Europe. In the evolution of a humanist study, German-speaking pastors engaged in ethnographic descriptions of the musical pastimes of the serfs, providing an international dimension to the study of the region's indigenous cultures.

⁵⁴ Misiunas and Taagepera, 1993, 4-5.

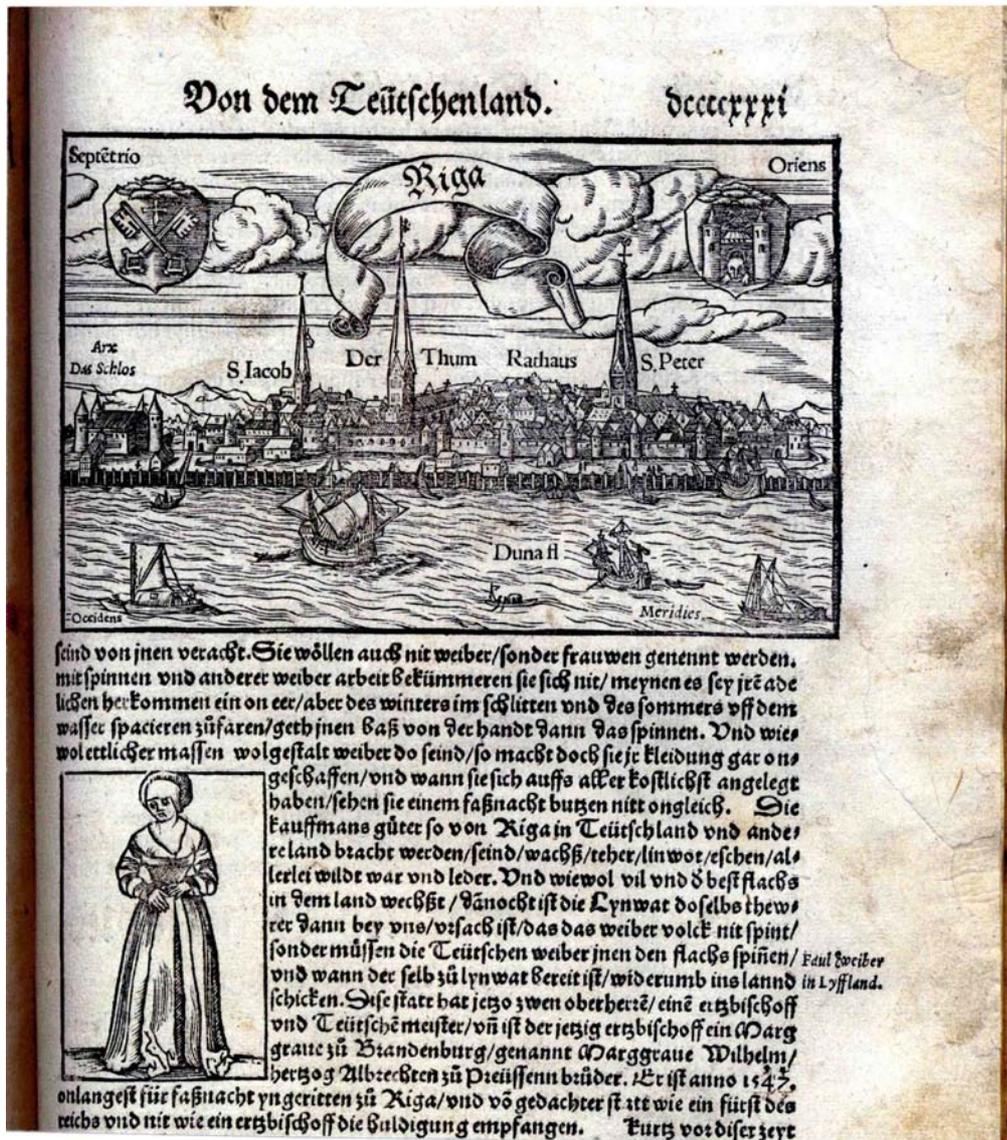
⁵⁵ Pastor August Wilhelm Hupel (1737—1819), *Topographische Nachrichten von Lief- und Ehistland, Zweiter Band*, Riga: J. F. Hartknoch, 1777, 127. To this commentary Hupel appended statistics on the sale of serfs: *1 Kind = (4 Rubel), eine Magd = (10 Rubel) und eine ganze Familie = (100 Rubel)*.

⁵⁶ German rule of Ducal Prussia was established by the founding of the Kingdom of Prussia in 1701, the independent monarchy of the Hohenzollern lineage consisted of Brandenburg, Pomerania, Danzig, West Prussia and East Prussia.

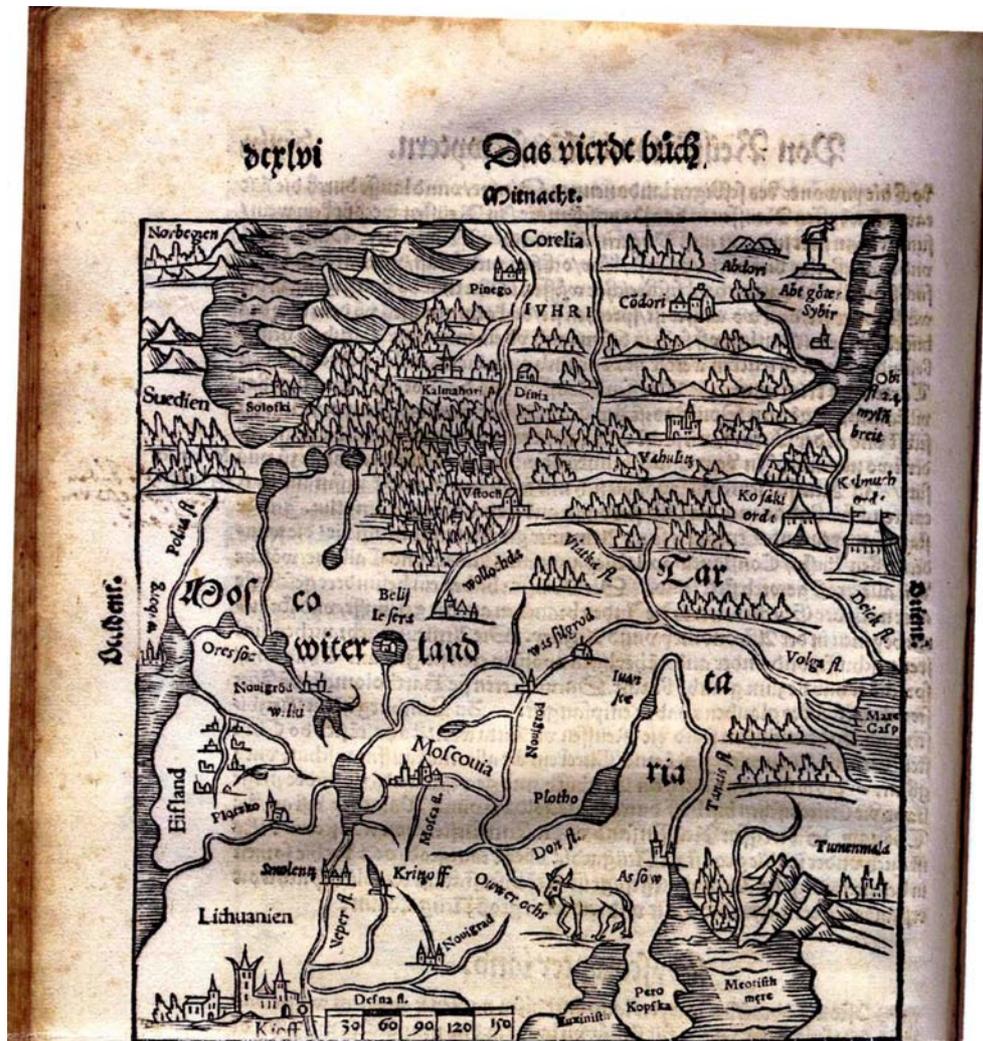
Conclusion

In the preceding pages I have presented an outline of pre-Christian and medieval song cultures, whose influence and regeneration is part of contemporaneous Latvian society. My approach has evoked the words of J. G. Herder, who called for an intense immersion into history as a mean of differentiating national character. I have drawn attention to the factors of intense isolation – ethnic, religious, and social – that have shaped the history of the pre-Christian Baltic peoples. With the introduction of Lutheranism, and the expansion of literacy, the first religious records of the oral poetry and songs of the subjugated native serfs provided a foundation for historic continuity. In overseeing the music-culture of the Latvian serfs German religious officials produced iconographical and textual examples, from which it is possible to see that oral continuity extends to the present day. I have reviewed the historical significance of the *daina* text dating from 1632 or 1635 within the collection *Latvju dainas* (volume VI, 1915, LD 34 388). A qualitative fieldwork study has considered the musical re-enactments by which pantheistic beliefs are realized in the worship of ancient cult sites and sacred stones. To conclude, when conducting observations and interviews from 2002 to 2007 among folklore groups (*kopas*) I have uncovered an intense personal veneration of the land and the natural landscape, from which a plethora of historic and religious activities have pursued a distant mythic past.

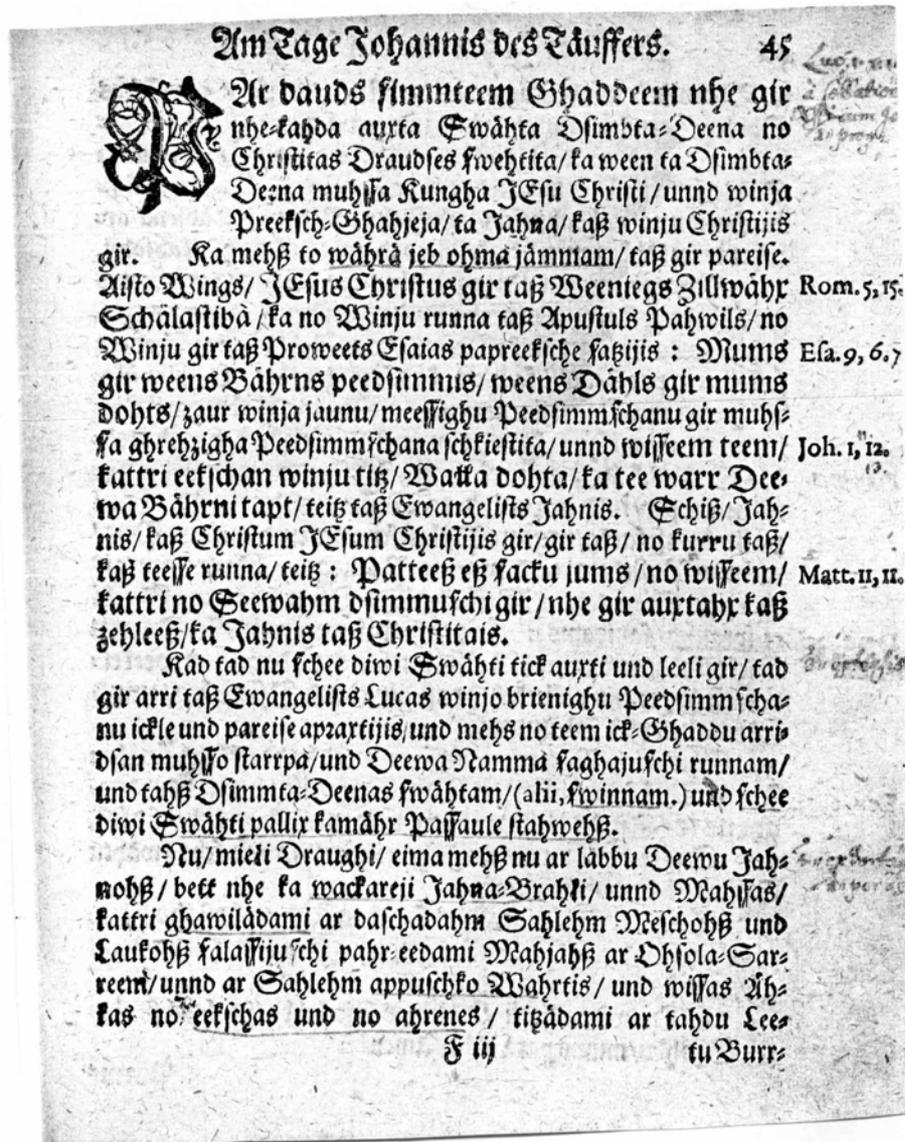
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3. Engraving of Riga in Sebastian Münster, *Cosmographie oder Beschreibung aller Länder*, Basel, 1550.



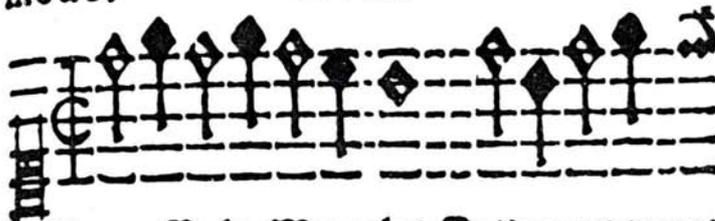
4. Map of Livonian and adjacent Lithuanian, Swedish and Russian lands in Sebastian Münster, *Cosmographia*, 1546.



5. On the Day of John the Baptist, Sermon. G. Mancelis.

Lang-gewünschte lettische Postill, Riga, 1654.

DE ORIGINE LIVONOR. 45
 seu pausâ semibrevis ◊, gaudeant, hoc
 modo: I. Vox.



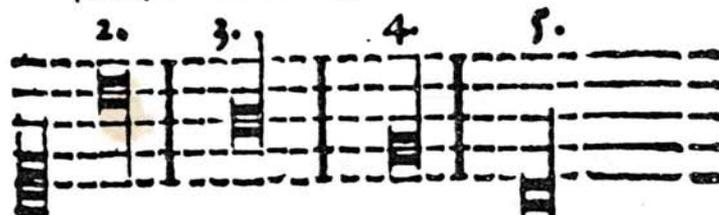
Manne Balte Mamelyt/ Dob mann weene



Rattennyt/ Mann pelhete peejufus/ Phta



sweeſte bundeling.



Hæc, quam dixi, Lettorum lingua
 est. Utuntur eodem canendi, modo
 in suo idiomate Esthones. Frequentius
 tamen hæc sequenti, quæ utriq; genti
 quasi generalis fere est, non tantum
 prædictum textum, sed quosvis etiam
 alios

6. *Mane Balte Mamelyt*, the first notated Latvian melody, Fredericus Menius,
Syntagma de Origine Livonorum, Dorpat, 1632, 45.



7. Kārlis Krūmiņš, *Bērnū Kopa Vilkači*, Mazirbe (Kurzeme) August 2003



8. *Senūs Vides Darbnīca* (Ancient Environmental Workshop)

Rīga, May 2001

II. Herder in Riga 1764—1769

As long as a language is not yet a book language but the language of song, it has
a wealth of images and the most exalted harmony.

Über die neuere deutsche Litteratur, erste Sammlung von Fragmenten

(Riga, 1766)

Introduction

A critical epoch for the history of ideas in the territories of the Baltic Russian provinces (German: *Ostseeprovinzen Russlands*) the late eighteenth century saw the emergence of Riga as a literary and publishing centre. Despite Imperial Russia's governance of Livland (or the province of Livonia), its capital city retained constitutional rights, exhibiting the character of a German Hanseatic town, such as Bremen or Lübeck. Having a governing *Rathaus* and guilds of artisans and merchants, which prospered under the fourteenth-century alliance *Hanze Theutonica*, Riga and Königsberg (now Kaliningrad in Russia) established far-reaching cosmopolitan trading relations, facilitating the flow of progressive Western ideas into the East. Since the sixteenth century Königsberg's schools and printing resources served the landed gentry of the Baltic Russian provinces as an important publishing centre. With the founding of the *Academia Petrina* in 1775 the ducal capital city Mitau in Kurland produced a comparable centre of Enlightenment thought.¹ The

¹ The brother of Immanuel Kant, Johann Heinrich Kant, was appointed deputy headmaster (*Konrektor*) there in 1775. See Anne Sommerlat, "*Le duché de Courlande et l'Aufklärung dans la seconde moitié du XVIII^e siècle: interactions et représentations*". Université de Toulouse, 2005.

international stature of Riga's publishing house of Johann Friedrich Hartknoch (1740—1789) was associated with a succession of works by Johann Gottfried Herder, Immanuel Kant (1724—1804), and Pastor August Wilhelm Hupel (see below). Hartknoch and Hupel began a series of periodical publications, *Nordische Miscellanen*, which defined the Baltic Enlightenment according to the regional ethnography and natural history of Livland.²

Herder's birthplace of Mohrunen (now Morang in Poland) lay in the province of East Prussia (*Provinz Ost-preussen*) that was southwest of Königsberg. Although ruled by the Teutonic Order since the fifteenth century, historically the region was the ancestral homeland of West Baltic tribes, whose principal language of Old Prussian was spoken and written until the end of the seventeenth century.³ When Frederick the Great (Friedrich II), who ruled the Kingdom of Prussia from 1740 to 1786, annexed East Prussia in 1773 Herder warned of Europe's "unnatural enlargement of states, the chaotic mixing of [different] types of people and nations under one sceptre" [*die unnatürliche Vergrößerung der Staaten, die wilde Vermischung der Menschen-Gattungen und Nationen unter Einen Scepter*].⁴

² The leading example of this genre is Heinrich Johann von Jannau's *Geschichte der Sklaverey und Charakter des Bauern in Lief- und Ehstland. Ein Beytrag zur Verbesserung der Leibeigenschaft*. Riga: Hartknoch, 1786.

³ With borders created by the lower Vistula and the Nemunas (German: Memel) Rivers and the Baltic Sea East Prussia lies today in northeast Poland and in the Russian Kaliningrad Oblast⁵. West Baltic tribes that inhabited the region were the Skalvians, Galindians, and Yotvingians (or Sudovians). The Old Prussian language was related to the (now extinct) West Baltic Kuronian and Sudovian languages; it was spoken and written in East Prussia to the sixteenth century and its dictionaries survive. The decline of Old Prussian was sealed after the Kingdom of Prussia was proclaimed in 1701. See *Latvijas enciklopēdija, 1. sējums*, 2002, 411.

⁴ *Ideas for a Philosophical History of Mankind*, volume two [*Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*], *Zweiter Theil*, first published in Riga and Leipzig, 1785. See Herder, *SW*, XIII, 384-85.

Reflected in Herder's family life is the history of East Prussian Lutheran Pietism (Latin: *pietas* – "reverence, devoutness"), which by the eighteenth century represented an opposing sect of orthodox Lutheranism. The Pietist teachings of Philipp Jakob Spener (b. 1635), whose seminal *Pia Desideria* of 1675 was a reaction to the bloody Thirty Years War (1618—1648), advocated practical acts as a basis of reform and spiritual redemption. Followers of Spener's successor and godson Nikolaus Ludwig Count von Zinzendorf (1700—1760) established colonies in Tsarist Livland (the current Latvian province of Vidzeme), and in North America.⁵ To the close of the eighteenth century the Pietistic Moravians of the Herrnhut Brethren movement (Latvian: *brāļu kustība*) became educators of Latvian serfs in Livland, where they bequeathed translations into Latvian of biblical works, choral music, and songbooks.⁶ Pietism became a source of the rational current of Enlightenment thought with the conversion of thinker and writer Johann Georg Hamann (see below), and the influential role of Lutheran Pietistic pastors in Riga. With their attempt to bring peasant religious activity closer to the church this Lutheran clergy printed and circulated diverse literatures in the local "non-German" (*undeutsche*) vernacular. Drawing on the Latvian language the Baltic German clergy authored practical farming almanacs, and calendars, but also recreational and morally didactic fiction. The pastors who were aligned with Pietism collected observations on the local knowledge that would influence their sermons and personal diaries.

⁵ Buceniece, 1995, 98-100.

⁶ See, for example, Zinzendorf's *Common Prayer*, issued by the Brethren in 1745-48, among several songbooks dating from the 1740s. A large Herrnhutters' meeting house, the work of Latvian peasant converts in 1785 in the village of *Plāņi* (now in Vidzeme), was transported to the Ethnographic Open-Air Museum outside Riga in 1940; a few meeting houses still can be found in central Vidzeme, in the Vecpiebalga and Cēsis districts.

Exceptionally, the Baltic German pastors contributed scholarly essays to literary publications and newspapers, a source of collaboration with Johann Gottfried Herder during his Riga period. Herder was able to return to the indigenous ethnographic study of Livland when in 1778 and 1779 he aspired to evaluate customs, rites, expressive oral lore and poetry in the Latvian sample to the *Volklieder*.

The Lutheran Pietism that determined the spiritual life of Herder's teachers Immanuel Kant and Johann Georg Hamann was also central to Herder's background. Working as a copyist (*Handlanger*) to Pietist Deacon Sebastian Friedrich Trescho (1733—1804) in Mohrunen's church library from 1760, Herder became self-educated and read extensively in languages and literatures. As a student of theology at the Albertus Universität in Königsberg Herder studied with Immanuel Kant, whose lectures on mathematics, geography, ethics, metaphysics, and other topics stemmed from Kant's early philosophical thinking (1762-64). As a student in 1764 Herder obtained the opportunity to teach members of the Russian Baltic provincial gentry at the Pietistic Latin School *Collegium Fridericanum*.⁷ At the end of this year he took steps to evade forced military conscription into the Prussian army, and upon Kant and Hamann's recommendations, the young scholar of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew migrated to Riga. In November of 1764 he became a schoolmaster of geography, history, and European languages at the Cathedral School (*Domschule*).⁸

⁷ From 1544 to 1800 Königsberg University hosted 1,768 students from the Baltic territories; see Zanders, 2005, 50.

⁸ The premises were in the southeast wing of the thirteenth-century cloister of the *Domkirche*, which was also known as *Māras baznīca*. The Cathedral that was founded in 1201 is usually known, in the German spelling, as *Dom*, or in the Latvian form *Doms*. Adjacent to this wing is a narrow enclosure that in 1864 was renamed as *Herdera laukums*, see chapter three.

1. The Unifying Instant

Herder recalled in his frequent letters to Johann Georg Hamann their many enjoyable visits in his rooms, which lay in the shadow of the Russian Orthodox Church of St. Alexis⁹ on Monastery Street (*Klosteru iela*) and beyond St. Jacob's Church (*Jēkaba baznīca*). It could be said that Herder's career came to fruition in this historical milieu, where he secured his first standing within the Lutheran Church. In 1767 Riga's Council approved Herder's advancement to which he was ordained as an adjunct minister (*pastor adjunctus*) at two of Riga's principal suburban churches: the Jesus Church and St. Gertrude's Church. A published inventory that dates from 1789 identifies sixteen practising churches in the Lutheran city of Riga and the suburbs.¹⁰ Having a small, square classical structure with a plain wooden interior and pleasing woodwork typical of many Latvian churches, the Jesus Church (*Jēzus baznīca*) is adjacent to the present day Academy of Sciences Square in the Maskavas District. A watercolor illustration of the blue wooden façade of St. Gertrude's Church in 1792 by Johann Christoph Brotze (1742—1823), a schoolteacher and deputy headmaster (*Konrektor*) of Riga's Lyceum vividly captures the social hierarchy in Riga's monuments and buildings. After 1867 a red brick church was erected to replace the

⁹ Herder's correspondence to Hamann from Weimar, dated 28 October 1787, was reprinted in the illustrated supplement to the newspaper *Rigasche Rundschau*, November 1903, 81-83; the author of this essay A. Busch was a representative of the *Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Altertumskunde*. Formerly the Russian Orthodox Church of St. Alexis on *Klosteru iela* is now the Roman Catholic Church of St. Mary Magdalene (*Sv. Marijas Magdalēnas baznīca*). See Jānis Krastiņš, Ivars Strautmanis, *Riga: The Complete Guide to Architecture*, 2004, 62; I acknowledge the assistance of Ingrīda Batare of the Latvian National Library.

¹⁰ Riga was a Lutheran city since 1522. *Zur Ergänzung Topographischen Nachrichten von Lief- und Ehtland* is appended to the three-volume ethnography of Pastor August Wilhelm Hupel (1737—1819). He enumerates 153 booths and shops, and 648 private residencies, under the heading *Die gegenwärtige Verfassung der*

wooden church, which had been destroyed by fire during the retreat of Napoleon's troops in 1812. St. Gertrude's Church, situated on the corner of *Ģertrūde* and *Baznīca* streets, remains a vital Lutheran and public center; it provides a setting for organ and chamber concerts near to the *art nouveau* district northeast of old Riga.

During Herder's years incoming national groups of merchant guilds in Riga enhanced the autonomous standing of the Tsarist city-state.¹¹ A leading figure of the merchant society, and a friend of Herder, Johann Christoph Berens (1730—1792) wielded authority among the influential class of property owners (*Bürgertum*).¹² The Berens family was at the centre of a powerful financial and intellectual societal circle, *der Rigaische Kreis*,¹³ which gathered at residences on *Mārstaļu iela* in the central old town sector, and in the large summer estate of *Strasdenhof* across the Daugava River in *Āgenskalns*.¹⁴ Berens strengthened the devotion to Enlightenment ideals in his Riga circle by the publication of *Bonhomien* (1792), in which he appealed radically for the education of Latvian serfs.

Johann Friedrich Hartknoch singlehandedly brought descriptive ethnographic studies of Livland to light. In the works of Pastor August Wilhelm Hupel, Hartknoch published an important periodical series containing varied topics on Baltic history,

Rigischen und der Revalschen Statthalterschaft see also Chapter Three.

¹¹ At the close of the eighteenth century the composition of Riga's population contained 45.7% German, 31% Latvian, and 14% Russian inhabitants: Strods, 1983, 149. On Riga's international musicians' guilds see Brauns, 2002.

¹² Riga's merchant class of *Bürgers* was confined to German bourgeois or "colonial" society. *Beiwohner* denoted a second class of Latvians, whose properties lay on the outskirts of Riga and were not inherited, but rented. See Dunsdorfs, 1973, 120-21, 585.

¹³ Arend Berens (1687—1747) and his sons Reinhold (1745—1823) and Karl (1725—1789) were pillars of an influential merchant societal circle.

¹⁴ Visual documentation of late eighteenth-century estates and other buildings and sites is found in the watercolours of J. K. Broce; see Broce, 1996, 10.

natural science, and genealogy: *Nordische Miscellaneen* (1781-91), and its sequel *Neue Nordische Miscellaneen* (1792-98). Under Hartknoch's name and sponsorship Herder's published output spanned his life's productivity: from the Riga period, e.g., *Über die neuere deutsche Literatur*, 1767, and *Kritische Wälder*, 1768, but also extending to mature works, such as *Volkslieder*, 1778-79, and *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, 1784-91. Hartknoch simultaneously issued the major works of Immanuel Kant (1724—1804) – *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, 1781, and *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, 1788, as well as their later editions, publications emanating from Riga that influenced the rise of the late European Enlightenment (*Hochaufklärung*) from 1760 to 1780.¹⁵

Herder's unique circumstances afforded him opportunities for civic responsibility and debate at the height of the late Enlightenment epoch. His successful positions as schoolmaster at the Cathedral School of the *Dom* (St. Mary's Church) and, secondly, as assistant to the City Librarian in the *Bibliotheca Rigensis* can be ascertained from the inaugural lecture to the Cathedral School in June of 1765, in which Herder spoke on the historical significance of securing a national community, a "fatherland."¹⁶ Despite having reservations about its secrecy Herder

¹⁵ The dominant circle of late-Enlightenment writers included Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, Johann Jakob Möser, Joseph Zulzer, Thomas Abbt and others; Zammito, 2002, 10. On Lessing, Herder, and their bearing upon the selection of the title of *Latvju dainas*, a six-volume collection from 1894—1915 see also Chapter Four.

¹⁶ Herder's idealization of ancient Greek culture was the premise of the lecture given at his installation as schoolmaster of the *Domschule*, on 27 June 1765 (Old Style Julian calendar) *Haben wir noch jetzt das Publikum und Vaterland der Alten? Eine Abhandlung, zur Feier der Beziehung des neuen Gerichtshauses*, von J. G. Herder, Mitarbeiter der Domschule. Riga: gedruckt mit Fröhlichen Schriften, 1765, 19. "Do we now have a public and fatherland like the ancients?" Herder reworked and published it for the dedication of a new courthouse building in October of 1765: Zanders, 2005, 53, Sheehan, 1989, 165; Liebel-Weckowicz, 1986, 15.

attended a Freemasons' lodge, where strong views concerning Russian emancipation may have been introduced. A contributor to *Rigische Anzeigen*, the newspaper that was under the influential patronage of Johann Christof Berens, Herder wrote on topics pertaining to history and religion for the newspaper's bi-weekly supplement, *Gelehrte Beyträge zu den Rigischen Anzeigen*. This important compendium of accounts and explorations "of Livland, its residents and products"¹⁷ may be construed as an early "cultural anthropology" of local customs and knowledge, as seen in published observations of the local serfs and their peasant culture.

Herder's stature as a scholar of folksong came to the foreground at the time of the German literary movement of the *Sturm und Drang*. At this time he collected mainly Nordic and Celtic Northern European song texts in Bückeburg and Weimar (from 1771 to 1777), although writing on diverse song cultures inherent to his concept of the folksong (*Volkslied*). The possibility arises that his probable experience of Latvian ritual song cultures also had a determining influence on his cultural outlook. Baltic folklorists, historians, and musicologists assume that the young schoolmaster witnessed Latvian Midsummer rites in the environs of the *Jägelsee* near Riga on the twenty-third of June of 1765,¹⁸ and that he encountered Latvian singing in similar excursions to other country estates in Livonia and Kurland. Furthermore, their documentation supports the likelihood that Herder's circle of influential friends reinforced his interest in the folk poetry of provincial

¹⁷ Rudolf Haym, "Die Rigischen *Gelehrten Beiträge*," in *Herder, Erster Band* (Berlin, 1954), 115-17; Bernhard Suphan, "Die Rigischen *Gelehrten Beiträge* und Herders Anteil an Denselben." *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 6, 1875, 45-83.

¹⁸ In the Julian Old Style Calendar, which after 1700, was eleven days behind the Continental Gregorian Calendar; these dates will be indicated as "Old Style" when necessary. Herder's close association with the summer solstice celebrations is

Baltic lands. When discussing this point Kurt Stavenhagen (1884—1951), a Baltic German professor of philosophy, placed emphasis upon the stimulating effect of Herder’s encounter with democratic patriotism and enlightened debate; it was a “unifying instant” (*das einheitgebende Moment*), Stavenhagen added, that “in Riga Herder grew to be Herderian” – *das Herdersche in Herder [ist] in Riga gewachsen*.¹⁹ Herder similarly referred to a “Golden Age” when corresponding to Friedrich Hartknoch in 1778, a narrative that is consistent with a letter to Marie Karoline Flachsland (1750—1809) on 22 September 1770:²⁰

In Livland I possessed the admiration of the city in a short time [...] I lived, taught, and acted freely – as perhaps I will not be in a position to live, learn, and act. *In Liefland besass ich in kurzer Zeit die ganze Liebe der Stadt [...] Bei alle dem habe ich in Livland so frei, so ungebunden gelebt, gelehrt, gehandelt – als ich vielleicht nie mehr im Stande sein werde zu leben, zu lehren, zu handeln.*²¹

Herder’s close contemporary Prussian author Theodor Gottlieb von Hippel (1741—1796) equated his comparable experience in the Kurish countryside with the euphoric liberation (*manumissio*) of freeing one’s soul.²²

Notwithstanding these testimonies to colonial life, circumstances intervened

discussed in Andreas F. Kelletat, *Herder und die Weltliteratur*, 1984, 131.

¹⁹ Stavenhagen, 1925, 4. During the inter-war years of the Latvian Republic Stavenhagen was professor of philosophy at the Herder Institut in Riga; see Bērziņš, 1933, 121; Johansons, 1975, 419.

²⁰ Strasbourg, 22 and 24 September 1770, *Johann Gottfried Herder Briefe Erster Band*. Wilhelm Dobbek, Günter Arnold (Weimar: Hermann Böhlhaus Nachfolger, 1984), 228; Zanders, 2005, 50.

²¹ During correspondence in 1778 with Johann Friedrich Hartknoch, Herder wrote from Weimar on his productive years in Riga.

which rendered Herder's ministerial duties and standing insufferable. A controversy arose in late 1768 from Herder's literary altercation with critic and rival Christian Adolf Klotz, a philologist at Halle University, who disclosed Herder's anonymous authorships of works that he had written in Riga: *Fragments Concerning Recent German Literature* (*Fragmente über die neuere deutsche Literatur*) and *Critical Woods* (*Kritische Wälder*). The public humiliation had greater consequences, estranging Herder yet further from the narrow colonial confines – “the patronage and philistinism” – of bourgeois Riga.²³

Besides, my somewhat melancholy way of thinking these days makes everything difficult for me, and me difficult for everything. The place where I live, my place in society, my work, the people with whom I have to deal, all of these are vexing to me [...] *Überdem macht meine gegenwärtige fast melancholische Denkart mir Alles schwer, und mich zu Allem auch schwer. Der Ort wo ich lebe, mein Stand, meine Arbeiten, die Leute, mit denen ich umgehen soll, alles ist mir verdriesslich* [...] ²⁴

Herder's departure entailed a dispute at the Jesus Church (*Jēzus baznīca*) over a New Year's Day sermon, in which his colleague had questioned Herder's ability to preach in Latvian. In turn, the congregation of St. Gertrude's Church gathered on the 28th of May 1769 (Old Style Julian Calendar) to hear Herder's farewell sermon (*Abschiedspredigt*) and his scriptural reading from James 1: 21: “accept and submit to the Word with gentleness, which has been planted in you, and save your souls”

²² Johansons, 1975, 419; on Hippel's contested authorship, see Chapter Three.

²³ For satirical commentary on the Riga bourgeoisie see Berlin, 1993, 9.

²⁴ Correspondence, November 1768, to Johann Georg Scheffer (1736—1820) a fellow member of the *Deutsche Gesellschaft* in Königsberg; cited by Zanders

(*nehmet das Wort an mit Sanftmuth, das in euch gepflanzt ist, welches kann eure Seelen selig machen*).²⁵ Eulogizing the Russian province of Livland Herder's poem *Als ich von Liefland aus zu Schiffe ging* paid homage to a "second, better Fatherland." Evidently, Herder preferred his stay in Riga to life in native Prussia under the military oppression of Frederick II.²⁶ Accompanied by his friend, the prominent merchant Gustav Berens, Herder underwent forty days at sea, until he reached Nantes on the coast of France:

I departed from Riga and on May 23th / June 3rd, and I went to sea on May 25th to go I don't know where. *Den 23 Mai / 3 Jun. reisete ich aus Riga ab und den 25/5 ging ich in See, um ich weiss nicht wohin? zu gehen.*²⁷

In 1846 Emil Gottfried Herder published sections of his father's travel-diary, which bore the title *Journal of my Voyage in the Year 1769*; thereafter translations and complete editions fueled the growing political current of national self-determination in Eastern Europe. On the basis posthumous works it can be argued that Herder was no less a historian and philosopher of Tsarist Livland than of German lands.²⁸ It is not surprising that a prominent Herder scholar has philosophy of history.²⁹ Under the diary heading of "political sea dreams" Herder unfolds a soliloquy. The receding coastline of the Duchy of Kurland at sea forms the starting point for a reform of the colonial order, "Kurland, the land of license, and poverty, of freedom and disorder,

(Sander), 1977, 42; see also Clark, 1969, 60; Zammito, 2002, 162.

Jegór von Sivers, 1869, 9; Herder, *SW*, XXXI, 125.

²⁶ The poem appeared in the *Silbernes Buch* of 1771 (see Chapter Three), a gift to Herder's fiancée; see Herder, [*Poetische*] *SW*, XXIX, 319-21.

²⁷ Herder, *SW*, IV, 399; the "old style" dates correspond to the Julian calendar of the Russian Empire.

²⁸ Cera, 2005, 137.

²⁹ Pascal, 1939, Zammito, 2002, 332.

now a moral and literary wasteland” (*Kurland, das Land der Lizenz und der Armut, der Freiheit und der Verwirrung, jetzt eine moralische und literarische Wüste*).³⁰ Completing a preliminary assessment at his final destination of Nantes in June 1769 Herder envisaged changes to the old Latinized secondary school curriculum. He found the opportunity when he served as superintendent of schools and chief pastor in the Lutheran Church in Weimar from 1776 to 1803 to introduce modern European languages and sciences as part of an exemplary curriculum (*Realschule*). Additionally, Herder’s political thought imbued a critical review of a treatise on Livland, whose author, Herder claimed, had excluded the history of the Latvian class of serfs and servants.³¹ A witness to poverty in provincial Livland and Kurland Herder became aligned with supporters of Baron Schoultz, whose choice to liberate serfs on his estate in 1764 was subject to debate in the *livländische Landtag*.³²

Speaking at the dedication of a new courthouse in Riga in October 1765 Herder’s political rhetoric was in sympathy with the writings of Catherine II (the Great), who ruled from 1762 to 1796. The eastern borders of Livland feature prominently in this address that honored the Russian Empress’ inauguration of the governing *Livland Landtag* – “Do We Yet Have the Public and the Fatherland of Yore”:

Yours is this house in Catherine’s shadow, which by her majesty she blessed
for you; so long as Russia’s noble heads abound; here justice, fairness will be

³⁰ Herder’s East Prussian background is discussed in Clark, 1969, 61, Gillies, 1945, 16, Spekke, 1951, 286, Wolff, 1994, 310, and Zanders, 1977, 37.

³¹ *An das Lief- und Estländische Publikum*, Riga: Bey Hartknoch, 1772; the review is reprinted in *SW*, V, 546-9.

³² Stavenhagen, 1925, 20; For Herder’s defense of Baron Schoultz see “An das Lief- und Estländische Publikum,” Riga: bey Hartknoch, 1772, in *Keine Nachrichten*,

found: and innocence finds refuge here. *Dein ist dies Haus in Catharinens Schatten das sie dir selbst voll Majestät geweiht: so lang sich Russlands Adlershäupter gatten; so lange blüht hier Recht und Billigkeit: die Unschuld flieht zu diesen Schranken.*³³

In an unpublished legacy contained in notebooks from Riga Herder sketched out the cultural autonomy of Slavic peoples, a recurrent theme in the travelogue (*Reisejournal*) of 1769:

The Ukraine will become a new Greece: the beautiful sky of this people, their merry disposition, their musical nature, their fertile land, and so forth, will one day awaken; out of so many little savage peoples, as the Greeks were also once, a civilized nation will come to be. *Die Ukraine wird ein neues Griechenland werden; der schöne Himmel dieses Volks, ihr lustiges Wesen, ihre musikalische Natur, ihr fruchtbares Land, u.s.w. werden einmal aufwachen; aus so vielen kleinen wilden Völkern, wie es die Griechen vormals auch waren, wird eine gesittete Nation werden.*³⁴

Although Herder did not publish this travel-diary in his lifetime, he renewed a plea for nationhood and cultural diversity in Eastern Europe, among “tireless and peaceful Slavs,” in a prominent sub-section of *Ideas for a Philosophical History of Mankind*:³⁵

vermischte Sachen, SW, V, 346-49.

³³ Reprinted in SW, I, 13-28. See Note 15. Translated from the German by Ernest A. Menze and Michael Palma, in: Herder, *Johann Gottfried Herder: Selected Early Works, 1764—1767*, 1992, 63.

³⁴ The translation is from Gillies, 1947, 61.

³⁵ *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*; Book XVI, Section IV: *Slavische Völker*, “Slavic Peoples,” Herder, SW, XIV, 280; see also and Section II:

Ye deeply bowed, once so tireless and happy peoples, you will be awakened at last from your long indolent sleep, freed from your chains of slavery, and will be able to use your fair lands from the Adriatic Sea to the Carpathian mountains, from the Don to the Moldau (i.e. Vltava) as your own property and celebrate on them your ancient festivals of peaceful industry and commerce. *So werdet auch, ihr so tief versunkene, einst fleissige und glückliche Völker, endlich einmal von euren langen trägen Schlaf ermuntert, von euren Sklavenketten befreiet, eure schönen Gegenden vom Adriatischen Meer bis zum Karpathischen Gebürge, vom Don bis zur Moldau (i.e. Vltava) als Eigenthum nutzen, und eure alten Feste des ruhigen Fleisses und Handels auf ihnen feiern dürfen.*³⁶

The four-page subdivision that Herder devoted to the Slavic peoples in his treatise (volume four, 1791) was singled out for publication within newspapers and journals in Eastern Europe, becoming known to many Slavic readers during the nineteenth century.

2. Gravenheide, and the Significance of St. John's Day (*Jāņi*)

Because Herder had not experienced Slavic festivals or landscapes directly, the puzzling reference in the quoted passage (above) from the *Ideen* may in part reflect Herder's familiarity with Latvian ritual song culture. After all, his knowledge had been strengthened by the task of compiling a Latvian sample with ritual song

Finnen, Letten und Preussen, and the discussion of its influence in Eastern Europe, in Wolff, 1994, 306.

³⁶ Herder, *SW*, XIV, 280. More work is needed on Herder's assessment of the Slavs in this chapter of the *Ideen* and the sources that he cites. See also Chapter IV.

examples for the second volume of *Volklieder* (1779). Drawing on biographical data, Baltic German and Latvian scholars have measured the extent and probability of Herder's observations of Latvian rites and oral poetry. The most likely occurrence, according to their enquiry, is centered on St. John's Day (Latvian: *Jāņa diena*), whose festivities, in part, were held on 23 June 1765 (Old Style Calendar).³⁷ During this time Herder was a guest of the Gravenheide manor house, situated ten kilometers from the center of Riga, in a picturesque rural landscape encircled by the dunes and meadowlands surrounding Lake Jugla (*Jägelsee*). The manor house and estate of Captain Ernst Heidefogel, an elder official of Riga's Great Guild, lay only two kilometers north of the Bickern Church (*Kirche Bickern*), whose inauguration ceremony in 1765 premiered a cantata that had composed by Herder.³⁸

After Herder's departure from Riga we find the expression – “almost always” – in Herder's reminiscence of “old songs,” which he heard repeatedly, that is, in a familiar locality:

You must know, listening to the untamed flood of these old songs I have almost always wanted to say like the French Marcell: *que de choses dans un menuet!* Moreover, what will these people gain if they exchange their songs for a crippled minuet, or minuet-like rhymes? You know both the Latvian

³⁷ Johansons, 1975, 418; Apkalns, 1977, 317; and Bērziņš, 1927, 1933, Baltic German scholars Leonid Arbusow, 1953, and Kurt Stavenhagen, 1925. See the synopsis in Jaremko-Porter, 2007.

³⁸ The estate of the Heidefogel family since 1730, Gravenheide was renamed *Garansku muiža* at the outset of the nineteenth century; see *Baltisches historisches Ortslexikon*, Teil II, Lettland (*Südlivland und Kurland*), Köln, Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1990, 194, and Stavenhagen, 1925, 13. In 1796 Johann Christoph Brotze (1742—1823), a deputy headmaster at Riga's Lyceum captured the architectural history of Riga in watercolor drawings. See the collected drawings and annotations of Brotze, volume 2, 1996, 122- 27.

[i.e. Lithuanian] songs that Lessing cites from Ruhig in his *Litteraturbriefen* and know how many sensuous rhythms of speech must lie in their substance. *Wissen Sie also, dass, wenn ich einen solchen alten Gesang mit seinem wilden Gange gehört, ich fast immer, wie der Französische Marcell gestanden: que de choses dans un menuet! Oder vielmehr, was haben solche Völker durch Umtausch ihrer Gesänge gegen eine verstümmelte Menuet, und Reimleins, die dieser Menuet gleich sind, gewonnen? Sie kennen die beyden lettischen [sic] Liederchen, die Lessing in den Litteraturbriefen aus Ruhig anzog, und wissen, wie viel sinnlicher Rhythmus der Sprache in ihrem Wesen liegen musste.*³⁹

An important implication underpinning Herder's reference to an "untamed flood of old songs" is that he had heard songs repeatedly, or in his words, "almost always." This admission is consistent with Herder's schedule of recurring visits to rural estates adjoining Riga, and to the country estate of Gravenheide by Lake Jugla (*Jägelsee*). On Hamann's invitation, Herder traveled to the Kurish ducal estate of Maihof in Mitau (Jelgava) in August of 1766.⁴⁰ As differing Latvian ethnic and regional groups were native to these localities, it is likely that he overheard dialects of Latvian in speech and in outdoor agrarian celebrations – of weddings, baptisms, or joint farming works (Latvian: *talkas*) that required a large number of serfs to be present on these

³⁹ Herder used the term *Volklied* in this essay in reference to diverse types of songs, such as to biblical poetry, as well as to the songs of Shakespeare: Herder, *SW*, V, 174, Baildam, 1999, 81. See also Chapter Three.

⁴⁰ Stavenhagen, 1922, 13; for data on the Baltic German manor estates and their current situation, such as Maihof, located 4.5 kilometers northwest of Mitau (Jelgava), see the compendium *Baltisches historisches Ortslexikon, Teil II, Lettland (Südlivland und Kurland)*, Köln, Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1990, 373.

estates.⁴¹ Baltic German scholars of inter-war Latvia have contended that Herder witnessed Latvian Midsummer rites near the *Jägelsee* at the estate of *Gravenheide*, however the origin of Latvian influence in Herder's coinage of the term *Volkslied* in 1771 remains conjectural.

Ein Landleid auf Gravenheide, Herder's ode which he dedicated to his host Ernst Heidefogel, praises the rural pastimes of Livland (*Liflands Landesfreuden*) during this, his pleasant summer among a circle of dear friends" (*Genussreichste Sommer im Zirkel lieber Freunde*):⁴²

*Zwar ist Grafenheide
Keine Götterflur—
Doch auf dieser Unschuldswaide
Lacht in Augen und auf Stirnen nichts als du, Natur.
Wenn im Abendroth der Himmel schwimmt
Wähl ich dich, o See!
Wenn der Silbertau auf Wiesen glimmert
Wähl ich dich, Allee;
Wenn die Sonne steigt
Suche ich den Wald;
Wenn sich der Abend neiget,
O, so bist du, Freundschaftshütte, mir ein Aufenthalt.
Hier als Jüngling Rosenkränze winden
Ist ein Königsriech:*

⁴¹ Arbusow, 1953, 140.

⁴¹ Stavenhagen, 1925, 15: "To be true Gravenheide is not an Elysian field of the Gods – But on this pasture of innocence nothing but you, nature, laughs in one's eyes and brows. When the sky swims in the redness of sunset, I choose you, oh lake! When the silver dew glimmers on meadows, I choose the path; when the sun rises, I seek out the forest: When evening descends you, oh cottage of friendship, are a place for me to stay. Here to weave as a youth wreathes of roses that make a king's realm; Here to feel one's life renewed —tell (me) what could equal this? Here, where enjoyment cannot be bought in silver, where with tender strokes true friendship is painted on the countenance of the residents."

*Hier sein Leben neu verjüngt empfinden—
Sagt, was ist dem gleich?
Hier, wo sich Vergnügen
Nicht mit Silber zahlt,
Und wo sich mit sanften Zügen
Auf dem Antlitz der Bewohner treue Freundschaft malt.*

It may be useful to place Herder's ode in the context of the Latvian midsummer rites of the summer solstice. Marking the position of the sun at its highest point in the northern hemisphere the solstice is a ceremony to ward against the impending darkness. The extended Latvian ritual pertains to invocations against the descent of the sun.⁴³ Written accounts of nocturnal ceremonial fires among Latvians begin in the sixteenth-century sermons of Georg Mancelius (see Chapter One), and the traveler's chronicle of Balthasar Rüssow, *Chronica der Prouintz Lyfflandt*, "The whole nation would light fires around which there is joyous singing and dancing."⁴⁴

Preparations for St. John's Eve begin weeks beforehand and progress towards a full day of ritual activities, which is followed after sunset by the bonfire ceremony; the entire framework is linked to specific songs within the Latvian ritual cycle. On *Zāļu* or *ziedu diena* (23 June), songs accompany the gathering of greens (*zāļi*) and blossoms (*ziedi*) by women and girls who decorate the farmstead, the fields, and garden plots – the endurance and duration of the blooms may foretell prophecies and ensure the fertility of the crops. St. John's Day songs may be prescribed for the tasks of tying together the nine corners of the St. John's cheese for hanging and for weaving ornamental crowns of flowers or oak leaves.

⁴³ Frazer, 1975, 720-1.

⁴⁴ Balthasar Rüssow, *Chronica der Prouintz Lyfflandt*, Revaliensem, 1578; see Chapter One, Apkalns, 1977, 48, Brauns, 2002, 4.

Ritual processions of St. John's children (*jāņu bērnu nākšana*) occur from household to household and between boys and girls (*aplīgošana*). When oak garlands are bestowed during song exchanges between households, recitations are directed to honor the St. John's "father and mother" (*jāņu māte un jāņu tēvs*). On a hill site (*jāņu kalns*) the round dancing and singing of the St. John's Day songs (*līgotnes*) evolve around the St. John's bonfire (*jāņuguns*). Examples of these *līgotnes* or *Johanneslieder* became a significant part of Herder's posthumous papers (German: *Nachlass*). Twenty-two out of seventy-eight song texts, which he procured by correspondence in 1778 (see Chapter Three), have German translations. Errors, however, occurred in the transliteration and translation of the corpus of Latvian texts into German; this may be ascertained by judging the sixth of the *Nachlass* verses:⁴⁵

<i>6. Wissi bija Jahna behrni</i>	We (all) are St. John's guests
<i>Kas nahk Jahnu wakkara,</i>	That arrive on St. John's eve,
<i>Wissam bija jahnu sahles</i>	We (all) have St. John's greens
<i>Ko nes Jahnu wakara.</i>	To carry on St. John's evening.
<i>6. Alle sind Johannesgäste</i>	All are St. John's guests
<i>Lieben den Johannesabend,</i>	[All] love St. John's Eve.
<i>Lassen sich mit Grase binden,</i>	[All] have themselves bound with grass,
<i>Hören die Johanneslieder.</i>	[All] hear the St. John's songs.

In the Duchy of Kurland, Pastor Gottfried Friedrich Stender (1714—1796) gave an account of *Johanneslieder* in his comprehensive study of Latvian language and

⁴⁵ Arbusow, 1953, Bērziņš, 1933; An enlarged and unpublished essay of Ludis Bērziņš, essays with editorial annotations, *Grezna dziesma*, 1942, has been reissued by the Latvian Folklore Archives in 2007. *Nachlass* Herder was formerly housed in the Prussian State Library, *Preussische Kulturbesitz*, what is currently the

folklore that was published in 1761 and again in 1763, approximately sixteen years prior to the date of Herder's Latvian sample in *Volkslieder*:

But for them the most pleasant are their St. John's Day songs, in which they conclude each verse with the refrain *līgo* repeated twice. [*Am allerangenehmsten aber sind ihnen ihre Johannislieder, darin sie jede Strophe mit einem doppelten Lihgo beschliessen*].⁴⁶

Herder's colleague and correspondent Pastor August Wilhelm Hupel (see above) transcribed a full account of the ritual, which he interpolated into his ethnographic treatise or "topography," as it was known, *Topographische Nachrichten von Lief-und Ehstland*. His lengthy chapter "on the peasantry" (*von den Bauern*) is found in volume two (1777):

In many regions the entire parish district will gather on the day before *Jāņi* on the manor farming estates carrying St. John's wort and berries, sweeping the courtyard, three times encircling the rye field singing, and in four separate groups, so that men, women, young men and girls walk separately. The girls wear crowns of flowers. In the evening they are regaled with food and drink and dance no matter how tired. *In vielen Gegenden versammelt sich das ganze Gebiet am Tage vor Johannis auf den Höfen, bringt Johanniskraut und Beeren, reiniget das Gehöft, und umzieht dann das Roggenfeld dreimal mit Gesang, und zwar in 4 besondern Hausen, so dass Männer, Weiber, ledige Kerls, und Dirnen, abgesondert gehen: die letzten tragen auf ihren Köpfen*

Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

⁴⁶ Cited from the enlarged edition of 1763, *Neue Vollständigere lettische Grammatik, nebst einem hinlänglichen Lexico, wie auch einigen Gedichten, Verbesserte Auflage*, Braunschweig, V. Theil: *Von der Poesie*, paragraph 217, p. 162.

*Blumenkränze. Um Abend werden sie traktirt und tanzen aller Ermüdung ungeachtet.*⁴⁷

In the course of a regular correspondence with Hupel several *līgotne* song texts, as well as the notation of a single narrow-range melody with the text “*Jānis sēde kalniņā*” [...], reached Herder’s hands in 1777, and remained in his posthumous papers (see Chapter Three).

Dating from 1798, the novel *Die Vorzeit Lieflands* (“Livland’s Past”) by Herder’s contemporary Garlieb Helwig Merkel contains a section devoted to the ancient priestly class: *Lihgonacht* is an imaginative reconstruction of the pre-Christian *Līgo* festive night in which Merkel’s vivid descriptions of music specify accompaniments by zithers and bagpipes, and the singing of the crowd, who joins in regularly with the refrain “*līgo.*”⁴⁸

During the historical epoch of Latvian national awakening, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, Pastor (Dr.) August Bielenstein published an authoritative essay on the *Jāņi* rites, *Das Johannisfest der Letten*, in which a few examples of *līgotnes* coincide with those in Herder’s posthumous papers.⁴⁹ Appended to the comprehensive folksong collection *Latvju dainas* (to Volume Five, *Jahnu swineschana*, 1915 the principal editor Krišjānis Barons attests to the endurance of this ritual song cycle in the provinces of Kurzeme and Vidzeme just prior to World War I.

One may explain the strong association of the rites of St. John’s Day with

⁴⁷ *Topographische Nachrichten von Lief-und Ehistland, Zweiter Band*, Riga: J. F. Hartknoch, 1777, Bd. 2, p. 190-1. The three volumes date from 1774 to 1781.

⁴⁸ See Chapter Three; Merkel, 1798, 172-4.

Herder's documented visit to the Gravenheide estate by the fact that this cycle of songs continues to play a vital role in the characterization of Latvian traditional music. For this reason in 1961 authorities of the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic censored festivities and banned a wide range of cultural productions.⁵⁰ After the restoration in 1990 of the two-day national holiday (*Līgo Diena* 23 June and *Jāņi* 24 June), the involvement of the press, museums, folklore organizations and amateur singing groups (the *kopa* communities) has worked towards restoring and replenishing ritual activities. Unlike the celebration of the winter solstice and Christmas (*Ziemassvētki*), the authenticity of *Jāņi* poses problems in its folkloric revival because it is less dependent upon conservative family customs. In the spring of 2003, therefore, the daily newspaper *Diena* began a series of informative articles, along with solicitations to participate in a new campaign (Latvian: *akcija*) to learn the ritual preparations, decorations, foodways, and songs and dances. A pivotal figure in these activities, Ilga Reizniece (b. 1956) is a violinist, singer, and music educator; she was an early participant in the "singing revolution" beginning in the late 1970s (see Chapter Five), and the founder and leader since 1981 of *Iļģi*, a folk-rock band (see Chapter Seven). Reizniece enriched the Latvian national holiday with courses, in which traditional components of the song cycle of *Jāņi* are taught freely:

Because 1,200 melodies exist for the segment of *Zaļu vakars* (St. John's Eve) alone, I decided to write a proposal pertaining to the true *Jāņi* (St. John's Day).⁵¹

⁴⁹ *Baltische Monatsschrift* 23, 1874, 1-46; Arbusow, 1953, 225.

⁵⁰ Stradiņš, 1992, 303.

⁵¹ The organizers of the annual nation-wide campaign of weekend classes are folklore *kopa* activists and performers: correspondence with Ilga Reizniece, 13 May

Reizniece and curators of the Krišjānis Barons Memorial Museum culled examples of St. John's day songs, *līgotnes*, from the folksong collections of Andrejs Jurjāns (1894), Jūlijs Sproģis (1941), and Jēkabs Vītoliņš (1973), and from the *kopa Skandinieki*. Beginning in 2003 *Diena*, along with twenty-one regional newspapers and the national Latvian radio publicized weekend lessons. In June of 2003, editors of *Diena* featured a front-page photograph and caption:

As once the mistress of the farmstead would accompany shepherds to shepherding places, teaching them traditional *Jāņi* songs from the dowry of ancient melodies, today on a Sunday evening the leader of the folklore *kopa Dimzēns* Velta Leja called together the people of Jelgava to teach the *Jāņi* songs [...] and the group's signature polonaise tune was played.⁵²

With the motto "*mācīsimies!*" ("Let's learn!"), organizers of the St. John's Day programme planned a public event (*akcija*) whose spontaneity was extended to the Russian community in Latvia who may celebrate *Jāņi* by attending outdoor picnic concerts.

3. J.G. Hamann: Herder's Latvian Tutelage

Widely viewed as an avid opponent of the rational current of Enlightenment thought prevailing in the works of Immanuel Kant, Johann Georg Hamann (1730—1788) left a legacy of erratic and revolutionary writings. His alternative way of thinking and writing may be linked with an introspective and emotional interpretation of Lutheran

2003, interview with Andris Ērglis, Riga, 5 October 2003.

⁵¹ Gunita Nagle, *Diena*, 9 June 2003, 1.

Pietism.⁵³ During much of Herder's life Hamann was a spiritual friend and intellectual mentor who directed his protégé to the study of oral poetry and folksong, as well as to studies of the Latvian language. This familiarization entailed a range of oral literatures, ranging from the biblical songs of David and Moses, to the epics of Homer, the songs of Shakespeare's plays, and the Celtic Ossianic poems of James Macpherson's compilation. It should be added that Herder's emphasis upon oral poetry can be attributed an influential essay by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729—1781), published by Hartknoch as the thirty-third letter (dated 19 April 1759) of Lessing's collected writings, *Briefe der neuesten Litteratur betreffend*. The summation of Lessing's discussion, in which he comments appreciatively on two Lithuanian folksongs (*dainos*), is reflected in the second volume of Herder's first major work, published in Riga from 1766 to 1768, *Fragmente über die neuere deutsche Literatur* (*Fragments Concerning New German Literature*). In the excerpt below Herder clearly acknowledges Hamann's notion of a creative profusion of oral poetry in the early stages of language development:

As long as a language is still evolving, as a language of necessity, its advantage – notwithstanding the drawbacks of poverty (of expression) – is strength: as long as a language is not yet a book language, but the language of song, it has a wealth of images and the most exalted harmony. *So lange sich eine Sprache bildet, als Sprache der Nothwendigkeit, ist bei allen*

⁵² On Hamann's influence upon Herder see Isaiah Berlin, *Against the Current: Essays in the History of Ideas*, edited by Henry Hardy, 1980, 165-70; idem, *The Magus of the North: J.G. Hamann and the Origins of Modern Irrationalism*, 1993; see also Terence J. German, *Hamann on Language and Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981). Hamann's biographer Josef Nadler is the editor of his collected works in six volumes: *Sämtliche SW, Historische-Kritische Aufgabe*, Wien,

*Ungemächlichkeiten der Armuth ihr Vortheil Stärke: wenn die Sprache noch nicht Bücher- aber Liedersprache ist: so hat sie Reichtum an Bildern, und den höchsten Wohlklang.*⁵⁴

In his lifetime Hamann, who was held to be an enigmatic wizard, was reputed to be the "Magus of the North" by Kant, and writers of the *Sturm und Drang* movement in German literature championed his works. Johann Wolfgang Goethe (1749—1832) intended to compile an edition of Hamann's writings. In his autobiography *From My Life: Poetry and Truth* (*Aus meinem Leben, Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Part III, Book 12) Goethe praised the holistic integration of Hamann's beliefs and writings:

The principle, to which Hamann's pronouncements can be reduced, is this: all that man undertakes to perform, whether it is brought forth through deed or word, or in any other way, must originate from the union of all his powers. *Das Prinzip, auf welches die sämtlichen Ausserungen Hamanns sich zurückführen ist dies: alles was der Mensch zu leisten unternimmt, es werde nun durch Tat oder Wort oder sonst hervorgebracht, muss aus sämtlichen vereinigten Kräften entspringen.*⁵⁵

As a convert to Lutheran Pietism Hamann conceived of a personal world in which spoken words symbolized a union of God in the natural environment. This idea receives its fullest expression in *Aesthetica in nuce* (*Aesthetics in a nutshell*, 1762),

1949-57. A recent biographical overview is found in Haynes, 2007, vii-xxi.

⁵⁴ Herder, *Über die neuere deutsche Litteratur. Erste Sammlung von Fragmenten*, Riga: bey Johann Friedrich Hartknoch, 1766, SW, I, 148; Zammito, 2002, 15 and 159.

⁵⁵ Goethe, *Gedenkausgabe der SW, Briefe und Gespräche*, volume 10, 563. Goethe's narrative is printed in a posthumous collection of essays by J. G. Hamann:

an essay that is appended to Hamann's second published work:

Poetry is the mother tongue of the human race; even as the garden is older than the ploughed field, painting than script; as song is more ancient than declamation; parables older than reasoned conclusions, barter than trade. A deeper sleep was the repose of our farthest ancestors; and their movement a frenzied dance. Seven days they would sit in the silence of deep thought or wonder; – and would open their mouths to utter winged words of wisdom. *Poesie ist die Muttersprache des menschlichen Geschlechts; wie der Gartenbau älter als der Acker; Malerey, – als Schrift; Gesang, – als Deklamation; Gleichnisse, – als Schlüsse: Tausch, – als Handel. Ein tieferer Schlaf war die Ruhe unserer Urahnen; und ihre Bewegung ein taumelnder Tanz, Sieben Tage im Stillschweigen des Nachsinnens oder Erstaunens sassen sie; – und thaten ihren Mund auf – zu geflügelten Sprüchen.*⁵⁶

Hamann became familiar with the Latvian farming culture and language of the Baltic Russian provinces during sporadic employments and residencies. It should be added that his affinity toward the serfs might have been influenced by his own East Prussian origins, which lowered his social standing in the eyes of the Baltic German landowning class. The first of Hamann's three Baltic sojourns began in 1752 the northern Livlandic manor house *Kegeln* (Latvian: *Kieģeļmuiža*) near Rubene, where Hamann briefly served Baron and Baroness W. D. v. Budberg as a house tutor.

Sibyllinsche Blätter des Magus in Norden, (Leipzig: Cramer, 1819), 66; it is cited by Nisbet, 1999, 116, and Clark, 1954, 48.

⁵⁶ *Aesthetica in nuce (Aesthetics in a nutshell)* from *Crusades of the Philologist (Kreuzzüge des Philologen), 1762*, in: *Johann Georg Hamann Sämtliche SW*, edited by Josef Nadler, Bd. 2, Wien, 1950, 197; the translation is taken from German, 1981, 35. Herder's *Volkslieder* reproduces a longer excerpt from Hamann's essay in

Thereafter, from 1753 to 1755, he gained employment from General von Witten on the estate *Grünhof* in *Mittelkurland*, near Mitau, the capital city of the Duchy of Kurland. Hamann's second period of residency was confined to Riga, where he became apprentice to the firm of the influential merchant Johann Christoph Berens, whom he had known in university circles in Königsberg. Engaged in an important diplomatic mission to London on behalf of the Berens' merchant house, Hamann's failure sparked a bitter crisis, from which he sought a Pietistic spiritual renewal and resolution in his writings. From 1765-7 Hamann returned to the Duchy of Kurland and took up secretarial positions attached to the ducal court in Jelgava, and well as the editorship of *Mitauische Nachrichten*.

Hamann's attention to Latvian speech and oral traditions was an impetus for his pursuit of practical language studies, whose preparation he outlined in letters to Herder from Jelgava, April to August 1766. He goaded his protégé to cultivate a residency in the provincial countryside, where "in Kurland it would be easier to acquire the native tongue."⁵⁷ Yet because he remained in German-speaking Riga Herder did not acquire the skills of an active rural ethnographer, or a Latvian speaker, a point that may account for his errors and misprints in the *Nachlass* listing of song texts (Chapter Three). Nevertheless, Herder admired the published fables and tales from Kurland, *Pasakas un stāsti* (Jelgava, 1766), among other publications by

Volkslieder Theil II, 1779, SW, XXV, 299.

⁵⁷ *In Kurland möchte es Ihnen leichter werden die Landessprache zu erlernen* (10 December 1766), Dobbek, 1959, 444. See also Walther Ziesemer and Arthur Henkel, editors, *Johann Georg Hamann Briefwechsel Bd. 2, 1760—1769* (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1956).

Pastor Gotthard Friedrich Stender (1714—1796), who was a didact of the Latvian language.⁵⁸

Biographers and translators have attributed Hamann's radical style of writing and its fragmentary texture to his intense Pietist devotion, guilt, as well as self-remonstrance. During an emotional renewal of Pietistic values in 1758 Hamann wrote of the voice of God, which lay in the depths of his heart: "I felt my heart thump, I heard a voice sigh in its depths and wail as the voice of blood."⁵⁹ The emphasis that he placed upon the voice within a holistic understanding of God may be ascertained by his customary greeting – "Speak that I may see Thee."⁶⁰

A synopsis of Latvian recitation features in Hamann's second published essay *Aesthetica in Nuce: Eine Rhapsodie in Kabbalistischer Prose* ("Aesthetics in a nutshell: A Rhapsody in Cabbalistic Prose," 1762), which is widely quoted in classic and romantic German literary studies, and is an early resource in the history of Latvian folksong documentation. Towards the end of the essay Hamann appends a paragraph pertaining to his perception of a Homeric metrical structure in the recitation of Latvian work songs. As a token of his admiration for this monotonic recitation, he referred to the religious poetry of Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock (1724—1803, the acclaimed lyric poet of *Geistliche Lieder* (1758) who was reputed to be a German equivalent of the Greek poet Pindar. Hamann's reminiscence evokes a landscape of continuous and repetitive sounds – of sowing, haying, or mowing in

⁵⁸ His study of Stender is discussed by Bernhard Suphan, 1875, 51 and below.

⁵⁹ German, 1981, 5.

⁶⁰ German, 1981, 48; this author compares Hamann's veneration of the voice with that of the Russian dissident poet Osip Mandelstam, who entitled a poem "Save my speech," see Nadezhda Mandelstam, *Hope Against Hope: A Memoir*, translated by Max Hayward, London, 1970, 82.

Kurish farmlands:

Homer's monotonous meter ought to strike us at least as paradoxical as the free rhythms of our German Pindar. My surprise at or ignorance of the causes for the Greek poet's use of the same metre throughout has been moderated when I made a journey through Kurland and Liefland [Livland].⁶¹ In the regions mentioned there are certain areas where one hears the Latvians (or non-Germans, *Undeutsche*) always singing at their work, singing only a single cadence of a few notes, which greatly resembles a poetic metre. If a poet were to emerge among them, it would be quite natural for him to tailor all his lines to this measure initiated by their voices. *Homers monotonisches Metrum sollte uns wenigstens ebenso paradox vorkommen, als die Ungebundenheit des deutschen Pindars. Meine Bewunderung oder Unwissenheit von der Ursache eines durchgängigen Silbenmasses in dem griechischen Dichter ist bei einer Reise durch Kurland und Livland gemässigt worden. Es gibt in den angeführten Gegenden gewisse Striche, wo man das lettische oder undeutsche Volk bei aller ihrer Arbeit singen hört, aber nichts als eine Kadenz von wenigen Tönen, die mit einem Metro viel Ähnlichkeit hat. Sollte ein Dichter unter ihnen aufstehen, so wäre es ganz natürlich, dass alle seine Werke nach diesem eingeführten Masstab ihrer Stimmen zugeschnitten sein würden.*⁶²

⁶¹ In translating this passage from *Aesthetic in nuce* J. P. Crick (in Nisbet, 1985, 149, and Bernstein, 2003, 21) erroneously translates the territorial designations to be "Courland and Lithuania," although Hamann states that he traveled in Courland and Liefland (or Livland). Unfortunately, this error is repeated in Haynes, 2007, 93, whose translation is modeled on J. P. Crick's in Bernstein, 2003, 1-23.

⁶² Translations of *Aesthetica in Nuce* by Joyce P. Crick are found in Nisbet, 1985, 1-

Occurring shortly before Hamann's essay *Aesthetica in Nuce*, Pastor Gotthard Friedrich Stender recorded observations of *talkas* [German: *Talken*] in the fields of Sengallen. For his early study of Latvian folklore and language, dating from 1761, Stender wrote of festive joint farming works that required large numbers of serfs and contained customary songs – “when a group of people are invited for a day's work together and are treated with food and drink” [*wenn eine Menge Personen zu eines Tages Arbeit zusammen gebeten sind und dabei tractirt werden*].⁶³

The value of Hamann's perspective lies in the unified presentation of cultural elements of oral poetry and dance, on the one hand, and accompanying work-related activity, on the other. Hamann's preliminary exploration was echoed in the the concept of *Gesamtkunst* of Karl Bücher, an influential sociologist who claimed, “it is energetic, rhythmic bodily movement that led to the origin of poetry, particularly that movement which we call work.”⁶⁴ Positing a new theory in which primitive cultures derived music from rhythm, Bücher's studies towards the close of the nineteenth century contributed to the establishment of a separate discipline of comparative or intercultural musicology (*vergleichende Musikwissenschaft*).

50 and in Bernstein, 2003, 1-23. Haynes, 2007, 60-95, models his translation upon that of Crick, 2003. The German text is taken from Josef Nadler, *Johann Georg Hamann SW II* (1950), 195-217.

⁶³ The citation is taken from the first edition of 1761, *Neue Vollständigere lettische Grammatik, nebst einem hinlänglichen Lexico, wie auch einigen Gedichten*. V. Theil: *Von der Poesie*, Paragraph 218, p. 152.

⁶⁴ *Es ist die energische, rhythmische Körperbewegung, die zur Entstehung der Poesie geführt hat, insbesondere diejenige Bewegung, welche wir Arbeit nennen*; Karl Bücher, *Arbeit und Rhythmus*, 1899, 306, cited by Pound, 1921, 5; Apkalns, 1977, 314-16; Arbusow, 1953, 131.

Conclusion

Preserving a narrow-range and metrically monotonous melodic structure, as it was delineated in Hamann's *Aesthetica in Nuce*, the Latvian manner of declamation has survived among exceptional practitioners (*teicēji*) to the present day. Scholars who conduct fieldwork studies in the Latgalian farmlands of eastern Latvia have observed communal work songs of joint field tasks (*talkas*), although these incidents of spontaneous singing among farmworkers have become a rarity.⁶⁵ Hamann's documentation, which has presaged the scholarly exploration of the Latvian rural song culture of farming, became part of the legacy of Herder, which in turn inspired a succession of Baltic and German folksong collectors well into the nineteenth century.

It may be more challenging to recognize Hamann's narrative as a source of modernity, underlying, for example, the recent popular consciousness concerning Latvian rural or folk life. As a consequence of her experience of the Latvian countryside in northeast Vidzeme, violinist Ilga Reizniece (see above) became schooled in the ways of the folklore movement of the *kopas*. She attributes her choice of career to her many visits to old people, her mother and friends, and the traditional "declaimers" (*teicēji*) from whom she sought forgotten knowledge as an approach to contemporary performance. Acquiring a second music education in the country, since 1981 she adopted this traditional music, a measure of ethnic individuality, to her innovative folk-rock group *Ilģi*. Furthermore, drawing on practical work, rapport, and familial ritual commemoration, Reizniece formulated an

⁶⁵ Interview with Andris Kapusts, 9 August 2003. Sound recording: *Linu druva*

ethos of fieldwork exploration:

We traveled on expeditions and spoke with people, and worked to finish their tasks, and in this way we related closely to the singing that is the foundation of their life. Folksongs cannot be pulled out of the environment to which they are organically joined – the country people’s life, their daily work, their communal work celebrations [*talkas*] and the rhythm of the whole year.⁶⁶

In this famous narrative account of field laborers in Kurland Hamann did not specify which agricultural tasks were at hand, although it is probable that he would have heard melodic formulas that accompany straw making, muck spreading, or flax, potato, and rye picking. These prescribed seasonal tasks differentiate the practice of customs, dances, and songs in specific regions.

Ethnographic singing has only recently been reproduced on a large scale in the *Baltica* international folklore festivals that are held alternatively, since 1987, in each of the Baltic nations. In July of 2003 Latvian folklore *kopas* and organizers returned a semblance of the rustic past with rakes and haystacks in its streets.⁶⁷ A second example, dating from 2003, the national spring fair for children is devoted to the rural lore of shepherding (*ganīšana*) and its folk music repertoires. Involving ninety-six children’s and youth *kopas* from across the nation, the music instruction varied according to the smallest children, who were matched to chickens and geese, and the teenagers, who were entrusted with horses and cattle. Children from the city mastered the art of mouthing traditional bird imitations or narrating shepherd’s tales;

(“Field of flax”), music notation example, File 4 Zemgale, Z3.

⁶⁵ Beitāne, 1996, 10. ⁶⁶ Zveja, 2003, 17. See Illustration 23.

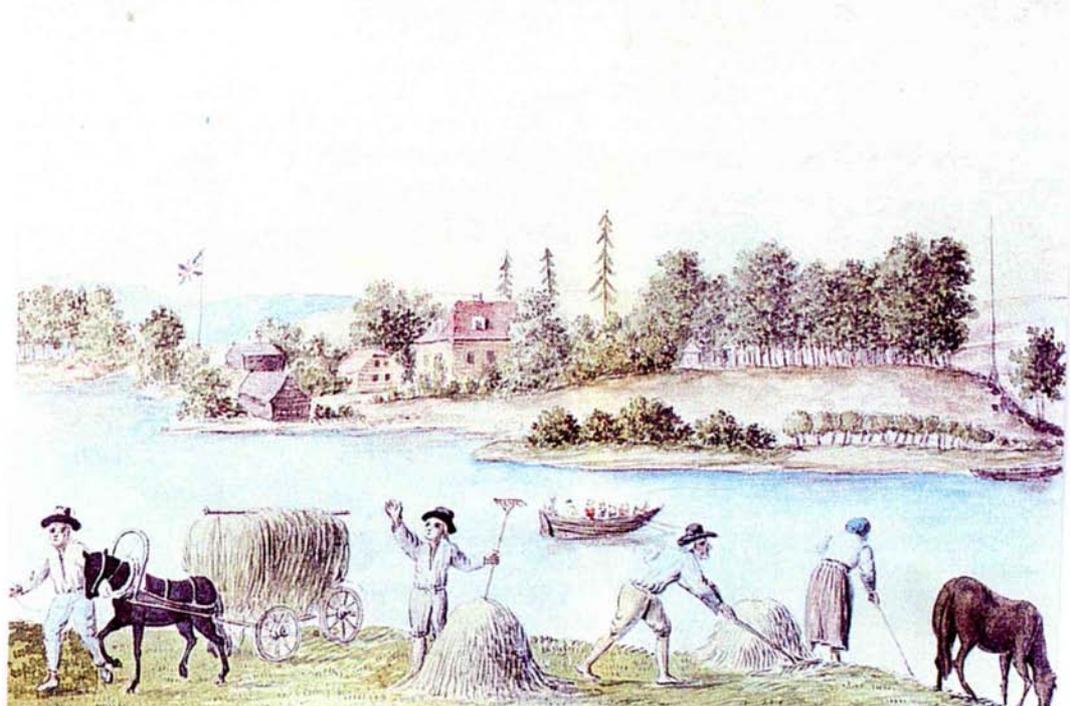
they received instruction on playing the wooden conical flute (*stabule*) and other instruments of shepherding, Genādījs Maksimovs, a member of the *kopa Dimzēns* who immigrated to Jelgava following the Second World War, demonstrated melodies upon the *vargans* (the Jew's harp) as well as his mastery in fashioning reeds and whistle pipes from birch leaves (CD composite: *Dimzēns*). Contemporary festival participants learned of the correct songs for guiding cattle and other farm animals, for signaling and warding off evil spirits.⁶⁸ Thus when reconsidering the folklore revival as a form of national commemoration, it is possible to evoke Hamann's founding perception of Kurish oral poetry, which springs from its natural surroundings.

⁶⁸ A range of traditional musical instruments and their functions has been revealed according to the computer analysis of some 3,000 folksong (*daina*) verses, see Klotiņš and Muktupāvels, 1989, 186-217.

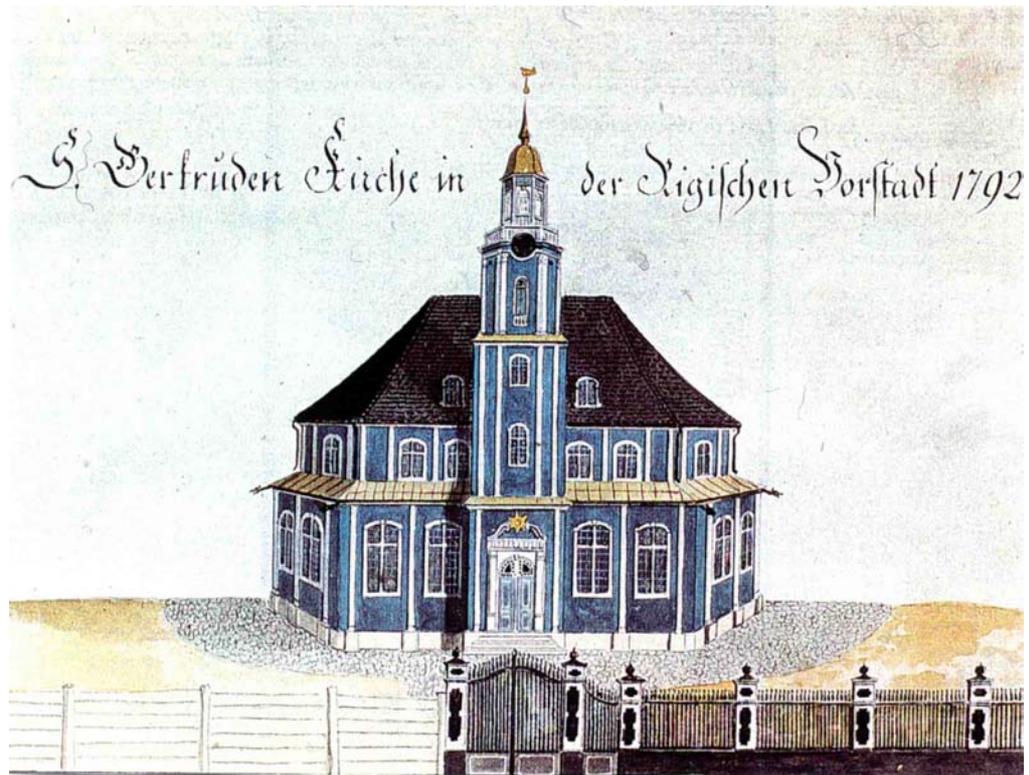
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9. Lithograph: Herder in Riga (c.1765). Photographed with permission of the Dom Museum of the History of Riga and Navigation VRVM34238.



10: Gravenheide (Estate) am Jägelsee (from the opposite shore of Lake Jugla) Watercolour, Brotze, from a painting of V.D. f. Budberga-Benninghauzena (1781); Thor Avestenhof an der Jägelsee, Brotze (1779)



**11: St. Gertrude's Church (*S. Gertruden Kirche in der Rigischen Vorstadt*)
proximity of Riga, Watercolour, Brotze (1792)**

III. *Fragments of a Latvian Voice: Volkslieder (1778-79)*

Introduction

From 1771 to 1776, when Herder found employment in Bückeburg, he expanded his pursuit of original poems and published verses, whose merits in a collection of folksongs, *Volkslieder*, are the focus of the present chapter. The neologism (*Volkslieder*) appeared separately, however, in the context of Herder's *Extract from Correspondence about Ossian and Songs of Ancient People*. Written in 1771, this highly-regarded work was the first of several literary contributions that Herder edited and published in 1773 under the heading *Von deutscher Art und Kunst: Einige fliegende Blätter (Of German Nature and Art: A Collection of Broadsheets)*. A key factor that contributes to the essay's decidedly abrupt and spontaneous digressions is Herder's autobiographical account of vivacious singing, which pertains not to his German homeland, but to the Baltic Russian provinces. Moreover, he visualized the performance context of folksongs, which were inseparable from the living traditions, and thereby distinct from lifeless words upon paper. Presenting a succession of abrupt episodic Moreover, his unusual and rare autobiographical digressions allude to the influence of his Baltic Russian period upon this decade of the *Sturm und Drang* years, which led to the fruition of the folksong anthology *Volkslieder (1778-1779)*.

Herder's campaign to collect folksongs contributed to raising the status of the

ballad and the *Lied*, which signified the historic oral poetic origins of German national literatures. He wrote in 1777 that “in more than one German province one could find, however coarse or flawed, folksongs, provincial songs, and peasant songs (*Volkslieder, Provinziallieder, Bauerlieder*), which were no less equal – in liveliness, rhythm, innocence, and strength – to the language of English folksongs in the collected work of Thomas Percy.”¹ Under the influence of Percy’s collection and other readings, which Herder listed at the outset of *Volkslieder*, he sought means to authenticate his international collection of folksongs. Firstly, it began with an impressive dedication page, *Zeugnisse über Volkslieder*, a compilation of testimonies on oral poetry and popular songs. The earliest among these learned authorities is the Renaissance scholar Michel de Montaigne (1533—1592), whose excerpt from 1580 introduces the expression “popular poetry” (*poésie populaire*, or in German, *Volks poesie*): “*Die Volkspoesie, ganz Natur, wie sie ist, hat Naivetäten und Reize.*”² One could posit that Herder also developed the notion of “naiveté and charm” of folk poetry in the essay “on Ossian” of 1773, whose implications are dealt with in the present chapter.

Biographical considerations are critical to the understanding the development of the Latvian chapter in Herder’s anthology. Indeed, it embodies a published legacy of ethnographic accounts and song examples of Lutheran clergymen. These works transcended bitter class distinctions within the Baltic German stratum of

¹ *In mehr als einer Provinz sind mir Volkslieder, Provinziallieder, Bauerlieder bekannt, die an Lebhaftigkeit und Rhythmus, und Naivetät und Stärke der Sprache vielen derselben (i.e. Percy’s) gewiss nichts nachbegen würden.* Herder, SW, V, 189. For a synopsis of the pre-Romantic origins of the German folk revival see Sheehan, 1989, 165-292.

² Herder, SW, XXV, 129-32. Herder cites Montaigne’s *Essais (Attempts)*, in which

Livland and attest to their affinity toward native Latvian peasant culture. Herder selected only a small number of observations and transcriptions (of ritual group singing, round dances, games, and processions) in assembling the Latvian chapter of *Volkslieder Band II* (1779). It is possible to conclude that his attempt to establish a Baltic regional ethnography in *Volkslieder* was entirely dependent on the historic, linguistic, and social commentaries of his Baltic German contributors.

Before the Riga years Herder was already familiar with the singing traditions of the Baltic peoples as a young scholar, who had published an Estonian love song in German translation (*Jörru, Jörru*) in the *Königsberg Politischen und Gelehrten Zeitungen* (Stück 37, 8 June 1764). Overall, unequivocal biographical evidence is lacking which would chronicle Herder's development as a scholar of oral poetry in Riga. Nevertheless, from 1765 and 1767 one could infer that Herder's frequent excursions to Baltic Russian provincial manor houses that housed Latvian serfs were influential to his interest in vernacular traditions. Moreover, during numerous social visits outside of Riga, in adjacent Livland, or in the Duchy of Kurland, Herder may have learned of a precursor of the *Volkslied*, the Latvian expression *tautas dziesma*, which denotes the songs of a host of people (*tauta*).³

1. An Aesthetic Sense of Immediacy, Vitality, and Wit

During the autumn and winter of 1770-1771 Herder underwent eye surgery in Strasbourg and in his convalescence he formed an important friendship with Johann Wolfgang Goethe (1749—1832). As a young student the latter's devotion to Herder

he compared “the naivité and charm of folk poetry with all of nature.”

³ On the concept of *Volkslied* see Irmscher, 2001, 463, Wienker-Piepho, 2007, and Šmidchens, 1996, 88; on the Estonian translation of 1764 see Arbusow, 1953, 157.

was to unfold in the course of daily meetings. In his famous memoirs, *Aus meinem Leben, Dichtung und Wahrheit* (*From my Life: Poetry and Truth, 1811-33*, Part II, Book X), Goethe elaborated on Herder's ideas, which encouraged him to listen to the songs of Alsatian old women – “to the voice of nature, from which they sprang.”⁴

I learnt to know poetry from quite a different side, and in another light than heretofore, one, too, which suited me well. [...] – folk poetry, the tradition and remains of which he urged us to search out in Alsace; and the poetry of the oldest extant records – all bear witness that the art of poetry is in reality a universal gift, and not the private inheritance of a few refined and cultivated men. *Ich ward mit der Poesie von einer ganz anderen Seite, in einem anderen Sinne bekannt als bisher, und zwar in einem solchen, der mir sehr zusagte. [...] – die Volkspoesie, deren Überlieferungen im Elsass aufzusuchen es uns antrieb, die ältesten Urkunden als Poesie, gaben des Zeugnis, dass die Dichtkunst überhaupt eine Welt- und Völkergabe sei, nicht in Privaterteil einiger seinen gebildeten Männer.*⁵

The success of Goethe's expedition lies in his transcription of twelve Alsatian ballads, which found their way into Herder's *Volkslieder* collection. In the larger historic sense, Goethe's poems and folk dramas that mirrored the influence of his

⁴ Gaskill, 2003, 107, citing Pascal, 1953, 14; see also Nisbet, 1985, 17.

⁵ Goethe, *Gedenkausgabe der SW, Briefe, und Gespräche* 10, 448; this English translation is taken from Gaskill, 2003, 115. See also Smith, 1930, 365, which is an English translation of the complete autobiography. On Goethe's ballads from Alsace, of which three are included in *Volkslieder I*, see Boyle, 1991, 98-99; Gillies, 1945, 19. Latvian historian Edgars Dunsdorfs, 1961, 103, believes that Herder, in turn, modeled his notion of folksong collecting on Lessing's essay of 1759, *Briefe der neueste Litteratur betreffend*, see Chapter Two.

mentor became vital to the development of the German folk revival.⁶

The term *Volkslieder* occurs in the pages of an imaginative essay, which Herder dismissed at first as – “a few loose leaves” (*einige fliegende Blätter*). But this leading essay in *Von deutscher Art und Kunst* (Hamburg, 1773) was instrumental in defining and characterizing the *Sturm and Drang* literatures. Thereby Herder, Goethe, and the remaining contributors (whose essays were of lesser importance), challenged the staid conventions of the Enlightenment era. Herder’s long introductory essay assumed the form of a letter to an unnamed and possibly imagined correspondent. Its underlying premise was to promote the qualities of genuine folk poetry of the Ossianic poems that had been compiled, edited, and published by James Macpherson, on the one hand, and to impugn the artificiality of stylistic devices employed by the German translator, Michael Denis, on the other.⁷

In *Extract from Correspondence about Ossian and Songs of Ancient Peoples* Herder gives a musical portrayal of vivacious or “sense-perceptive” peoples, whose songs are familiar to him from direct experience and observation. Because he had not seen the Scottish lands depicted in Macpherson’s *Ossian* one can argue, therefore, that this recollection pertains to Latvian-speakers. Moreover, Herder was able to “to breathe new life”⁸ into rural Kurish and Livonian lands through his detailed synopsis of aesthetic qualities and emotions:

It is upon the lyrical, the living, dance-like rhythm of song, on the living

⁶ These are Goethe’s *Heidenröslein*, *König in Thule*, and the folk drama *Faust*; see Gaskill, 2003, 107.

⁷ On Herder’s concept of language in the essay see Koepke, 2003, 90. The identity of Herder’s unnamed correspondent was likely to have been Heinrich Wilhelm von Gerstenberg, see Clark, 1955, 145; Berlin, 2000, 195; Nisbet, 1985, 17.

presence of the image, the coherence and, as it were, necessity of the content, the feelings, on the symmetry of the words and syllables, and sometimes even of the letters, on the flow of the melody, it is upon this, and upon this alone that the nature, the purpose, the wholly miraculous power depends that these songs must be the delight, the driving-force, the everlasting [poetic] inheritance and joyful song of the people. *Vom Lyrischen, vom Lebendigen und gleichsam Tanzmässigen des Gesanges, von lebendiger Gegenwart der Bilder, vom Zusammenhange und gleichsam Nothdrange des Inhalts, der Empfindungen, von Symmetrie der Worte, der Silben, bei manchen sogar der Buchstaben, vom Gange der Melodie [...] – davon, und davon allein hängt das Wesen, der Zweck, die ganze wunderthätige Kraft ab, die diese Lieder haben, die Entzückung, die Triebfeder, der ewige Erb- und Lustgesang des Volks zu sein!*⁹

Herder's bold "living world" of his subjects unfolded according to textual fragments and incomplete phrases, numerous punctuation marks, and rhetorical questions. On the premise that the editor Michael Denis had distorted the character of these poems as Macpherson had presented them, in the essay of 1773 Herder compares the vivid imagery of the Ossian poems to his direct experience among singers, presumably Latvian peasants. A precedent for the essay is found in Herder's *Reisejournal* of 1769 (see Chapter Two), in which he criticized the German translation of Ossian into hexameters. In the unpublished diary he commented on Macpherson's *Fingal, An*

⁸ Berlin, 2000, 19.

⁹ Joyce P. Crick, translator, in: Nisbet, 1985, 156; the original text is in Herder, *SW*, V, 164; Dr. P. H. Gaskill has contributed to the translation.

Ancient Epic Poem in Six Books (1762)¹⁰ at the point where he was situated “past the far-off shores, where Fingal performed his deeds.”¹¹ During this dramatic night, when his ship was precariously grounded off the coast of Holland, Herder wrote:

But that is still not the genuine genesis of my enthusiasm over which you are remonstrating with me for otherwise it would be nothing more than an individual delusion, a mere sea ghost that appeared to me. Please know therefore that I myself have had the opportunity of observing living remnants of this ancient primitive type of song, rhythm, dance amongst living nations, whom our conventions have not as yet succeeded in completely robbing of language, songs, and customs, giving something mutilated or nothing at all in return. *Aber auch das ist noch nicht eigentlich Genesis des Enthusiasmus, über welchen Sie mir Vorwürfe machen: denn sonst wäre es vielleicht nichts als individuelles Blendwerk, ein blosses Meergespenst, das mir erscheint. Wissen Sie also, dass ich selbst Gelegenheit gehabt, lebendige Reste dieses alten, wilden Gesanges, Rhythmus, Tanzes, unter lebenden Völkern zu sehen, denen unsre Sitten noch nicht völlig Sprache und Lieder und Gebräuche haben nehmen können, um ihnen dafür etwas sehr Verstümmeltes oder Nichts*

¹⁰ *Fragments collected in the Highlands and translated from the Galic or Erse Language*, Edinburgh: Hamilton and Balfour, 1760; *Fingal, An Ancient Epic Poem, in six books; together with several other poems, composed by Ossian, son of Fingal*; translated from the Galic language by James Macpherson, 1762; and *Temora, an ancient epic poem in eight books*, London: Becket & Dehondt, 1763; the many European translations and critical writings constitute a separate research area. Herder criticized the German translation of *Fingal* for it was set into hexameter verse by Michael Denis, and his reading of this edition is confirmed by the mention of the appended translation of Hugh Blair’s *Critical Dissertation (Abhandlung)*. Herder received the first edition from Goethe only in late 1771. On Herder’s debt to Blair see Gaskill, 1996, 257-72, and 2001, 213.

¹¹ Herder, SW, V, 169.

zu geben.¹²

A broad consensus of scholarship – Apkalns (1977), Arbusow (1953), Bauman (2003), Bērziņš (1933 and 1942), Johansons (1976), among others – ascribe the passage to Herder’s recollection of the singing of Latvian peasants, and not to Herder’s reading of Macpherson’s collection of poems. One of the few rare autobiographical reflections in all of Herder’s writings, the passage in which he sets off in the reflexive (*ich selbst*), is founded on Herder’s concrete perceptions. The aesthetic attributes of music and language form his ethnographic description of “the symmetry of words, syllables, many times even of letters [...], the cadence of the melody.” These detailed features form the “genesis of his enthusiasm” for all traditional song.¹³ For the Estonian and Latvian chapters in the *Volkslieder, Band II* (1779) Herder reproduced the collecting work of pastors in the Baltic Russian provinces by using song texts that he received in correspondence. Yet in the essay on Ossian in 1773 it is important to note that he only accentuated the importance of his own direct observations, giving no indication that his experience or knowledge of the group singing had been linked to others in the Baltic German clergy. Thus, the essay suggests the importance of the Latvian singing to Herder’s conceptualization of the *Volkslied*.

¹² Herder, *SW*, V, 169-70.

¹³ Herder, *SW*, V, 164, Berlin, 2000, 195; Bohlman, 2004, 3; Nisbet, 1985, 17.

2. The Latvian Sample and its Humanist Framework

Nearly a decade had elapsed since Herder had direct contact with Riga or his colleagues in the Baltic countryside, when in 1778 he faced the immense editorial challenge of preparing song samples in the native Latvian tongue. These were destined to become part of a comprehensive anthology of folksong by which they would be transformed into a significant genre of world literature. In *Volkslieder* he allotted chapters (in the second part of the second volume) to folksong texts in the primary Baltic languages of Latvian, Lithuanian, and Estonian, and their translations into German. He interpolated editorial headings and categories, grouping quatrains and verses according to a numerical ordering of sequences: eight Lithuanian, three Estonian, and eleven Latvian song texts.¹⁴ Herder's method of listing song texts for publication without melodies, and often without annotation, established an editorial precedent for the collection and analysis of textual content, which directly influenced the compendious national collections of the Latvian folksong (*daina*) during the latter quarter of the nineteenth century (Chapter Four).

During the years in which Herder prepared his international song collection for publication, he took steps to assemble an adequate Latvian and Baltic sample. By 1773 he had outlined these main approaches and emphases in a preliminary manuscript, *Alte Volkslieder*, whose fourth chapter, *Nordische Lieder*, contains a forward (*Vorrede*), *Ausweg zu Liedern fremder Völker*.¹⁵ Herder surveyed the required conditions for research that would validate his folksongs, myths, and folk tales (*Volkslieder, Mythologien, Märchen*) from neglect and oblivion. His essay

¹⁴ Rölleke, 1975, 465-76.

¹⁵ *SW*, IX, 522-33. Published by Herder as *Von Ähnlichkeit der mittlern englischen*

argued for the scholarly exploration of small and obscure national groups, which lay near to the northern and eastern extremities of German-speaking territories – the Wends, Slavs, Old Prussians, Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, Frisians (*Wenden, Slaven, Alt Preussen, Litthauen, Letten, Esthen, Friesen*).

During his stay in Strasbourg (1770-1), Herder wrote, collected and exchanged song texts regularly when corresponding with Marie Karoline Flachsland (1750—1809). Interpolating her own fastidious transcriptions his fiancée compiled a songbook – the *Silver Book* (*Silbernes Buch*) – whose seventy-five song texts exhibited widely divergent traits. Herder contributed his original verses, as well as displaying his newfound hobby of collecting the primitive poetry of Nordic lands:

Now in addition I could present to you a good deal more of other examples in my material: Arabian ones from donkey-drivers, Italian ones from fishermen, and American ones from snow hunting (Huron or Eskimos), Greenland Lapps, and Latvian. *Nun könnte ich Ihnen noch aus meinem Kram einen guten Theil andere hinzusetzen: arabische von Eseltreibern, italienische von Fischern, amerikanische aus der Schneejagd, lappländische, grönländische, und lettische.*¹⁶

It is possible to reconstruct Herder's motivations and influential sources for collecting "beautiful and interesting things, as in an ethnographic museum,"¹⁷ which

und deutschen Dichtkunst" in 1777 for the periodical *Deutsches Museum*.

¹⁶ Herder's letter to Karoline Flachsland in Darmstadt (14 June 1771) is in *Johann Gottfried Herder: Briefe. Gesamtausgabe, Erster Band 1763—1771*, bearbeitet von Wilhelm Dobbek und Günter Arnold, pp. 95-98; see also *Herders Briefwechsel mit Caroline Flachsland. August 1770 bis Dezember 1771*) herausgegeben von Hans Schauer, (Weimar, 1926-28).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

may have led him to pursue his treasured *Silver Book*. Praise of a song of Lapland may be attributed to Gotthold Ephraim Lessing in his 33. *Litteraturbriefe* (1759).¹⁸ According to his letter to Karoline Flachsland on 14 October 1770 he had carried to Strasbourg a collection of song fragments (*Fragmentensammlung*), which had been in his possession in Riga,¹⁹ as well as nine ballads from Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765), four songs of Shakespeare (whom he considered to be an English national poet), and one from the Greenland-Lapp Eskimos, a topic of correspondence between Herder and Hamann during his time in Riga, in December of 1767.²⁰

Directing his commentary to those authors who had placed value on their personal observations, rather than on those they observed, Herder proposed that new forms of documentary materials must be taken directly from uneducated and common people – by means of their “sensation, talk, and action.”²¹ This appraisal may be considered as an important precursor to the underlying criteria of the *Volkslieder* volumes, in which Baltic peasants, the German *Volk*, the Russian *narod*, and other national groups shared a common universal framework of research.²² In specifying a stratum of society that was neither refined nor uncultivated, Herder elaborated on the natural unity that separated distinct groups – “peasants, farmers, fisherman, craftsmen, artisans and trades people” – as well as the residents of farms,

¹⁸ In *Briefe der neuesten Litteratur betreffend*, see Dunsdorfs, 1961, 113.

¹⁹ Arbusow, 1953, 158.

²⁰ *Johann Georg Hamann Briefwechsel II*, Wiesbaden, 1956, 405; cited by Dunsdorfs, 1961, 123.

²¹ Herder, *SW*, IX, 532-33; see also V, 502-3.

²² Breuilly, 1993, 56-57; see also Taruskin, 2000, 691.

towns, and marketplaces.²³ But in Herder's contextualization of the "folksong" (*Volkslied*) he interspersed several related terms: *Bauerlied*, *Lied des Volkes*, *Spruchlied*, *Nationallied*, *Populärlied* (peasant- and folk song, epigrammatic song, national song, popular song):²⁴

In more than one province I know folk songs, dialect songs, peasant songs, which would certainly yield nothing in the way of rhythm and liveliness, naiveté and vigor of language, to many of those ballads [of Percy]. Only who is there who will collect them? Who will trouble himself about them, to trouble himself about the songs of the people, in the streets, the alleys and fish markets – in the unsophisticated roundelays of the peasant-folk – songs which often do not scan and which rhyme badly? *In mehr als einer Provinz sind mir Volkslieder, Provinziallieder, Bauerlieder bekannt, die an Lebhaftigkeit und Rhythmus, und Naivität und Stärke der Sprache vielen derselben gewiss nichts nachgeben würden; nur wer ist der sie sammelte? der sich um sie bekümmre? sich um Lieder des Volks bekümmre? auf Strassen, und Gassen und Fischmärkten? im ungelehrten Rundgesange des Landvolks? um Lieder, die oft nicht skandirt, und oft schlecht gereimt sind?*²⁵

Because critics refuted the provenance of James Macpherson's poems of Ossian, Herder and his publisher J. F. Hartknoch deferred plans to publish Herder's

²³ Barnard, 1965, 74; Bauman and Briggs, 2003, 189; Alan Dundes, foreword to Bohlman, 1988, [ix].

²⁴ According to the late German musicologist Josef Müller-Blattau, 1931, 21.

²⁵ Herder, *Extract from a Correspondence on Ossian and the Songs of Ancient Peoples*, the translation is adopted from Gillies, 1945, 45, and Joyce P. Crick, in: Nisbet, 1985, 160, translated with the assistance of P. H. Gaskill; the original text is in Herder, SW, V, 189.

preliminary manuscript, *Alte Volkslieder*.²⁶ Herder's project was courageous in view of his literary rivals in Berlin, August Ludwig Schlözer and Friedrich Nicolai, who directed criticism and scorn at the folksong topics in the essay "on Ossian" of 1773, and later also derided the publication of the *Volkslieder* (1778-79).²⁷

Originally collected from students from Livland (*Liefländische Sprache*) the ballad or *Singe* (Latvian: *ziņģe*) *Klāusset sché Meitingé* appeared in a widely influential travelogue published in 1721 by a German diplomat in Russia, Friedrich Christian Weber. Printed and sold in broadsheets, as part of the market place of towns and cities, the *ziņģe* was a secular, German-derived romance or sentimental ballad.²⁸ Becoming Herder's sole Latvian-language song text under the category of "Nordic songs" in his *Alte Volkslieder (Zweiter Theil, Viertes Buch)* the text had been reprinted in 1764 in the reputable scholarly supplement *Gelehrte Beiträge Stück 12*, to which Herder contributed; nevertheless, he admitted to having doubts over its criteria and contents:²⁹

This attempt, perhaps the worst possible one that I could first provide, is from Weber's travel book *Das Veränderte Russland (The Changed Russia)*, p. 70. *Diese Probe, vielleicht die schlechteste, die zuerst gegeben werden konnte, ist aus Webers neuerändertem Russland S. 70.*³⁰

Herder's decision to select "the worst possible attempt" has been justifiably

²⁶ Alan Dundes, introduction, in: Bohlman, 1988, ix; Gaskill, 2001, 217.

²⁷ See Jürjo, 2006, 347, Koepke, 2003, 74; Liebel-Weckowicz, 1986, 12-13.

²⁸ This strand of Latvian song culture is represented in the Latvian Folklore Archives, which by 1990 had catalogued 75,825 *ziņģes*; see Reidzāne, 1996, 159.

²⁹ Arbusow, 1953, 152.

³⁰ *Klāusset sché Meitingé* [Friedrich Christian Weber], *Das Veränderte Russland*, three volumes, Frankfurt, 1721—1740. Cited in Herder, SW, XXV, 91.

criticized in Latvian folklore scholarship. Professor Kārlis Straubergs drew attention to the five misspellings in the transcription of eleven lines. In fact, Herder's decision not to publish the manuscript in 1775 was clearly advantageous to the outcome of Latvian cultural history, for Herder did not repeat the song text in 1779, in the *Volkslieder Band II*.³¹

Herder's correspondence in 1777-78 identified several key collaborators, who expedited his quest for new materials that represented unmediated Latvian (or Livlandic) song examples. As a result of this progression of events one can measure Herder's development as a scholar who questioned the validity of other published sources of folksongs. Therefore he assumed the tasks of corresponding, soliciting song texts, translating, altering original titles, and adding commentary to the raw materials. Problems still arose, however, because in his quest for a Latvian chapter, which will be reviewed below, Herder obtained song texts indirectly from a network of Baltic German Lutheran pastors in Livland, who possessed varying abilities in transcribing the native language.

Despite the addition of annotations (*Nachrichten zu einigen folgenden Liedern*), which provide a fragmentary sketch of the contexts of singing and other verbal lore such as riddles (*mīklas*),³² Herder generally enumerated verses regardless of their melodies and the manner of singing. In this respect, collectors of Latvian folksong in the nineteenth century emulated the standards he had established in the *Volkslieder* (see Chapter Four). The classification of Krišjānis Barons, in the six-

³¹ The evaluation of *Alte Volkslieder* is given by the Herder bibliographer and philologist Ludis Bērziņš, [1942] 2007, 105; the émigré historian Edgars Dunsdorfs, 1961, 107; and émigré philologist Kārlis Straubergs, 1952, XXXII.

³² *Volkslieder, Zweiter Theil*, Leipzig: in der Weygandischen Buchhandlung, 1779,

volume collection, *Latvju dainas* (1894—1915), illustrates Herder's essential premise that a listing of the text alone is synonymous with the meaning of the song.

On account of a problematic Estonian example, in volume two of *Volkslieder* (1779), Herder's editorial criteria have been challenged in modern Baltic area studies. A source of contention has been Herder's annotation to the Estonian example at the outset of volume two of *Volkslieder*, "The Slave's Lament about the Tyrant," in which Herder stipulated that he wished to present the "full length" of the text because of its realistic portrayal of the punishment and suffering of a serf who is placed in irons and chains. The editor contended that the song should not be shortened in order to make it aesthetically beautiful, for its poetic sighs were subservient to the realistic moans of the enslaved:

*Abgekürzt würde das Lied schöner seyn: aber es sollte nicht abgekürzt werden. Der wahre Seufzer aus der nicht dichterlich, sondern wirklich gefühlten Situation eines ächzenden Volks, sollte wie er da ist, tönen.*³³

The historical passage that is said to illustrate the "populist and libertarian overtones" of the word *Volkslieder*³⁴ certainly depicts a source of social discontent that gave rise to Estonian nationalism.³⁵ It is interesting to add that the lament and its annotation were also taken up by East German scholars of Herder, as a key to their approach to "democratic folksongs" and the spiritual needs of the working classes.³⁶

85-94.

³³ The Estonian example is in the *Volkslieder*, Herder, *SW*, XXV, 401-2; Herder's notes to this text are found on page 537.

³⁴ This is the opinion of H. Barry Nisbet, 1999, 130.

³⁵ Lietina Ray, 2003, utilizes this *Volkslieder* example, as well as Latvian folksong texts published elsewhere, in reconstructing the lives of the serfs.

³⁶ See the lengthy essay by Hermann Strobach, "*Herders Volksliedbegriff*," 1978.

On the related topic of ethnic and social divisions in Livland, it is likely that conditions were not favorable for the observation and study of all song genres. This was likely to have occurred because traditional customs prevented the lyrical or “sung songs” (*dziedamās dziesmas*) to be heard outside of closed family circles. In contrast, singers who participated in a “festive voice” (*godu balss*), particularly in the open air, would present a clear formula of repeated lines, such as in the common pattern ABABB. Thus, Baltic German ethnographers and historians of ritual and calendar group songs (*apdziedāšanās dziesmas*) gained an appreciation of this facet of the wider song culture. When replying to Herder’s criteria regarding Latvian examples for *Volkslieder* in January of 1778 Pastor August Wilhelm Hupel (see below) confirmed that songs of weddings and other festive occasions would be “particularly useful.”³⁷ Thus, the seventy-eight verses, which Hupel sent in March of 1778, contained song groupings under the headings *Hochzeitlied* (numbers 9-12) and *Johannislieder* (56-69), as well as a single written melody (*Schahdi kungi, tahdi kungi*) having the narrow ambitus that is appropriate for a festive declaimer during St. John’s Day rites.³⁸ Thus, Hupel’s name alone was a guarantee of authenticity:

One can be in no doubt of the genuine validity of each stanza, since we are dealing here with the actual characteristic songs of the people, and not the abstract ideal of a song. *Jeder Strophe brauchts keine Bürgschaft, da hier von treuen, wahren, charakteristischen Gesängen eines Volks, und nicht von*

Wolfgang Steinitz posited the Marxist interpretation of a democratic folksong (*demokratisches Volkslied*) in 1955; see also Wienker-Piepho, 2007, 31.

³⁷ On Hupel and collecting see Apkalns, 1977, 317, and Johansons, 1975, 422; Bendorfs, 2000, 1, defines the features of the “festive voice.”

³⁸ The numeration conforms to the catalogue of Ludis Bērziņš, see *Greznas dziesmas*, [1942] 2007, 106-19.

*abstraktem Ideal eines Liedes die Rede sehn kann.*³⁹

By calculating generic categories that are represented in Herder's Latvian *Volkslieder* sample, the late Latvian émigré historian Edgars Dunsdorfs was able to devise a numeric table. He found that the highest ratio, that of wedding songs (four out of eleven in his sample), mirrored the equally high proportion of wedding ritual songs (nearly one third, or 19,422 out of 60,080) that is found in later folksong collections of Krišjānis Barons and others.⁴⁰

It is possible to reconstruct Herder's search for Latvian song texts after he resettled in Bückeburg and Weimar, from 1771 to 1778. His correspondents were an important legacy of his years in Riga.⁴¹ Herder's progress in bringing together Latvian materials for *Volkslieder* began in January of 1777 when he conveyed a plan to publish Latvian songs to his publisher J. F. Hartknoch in Riga and the latter's close colleague, a prominent scholar of Livland and its diverse ethnic groups, Pastor August Wilhelm Hupel (see below). Hupel's letter to Hartknoch, 17 October 1777, presents the scope of Herder's search for Latvian (or Livlandic) representation in *Volkslieder*:

Herder bittet mich um estl. und lettische Volkslieder; ich will ihm schaffen; aber könnten Sie mir nicht einen Beytrag schaffen, nemlich etliche lettische Lieder bey der Letten Hochzeiten, Festen, etc. die nicht ganz einfältig sind,

³⁹ SW, XXV, 537; Johansons, 1975, 411; Švābe, 1958b, 122-3.

⁴⁰ See Dunsdorfs, 1961, 108, whose distribution of Herder's Latvian examples in *Volkslieder* is as follows: children's songs and singing (2), years of youth (1), social life (1), work and craft (2) and mythological songs (1).

⁴¹ A compendium of letters, *Von und an Herder*, hrsg. von Heinrich Düntzer und Ferdinand Gottfried von Herder, *Band 2* (Leipzig, 1861); Arbusow, 1953, 166-74, and Johansons, 1975, 422-3. See "Der Vermittler der estnischen Volkslieder an

*nebst einer möglichst treuen Uebersetzung, eins oder 2 bitte ich mit dem Sylbenmaass zu bezeichnen.*⁴²

As Hupel's song transcriptions, which he had sent to Herder in January of 1778, were confined to eight Estonian examples, Herder required additional collectors who were familiar with the Latvian traditions of their household, congregation, or parish community. Because these conditions were not at hand, Hupel engaged the assistance of his friend and publisher Johann Friedrich Hartknoch, and Riga's prominent botanist and natural scientist Jakob Benjamin Fischer (1731—1793). The latter's work *Naturgeschichte von Lief- und Ehistland* (1778) had been central to the scholarship of Livland, and it had played a role in Hupel's philological activity. Fischer contributed since 1775 to the periodical series *Nordische Miscellaneen*, as well as to the compendium *Topographische Nachrichten von Lief- und Ehistland* (*Topographical Surveys of Livland and Estland*), whose second volume had been published at the time of Herder's request in 1777.

In a reply to Herder (on 4 January 1778) Hartknoch conveyed the sense of urgency that underlied Herder's search for *Volkslieder*: *Hupel wird nächste Post Volkslieder schicken, das sind estnische; aber wo kriege ich lettische?*⁴³ Seeking a resolution to the matter Jakob Fischer contacted local collectors in Livland: Lutheran

Herder," Jürjo, 2006, 342-9.

⁴² "Herder has requested Estonian and Latvian folksongs from me; I will produce them; but couldn't you not make a contribution, namely a few Latvian songs from Latvian weddings, festivities, etc. that are not too simple, along with as accurate a translation as possible, and I request that, for one or two, the metrical scansion be shown." Jürjo, 2006, 343. This excerpt is from Pastor Hupel's letter, 17 October 1777, to his publisher Johann Friedrich Hartknoch. See the latter's housed papers: *Latvijas Akadēmiskā Bibliotēka*, Ms. 828, A. 4, Nr. 44, formerly the *Stadtbibliothek, and Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Altertumskunde*. Arbusow, 1953, 166.

⁴³ "Hupel will send folk songs in the next post, they are Estonian; but from where

Dean (*Prāvests*) Heinrich Baumann (1716—1790) of Cēsis (German: Wenden) and Pastor Gustav Bergmann (1749—1817), who preached in nearby Āraiši from 1771 to 1780. Pastor Baumann was an avid collector, who, like Fischer, had assisted Hupel in providing prolific ethnographic and folkloric research of Livland for *Nordische Miscellaneen*. Indeed, Baumann was known to have collected a “Latvian Bible” of verbal lore – “of historical anecdotes, notes and letters, as well as folksongs.”⁴⁴ The other key affiliate Gustav Bergmann shared an interest in song collecting with Pastor Christof Harder (1747—1818), the brother of Herder’s colleague Pastor Johann Jacob Harder (1734—1775), who preached in Rubene, and from 1787 was the Lutheran Dean of Valmiera and edited a popular local periodical (or “calendar”) *Vidzemes kalendārs*. Bergmann, who assumed this editorship in 1792, drew on Christof Harder’s materials in *Erste Sammlung lettischer Sinngedichte*, whose publication in 1807 marked the first book-length monograph devoted to Latvian song texts. Of added significance is Bergmann’s sequence of twenty-one items that corresponds to the Latvian verses contained in Herder’s *Nachlass* papers of correspondence that he received in March of 1778.⁴⁵

Less than a decade after his departure the impact of Herder’s letters confirmed that the provincial clergy of Livland held him in high esteem. The wider chain of correspondence between Heinrich Baumann and households in nearby towns attests to the overall sequence of the steps taken to gather the Latvian songs. It was a a

will I obtain Latvian (songs)?” See Arbusow, 1953, 170.

⁴⁴ Bērziņš, 1933, 125.

⁴⁵ On Christof Harder see Bērziņš, 1933, 150; Arbusow, 1953, 174. In Herder’s *Nachlass* the consecutive order of texts – 32, 37, 36, 38, 39, 40, 58, 61, 60, 62, 65 – conforms to Bergmann’s listing – 202, 204, 205, 206, 207, 209, 209, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217.

critical first step for Pastor Baumann to summon the servants to sing, particularly as it became an occasion in which he rejoiced at their cooperation and response. According to Andrejs Johansons the impromptu meeting of 30 October 1777 (Old Style) in the parish of Cēsis serves as verification of Herder's influence "from the distant light of Weimar."⁴⁶ These few songs produced within a random gathering of servants show Herder's role in the early study of Latvian folksong scholarship, as well as marking the tentative beginnings of the use of the printed media of folksongs as instrumental to Latvian national symbolism and unity:⁴⁷

Here follow, bosom friend, some examples of Latvian poetry. Believe me, dear friend that I have heard nothing of this poetry before. In this month, the thirtieth day, when I received your honored letter, I related to my household about these requested songs, and they approached with such joy and enthusiasm, that I could scarcely control them. This, what I append here, is only the beginning; there follows more. You will find much of what could scarcely be expected from Latvians. *Hier folgen, Herzensfreund, einige lettische Poesien. Glauben Sie wohl, liebster Freund! Dass [ich] von solchen Poesien niemals je etwas gehöret. Den 30. cujus, da dero geehrtes (vom 17.10.1777) erhielt und (13.3.1778) meinen Hausleuten von den verlangten Liedern etwas äusserte, wurden sie alle begeistert und kamen in enthusiasmo, so dass [ich] kaum mässigen konnte. Das, was hier folget, ist also der Anfang, künftig ein mehreres. Sie werden doch manches finden, so kaum von Letten zu vermuten.*

⁴⁶ This correspondence of Pastor Heinrich Baumann will be discussed below; it is preserved among his catalogued posthumous papers in the Latvian State Historical Archives (*Latvijas Valsts vēstures arhīvs*), Rīga (LVVA 4038, V. 2, Apr. 304, 41

Writing from the town of Cēsis in a second letter to Jakob Fischer (13 March 1778) Pastor Baumann expressed perplexity, which hitherto was not uncommon in the portrayal of peasant songs in literatures:

Dear friend, let me know what will [Weimar's Lutheran] Generalsuperintendent Herder – whose good likeness in a portrait I have kept in my *livonicis* [collection], as a one-time man of letters in Vidzeme – hope to begin with our Latvian folk songs? The great man! This is a real riddle that I cannot solve. *Melden Sie mir doch, liebster Freund! was will Herr Generalsuperintendent Herder – sein wohlgetroffenes Bildnis als eines ehemaligen liefl. Gelehrten liegt unter meinen livonicis – mit unsern lettischen Volksliedern machen? Der grosse Mann! das ist mir doch ein rechtes Rätsel, so aufzulösen nicht imstande bin.*⁴⁸

In a letter to Fischer dated 21 February 1778 Hupel wrote that his compilation of seventy-eight Latvian song texts had been sent to Herder in Weimar. Evidently, a decade after his departure Herder's correspondence had a stimulating effect on the study of Livland (now Vidzeme in central Latvia), and the status of song collecting. Somewhat earlier in the century Baltic German minister Gottfried Friedrich Stender (1714—1796) was a comparable catalyst for the study of Latvian language and culture in Kurland (see below).

Preserved in the *Staatsbibliothek* of Berlin, the former Prussian State Library,

lp.).

⁴⁷ Strods, 1983, 151.

⁴⁸ Arbusow, 1953, 169. Baumann's letters in response to Herder's request are excerpted in Jürjo, 2006, 344-45. The Estonian historian explains Baumann's consternation in respect to popular opinions about folksong in the eighteenth century

the posthumous papers of Herder contain seventy-eight Latvian song texts and a smaller number of Lithuanian and Estonian examples, out of an international corpus of 150 to 200 numbered verses. Approximately one third of the large Latvian sample conforms to German-derived ballads and romances (*ziņģes*), rather than to an older stratum of traditional *dainas*. During the productive period of Baltic-German historiography in inter-war Latvia, a leading Latvian author and literary scholar, Ludis Bērziņš transcribed and catalogued seventy-eight texts from the *Nachlass* papers housed in Berlin, publishing a critical analysis in 1933. Twenty years later historian Leonid Arbusow (Jr.) published a biographical synopsis of Herder in Riga, with an amended and enlarged catalogue of these Latvian song texts.⁴⁹

In determining the provenance of individual folios Bērziņš identified the core grouping from Livland (*Livländische Sammlung*). He attributed these twenty-seven song texts to Pastors Baumann, and Bergmann, and possibly Nessler (see below) and other affiliates. Unlike the remaining papers, this Livlandic grouping was transcribed only in Latvian, and it exhibited three unified sets of handwriting, with the addition of generic headings. In one instance, a collector, whose identity is unknown, had entitled the first verse of his listing as *Johannislied* (St. John's Day song), but for publication in *Volkslieder* Herder had revised this heading to *Schmeichellied auf die Herrschaft*, denoting the satirical and humorous songs common to a procession of St. John's Day celebrants (*Jāņu berni*).⁵⁰ Because Herder specified in his request to

by Friedrich Christian Weber, *Das veränderte Russland* (Frankfurth, 1721).

⁴⁹ The late Leonid Arbusow compiled and edited a catalogue [1953, 129-256] from the posthumous papers of Herder's *Nachlass*. During the post-war years, for purposes of safekeeping, these were preserved in microfilm at Tübingen University. See Apkalns, 1977, 326.

⁵⁰ The singing to flatter or honor the hosts is known as *glaimošānās*, Herder, *SW*,

Hartknoch and Hupel in 1777 that they procure an example of metrical scansion, interpolated among the folios sent by Hupel is a strip of paper that bears the notation of a single melodic line: the verse beneath, *šādi kungi, tādi kungi*, is traditionally sung to the hosts during St. John's Day processions. Moreover, Herder may have taken the text with him from Riga for he had it bound among twenty-four examples in the gift album (*Silbernes Buch*) belonging to his fiancée (see above):⁵¹

<i>Schadi kungi tahdi kungi</i>	<i>Diese Herren, jene Herren</i>
<i>Muhs kundsiņu ne panahks.</i>	<i>Sind nichts gegen unsern Herren.</i>
<i>Muhs kundsiņa zeppuriht</i>	<i>Unsres Herren Mütze glänzt</i>
<i>Tihru seltu wisuliņ.</i>	<i>Von dem besten Flittergold.</i>

While the grouping of eleven Latvian folksongs in *Volkslieder* is divided into two sequences, of *Fragmente Lettischer Lieder* and *Frühlingslied*, it is worth noting that Herder had provisionally planned, from his manuscript of seventy-eight verses, a third sequence listing seven examples of flattering songs offered to the host.⁵²

Yet prone to errors and distortions the Latvian textual transcriptions contained in the *Nachlass* papers, according to Latvian philologist Ludis Bērziņš, consist of a “broken [Latvian] language” (*lauzītā valoda*).⁵³ By way of example, the verse that begins *Dehlu zeme, dehlu meita* (“son’s land, son’s daughter”) differs from

XXV, 579.

⁵¹ Illustration Seventeen. The primitive notation of *Nachlass* of *Schmeichellied auf die Herrschaft* is reproduced in Josef Müller-Blattau, *Hamann und Herder in ihren Beziehungen zur Music*, Königsberg, 1931, 53, and also in Johansons, 1976, 543. See Herder, *SW*, XXV, 579, for the contents of the *Silbernes Buch: Anhang. Druckmanuskript der Volkslieder und andern Kleinschriften*, 1931, 53; see also Bērziņš, 1933, 146; Wegner, 1928, 39-46.

⁵² Historian Edgars Dunsdorfs identifies the texts according to their corresponding variants and classification types in the collection *Latvju dainas* (1894-1915): 4358, 31431, 11547, 13248, 28033, 3086, 29615, 33869; see Dunsdorfs, 1961, 108.

the common textual incipit: *Cēsu zeme, Cēsu meita* (“the land of Cēsis, and the girl of Cēsis”).⁵⁴ Jānis Misiņš, a bibliographer at the Latvian National Library in Riga, undertook a study of concordances, matching the *Nachlass* listing to variants that appeared over a century later, in *Latvju dainas* (1894—1915).⁵⁵ It should be added that the student song or *ziņģe* that Herder selected for inclusion in his unpublished song collection *Alte Volkslieder (1773/74)* is also represented in the posthumous listing as the thirteenth text (*Kláusset sché*).

Although the *Nachlass* listing is a flawed and distorted record of Latvian oral tradition, it illustrates important ethnographic elements that had not been previously documented. Above all, the unified grouping of seventeen song texts (Latvian: *virķne*) is a rare example in print of the traditional manner of the *teicēji* (“declaimers”), who spontaneously build a sequence of quatrains according to the requirements of a ritual act, or other formal group situation. Herder refers to his manuscript, now within the *Nachlass* (containing the verses that are numbered fifteen to twenty-seven in the numeration of Bērziņš) when corresponding with Hartknoch in 1777 about the potential collector “*der alte Kandidat Nessler*,” Christian Gotthard Nessler, a correspondent from whom Hupel and Baumann received seventeen song texts.⁵⁶ From the manuscript paper headed *Fragmente Lettischer Lieder* Herder

⁵³ Bērziņš, 1933, 132; see also Arbusow, 1953, 178; Johansons, 1975, 420.

⁵⁴ Bērziņš, 1933, 147. This song text is numbered twenty-six.

⁵⁵ Wegner, 1928, 41. Concordances fall into the category of family and orphan songs, and variants of Herder’s examples of seasonal songs for spring: *Nāc nākdama lakstīgala* and *Bite liela draveniece* recur in *Latvju dainas* (1894-1915), see 28033 and 27949, respectively.

⁵⁶ The early background of Chr. Gotthard Nessler is obscure, although it is known that he studied at Königsberg’s Collegium Fredericianum from 1743. Nessler became a collector of Latvian historical materials and song texts in the province of

selected five verses, which are likely to have been Nessler's contribution, comprise the section entitled *Fragmente Lettischer Lieder* in *Volkslieder* (SW XXV, 409-11; see illustration 13). According to his annotation in *Volkslieder*, Herder had received the quatrains (*Vierzeiler*) from Nessler, which the latter presumably had transcribed from the song tradition of freely composed textual cycles (Latvian: *virķnes*). These sequences of the *Nachlass*, "wedding songs" and "St. John's Day songs," enable the reader to see how the verses would have been extemporaneously combined.

The *Nachlass* presents remnants of an oral tradition, which formerly survived among a small minority of Catholics within the Protestant territory of Livland (present-day Vidzeme); these two song texts are evidence of a historical period of Polish rule.⁵⁷ A suggested source for the second of these examples of Catholic liturgical texts (number fifteen) is a hymn of fasting (*Audi benigne conditor*) that has been found in a breviary from Riga dating from 1513:

<i>Ko guli? Neguli!</i>	What sleeping? Don't sleep!
<i>Celies augšam!</i>	Wake up!
<i>Šī saule, šī zeme</i>	This land and this sun
<i>Tevis gauži raudāja.</i>	Are crying for you. ⁵⁸

Also illustrating the process of song continuity, the Latvian sample of the *Nachlass* has evolved within later singing practices. In a study of the evolution of melody in oral tradition Soviet-era musicologist Jēkabs Vītoliņš estimated that fifteen to twenty of Herder's quatrains were sung within the current folksong practice. Unlike older

Livland during the 1760s being employed as a house tutor near Cēsis; he died in Riga in 1779; Arbusow, 1953, 172; Johansons, 1975, 423.

⁵⁷ Polish Catholic rule was brief in Livland, dating from 1582 to 1629, when compared to adjacent Latgale, where this rule extended from 1561 to 1772.

⁵⁸ Arbusow, 1953, 225; Bērziņš, [1942] 1977, 78; Johansons, 1975, 421-22.

declaiming melodic structures, these songs contained a wider ambitus, the equivalent of Western Ionian, Mixolydian, and Aeolian modes.⁵⁹ Vītoliņš inferred by his analysis that the lyrical characteristics of traditional singing had evidently evolved by the late eighteenth century, when the melodic structure of the folksongs (*dainas*) had been established.

3. Herder's Bridge to Latvian Song Culture

By reprinting a long excerpt from an essay by Pastor Johann Jacob Harder (1734—1775), which he featured in the *Volkslieder's* Latvian chapter, Herder clearly acknowledged Pastor Harder's unusually close rapport with his Latvian parishioners. A fellow graduate of Königsberg University, Pastor Harder became a prolific author who, alongside Herder, contributed to the organ of Herder's intellectual circle, the *Scholarly Contributions* or *Gelehrte Beyträge zu den Rigischen Anzeigen*. Harder secured a reputation as an author and ethnographer of the peasantry in a series of essays for the *Scholarly Contributions*. In an exceptional essay to this newspaper supplement, Pastor Harder gave an account of the delirium of a fourteen-year old maidservant, who lived in isolation, for she was considered to be mad. Harder defended her gift of prophecy, by which she claimed she joined the world of dead souls in her dreams and visitations.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Vītoliņš and Krasinska, 1972, 77; Johānsons, 1975, 544; approximately twenty examples in the *Nachlass*, nearly one quarter, are known to Latvians, and to Latvian émigré society: recording artist Ainars Mielavs gives a rendition of the shepherds' song *Tumša nakte, zaļa zāle* (Dark night, green grass) in the CD *Skaistākās dziesmas* (Rīga, Upe, 1999); other familiar texts include the orphan song *Maza biju neredzēju* (I was little and did not see).

⁶⁰ *Scholarly Contributions*, 1763, see Andrejs Johānsons, "Herder, Harder, und ein lettisches Bauernmädchen," *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 61, 1965, 1-14.

A pastor in the Livlandic parish district of Suntaži Harder preached from 1758 to 1771, a period in which he gathered Latvian beliefs, crafts, mythology and folklore.⁶¹ His thorough acquisition of local knowledge underpinned a lengthy four-part series of essays published in 1764 for the bi-weekly newspaper supplement *Gelehrte Beyträge zu den Rigischen Anzeigen – II, V, VII, XII Stücke (aus Jahr 1764)*.⁶² Bearing the title “Untersuchung des Gottesdienstes, der Wissenschaften, HandSW, Regierungsarten und Sitten der alten Letten, aus ihrer Sprache,” Harder not only subsumed historical Latvian topics and comparative mythology, but he professed to publish an authoritative ethnography of customs and rituals in the Latvian language. He wrote, “The poetry and music of the Latvians is remarkable, and is indicative of nature, which was and remains their instructor.”⁶³ Harder gained significant insights into social meanings and values underlying Latvian group ritual singing, and he praised the natural extemporization of a broad range of song texts. Showing an unusual ability to interpret Latvian extemporized declaiming songs (*teicamās dziesmas*), Harder commented on the satirical ridiculing (*boshaft*) of ritual participants during *Jāņi* (St. John’s Day):

I have heard *ex tempore* on St. John’s Day the following verse: *Schahdi kungi, tahdi kungi, lihgo! lihgo!*⁶⁴ Their improvisatory songs have all of the

⁶¹ Bērziņš, 1933, 125; Johansons, 1975, 411-16. Towards the end of his career Harder assumed high-ranking positions as the minister at *Jēkaba baznīca*, one of the principal churches of old Riga, and as the rector of the Riga Lyceum.

⁶² Bernhard Suphan, “Die Rigischen Gelehrten Beiträge und Herders Anteil an denselben,” *Zeitschrift für Deutsche Philologie* VI (Halle, 1875), 49-53.

⁶³ *Die Dichtkunst und Musik der Letten ist ganz besonders, und zeigt von der Natur, die ihr Lehrmeister gewesen und noch ist*, Harder, 1764, 89.

⁶⁴ The Latvian St. John’s Day text *Šādi kungi, tādi kungi* was among two hundred song texts, of which seventy-nine were Latvian song texts, in Herder’s posthumous handwritten papers (see above). The text of the *līgotne*, which had been published by

satirical and sometimes the malicious wit of English street ballads. *Ich habe einmal am Johannistage diesen Vers extempore gehört: Ihre Lieder aus dem Stegreif haben allen den satirischen, manchmal auch boshafte Witz der englischen Gassenlieder.*⁶⁵

Harder added that the declaimers' recitations were no less satirical than the wit of Jonathan Swift (1667—1745) or Gottlieb Wilhelm Rabener (1714—1771). By coining the term *Staatslieder*⁶⁶ Harder categorized the manner of singing St. John's Day songs, which were hymn-like, and not among the improvised poems.⁶⁷

Published anonymously in three volumes, 1778, 1779, and 1781, and of disputed authorship, *Lebensläufe nach aufsteigender Linie* (1778) is perhaps the greatest novel of the Baltic German colonial era due to its familial contexts, eccentric characters, and richly descriptive settings of the Kurish countryside. Herder selected an excerpt from the first volume to supplement the Latvian song listing in *Volkslieder*. The purported author, Theodor Gottlieb Hippel (1741—1796), was born near to Herder's home in Mohrunen, and educated at the University of Königsberg in the company of Herder's Riga circle – of Berens, Harder, and the publisher Hartknoch. But Hippel's status, in claiming the authorship of a novel devoted to

Pastor August Wilhelm Hupel (see below), was in Herder's possession as part of the manuscript album *Silbernes Buch* (1771-3), *Anhang, Druckmanuskript der Volkslieder und andern Kleinschriften*, (Herder, SW, XXV, 579). German musicologist Müller-Blattau reprints the melodic line, in *Hamann und Herder in ihren Beziehungen zur Musik*, 1931, example nine, p. 53.

⁶⁵ A part of Harder's narrative on Latvian improvisatory songs in the excerpt *Singe, dziesma*, from *Gelehrte Beyträge* (XII Stück, 89-90) was omitted in the publication of *Volkslieder*, volume two (Herder, SW, XXV, 391-7).

⁶⁶ *Ausser ihren Staatsliedern, d. i. solchen, die bei gewissen feierlichen Gelegenheiten gesungen werden, machen sie ihre meisten Poesien aus dem Stegreif.* Herder, SW, XXV, 395. See also Johansons, 1975, 411.

⁶⁷ Harder's term is noted by the late Soviet Latvian musicologist Jēkabs Vītoliņš,

Kurish country life and characters, developed apart from them. An attention to idioms of the native language enlivens the novel's commentary on the poetic world of the Latvians, and an excerpt was popularized in *Volkslieder*, in part two of volume two. Another narrative section is included below, which is taken from the first edition of the novel (1778):

The Letts have an irrepressible attachment to poetry, and although I am disposed to believe that this circumstance was responsible for sowing the poetic seed in my mother, who had, in her ancestors, eaten with this people the fruits of the same field and drunken water from the same river; yet in this respect she showed no gratitude. However, she was willing to admit that the Latvian language was in itself almost poetry. It sounds, she said, like a china bell; but German, like a church bell. She could not deny that the lowliest of Latvians, when they are in a happy mood, speak with the tongues of prophets or in verse, and if she would have wanted to ascertain otherwise, that would have been strongly refuted by *Herr Jānis* [the pastor's servant] and his pastoral relations. *Jānis* and his subordinates never allowed a single harvest rite or wedding to go by without divining in verses. In all their daily works during which the folk by the sweat of their brow were grandly feasted in the Latvian style, they proved that they were children of the poetic spirit. *Die Letten haben einen unüberwindlichen Hang zur Poesie, und ob ich gleich gerne glaube, dieser Umstand habe den poetischen Samen in meine Mutter ausgestreut, welche schon in ihren Vorfahren mit diesem Volke zusammen Früchte eines Feldes gegessen und Wasser eines Flusses getrunken; war sie doch in diesem Stück*

*unerkenntlich. Sie bestritt indessen nicht, dass die Lettische Sprache schon halb Poesie wäre. Sie klingt, sagte sie, wie ein Tischglöckchen; die deutsche aber wie eine Kirchenglocke. Sie konnte nicht leugnen, dass die gemeinsten Letten, wenn sie froh sind, weissagen oder in Versen reden, und wenn sie das Gegentheil hätte behaupten wollen, würd Herr Jachnis mit den lieben Pastorats Angehörigan den Gegenbewies geführt haben. Herr Jachnis und seine Untergebene liessen keine Erndte, keine Hochzeit, keine Leichenwache vorüberwo nicht geweissaget wurde. Bei allen Talcken oder Tagesarbeiten, wo die Leute im Schweiss ihres Angesichts herrlich nach Lettischer Art bewirtheet wurden, bewiesen sie, dass sie poetischen Geistes Kinder wären.*⁶⁸

Elsewhere the author satirized folksong collectors among the local clergy, who habitually shorten Latvian peasant songs, thereby “diluting wine with water” (1778, 552).⁶⁹ On the other hand, his admiration was stated clearly: “the genius of the language, and of the nation, is a creative genius” (*das Genie der Sprache, das Genie der Nation ist ein Schöpfergenie*). The novel’s rich characterization can be seen through the master of the household’s soliloquy on the demise of the Latvian epos. It should be added that this topic became a nationalist issue in the nineteenth century:

There are many who maintain that the Latvians have traces of heroic songs, but my father alone contradicts them: the genius of the language, and of the

⁶⁸ The excerpt from the first edition of the anonymous work *Lebensläufe nach aufsteigender Linie*, 1778, 72, is cited in Bērziņš, 1933, 128; Apkalns, 1977, 423-4. The authorship of this novel has been attributed to Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz (1751—1792) by Margot Paterson, *Semgallen Revisited*, Norwich: Ridge End, 2003. She contests Hippel’s association with aspects of the novel, such as its familial ties to Baltic German manorial society in Kurland. Ludis Bērziņš has analyzed the novel from the perspective of Hippel’s authorship: see Bērziņš [1942] 2007, 95-105.

⁶⁹ Liebel-Weckowicz, 1986, 11-12.

nation, is a creative genius. If they should be crowned, they would deserve only hay or corn crowns. [...] Can one imagine that they would be and remain what they are, if they had in them even the slightest foundation of freedom and pride [...] Kurzeme is home to only freedom and slavery. *Es sind viele, welche behaupten die Letten hätten noch Spuren von Heldenliedern, allein diesen vielen widerspricht mein Vater 'das Genie der Sprache, das Genie der Nation ist ein Schöpfergenie. Wenn sie gekrönt werden sollen ist's ein Heu oder höchstens ein Kornkranz, der ihnen zustehet [...] Würden sie wol seyn und bleiben was sie sind, wenn nur wenigstens Boden zur Freiheit und zum Ruhm in ihnen wäre. In Curland ist Freiheit und Sklaverei zu Hause.*⁷⁰

Combining abilities of a clergyman, geographer, historian, and publicist, Pastor August Wilhelm Hupel excelled as an ethnographer of the Estonian and Latvian serfs of the Russian Baltic provinces of Estland and Livland. This expanse of peasant life is the prominent feature in a comprehensive and systematic overview of regions that border upon the town of Oberspal, in present-day Estonia, and extend to the Latvian borders of northern Vidzeme. Hupel's *Topographische Nachrichten von Lief- und Ehstland (Topographical Surveys of Livland and Estland)*, which Herder held in high esteem, signifies an encyclopedic compendium ("topography") containing descriptive ethnography and geography,⁷¹ and a lengthy account of peasant life – *Von den Bauern, (Zweyter Band, fünfter Abschnitt, 121-93)*. The latter

⁷⁰ Bērziņš, [1942], 49.

⁷¹ Another example of the genre, by rector of Riga's *Domschule* Karl Philip Michael Snell (1753—1806) is a study of the Russian Baltic provinces in 1794: *Beschreibung der russischen Provinzen an der Ostsee*. A comprehensive chapter on Hupel's *Topograph Liv-und Estlands* is given in Indrek Jürjo, *Aufklärung im Baltikum: Leben und Werk des livländischen Gelehrten August Wilhelm Hupel*. Köln: Böhlau, 2006,

assesses the established social order of the divergent ethnic groups of Livland. An addendum in volume, which provides melodic notation of St. John's Day ritual songs (*līgotnes*), is of particular importance (see below and illustration 16). Of further musical interest are transcriptions of Estonian melodies, a dance for bagpipes (*dūdas*) and a wedding song of Estonian serfs in Livland (see illustration 16): of two repeated four-bar phrases in D major.⁷² In addressing Latvian singing techniques Hupel distinguished between the practical role of the principal declaimer (*Stegreifdichter*), who extemporized texts and melodies in a humorous manner, and the supporting voices that draw and extend a long *e* (*ē*), as a lower accompanying part. In regard to the widespread vocal practice, in which the singers intone or “draw upon” a single note – *vilksāna* – Hupel wrote: “Latvians stretch the last syllables far, and after a time they sing in two vocal parts, in order for some to hum something similar in the bass.”⁷³ In 1798 Herder's spiritual successor and friend Garlieb Helwig Merkel similarly delineated the vocal parts of a Latvian Livlandic wedding ritual, which he had vividly reconstructed in the historical novel *Die Vorzeit Lieflands*:

Usually such a [wedding] song contains only two or four lines, which are sung with a simple melody in a very monotonic manner, and at the end the throng would break in at the octave of the key note with a long extended ‘Oh!’ [*Gewöhnlich enthält ein solches Lied nur zwei oder vier Zeilen, die in einer einfachen Melodie sehr monotonisch abgesungen werden, und am Ende fällt der Chor mit der Oktav des Grundtons in einem lang gezerrten Oh! ein.*]

121-69. On Herder's ownership and praise of the work see p. 172

⁷² Johansons, 1975, 555.

⁷³ *Die Letten dehnen die letzten Sylben sehr, und singen gemeiniglich zweystimmig, so dass etlich eine Art von Bass darzu brummen.* Hupel, 1777, 133.

Appended to Hupel's second volume (1777) are rare melodic examples of multipart declaiming ritual songs: one is a social or group song (*sadzīves dziesma*), the other is a two-part St. John's day song (*līgotne*) in twelve bars, in which each bar, or textual line of verse, is followed by the repeated refrain [*Lihgo*]. Establishing the latter's historical importance, the Latvian musicologist Jēkabs Vītoliņš has written:

The perfect form of A.V. Hupel's *līgotne* published in 1777 *Jānis sēde kalniņā* [...] is attributed to the simple small-range melody, having little variation, the customary repetition of *līgo!*, the multi-voiced drones on the tonic note, and the clear metrical text; [these elements] attest to the fully developed classical folksong, as much as to the musical and Latvian language skills of the transcriber.⁷⁴

Vītoliņš elicits the musical parameters in Hupel's transcription, which he concludes are inherent to an older stratum of the *dainas* tradition. Overall, the vocal parts conform to a narrow ambitus (of a minor third), in which the second voice embellishes the refrain *līgo* and a drone is sung below the second line of the quatrain (see Illustration 17). Furthermore, the few number of syllables in each line, as well as metrical and rhythmic considerations, supports this determination. It should be noted that similar methods – of specifying stylistic traits in folk melodies according to their age – are associated with the collections and musicological writings of Béla Bartók.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Vītoliņš, 1973, 28, see also page 22. Hupel's melodic notation for *Johannislied* (St. John's Day song) *Jānis sēde kalniņā* (*Jahnih sehde kalnina, sic.*) is found in illustration 16. The notation is reproduced in Johansons, 1975, 543 and Müller-Blattau, 1931, 51. A contemporary variant is found in Dīna Kalniņa, *Līgotnes*, Rīga, Latvijas Universitāte, 2000, 30.

⁷⁵ Bohlman, 1988, 41, citing Béla Bartók, 1931, *Hungarian Folk Music*, translated by M. C. Calvacoressi. London: Oxford University Press.

Providing insights into the peasant song traditions Hupel singled out voices of young girls who worked in the fields, and the value of these shouting (or declaiming) songs that, to other serfs, were able “to spread contentment far and wide.”⁷⁶ When turning to the playing techniques of the instrument that was common to both Estonians and Latvian in Livland, the bagpipe, *Dudelsack* or *Sackpfeife*, Hupel proposed that peasants, who fashioned the instrument themselves, blew it rhythmically in two parts, and with great dexterity. Hupel accorded comparatively less importance to the violin and the folk zither, the *kokle*.⁷⁷

Before the Sovietization of the 1950s when the traditional ways of cultivating farmlands changed, popular celebrations accompanying collective work were deeply entrenched within rural Latvia’s eastern Latgalian regions. Nevertheless, recordings of the genre, *talka*, were made during the Soviet era, which are preserved in the Latvian Folklore Archives, the Latvian Radio Archive, the Center for Traditional Music, and other private sources. An ensemble (*kopa*) entitled *Saucējas* (“Shouters”) issued a CD in 2007, reproducing seventeen examples of immensely varied regional polyphonic singing traditions – of *talkas*, weddings, and various polyphonic genres (Latgalian *bolss*) that are sung in spring and summer. The leader, Iveta Tāle, also recorded beliefs and customs surrounding these repertoires, such as the tradition of inviting good singers, whose voices resound as far as the neighboring villages, to participate in the *talka* in order for the work to be successful. Tāle’s recent fieldwork

⁷⁶ *Bey der Feldarbeit [...] hört man nur die Dirnen durch ihre schreyenden Gesänge allgemeine Zufriedenheit verbreiten*, Hupel, 1777, 133.

⁷⁷ *Ibid. Beyder Völker gemeinstes und vermuthlich sehr altes musikalisches Instrument ist der Dudelsack (Sackpfeife) den sie selbst machen und zweystimmig mit vieler Fertigkeit sehr taktmässig blasen*. Hupel’s notation of an Estonian dance on the bagpipe is illustration 15: Nr. I *Ehsteischer (sic.) Tanz auf dem Dudelsack*. See

echoes Hupel's observations of collective work (see above, "Topography II," 1777), in which he noted that the singing of young girls in the fields would resound and "spread contentment."⁷⁸

Referring to Latvian ritual wedding melodies as *Improvisationen* ("Improvisations") German traveler and publicist Johann Georg Kohl (1808—1878) discussed features which he had annotated in 1832. These resembled the commentary of Hupel and Merkel. Kohl distinguished the recitation of the solo female voice, from the choral response of a long vocal drone on the vowel "o" – [*lang gehaltenen 'o'*] – the practice of extending a lower tone within a singing part (*vilcējas*) is common to present-day Latvian regional ethnographic singing, and in its reproduction.⁷⁹

4. Song as Dissonance in the Novels of G. H. Merkel

Prior to Herder's arrival in Riga in 1764 the highest social standing, that of Estonian, Livlandic, or Kurlandic *Ritterschaften*, and manorial barons or *muižnieki*, cultivated German classical music within the venue of concert settings or within the liturgy of the Lutheran Church. In Riga, the cultural life among the upper classes expanded after the establishment of a public theatre in 1772. Under the patronage of a powerful Russian civil servant Baron Otto von Vietinghoff (1727—1792), the theatre provided

also the discussion on Hupel in Vītoliņš and Krasinska, 1972, 76.

⁷⁸ Tāle, notes to *Saucējas*, 2007, p. 9.

⁷⁹ See conclusions to chapter four, and chapters five and six on the reproduction of agricultural singing practices in the movement of *kopas*, 1976—to present; see also Muktupāvels, 2000, 500. Iveta Tāle, folklorist, compiler of the CD *Saucējas*, 2007, leads eight female singers who, since 2003, have reproduced polyphonic singing from ethnographic recordings made in northern Latgale, Maliena, Selonia, and southern Kurzeme.

regular music performances by its famous private instrumental ensemble of twenty-four salaried musicians.⁸⁰

Because of his contribution as an important mediator who reconciled hierarchical social divisions in the Baltic provinces, Pastor Gottfried Friedrich Stender (1714—1796) is widely admired as the founder of Latvian secular literature. Educated at the universities of Jena and at the principal Pietist centre of Halle, Stender composed many German-influenced didactic vocal pieces (*ziņģes*), in addition to translating Biblical legends and tales into Latvian. His innovative musical and literary projects, such as a popular encyclopedia, *Augstas gudrības grāmata* (the book of great wisdom) published in 1774, were directed at ameliorating the lives of the peasantry. Stender's broad range of language studies and educational works became instruments of culture in the historical period from 1750 to 1820, which Latvian historians designate as the era of Stender.

Stender assiduously collected examples of Latvian folklore and language and produced his systematic lexicon as a pastor in several parishes of the Duchy of Kurland and Semigallia (*Herzogtum Kurland und Semgallen*), and in Birzgale, where he lived from 1744 to 1753. Stender remained in Sunākste in the Semgallen region from 1766 to his death in 1796 – his gravestone is marked with the simple appellation, *Latvis*. Following his early translations of church songs into Latvian (*Baznīcas dziesmas*, 1754), Stender strove to popularize his collections of sentimental ballads and romances in *Jaunas ziņģes* (1774) and *Ziņģu lustes* (1789). These paired collections became pedagogical tools by which Stender would shape

⁸⁰ To whom he paid an annual sum of 2,500 Ducats; see Bosse, 1989, 210-13; Kirby, 1995, 56.

the moral constitution of the Latvian peasant. The unique German-Latvian syncretism of the *ziņģe* achieved popularity within his native Duchy of Kurland, spreading to Livland, as Stender himself noted in 1777:

Some Latvian national songs continue with the subject matter of the song in a sequence dictated by the imagination. These songs are specifically named *Singes*, and are sung most often when spinning in the long winter evenings. *Einige lettische Nationallieder continuiren in der angefangenen Materie, so wie es die Phantasie hintereinander eingegeben. Diese werden besonders Singes genannt, und am meisten in den langen Winterabenden beym Spinnen gesungen.*⁸¹

Devoting a chapter to Latvian oral poetry in his definitive study of Latvian grammar, *Neue vollständigere lettische Grammatik* (1761),⁸² Stender publicized sympathetic views of folksingers and, despite his critical position on the indigenous culture, in the second edition of 1783 these points are expanded, numbering paragraphs 215 to 225: “Nevermore will we Germans be so content with the most beautiful music, as the Latvians with their songs” [*Nimmermehr werden wir Deutschen, bey der schönsten Musik so vernügt seyn, als die Letten bey ihren Liedern*].⁸³ A committed educator of the peasantry, Stender introduced the use of the vernacular within pedagogical and

⁸¹ Stender, 1761, *der V. Theil, Von der Poesie*, paragraph 224, p. 155. Latvians refer to Gothards Frīdrihs Stenders as “Vecais Stenders” or “the old Stenders.”

⁸² A compendium of Latvian grammar, orthography, ethnography, and folklore, the first edition appeared in 1761 as *Neue Vollständigere lettische Grammatik, nebst einem hinlänglichen Lexico, wie auch einigen Gedichten, vergasset von Gotthard Friedrich Stender*. Braunschweig: gedruckt im Fürstl. Grossen Waisenhouse, 1761, V. Theil: *Von der Poesie*, 152-64. A second edition, *Verbesserte Auflage*, dates from 1763; a revised edition entitled *Lettische Grammatik* was issued by the Deutsche Gesellschaft zu Göttingen in 1783.

⁸³ Stender, *Lettische Grammatik*, 1783, paragraph 220.

socio-religious literatures.⁸⁴ Yet he resurrected the derogatory term *blēņu dziesmas* (“nonsense songs”), which the Lutheran scholar Georg Mancelius had coined during the sixteenth-century age of Reformation (see Chapter One). He called for the new didactic and moral themes of the popular *Singes* to replace longstanding backward traditions, in particular “the incessant singing [of Latvians] to their dear mother or to their little colt” (*no māmūlītes un kumeliņa dziedāt*).⁸⁵ Although he derided the peasant songs (*Bauerlieder*), Stender attributed their lack of culture and wit to conditions of serfdom, in which singing was situated.⁸⁶ As a proponent of values that were antagonistic to some peasant traditions, Stender could not have foreseen the completion in 1807 of a book-length collection of Latvian song texts by Pastor Gustav Bergmann.⁸⁷

The author of historical novels, poems, and polemic essays that he composed from the standpoint of the Latvian serfs, Garlieb Helwig Merkel (1769—1850) inherited Herder’s post of schoolmaster at the *Domkirche* in Riga in 1776. Having been a private tutor in Livland, Merkel responded to the injustices of serfdom, which he witnessed and recorded. A historical work that appeared in 1786 by Heinrich Johann von Jannau, *Geschichte der Sklaverey und Charakter der Bauern in Lief- und Ehistland*, was an immediate forerunner of Merkel’s *Die Letten* (1797),⁸⁸ but the

⁸⁴ Frīde, 2003, cites tributes to Stender by the Latvian national leader Krišjānis Valdemārs and others; see Bērziņš, 1927, 163, and idem, 1933, 115.

⁸⁵ Frīde, 2003, 176.

⁸⁶ *Das in den meisten Bauerliedern nicht eben viel witziges anzutreffen, daran ist nicht ihre Sprache selbst, sondern der Mangel der Kultur, wegen der Leibeigenschaft, darin sie stehen, schuld*, Stender, *Lettische Grammatik*, 1761, der V. Theil, *Von der Poesie*, paragraph 220, p. 153.

⁸⁷ Johansons, 1975, 404, 408-9; Spekke, 1951, 280.

⁸⁸ Merkel wrote in German. The full title reads *Die Letten vorzüglich in Liefland am Ende des philosophischen Jahrhunderts: Ein Beitrag zur Völker- und Menschenkunde*, Leipzig: Heinrich Gräff, 1797 (the actual publication date was

latter work became the principle indictment of the institution of serfdom and the thirteenth-century Teutonic wars of conquest. Merkel's tone in the opening dedication: *non ignarus mali, miseris succurrere opto*,⁸⁹ announces a litany directed against the cultural oppression of the Latvians: "perhaps now they [the Latvians] would have shone [and excelled] amongst European peoples; perhaps they would have had their Kants, their Voltaires, their Wielands" (*izt hätten sie vielleicht unter den Bewohnern Europens geglänzt; hätten schon ihre Kante, ihre Voltäre, ihre Wielände*).⁹⁰ Merkel's successor to *Die Letten* was entitled *Die Vorzeit Lieflands: Ein Denkmal des Pfaffen- und Rittergeistes* (two volumes, Berlin, 1798-99), a novel in which Merkel's view of Latvian singing is expressed in fanciful reconstructions of the pre-Christian bardic and priestly class; in the chapter *Priester* he reconstructs offerings and ceremonies, and the singing among sacred groves and trees:

Folksongs, begun by the first to feel inspired, praised the deeds of the fallen [heroes], who often still in the nightly moonlight visited their huts and bestowed blessings. *Volkslieder, von dem ersten der sich dazu begeistert fühlte, angestimmt, verewigten die Thaten der Gefallenen, die oft noch im nächtlichen Mondstral ihre Hütten besuchten, und Segen in denselben verbreiteten.*⁹¹

Merkel arranged a typology of song types according to the longer, and more joyful, German-derived songs, which he associated with Stender's composed *ziņģes* (*Singes*). Their dissemination differed from the practice of serious songs (*Dzeesmes*)

1796). A second edition was issued in 1800. The general superintendent of the Lutheran church censored Merkel's work for publication in Livland.

⁸⁹ For misfortune is not unknown to me, I hasten to help the unfortunate.

⁹⁰ Merkel, *Die Letten*, 1797, 20.

and laments (*Raudes*). Citing the well-known passage taken from novel *Lebensläufe nach aufsteigender Linie* (1778, S. 72) attributed to Theodor von Hippel, that “*die lettische Sprache sey schon halb Poesie*,” Merkel also held that Latvians speak in verses.⁹² In *Die Letten* he proposed in “Rites of the Letts” (*Feste der Letten*) that singing among the Latvians was the provenance of only the womankind, for only they had retained some joy in living. Twenty years earlier in 1777 Pastor August Hupel remarked that music occupied most of the peasants’ amusements, whereas singing belonged only to the womenfolk.⁹³ In *Die Vorzeit Lieflands* the same observation is repeated: “the national poets are women: this characterizes their songs greatly” [*Mädchen sind die Nationaldichter: dies charakterisirt ihre Gesänge mit Einem Zuge ganz.*]⁹⁴

Weddings, because they were dependent upon the outcome of the harvest, occurred in the autumn among the serfs, whose cathartic celebrations Merkel was able to observe and document: “one dances and sings for several days to the drone of the fiddles and bagpipes” (*man tanzt und singt verschiedene Tage nach einander beym Schnarren der Fiedeln und Sackpfeifen*).⁹⁵ A compassion for the poverty and

⁹¹ Ibid, 19; cf. Merkel, *Die Vorzeit Lieflands*, 1798, 172.

⁹² Merkel, *Die Vorzeit Lieflands*, 1798, 190-1. The semantic connotations of the term *dziesmas* may refer also to religious songs. In Lithuanian the term *raudos* denotes laments.

⁹³ *Die Vorzeit Lieflands*, 1798, 56: *By den Letten ist die Dichtkunst auf die Kunkel gefallen, da die Mädchen die einzigen sind, deren Antheil an dem gemeinschaftlichen Joche, ihnen noch genug Lebensgeister lässt, um Freude zu empfinden.* Pastor August Hupel, 1777, 133: *Einen beträchtlichen Theil ihres Vergnügens setzen sie in Gesang und Musik. Der Gesang gehört eigentlich den Weibspersonen zu.* To this consensus similar comments made by the great literary genius of the Latvian awakening Auseklis (Krogzemis Miķelis, 1850—1879) can be added; “*Par dziedāšanu pie latviešiem*,” *Kopotī raksti*, Riga, 1923, 391.

⁹⁴ Merkel, *Die Vorzeit Lieflands*, 1798, 195.

⁹⁵ Merkel, 1798, 52. Merkel’s essay in *Der Neue Teutsche Merkur*, edited by

servitude of the Latvians pervades Merkel's observations of these events. Unlike the static worldview of Herder's generation of clergymen, these narratives are not content to describe the manner of singing, but expose the social ills underlying the occasions for singing:

It was always a celebration for me to observe these folk, who are more intoxicated with joy, rather than with bad beer. Their merrymaking makes one forget, like them, at the price of what labors and sacrifices they have obtained this meager amusement. [*Immer war es auch für mich ein Fest, diesem Völkchen, das mehr von Freude als von dem elenden Bier berauscht ist, zuzusehen. Bei seinem Jubel vergisst man mit ihm, durch welche Arbeiten und Ausopferungen es die ärmliche Lust erkauf hat.*]⁹⁶

Merkel often exchanged opinions concerning *Die Letten* and other controversial literary projects with Herder and his wife Karoline in correspondence; he was a houseguest in their Weimar home, a place of pilgrimage for writers from 1796 to the year of Herder's death in 1803.⁹⁷ Unlike Herder, Merkel witnessed the Napoleonic wars, and the emancipation of the serfs in the Tsarist Baltic provinces of Kurland in 1817, and Livland in 1819. Merkel's main contribution to the Latvian national cause was an epic poem on a Livonian chieftain (*Wanem Ymanta* 1802), a model upon

Christoph Martin Wieland (1733—1813) in 1797, “On the ethos of Latvian folk poets and poetry” (“*Über Dichtergeist und Dichtung unter der Letten*”) in essence replicates *Die Vorzeit Lieflands*; in the second volume of the same journal, 1798, Merkel writes on the customs of Livland in the first half of the sixteenth century.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 57.

⁹⁷ Berlin, 2006, xiv; Graubner, 2002; correspondence from Herder and his wife to Merkel is in the Latvian National Library in Riga, see Zanders, 1999, 150.

which epics of the Latvian Romantic literary school – *Imanta* (1874) and *Lāčplēsis* (*Bear-slayer*, 1888) – were founded.⁹⁸

Conclusion

The shortcomings of Herder's approach to the anthology of *Volkslieder* (1778—79) may become apparent when studying the changes achieved by his immediate successor, Gustav Merkel. Unlike Herder, he devised a direct and practical method of folksong collecting within a specified societal context.⁹⁹ When he withdrew the manuscript of *Alte Volkslieder* of 1773 and 1774 from publication Herder was affected by the restrictive intellectual climate that his literary rivals had created. The failing of the *Volkslieder*'s Latvian song sample is the portrayal of natural unity, which may be questioned in light of the economic and political strife of the serfs prior to their emancipation in 1817. By way of contrast, the firsthand perception of serf communities in the prose of Gustav Merkel was neither peaceful nor idyllic. Rather, Merkel contested injustices against the Latvians as he observed how the economic and social order influenced the manner of singing. Within *Die Letten* and *Die Vorzeit Lieflands* (1777 and 1778, respectively) the first works of fiction to present the Latvian perspective, Merkel composed ethnographic settings that vividly conveyed conditions of poverty and exploitation.

Latvians commemorated the death of Merkel in 1850, as well as the centenary of his birth in 1869, and these early national events drew attention to an ethical

⁹⁸ Viķis Freiberga, 1985; in 1907 the Social Democrat symbolist writer Jānis Rainis recast *Imanta* into the play *Uguns un Nakts* (*Fire and Night*).

⁹⁹ Pascal, 1951, 14; cited in Gaskill, 2003, 107.

awakening in the attainment of morality and human rights. Beginning with the first monographs devoted to the Latvian folksong at the outset of the nineteenth century, larger campaigns to collect and preserve Latvian song traditions carried on the precedent of the song-collecting pursuits begun by Herder in the province of Livland in 1778 and 1779. The young Latvian nationalists established a far-reaching continuity of Latvian folksong scholarship that extended into the twentieth century, and to the present day. Yet conditions for this research changed in the course of subsequent years when, due to patterns of migration and urbanization, not all folksongs would be collected or written (see Chapter Four).

During the latter half of the nineteenth century Latvians publicized song-collecting campaigns in the national press, where Herder's legacy became encased within an ideology of the national and cultural awakening (*tautas atmoda*). A leading ideologue among Latvian national activists, Fricis Brīvzemnieks (born Treiland, 1846—1907) realized that the literary resurgence of his times would undermine the oral poetic tradition of the *dainas*¹⁰⁰ as a genuine expression of the national soul of the people (Herder's *Volksmässigkeit*):

A nation has two literatures; one is written on paper and in writings, the other is written in the nation's mind and soul. This last one will be the first [literature]. When that literature is collected and scientifically processed to some degree, then we can think about a genuine literary history of the Latvian people. *Tautai divas literatūras. Tā viena no tām uz papīra rakstīta un rakstos iespiesta, tā otra tautas prātā, tautas garā ierakstīta. Šī pēdējā būs tā pirmākā. Kad šī rakstniecība būs vairāk sakrāta un cik necik zinātniski*

*apstrādāta, tad varēsīm arī domāt uz īsto latviešu tautas rakstniecības vēsturi.*¹⁰¹

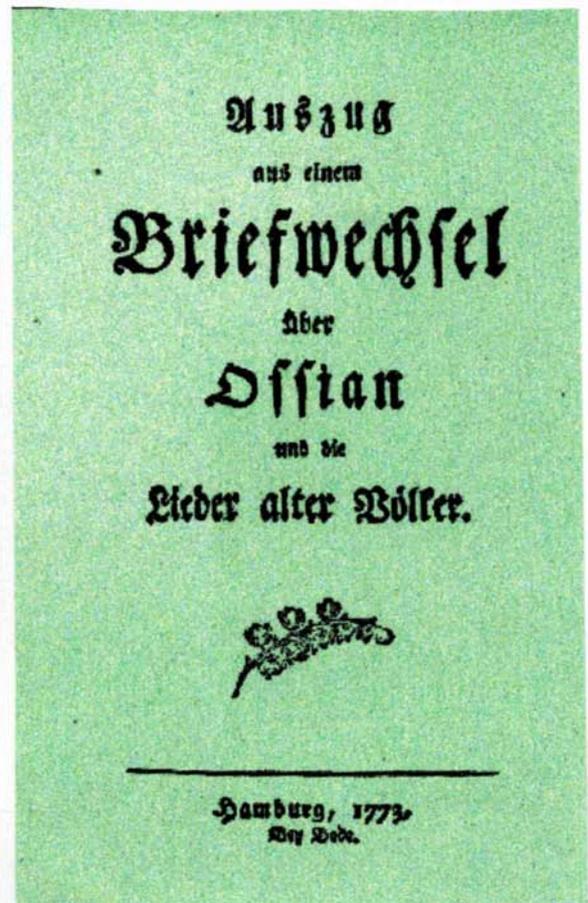
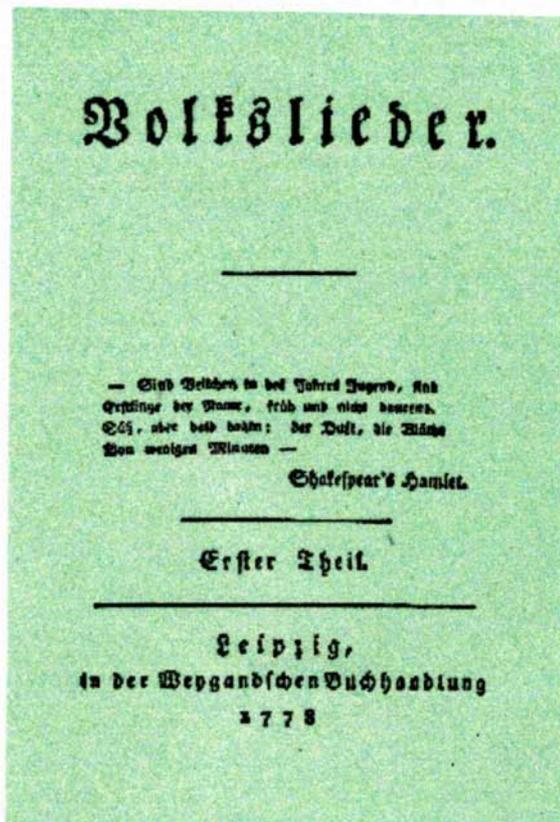
The excerpt is an eloquent parallel to Herder's essay of 1777, *Von Ähnlichkeit der mittlern englischen und deutschen Dichtkunst*.¹⁰² As a proponent of spontaneous and direct recitations Brīvzemnieks emulated Herder, who called for measures to be taken regarding the preservation, transcription and analysis of oral poetry as the essence of the Latvian language, which the sudden profusion of written literatures threatened to undermine.¹⁰³ Acting upon the role model of the *Volkslieder* in 1878 Brīvzemnieks and a handful of Latvian political exiles in Moscow initiated the largest collecting project of Latvian folksong (*dainas*) traditions to date and the publication of the six-volume collection *Latvju dainas* became a chronicle of the era of national awakening.

¹⁰⁰ Berelis, 1999, 19-21.

¹⁰¹ Brīvzemnieks, *Balss*, 1881, 24, 27; cited in Berelis, 1999, 19, Ozols, 1965, 17-18.

¹⁰² Herder, *SW*, IX, 522-35, the essay first appeared in the *Deutsches Museum, Zweiter Band*, (November 1777).

¹⁰³ Herder developed ideas on the orality of language in *Über die neuere deutsche Litteratur, Erste Sammlung von Fragmenten* (Riga, 1766); see the citation at the outset of Chapter Two. Statements concerning the direct expression of primitive songs of the Iroquois were made in the essay on Ossian, 1773; see Herder, *SW*, V, 160, and 182.



12. Title pages: anonymous, *Volkslieder Theil I* (first edition 1778);

J.G. Herder, editor, *Auszug aus einem Briefwechsel über Ossian und die Lieder alter Völker* (first edition 1773).

III

7.

Fragmente Lettischer Lieder.

Liebe Sonne, wie so säumig?
 Warum gehst du so spät auf?
 „Jenseit jenem Hügel säum' ich,
 Wärme da verwaiste Kinder.“

Scheinst du denn nur, liebe Sonne
 Durch die Spalte unsrer Wohnung?
 Sind nicht mehr der lieben Gäste,
 Als wir fünf zu der Hochzeit?

Was fehlt eines Herren Knechte?
 Ist er nur nicht stolz und trogig:
 Er sitzt auf des Herren Sattel,
 Hat des Herren Sporn und Pferd.

Meines Sohnes Tochter wollt ich
 Einem jungen Herrn vertrauen;
 An das Schilf band ich mein Schiffchen,
 Band mein Füllen an den Haber.

13. *Fragmente Lettischer Lieder* [fragments of Latvian song texts]
 in *Volkslieder, Theil II* (1779), page 111.

Liebe Sonne, wie so säumig? [Why arise so late, dear son?]

Verses 1 and 3 are numbered in Herder's *Nachlass* (posthumous papers).



14. Pastor August W. Hupel (1737—1819) *Topographische Nachrichten von Lief- und Ehstland*, *Zweyter Band*, 1777. [Illustration] Nr. 2. Drawing by Johann Christoph Brotze. *Eine lettische Familie wie sie auf dem Felde oder unter Weges, um das Feuer sitzt [...]* “A family of Letts as they sit around the fire in the fields, or on their travels.”

Ehstische Melodien . Topogr. Nachr. von Lief. u. Ehstland . II. Band . I. Kap. V. Absth.

Nr. 2. Nr. I. Ehstischer Tanz auf dem Dudelsack.

The image shows two musical pieces. The first, 'Nr. I. Ehstischer Tanz auf dem Dudelsack', is written for a bagpipe in 3/4 time. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system has a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature of 3/4. The melody is written in eighth notes. The bass clef staff has a common time signature of 4/4 and contains a simple harmonic accompaniment of chords. The second system continues the melody and accompaniment. The second piece, 'Nr. II. Ehstischer Hochzeitgesang', is written for a single staff in 2/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is written in eighth notes. Below the staff, the lyrics 'Nait'skenne nororenne kaslike — kanike' are written in a cursive script.

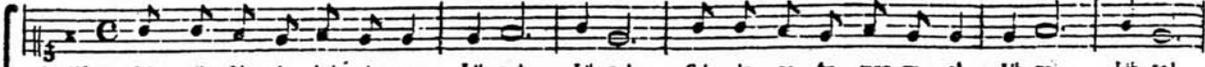
Nr. II. Ehstischer Hochzeitgesang.

Nait'skenne nororenne kaslike — kanike

15. Hupel, as above. *Ehstische Melodien. Nr. I. Ehstischer Tanz auf dem Dudelsack. Nr. II. Ehstischer Hochzeitgesang.* [Estonian melodies. I. Estonian dance on the bagpipes. II. Estonian wedding song.]

Zwey lettische Lieder. Topogr. Nacht. 3. B.

I. Johannis - oder eigentlich Sommerlied, darin das Wort Lihgo ein Freudenausdruck, aber übrigens bedeutungslos ist.

Einer. 

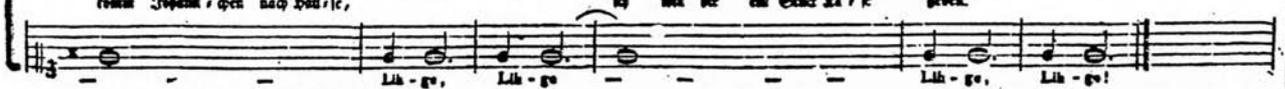
Lettsch. Jah - nih seh - de kal - al - na, Lih - go! Lih - go! Sak - le na - fu mug - ga - rd, Lih - go, Lih - go!
 Deutsch. Jo - hanna - chen fest auf dem Berge, ein Tamb Schy - rec auf dem Bunde!

Alle. 

Lih - go, Lih - go - - - - - Lih - go, Lih - go -



Nahn Jah - nihr seh - ti - na Lih - go, Lih - go! De - chu see - ra gab - ba - lin, Lih - go, Lih - go!
 fromm Johanna - chen nach Haus - se, Ich will dir ein Stuck Brot geben.



Lih - go, Lih - go - - - - - Lih - go, Lih - go!

16. Hupel, as above, *III. Band* (1782). Transcription notated in two-parts (solo declaimer and group) of *Jahnis sehde kalnina, Lihgo! Lihgo!* St. John's Day
 "A St. John's Day or true summer song in which the word 'Lihgo' is an expression of joy, but otherwise meaningless."

The image shows three staves of handwritten musical notation. The first staff has the lyrics: *Šah-di kung-i, tah-di kung-i miš' kum-sji-ru re-pu-nahut*. The second staff has the lyrics: *Muhf' kum-sji-na ze-pu-riht. ših-ru šel-tu vi-fu-lin. Muhf' kum-sji-*. The third staff has the lyrics: *na ze-pu-riht ših-ru šel-tu vi-fu-lin.*

17. *Shahdi kungi, tahdi kungi* [Šādi kungi, tādi kungi]. St. John's Day melodic line, contained in Herder's posthumous papers (*Nachlass*): reprinted in Josef Müller-Blattau, *Hamann und Herder in Ihren Beziehungen zur Musik*. Königsberg, 1931, 20, (example nine).

IV. Awakening a Latvian Voice

Introduction

The publication of a Latvian chapter in Herder's second volume of *Volkslieder* (of 1779) was a catalyst that reinforced the legacy of folksong study among the German-speaking minority of Livland. During the early decades of the nineteenth century a broad scope of Latvian song traditions continued to be transcribed and preserved in several small parish communities of this province. Herder's direct influence on Latvian national culture became apparent with the appearance of the first book-length listing of Latvian folksong texts in 1807, a milestone in Latvian historiography, which Pastor Gustav Bergmann (1749—1814) compiled and printed privately in the Livlandic town *Rūjiena* (German: *Ruien*). This regional-based cultural dialogue evolved with the introduction of formal Baltic German learned societies, which were dedicated to the study of the Latvian language, oral literatures, history, and archaeology: Kurland's Society of Literature and Art (*Kurländische Gesellschaft für Literatur und Kunst*) and Riga's prominent Latvian Literary Society (*Lettsch-literarische Gesellschaft*) were founded in 1815 and 1824, respectively. This chapter will consider scholarly exchanges, which diverged from the standpoint of Latvian cultural representation, for it is debatable whether the learned members of these intellectual forums addressed the poverty of their subjects.¹

¹ Spekke, 1951, 2-3; on the proliferation of learned societies, see Jörg Hackmann, "Vereinswesen und Museen in den baltischen Provinzen," *Das Dommuseum in Riga*,

Despite the inequity of land reform among the Latvian peasant class, provincial Tsarist Livland became fertile ground for folksong collectors, who were conscious of *Volkslieder's* Latvian verses and annotations. Their history begins with Pastor Bergmann's book-length project of 1807 *Erste Sammlung Lettischer Sinngedichte* (*The First Collection of Latvian Epigrams*), whose central grouping of short improvised song texts had been sent to Herder much earlier, in March 1778 (see Chapter Three).² Demonstrating a tendency towards larger and diverse collections, with immensely varied generic categories, Pastor Bergmann produced a second volume in 1808.³ In an elaborate page of dedication the compiler chose a Latin text from Plinius, thus evoking the broad range of emotions and ideals that were inherent to his Latvian song materials.⁴

By means of his propitious association with Robert Jamieson (1772(?)—1844), a resident tutor in Riga from 1805 to 1809, Pastor Bergmann was able to publicize examples of his Latvian folksongs to the Western literary world. A product of Bergmann's own handiwork, the Scottish antiquarian and ballad collector received an elaborately printed manuscript of German translations that Bergmann had chosen from his two-volume collection. Publishing an essay on Nordic traditions Jamieson

2001, 21.

² The collection contained 238 Latvian song texts. The following year Bergmann published a second volume, *Zweyte Sammlung Lettischer Sinn-, oder Stegreifs Gedichte* with 249 examples. For more on Bergmann as an integral supplier of Herder's Latvian contributions to the *Volkslieder* see discussion below under "*Latvju dainas*," and also Chapter Three.

³ *Zweyte Sammlung Lettischer Sinn- oder Stegreifs Gedichte* contains examples of folksong collecting of clergymen in nearby Cēsis, Valmiera, and Dzērbene, of children's songs, lamenting songs, and songs in which birds are mentioned, in all, 249 song texts. Bērziņš, [1942] 2007, 137-42.

⁴ From Plinius (61/62—c.114) *Epistulae*, fourth book: the dedication page and citation are discussed in Bērziņš [1942] 2007, 290.

reproduced a small number of the Latvian verses for *Northern Antiquities* (1814). Jamieson's gift of the Latvian manuscript, now housed in the British Library, later came to the attention of Sir Walter Scott, who wrote on its ethnographic significance in *The Foreign Quarterly Review*, 1831.⁵

Although Bergmann readily collected popular foreign ballads and romances (*ziņģes*), in his preface to the first volume he echoed Herder's legacy of ideas concerning a precious repository of oral lore from the past. His eloquent description of the Latvian peasantry as "a folk that lives simply" (*bey einem einfach lebenden Volke*) attests to altruistic ideals in ethnography that occasionally surfaced in the literatures of the Baltic German Lutheran clergy:

Yet they [the collected songs] have a certain scholarly attraction, for they are all we possess in this language, from this nation that cannot write. Researchers of language will find a true representation of nature, completely different from the stiff book learning, which we have forced upon this nation. *Allein sie haben doch ein gewisses wissenschaftliches Anziehendes, weil sie das Einzige sind, welches wir in dieser Sprache, von dieser Nation, die nicht schreiben kann, besitzen. Sprachforscher finden eine getreue Nachahmung der Natur, ganz verschieden von unserer steifen Buchweisheit, die wir diesem Volke aufgedrungen haben.*⁶

The preceding passage is a revealing example of early attempts at Latvian cultural representation. Bergmann establishes a relationship between folksong and national

⁵ On Jamieson's works in balladry, and his residence as a house tutor in Riga from 1805 to 1808, see Birznieks, 1992, and Rieuwerts, 2007.

⁶ Bergmann, 1807, 3; see also Karnes, 2006, 210.

identity, an analysis that Latvian collectors themselves would develop later in the century (see below).

On his unique printing press Bergmann issued more Livlandic folksongs in 1808, the collecting work of Pastor Friedrich David Wahr (1749 or 1750—1827). Wahr's *Palzmareeschu dseesmu krahjums*, containing over four hundred items from his personal archive of folksongs from the Palsmane parish district, maintained Herder's legacy of folksong collecting in the Baltic *Ostsee* provinces for nearly forty years. In *Songs and zīņģes of the Latvian people* (1844)⁷ Pastor Georg Friedrich Büttner (1805—1883) of the Kabile parish district accrued 2,854 verses,⁸ whose variegated song types continued to reflect the declamatory traditional songs (*dziesmas*, or in later usage *dainas*), on the one hand, and the German-derived lyrical romances and ballads, the *zīņģes*, on the other. It is worth noting that the pronounced disparity between song types at the close of the eighteenth century became evident to Herder's close colleague in Riga Garlieb Helwig Merkel, who distinguished older fragments of the *dainas* traditions that were recited without rhyme from the longer songs of German origin.⁹

Büttner's extensive use of the Latvian press signaled a departure from the methods of earlier collectors. In his enthusiastic solicitations he clearly defined his song sample, demonstrating a remarkable rapport with the Lutheran parishioners and

⁷ In the original orthography the title reads *Latweeschu ļauschu dzeesmas un siņģes*. To honor the completion of Büttner's work on 15 February 1843 (Old Style), a century later Ludis Bērziņš dedicated his collected essays *Greznas dziesmas* [1942] to him. The Latvian Folklore Archives published a revised edition of the latter in 2007.

⁸ Johansons, 1975, 426; the collection was issued in 1961 under the editorship of Harolds Biezais.

⁹ *Die Vorzeit Lieflands*, 1798, 194-5.

readers of *Latviešu Avīzes*, the principal organ of the Baltic German Lutheran populace since 1822:

But go ahead and send in [...] all those about flowers and trees, cows and horses, bees and nightingales, and just those that occur [to you] – wedding songs, shepherd songs, children’s or relative’s songs – and especially those that are told to children, and by which a nurse lulls a child to sleep. *Bet visādas citas lai tik raksta, no puķēm un kokiem, no govīm un zirgiem, no bitēm un lagstīgalām. Un kādas tik gadās – kāzu dziesmas, ganu dziesmas, bērnu jeb radu dziesmas, -- un īpaši tādas. ko bērniem teic un ar kuriem auklis bērnu aizšūpo,*¹⁰

The continuity of song types that is inherent to the early collections – of Bergmann, Wahr, and Büttner – received its most thorough presentation in the folklore scholarship of Pastor August Bielenstein (1826—1907). Pastor Bielenstein collected over ten thousand Latvian folksongs that he bound in four notebooks, two of which he published in 1874 and in 1875, respectively. Yet his long tenure as president of the Latvian Literary Society (1864-95) also marked the decline of an era of Baltic German scholarship, as well as the advent of the indigenous Latvian folklore researcher. Notwithstanding the polemic nature of remarks, which he directed against leading intellectuals of the Latvian national movement (see below), Bielenstein was a towering figure in the field of Latvian cultural and historical research, which flourished under the auspices of the Latvian Literary Society.¹¹

¹⁰ G. F. Büttner, 1858, *Latviešu Avīzes Baznīcas ziņas* “Church News,” the ecclesiastical supplement to *Latviešu Avīzes*, Nr. 17.

¹¹ Plakans, 1974, 459; Arājs, 1985, 30-31; Pastor August Bielenstein, *Die lettisch-nationale Bewegung und die kurländische Geistlichkeit: Eine unparteiische Stimme*

On the basis of this summary one may conclude that the documentation of folklore in Latvian-speaking territories was established in accordance with Baltic German notions of furthering intellectual progress and education. As will be shown in this chapter, however, after the mid-century a new paradigm of Latvian national consciousness intervened. During the “times of folk awakening” (*tautas atmodas laiks*) Latvian artists, poets, novelists, as well as folklore collectors began to imitate vernacular traditions that were spoken, declaimed, or sung on farming lands. Their creative and often satirical usage of the mother tongue became a catalyst by which one could express Latvian identity in newspapers. At the forefront of the developing Latvian press, the young Latvian intelligentsia appealed for the education and economic self-sufficiency of free peasants and small landowners.¹²

The authors, editors, and journalists who are surveyed below contested the declining status of agrarian culture, which became perceptible by the loss of work songs and other traditional genres. It is scarcely surprising that the early Latvian scholars debated Herder’s defining factors of the folksong. Additionally, the vanguard of the national awakening had the opportunity to collect folklore and folksong materials in their professional literary careers. Clearly influenced by Herder’s diatribe on the neglect of folklore studies – “a nation that lacks national songs scarcely possesses character”¹³ – they proposed to replicate the international success of folksong anthologies, such as the *Volkslieder*. The authors reviewed in this chapter alluded to a Herderian Romantic “song spirit” (*dziesmu gars*), which was

aus den Ostseeprovinzen, Leipzig, Georg Böhme, 1886, 9.

¹² Latvian free peasants faced impediments to land acquisition until at least 1863, when seigniorial peasants in the Tsarist province or *gubernija* of Kurland received this right.

a yardstick by which to measure the loss of indigenous culture in a changing rural landscape. Unlike the innocuous pastimes that Herder chose as the underlying basis of the *Volkslieder's* Latvian representation, this indigenous collecting work was governed by a realistic analysis of rural cultural change, which was not only surveyed, but questioned.¹⁴ In light of the urban migrations of the peasantry, the Latvian awakeners sought out folksongs as a decisive touchstone of their history and national identity. The largest of their campaigns, which began in 1878 (see below), was directed to the collection of an older layer of Latvian folksongs. Publication of *Latvju dainas* (1894—1915) ranged across the years of World War I, producing a vast chronicle of national identity formation.

1. A Monument to Humanity

In a course of events that dramatically illustrates the multicultural composition of Riga's political affairs during the 1860s, Riga's council (*Rat*) initiated plans to commemorate Herder's residence in the city, from 1764 to 1769. The unveiling of a monument on the centenary of his arrival in Riga in 1764 represented the first of its kind to a cultural leader of Riga. Secondly, the commemoration of unveiling was planned to coincide with the one hundred and twentieth anniversary of Herder's birth (25 August 1744). The project was to be modeled on the full statue of Herder that German Masonic lodges erected in Weimar on the centenary of Herder's birth in

¹³ Herder, *SW*, XXVII, 180.

¹⁴ Bula, 2005, presents an overview of Herder's admiration in the nationalist press amongst Matīss Arons (Matīss Brencēns), "Latviešu tautas dziesmas," in *Balss*, 1874; Mikus Krogzemis (pseud. Auseklis) in *Baltijas Zemkopis*, 1879; Ludis Bērziņš, "Ko senāki zināja par tautas dziesmām?" in *Baltijas Vēstnesis*, 1892, and Pēteris Lasis (pseud. Pastariņš), "Par latvju tautas dziesmu gara spēku," *Balss*, 1895.

1844. Austrian sculptor Johann Nepomuk Schaller (1777—1842) executed the statue in bronze; it stands near to the Church of St. Peter and Paul, where Herder preached until his death. The site that marked Herder's influence – a small, rectangular open space formerly called *Mazo svaro laukums* (a market area for small items) – stood outside the wing of the Cathedral School, where Herder had lectured as a tutor (*Collaborator*) of languages and other topics. At the ceremony of unveiling, held on a warm late summer's day of 25 August 1864, the city librarian Georg Berkholz (1817—1886) read a eulogy that described “Riga's adopted son, in the most heartfelt meaning of the word.”¹⁵ Newspaper essays pertaining to the ceremony, and to Herder's life and works, in *Die Rigasche Stadtblätter* attest to the importance of the event to the Baltic German community that faced the prospect of increased measures of Russification of their culture and society.¹⁶ By way of contrast, the commission and unveiling of Herder's bust added to the atmosphere of liberal reforms that is associated with the Tsarist rule of Alexander II Nikolaevich (from 1855 to 1881).

As a result of the devastation of Rīga during World War II the bronze bust was removed and held for safekeeping. But in June of 1959 Soviet authorities announced a new unveiling on the occasion of a visit by the General Secretary of the German Democratic Republic.¹⁷ The original ornate Gothic plinth, however, did not survive the wartime devastation of Rīga. It had been inscribed with the dates of Herder's life

¹⁵ [...] *ist Herder doch Rigas Adoptivsohn im herzlichsten Sinne des Wortes gewesen*, von Sivers, 1868, 74.

¹⁶ 1856, Nr. 5, 39; following the dedication ceremony a long obituary tribute appeared in the same newspaper: Nr. 35, 27 August 1864, 277-84. For the bicentennial commemoration of Herder's death in 2003 institutes and museums adjacent to the Dom Square organized a compilation of essays; see Ilze Ščegoļihina, Riga's Museum of History and Navigation, *Herder in Riga*, 2005, 7.

¹⁷ The memoirs of Rita Vilciņa, 2005, describe how she was employed to work on

and public service – as a young schoolmaster in the *Domschule* and as a lay pastor in two of Riga’s churches.¹⁸ The plinth replicated the few words on Herder’s gravestone in Weimar – “light, love, and life,” – a reference to the broad tenets of humanity that are outlined in Herder’s *Ideas for a Philosophical History of Mankind* (*Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, in four volumes, 1784-91). This final act of commemoration is a fitting tribute to Herder’s plans to complete the *Ideen* with an added fifth part entitled *Humanitätsbriefe*, for his ambition was “[to] include in the word *Humanität* everything that I have said hitherto about the noble constitution of man for reason, and for freedom [*Ich wünschte, dass ich in das Wort Humanität alles fassen könnte, was ich bisher über des Menschen edle Bildung zur Vernunft und Freiheit [...] gesagt habe*].”¹⁹

Herder’s biographer Alexander Gillies looked to his years in Riga as a civil servant as the source of ideas that began Herder’s formulation of the humanity philosophy.²⁰ Further autobiographical evidence is found in the fourth and final volume of the *Ideen*, (1791), where Herder condemns the institution of serfdom in the *Ostsee* provinces: “the fate of the peoples on the Baltic Sea amounts to a tragic

the restoration of the monument for the visit of Walter Ulbricht.

¹⁸ These inscriptions were: *JOHANN GOTTFRIED HERDER. LICHT. LIEBE. LEBEN. 1864. 25. VIII*; and on the reverse side *Collaborator an der Domschule und Pastor adj. an den Vorstadtkirchen in Riga 1764—1769*; on the right side *geboren den 25 August 1744 in Mohrunen (Ost-Preussen)*; and on the left side *gestorben den 18. December 1803 in Weimar*. Ilze Ščegoļihina, of Riga’s Museum of History and Navigation, in *Herder in Riga*, 2005, 7, writes on the possibility of restoring the ornate Gothic plinth, in place of the plain granite pedestal replacement of 1959.

¹⁹ *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit, Erster Teil, Viertes Buch*: VI, 1784, Herder, *SW*, XIII, 154; the translation is from Gillies, 1945, 79. Herder’s gravestone is discussed by von Sivers, 1868, 64; Gillies, 1945, 88, and Koepke, 2003, 73, 87, discuss his gravestone’s inscription.

²⁰ Herder’s dissenting views on Riga are discussed in Chapter Two. Additional principles of the *Humanität* philosophy are presented in Chapter Seven.

page in the history of humanity” (*Das Schicksal der Völker an der Ostsee macht überhaupt ein trauriges Blatt in der Geschichte der Menschheit*).²¹ Also lamenting the loss of Slavic cultural individuality, in the *Ideen* Herder envisaged the free development of nation-state reforms. It is worth noting that in Eastern Europe this chapter has been published separately in a succession of translations.²²

The prophetic doctrine of Herder’s *Humanitätsideen* – the ideals underlying the explicit formation of a people – was a major contribution to the rejuvenation of Slavic languages and cultures. Moreover, it was a disciple of Herder, Josef Dobrovsky (1753—1829), who pioneered a campaign to cleanse the Czech language from German loanwords. Soon afterwards, East European comparative philologists, antiquarians, and historians successfully issued dictionaries and grammars in languages such as Slovak, Polish, Serbian, and Hungarian.²³ Led by Bohemian historian František Palacký (1798—1876), the Manifesto and Slav Congress of 1848 promulgated Herder’s sympathetic portrayal of the historic oppression of the Slavs in the *Ideen*, an important step towards the pan-Slavic renewal of cultural nationalism.

²¹ Herder’s discussion of the Baltic, Nordic and Slavic peoples in European and world history is found in the fourth chapter (*Theil*) of the *Ideen*, 1791, see Herder, *SW*, XIV, 267-89. Section II is devoted to the cultural groups of *Finnen*, *Letten*, *Preussen*; Section IV is entitled *Slavische*. The citation is from p. 268 in Book XVI of the fourth chapter; see also Liebel-Weckowicz, 1986, 7.

²² Herder, *SW*, XIV, 277-80; see Nisbet, 1999, 130. Herder concludes the section with a listing of sixteen sources that underlie his discussion of the Slavs in the *Ideen*. They include historical accounts by chronicler M. Praetorius, August Wilhelm Hupel, Georg Georg Friedrich Hartknoch, Josef Dobrovsky, and others.

²³ Bernard, 1965, 175-76, devotes the concluding section of his work to Herder’s decisive influence on the nineteenth-century Czech national leader Thomas Garrigue Masaryk; Nisbet, 1999, 128.

2. The Voice of the Latvian Farmstead (*Sēta*)

Following Tsar Alexander's (the first) sweeping decrees of emancipation, the provinces (of Estland (1816), Kurland, or Courland, (1817), and Livland, or Livonia (1819) became the first regions in the Russian Empire to grant autonomy to their serfs. But only at the conclusion to these post-Napoleonic land reforms, serfs in the remaining Baltic *gubernii* of Vitebsk (modern Latgale) and Lithuania were freed in 1861. Yet to the vast majority of these peasants, and for the duration of the nineteenth century, the acquisition of land and other resources remained a distant possibility. In regard to the nature of this transition the eminent Latvian historian Arveds Švābe (1888—1959) remarked, "It took a long time for most of the Latvian nation to be awakened."²⁴ Below I will consider the exceptional circumstances, by which the offspring of a few emancipated Latvian peasants were able to acquire an education and to cultivate a national identity. But overall, the newly emancipated Latvian peasantry would have rarely found the means or the opportunity to express their Latvian ethnic identity.

Creating a notable exception to the restrictive environment, a peasant revolt dating from 1802 has been linked to the revisionist historical work *Die Letten* (1797), which Herder's close colleague in Riga Garlieb Helwig Merkel had composed from the viewpoint of the peasantry. Although this novel was not translated into Latvian until 1905, the German first edition allegedly inspired the Latvian rebellion in the

²⁴ Andrejs Plakans, Chapters 3-16, in *Russification in the Baltic Provinces and Finland*, ed. by Edward C. Thaden (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 219, citing Švābe.

town of Kauģuri.²⁵ But, overall, there were few indications of progressive change or unrest during the first decades of the agricultural corvée, a system of taxation based upon unpaid labor that began in 1817. In the 1830s German geographer and publicist Johann Georg Kohl (1808—1878) traveled through the Baltic Russian (*Ostsee*) provinces and studied the lives of Latvian landless farming peoples, whose destitute character, habitat and clothing presented a profound contrast to the affluence of the German landowners.²⁶ Years later, in 1869, Kohl's impressions were echoed by a Baltic German cultural historian Julius Eckardt (1836—1908), who perceived within a narrow strip of land: a mixture of diverse peoples and races that “make up a world unto themselves” (*eine eigene Welt ausmacht*); on the topic of the isolated terrain, Eckardt added that their “peculiar circumstances were as little known to the Western, as they were to the Eastern, halves of Europe” (*deren vielfach abnorme Verhältnisse in der westlichen Hälfte Europas sast eben so wenig bekannt sind, als in der östlichen*).²⁷

In J.G. Kohl's ethnographic study of 1841 he perceived anachronistic and backward customs, which he deemed typical of the parochial outlook of Estonian inhabitants of Livland. The latter's vocabulary did not contain the word “Estonian” to denote ethnic identity, for the peasants called themselves “a common people of the

²⁵ Gvido Straube, “Garlībs Merķelis un viņa laiks,” in: *Latvieši*, Rīga: Zvaigzne, 1999, 13-14; Skultāns, 1999, 162. Kauģuri had been a center of eighteenth-century Lutheran Pietism.

²⁶ Johann Georg Kohl, *Die deutsch-russischen Ostseeprovinzen oder Natur und Völkerleben in Kur-, Liv-, und Esthland*, 1841, 34. Under conditions of land tenure during the years of the agricultural corvée Baltic German landowners stipulated a formal tax of unpaid labor upon Latvians who cultivated their lands.

²⁷ Julius Eckardt, *Die baltischen Provinzen Russlands: politische und kulturgeschichtliche Aufsätze, Zweite, vermehrte Auflage*, Leipzig: Duncker und Humblot, 1869, 1 (first edition 1868); Kirby, 1995, 2.

land” (*maarahvas*).²⁸ Interestingly, modern British historian E. J. Hobsbawm attached significance to this etymological evidence when he refuted an early Livlandic historical account of 1695. This source falsely suggested that Estonian peasants harbored sentiments of national revenge. Hobsbawm concluded that this misleading representation exemplified his theory regarding the “invention” of national identity.²⁹

Adding important insights to the domain of Latvian oral poetry, mythology, and customs, Kohl wrote, “Truly it would be difficult to find another national group in Europe that was more deserving of the name of a people of poets, and no other country more deserving of the name of a country of poetry.”³⁰ On specific occasions, Kohl noted how the peasants extemporized appropriately, “As soon as the thought is born, it is dressed in words, rhythm, and melody” (*der Gedanke wird auch sogleich, so wie er geboren wird, in Worte, Rhythmus, und Melodie gekleidet*).³¹ Furthermore, the traveler relates an encounter with a gathering of women, who produced strange recitative-like improvisations “to a singularly uncivilized melody” (*nach einer eigenthümlich wilden Melodie recitirt*):³²

²⁸ Kohl, *Zweiter Theil*, p. 190.

²⁹ Christian Kelch, *Livonian History*, 1695, cited in Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 48; on this topic see Juhan Kahk, “Peasant Movements and National Movements in the History of Europe,” in *National Movements in the Baltic Countries during the 19th Century*, ed. by Aleksander Loit (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis, 1985), p. 16.

³⁰ *In der That möchte jetzt schwerlich ein Volk in Europa zu finden sein, das so sehr den Namen eines Volkes der Dichter, und ein Land, das so sehr den Namen eines Landes der Dichtung verdiente*. Kohl, *Zweiter Theil*, p. 119.

³¹ *Ibid*, *Zweiter Theil*, “Improvisationen,” 179; Kohl’s statement regarding Latvians who are born as poets was repeated by later native scholars, see Matīss Arons (Matīss Brencēns), “Latviešu tautas dziesmas,” in *Balss*, 1874.

³² *Ibid*, *Zweiter Theil*, “Improvisationen,” p. 179.

So often they sit together through the night, while continually reciting little poems about God and the whole world, to the same melody. The voices are so deep, and the whole physiognomy of the music is so wild, that at first it is difficult to convince oneself, that the singers are girls. *Sie sitzen so oft ganze Nächte bei einander, indem sie immerfort nach derselben Melodie Gedichtchen über Gott und die ganze Welt absingen. Die Stimmen sind so tief, und die ganze Physiognomie der Musik ist so wild, dass man sich Anfangs schwer überredet, dass Mädchen die Sängerinnen sind.*³³

A comparable emphasis upon spontaneous group singing may be found in Herder's autobiographical narratives dating from 1773, in the essay *Auszug aus einem Briefwechsel über Ossian und die Lieder alter Völker*, which forms an important precursor to Kohl's contribution. Herder singled out similar emotional and spontaneous qualities within a scenario of folksingers. Yet clearly a tone of condescension marred the Baltic German ethnographic outlook, a perspective that became obsolete later in the century with the rise of Latvian folksong collectors and their pursuit of populist aims in the Latvian press.

3. The Folk Awakening

The advance of Russian Tsarist liberal reforms after the mid century granted peasants rights to move from their lands freely, a development that at long last strengthened the platform of Latvian representation. To this effect, an increase in work

opportunities, industrialization, railways and telegraph lines supported Latvian migration from rural areas. Latvian economic and social advances were reflected in the near universal standard of literacy that had been recorded in the Tsarist census of 1897.³⁴ Literary symbols of the era depicted epithets of dawn and the breaking of light, a vivid reminder of the contrast experienced by migrants from rural darkness to the well-lighted streets of urban environments.³⁵ As a consequence of these many factors German dominance in cultural affairs gradually lessened.

Occurring decades later than the Herder-inspired Slavic literary resurgence (see above), a movement toward language reform began among a small handful of some fifteen students who in the 1850s were qualified to attend the prestigious German-speaking University of Dorpat (Estonia: Tartu).³⁶ An embodiment of Lutheran and German idealism since 1632, from the mid-nineteenth century this

³³ Ibid, *Zweiter Theil*, "Improvisationen," p. 180.

³⁴ The first official census of Riga in 1867 measured 102,590 inhabitants: the Baltic German majority constituted 42.8 per cent, as opposed to 25 percent of Latvian representation. Latvians comprised only 14.8 per cent of the urban populace in 1863, but this figure grew to 38 per cent by 1911.³⁴ The Tsarist census of 1897 reflected incoming Latvian migrants, who raised the Latvian population in Riga to 44 per cent of 255,879 inhabitants. Upon the eve of World War I Riga expanded to approximately half a million inhabitants, of whom some fifty per cent were Latvians. These statistics are taken from Plakans, 1974, 445; Spekke, 1951, 316.

³⁵ Plakans, 1974, 219; Smith, 1999, 205. The main thorough-fares of larger European cities had been illuminated with gas-lamps since the mid-century, and small country towns with paraffin lamps, but the rural areas "continued to sleep under the thick blanket of darkness," Kirby, 1995, 203.

³⁶ The Latvian designation *jaunlatvieši* ("Young Latvians") has traditionally denoted the nationalist group that originated in the 1860s within Dorpat (Tartu) University. The alternative translation of "Young Latvians" is now considered to be misleading, as the group was not comparable to the "Young Italians" or to similar European groups that have a revolutionary connotation. Plakāns, 1981, 277, and Švābe, 1958, 362, criticized its use by Arnolds Spekke (1951). A third possibility is found in Bula (2000), who employs the translation "Neo-Latvians."

university educated the Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian intelligentsia.³⁷ But in refusing to adopt many German characteristics, names, and social identities, the emergent “Young Latvians” were subject to widespread criticism in Baltic German circles, while they astonished their Latvian peers.

Among the Baltic German dissenters who circulated their arguments against the Latvian intelligentsia in the newspaper *Zeitung für Stadt und Land*, Pastor August Bielenstein (see above) wrote in 1871 that an educated Latvian was “an impossibility” (*was ein gebildeter Lette ist [...] ein Unding ist es, etwas Unmögliches*). With respect to the entrenched order Barons predicted that the modern Latvian nation would have easily become Germanized (*vācu kungi toreiz varbūt viegli būtu varējuši latviešus pārvācot*); the only effective deterrent, he continued, was the great mass of the Latvian people, “the nation’s tree stump having fairly deep roots in the land” (*tautas celmam bija pārāk dziļas saknes savā zemē*).³⁸ The memoirs of Krišjānis Barons reveal the conditions in which Latvian assimilation into the Baltic German social caste had occurred:

According to the views of the time an educated Latvian would be a contradiction in terms (*contradictio in adjecto*), for the meaning of being a Latvian, after all, was to be an unschooled and uncultured individual. Germanized Latvians married German wives (for there were no educated young Latvian ladies). *Pēc tālaika uzskatiem izglītots latvietis būtu, tā sakot, contradictio in adjecto, jo latvietis pats par sevi jau nozīmēja nemācītu*

³⁷ Tsar Alexander I re-established Tartu (Dorpat) University in 1893, at which point it was renamed the University of Jur’jev.

³⁸ Barons, *Atmiņas*, 2005 (1924), 46-47, translated by Jānis Arveds Trapāns, 1989, 17.

neizglītotu cilvēku. Pārvācotie latvieši apprecēja vācu sievas (izglītotu latviešu jaunavu jau arī vēl nebija).³⁹

As founding co-workers in the early Latvian press, Barons formed a lengthy alliance with Krišjānis Valdemārs (1825—1891) whom he knew as the central figure of the university fraternity *Fraternitas Academica Dorpatensi*. Creating a startling breach of academic decorum, Valdemārs composed a visiting card for his dormitory, stating that his identity and his writings were Latvian:

C. Waldemar

Stud.cam.

latvietis

Krišjānis Valdemārs, kamerāliju students (economics student), latvietis (a Latvian)

Journalists who assessed the severity of this violation and its repercussions in the Baltic German press alluded to Martin Luther's posting of ninety-five theses in Wittenberg.⁴⁰ In due course, the emergent Latvian intelligentsia became associated with the designation *jaunlatvieši* ("Young Latvians" or *Jungletten*), a term that Pastor Georg Brasche, a leading spokesman of the Latvian Literary Society, coined in the pages of the German periodicals *Das Inland* (1856) and *Baltische Monatsschrift* (1861). Although public opinion falsely linked the Latvian vanguard

³⁹ Krišjānis Barons dictated his memoirs (*atmiņas*) to his daughter-in-law Līna Barons (1872—1932): *Krišjāņa Barona Atmiņas* (Rīga: Valters un Rapa, 1924) reprinted by Jumava, 2005, 53. Buceniece cites the quoted passage in the context of the history of ideas in Latvia; 1995, 436-7. From church records in Kurland that began in the 1820s the pattern of *Volkstumswechsel* is apparent in the genealogy of my great-grandparents, who were named Bauer, Grünblatt, Hase, and Valdemārs.

⁴⁰ Edgars Kiploks collected and edited the works of Valdemārs, *Krišjāņa Valdemāra raksti*, in two volumes (Riga, 1936-37). The standard biographical reference work on the Latvian nationalists is the second and revised edition, *Latviešu rakstniecība*

with the 1848 revolution in France and the rise of Garibaldi in Italy, these individuals espoused pragmatic reforms and pursued peaceful campaigns that were distinct from their European revolutionary counterparts.⁴¹ In the forefront of the learned class – maritime economist Krišjānis Valdemārs (1825—1891), poet and translator Juris Alunāns (1832—1864), and a systematic astronomer Krišjānis Barons (1835—1923) – lived abroad in St. Petersburg, and then in Moscow, as forced political exiles. Yet they all engaged in Latvian folklore and folksong studies in the course of their literary and professional careers.

Barons returned to the *Ostsee* provinces in 1893, devoting his remaining years to the classification of folksongs in *Latvju dainas* (six volumes, 1894—1915, see below). But as a young student in Tartu in the summer of 1859 he achieved notoriety by completing a marathon walk across the provinces of Livland and Kurland: from his student residency in Dorpat (Tartu) he traveled on foot through twenty-five cities, towns, and villages in the province of Livland (present-day Vidzeme), visiting Rīga before reaching his family home in Dundaga in northern Kurland. Since July of 2006 the European Union has hosted an annual bicycle marathon *Velomaratons Projekta Pēdas* (“Project Footsteps”), which follows the course of Barons’ travels (7 to 23 July). Its influence is felt throughout the small towns en route; in 1985, for example, the town of Smiltene erected a boulder upon which Barons’ name and the date of his visit to their small music school in 1859 are inscribed.⁴²

biografijās, Rīga: Zinātne, 2003.

⁴¹ The speeches by which Barons and his associates became falsely linked to resurgencies are summarized in Barons, *Atmiņas*, 2005 (1924), 50.

⁴² Chapter Ten of Barons’ memoirs, *Atmiņas*, 2005 (1924), 52-6, is devoted to the

The creative outburst of the national awakening occurred in 1856 with the publication of Juris Alunāns' *Songs, translated into the Latvian Language* (*Dziesmiņas, latviešu valodai pārtulkotas*). The work demonstrated that language reforms had become central to the leadership of the young Latvian national cause.⁴³ Appropriating dialectal motifs and raw folklore materials the young writers raised the status of the Latvian vernacular and publicized the poetic strength of traditional verse. Alunāns, “the soul of the awakening,” was a university student in 1856 when he published the politically controversial book of poetic songs and translations into Latvian of Horace, Goethe, Heine, Lermontov, Schiller, and others.⁴⁴ Amongst a lesser number of original poems, his *Līgas svētki* is modeled on the St. John's Day refrain *līgo*; the constant four-foot trochaic rhythms and alliteration mirror women's voices that ring forth in the hills, valleys, and fields:

Līgsmas līgo līgaviņas

Līgo kalnos, līgo leijās

Līgo laukos, līgo zvejās.

*Līgo labās, jaukās ziņas.*⁴⁵

In the course of his short life Alunāns established over five hundred new Latvian words, primarily in the humanities, approaching the precedent set by Gotthard Friedrich Stender, who expanded the Latvian language in the mid-eighteenth century

summer of 1859.

⁴³ Indeed, one can identify the denouement of the epoch with the publication in 1879 of the first novel written entirely in Latvian, *Mērnīeku laiki* (“The Time of the Land Surveyors”).

⁴⁴ Juris Alunāns, *Dziesmiņas latviešu valodai pārtulkotas*, Tērbata: Drukkatas pie Laakmanna, 1856, 3-5; on Alunāns see Buceniece, “Jaunlatviešu filozofiskie uzskati,” 1995, 372-74, citing the epithet of historian Andrējs Johansons.

⁴⁵ *J. Alunāns, A. Pumpurs, Auseklis izlase*, Rīga: Zvaigzne, 2000, 38; because of the

through his many published songs and writings (see Chapter Three).

Folkloric words and “expressions of power” (*spēka vārdi*) imbued the essays, poems and plays by Alunāns’ younger contemporary Miķelis Krogzemis (1850—1879), who adopted the pseudonym of “the morning star” (*Auseklis*). His collected poems “Oak Leaves on the Graves of Famous Men” paid homage to Herder, whose insights into the historical roots of language he emulated. In *Gaismas Pils* (“The Castle of Light”) Auseklis invented a symbol of nationhood from an ancient Kurlandic folk tale on the resurrection of a sunken medieval lake-fortress.⁴⁶

One must consider as a parallel force of the awakening the many regional Latvian newspapers from 1822 to 1917, which also disseminated symbolic images of *Gaisma* (*Light*) and *Atmoda* (*Awakening*).⁴⁷ But it is customary to equate the outbreak of national awakening with the brief duration of the Russian-funded newspaper *Pētersburgas Avīzes*, whose issues ran from 1862 to 1865.⁴⁸ This short-lived “harsh bugle call”⁴⁹ was the product of the Latvian vanguard of Alunāns, Barons, and Valdemārs, exiled Latvians who gained a valuable understanding of the demographics of the Latvian public from subscription lists: in its first year the

folkloric language the excerpt of the first stanza is not translated.

⁴⁶ *Ozolu vainagi slavenu tautas vīru kapiem* [Oak leaves on the graves of famous men]: *Merkelam, Herderam* (1875) first published in *Ausekla raksti, 1. sējums*, 1888. Auseklis dedicated poems to Gotthold Stender, J. G. Kohl, Abraham Lincoln, and to his recently deceased colleagues Juris Alunāns, Atis Kronvalds, Jēkabs Zvaigznite,

⁴⁷ Comparable titles were found in the Lithuanian press – *Atgiminas* (*Rebirth*), *Auszra* (*Dawn*), and in the cultural society *Šviesa* (*Light*). During the latter quarter of the nineteenth century nineteen Latvian periodicals circulated under the title of *Atmoda*, “Awakening,” see Hoyer, 1993, 230, Švābe, 1958, 360-1. Under the editorship of Jonas Basanavičius in the 1880s, *Auszra* (*Dawn*) heralded the later Lithuanian movement of awakening, see Kavolis, 1991, 58; White, 1999, 205.

⁴⁸ The intense journalism is described in Trapāns, 1989, 25. See also Noll, 1991, 14; Hoyer, 1993, 68. Barons took over editorial duties from the promising writer Juris Alunāns, who tragically passed away in 1864 at the age of thirty-two.

newspaper circulated among four thousand readers. In the course of its brief tenure *Pēterburgas Avīzes* published forty-six folksong texts in dialects spoken by the inhabitants of Kurland.

With the heading “Reader, herein you now have a tongue, speak if you are alive,”⁵⁰ the editors of *Pēterburgas Avīzes* may have drawn on the Pietist religious belief in the power of the voice, for a comparable expression “speak, so I may see Thee” is attributed to Johann Georg Hamann (see Chapter Two). The biting satirical supplement to the newspaper, *Dzirkstele* (“Spark”) highlighted modernization and social change with the use of cartoon illustrations of Latvian peasant characters (*Brenci un Žvinguli, Jēci un Pēci*). Renowned for his charismatic brand of realist politics, Valdemārs raged a campaign against Latvians who “slept deeply in eternal darkness” (*viņi snauž dziļā garīgā tumsībā*).⁵¹ Because a vocal opposition to “fanatic nationalists” (*fanatische Nationalisten*) grew stronger within the Latvian Literary Society,⁵² in the end, Baltic German officials censored the distribution of *Pētersburgas Avīzes*. But growing subscription lists at other centers, in Jelgava, Dorpat (Tartu), and Moscow, became synonymous with the momentum of national consciousness.⁵³

The early Latvian press thus became a rich source of Herderian ideas regarding

⁴⁹ Spekke, 1951, 307, citing the commentary of Ludis Bērziņš.

⁵⁰ Arturs Baumanis, *Krišjānis Barons*, Augsburg, 1946, 50, cited in Krātiņš, 1961, 242.

⁵¹ Plakans, 1974, 219.

⁵² Pastor August Bielenstein, *Die lettisch-nationale Bewegung und die kurländische Geistlichkeit: Eine unparteiische Stimme aus den Ostseeprovinzen*, 1886, 9.

⁵³ Newspapers changed names to avoid censorship, see *Latviešu Periodika, 1. sējums, 1768—1919* (Rīga, Zinātne, 1977). An estimated one hundred and thirty newspapers were published in Latvian from 1860 to 1918, although they changed names to avoid censors, see Skultāns, 1999, 193, Švābe, 1958, 360.

a common identity and distinct national spirit that was embedded in the language of folksongs. This discourse inspired a new Latvian almanac, issued in 1860, whose editors Jēkabs Zvaigznīte (born Sterns, 1833—1867), a classical scholar, publicist and teacher, and the poet Juris Alunāns (see above), collected and published song texts from four rural districts in Livland.⁵⁴ In a preface that is imbued with national sentiments that are tied to the “blood and soil” (*Blut und Boden*), Zvaigznīte paraphrased a biblical passage on the myth of Creation (Genesis ii: 23), “they (the songs) have come from the heart of the Latvian people, and only Latvians can say that they are the flesh from my flesh, and the bones from my bones.”⁵⁵ Yet the author had modeled these views upon international folksong scholars, who in his estimation had fulfilled Herder’s ideals of a national history:

Each nation, just as each person, has their unique sorrows and joys [...] and from each song one can see well enough how their history has fared. *Katrai tautai, kā katram cilvēkam savs īpats dzīves gājums, savas bēdas un savi prieki [...] no katras dziesmas var jau labi vien zināt kā viņai priekšlaikā klājies.*⁵⁶

From this Herder-inspired passage it is possible to discern a unified national orientation, which transcended ethnographic and dialectal distinctions, not least those that divided the Tsarist provinces of Livland, Kurland, and Vitebsk. In the pronouncement that “we are all Latvians” (*mēs esam visi kopā latvieši*) Atis Kronvalds had argued explicitly for a common way of thinking (*kopīgs domāšanas*

⁵⁴ Jēkabs Zvaigznīte, “Par latviešu tautas dziesmām,” *Sēta, Daba, Pasaule, Pirmā grāmata*, Tērbata, 1860, pp. 1-15; Juris Alunāns, “Piebaldzenu dziesmas, Raudeniešu dziesmas,” *ibid*, pp. 15-48.

⁵⁵ *No latviešu tautas sirds viņas nākušas, un vienīgi latvieši var sacīt: tās ir kauli no maniem kauliem, un miesa no manas miesas*, Zvaigznīte, 1860, 15; see also Bula, 59-60; Arājs 1985, 138.

veids).⁵⁷ Thus it is scarcely surprising that in lieu of conceiving geographical categories of the folksong (see above), the vanguard of Moscow-based nationalists in 1878 inclined towards universally applicable categories, which would enhance the international standing of their new folksong (*daina*) classification system. The main categories of the collection, *Latvju dainas*, would mirror the family and life cycle song traditions of an older layer of declaiming texts (see below).

Yet before this turn of events the Latvian Literary Society played a formative role in sponsoring folksong collections by soliciting *dainas* from the readership of its organ, *Latviešu Avīzes*. Yet the nationalist faction led by Jēkabs Zvaigznīte took issue with this method, which undermined Herder's ideas on folksong interpretation and its relationship to the nation:

Only those songs, which have at their core what each Latvian, that is to say, the entire nation, feels about its own life and soul, are truly folksongs, and that is why all the people sing them [...] the nation itself is the maker of songs. *Tikai tādas būs tautas dziesmas saucamas, kam par kodolu tas, ko ikkatrs tautietis, t. i., visa tauta, par savu īpašu dzīves un gara kodolu justin sajūt, tāpēc arī no visas tautas tiek dziedātas [...] tauta pati ir tā dziesmas padarītāja.*⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Jēkabs Zvaigznīte, "Par latviešu tautas dziesmas," *Sēta, daba, pasaule*, 1860, 11.

⁵⁷ Atis Kronvalds, letter to Fricis Brīvzemnieks, 16 July 1872, in his monograph *Tagadnei*, Rīga: Liesma, 1987, 39, and 295.

⁵⁸ Kaspars Biezbārdis, "Mūsu tautas dziesmas," *Mājas Viesis*, nr. 27, 1873, pp. 212-13, citing the essay of Zvaigznīte.

The Baltic German constituency within the Latvian Literary Society underscored the lack of a Latvian folk epic by referring to the first edition of the Karelian folk epic the *Kalevala*, that was published from 1835-36.⁵⁹ Latvian intellectual leaders who took up the cause of the lyrical *daina* song traditions devised a rebuttal that was strongly reminiscent of opinions expressed in Garlieb Helwig Merkel's *Die Letten* (1797). A publicist of the national awakening, Kaspars Biezbārdis (1806—1886) singled out the ethical content of the St. John's Day song cycle in attesting "to this day they (the Latvians) were a fully peaceful people" (*visai mierīga, rāma tauta*).⁶⁰

Widely considered to be the apogee of the literary school of Latvian Romanticism, *Lāčplēsis* ("Bear-slayer"), an epic poem of 4,700 lines, followed the model of the Estonian epic *Kalevipoeg* ("Son of Kalev," 1857). Andrējs Pumpurs (1841—1902) devoted twenty years to its composition in which he integrated Latvian folk beliefs and legends about a thirteenth-century hero. The underlying allegory of a wakeful nation that is summoned to battle reinforced the political overtones of the choir performances at the third Latvian song festival of 1888 (see below). Yet the status of an epic nation remained controversial to Pastor August Bielenstein (see above), who found "irrefutable deficiencies" (*nenoliedzamie trūkumi*) in the Latvian folk epos:

All of Latvian history, its spiritual and moral attainments is such, that the aesthetic worth of their poetry, according to its substance, spirit, and structure,

⁵⁹ Herder's influence at Åbo Academy can be discerned in the work of folklore scholar Elias Lönnrot (1802—1884), who compiled thirty-two Karelian runic lays. The monumental epic poem "The Seasons" (*Metai*) was vital to the Lithuanian national awakening. Königsberg University Professor Ludwig Rhesa, an admirer of Herder published the first indigenous epic in Baltic literatures in 1818. The author, a priest, Kristijonas Donelaitis (1714—1780) wrote in Lithuanian hexameter verse.

could not be great at all. *Visa latviešu vēsture, viņu garīgā un tikumiskā izglītība ir tāda, ka viņu dzejas estētiskā vērtība pēc vielas, gara un formas nevar būt nekāda lielā.*⁶¹

It should be noted that the reputation of Bielenstein has been rehabilitated in recent years, particularly in view of biographical criteria that Latvian and German scholars have explored in order to vindicate his scholarship.⁶²

A public debate over the “childish” character of Latvian folksongs, which were deemed unsuitable for performance in the first national song festival of 1873 (see below), led to a longstanding argument that unfolded in the press (see below). Five years later, the leading representatives of this strand of nationalist thought implemented plans for a monumental song collection. From the outset, the structure of this classification served as a mirror of the agricultural and ritual calendar and the life-cycle events of the Latvian people. The chief classifier was thus able to circumvent comparisons which Baltic German critics had based on the aesthetic norms of other nations. The plan of Krišjānis Barons was entirely new, and his classification of over two hundred thousand song texts vindicated the national importance of singing.⁶³

⁶⁰ Biezbārdis, 1873, 214.

⁶¹ Zeiferts, 1922, 47.

⁶² Māra Vīksna, paper read in Rīga, 6 July 2007, to a conference devoted to the two hundredth anniversary of Bielenstein’s birth: “*Dr. Augusts Bielenšteins par latviešu kultūras pamatvērtībām.*”

⁶³ In 1903 literary historian Teodors Zeiferts recounted evaluations of Bielenstein and his works in the essay “*Kr. Barona pamatuzskati par latviešu tautas dziesmām.*” *Latvju Grāmata* Nr. 5, 1925, 348-49.

4. *Latvju dainas* (1894—1915)

Until the end of the nineteenth century German amateur folklorists continued to play a decisive role in preparing Latvian folksong editions. Representing an opposing current, the Latvian intelligentsia focused on the creative force of the native language, which became a strategy for securing cultural independence.⁶⁴ They devised small-scale projects by which they transformed oral folk poetry into an effective national voice. In this respect, the Latvian movement developed along the lines of the German folklore revival model that had been established earlier, dating from the 1830s.

As a starting point for these collecting efforts one can single out the compilation of three hundred humorous tales and riddles by Krišjānis Valdemārs, published in Liepāja in 1853, which was part of his campaign to motivate young Latvians and adults to read books. Valdemārs emulated Finnish methods of folklore collecting in his folk tales from the Dundaga Township of his native Kurland.⁶⁵ Shortly afterwards, in a treatise on Estonian folksongs in 1857, Krišjānis Barons adopted the Estonian and Finnish model to simulate interest in the native Latvian folksong (then termed *dziesma*, or *daina* in later usage).⁶⁶

An active folklore collector between the years 1877 and 1886, Fricis Treulands

⁶⁴ Some essayists regarded *Volkslieder* as the fruition of Herder's own experiences, rather than acknowledging the texts, which Herder had co-opted from others.

⁶⁵ Folksongs appended to the essay "Dondangen Ritterscholss und Privatgut in Kurland, besungen von Jacob Friedrich Bankau 1721, von C. Woldemar," *Das Inland*, 1855, 14-16.

⁶⁶ Barons published his first folksong study "Igauņu tautas dziesmas" (Estonian folksongs), during the first year of the newspaper *Mājas Viesis* (18 February 1857),

Brīvzemnieks (1846—1907) campaigned for the use of folklore in the construction of national identity (see Chapter Three). Under the auspices of the Russian Imperial Society of Natural Sciences, Anthropology, and Ethnography, Brīvzemnieks began a new initiative by leading a folklore expedition in the Latvian-speaking provinces. From 1877 to 1886 he surveyed the readership of the Latvian press, publishing 1,118 Latvian song texts in a Russian edition containing Cyrillic orthography (1873). The Latvian collector's emulation of Herder's ideals was apparent in his editorial policy, by which he avoided corrections to the song texts, while transcribing Latvian regional and dialectal inflections exhaustively. To this end, he cited from Herder's essay of 1777, *Von Ähnlichkeit der mittlern englischen und deutschen Dichtkunst*: "this is done clearly understanding Herder's words, that folksongs show us the history of the folk, a treasury of words and grammar" (*Tas viss darīts, skaidri saprotot Herdera vārdus, ka tautas dziesma rāda mums tautas vēsturi, vārdu krājumu un gramatiku*).⁶⁷

A close colleague of Brīvzemnieks in Moscow, Krišjānis Valdemārs developed an alliance in order to build upon the model of earlier folksong manuscripts, and "to select for the public the most beautiful and poetic songs."⁶⁸ The community of Latvian political exiles in Moscow assigned the task of initiating this major folksong collection to Brīvzemnieks, who was free of punitive travel restrictions. But the project contended with the lack of methodology for transcribing

see Vīksna, 1996, 87.

⁶⁷ Arājs-Barons, 1984, 209; Buceniece, 1999, 446.

⁶⁸ *Izlasītu jo daiļās un dzējiskās dziesmas un tās sevišķi priekš plašākās latviešu publikas laistu klajā*, Barons, *Ievads, Latvju dainas*, 1894, V. For details on the founding of this folksong campaign see the Internet site devoted to the history of the Latvian Folklore Archives, http://www.lfk.lv/1878_lv.html.

quatrains and verses in a traditional context where sequences of declamatory texts may be improvised. Creating an important precedent for the project in the *Volklieder* Herder singled out verses of four lines (*Vierzeiler*) and labeled them according to their textual incipit. But when considering the song texts listed within his posthumous correspondence papers, Herder clearly possessed valuable examples of longer chains of folksong texts (*virkses*) from which he explicated *Volklieder's* grouping of five “Latvian song fragments.”⁶⁹

In the renowned *Extract from Correspondence about Ossian and Songs of Ancient Peoples*, published in 1773, Herder established a passionate defense of oral poetry, alluding to German dramatist Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729—1781), but mistakenly attributing his praise of two Lithuanian folksongs (*dainos*) to “Latvian *dainos*” [sic.]. Herder’s misinterpretation of Lessing came to light towards the end of the nineteenth century in the context of a monumental Latvian folksong collecting campaign. To summarize, Lessing had cited Pastor Philipp Ruhig (1675—1749), who presented three Lithuanian *dainos* in German translation in his *Grammatik* (1745) and *Litauisches Wörterbuch* (1747). The Lithuanian textual examples simultaneously appeared in the preface to the collected lyric poems, *Sammlung neuer Oden und Lieder* (1747), by the poet Friedrich von Hagedorn.⁷⁰ Lessing’s poetic thirty-third “Letter on Literature” (April 1759) reveals that his estimation of the Lithuanian *dainos* exceeded even that of Ruhig:⁷¹

⁶⁹ *Fragmente lettischer Lieder*; Herder, *SW*, XXV, 409-10.

⁷⁰ Hagedorn, 1742-44, *Sammlung neuer Oden und Lieder*, two volumes. Music by Johann Valentin Görner. Hamburg: Bey sel Felginers Wittwe und J. C. Bohn.

⁷¹ Lessing, in *Briefe die neueste Literatur betreffend Theil 2*, *S. (page)* 241-42. This journal (volumes 1759—1765) was the organ of Friedrich Nicolai, Moses Mendelssohn, Thomas Abbt, and Lessing, among other writers who represented

You would also learn that in all climes, poets are born [...]. A few Lithuanian *dainos*, or little songs, that is to say as common girls sing them. What naïve wit! What charming simplicity! *Sie würden auch daraus lernen, dass unter jedem Himmelsstriche Dichter geboren werden [...] Einige Litthuaische Dainos, oder Liederchen, nehmlich wie sie die gemeinen Mädchen dasselbst singen. Welch ein naïver Witz! Welche reizende Einfalt!*

This commentary of Lessing is reprinted as part of Herder's "folksong testimonies" (*Zeugnisse über Volkslieder*) at the start of the *Volkslieder's* first volume.⁷² But in his earlier essay of 1773, *Extract from Correspondence about Ossian and Songs of Ancient Peoples*, Herder had mistakenly written:

You know both the Latvian (sic.) songs, which Lessing cites from Ruhig in his *Litteraturbriefen*, and know how much sensuous rhythm of language must have lain in their substance. *Sie kennen die beiden Lettischen (sic.) Liederchen, die Lessing in den Litteraturbriefen aus Ruhig anzog, und wissen, wie viel sinnlicher Rhythmus der Sprache in ihrem Wesen liegen musste.*⁷³

The significance of Herder's error was apparent only a century later, during preparations for the first volume of *Latvju dainas*. Because of the problematic usage of the Latvian *dziesmas*, which can denote popular, religious, or foreign songs, the

Berlin of the late Enlightenment (*Hochaufklärung*). On the *Volkslieder's* Lithuanian content and its influence into the early nineteenth century, see Astrauskas, 2002b.

⁷² Herder, *SW*, XXV, 132.

⁷³ Herder, *SW*, V, 170. It is worth noting that Goethe in 1782 utilized for his *Singspiel Die Fischerin* the Lithuanian bridal song that appears in German translation in Lessing as "Abschied einer heiratenden Tochter," and in volume two of *Volkslieder* (1779) as "Brautlied." See Astrauskas, 2003, 322. Goethe refers to Herder's "love of these Latvian *dainos*" [sic.] in a review of the collection by

main financial sponsor of the collection, Latvian tradesman Henrijs Viendorfs (1861—1916), preferred a title in which the Baltic content and etymology was indisputable.⁷⁴ Viendorfs therefore took up the wording of the Lithuanian term “*daina*” in 1892, as did Barons, perhaps more reluctantly, for the six-volume collection, *Latvju dainas* (1894—1915).

By its sheer breadth of scope *Latvju dainas* provided a history of the important rituals of the life cycle; Barons, unlike earlier collectors, created a tribute to the full range of human experience – of sorrows and work, social life and norms, as well as aesthetic and ethical values – according to the stages of the human life cycle and to the calendar rotation of the seasons.⁷⁵ Prior to the publication of volume one Barons broadly outlined a philosophy of song classification:

I set for myself as a model the people’s life, of which the folksong is the spiritual aspect, as it were, what the soul is to the body. In a live organism these two aspects cannot be separated, the one renders the other meaningful. What life puts before our eyes, the song presents poetically. Life is rich and colorful, thus the repository of songs is full and variegated. Life is not

Ludwig Rhesa, *Litauische Dainos* (1825); see Apkalns, 1977, 320, who cites *Goethes Werke*, Weimar, 1887—1920, Bd. 42, S. 305.

⁷⁴ The term *dziesma* denotes lyrical songs, (*dziedamās dziesmas*), as opposed to an older declaimed layer, *teicamās dziesmas*, but it is often synonymous with the *daina*. The latter is in fact a Lithuanian loanword, which was incorporated into the collection of *Latvju dainas* (six volumes, 1894—1915). Viendorfs (German: Wissendorff), who was a native Latvian educated in St. Petersburg and Paris, omitted the palatalized “ņ” that occurs in the Lithuanian cognate, *daiņu*, see Kratiņš, 1961, 245. The monumental endeavor had been initiated in 1878 and volumes 2-6 were published in St. Petersburg by the Royal Academy of Sciences.

⁷⁵ *Latvju dainas* follows the chronology of the life cycle: 1. Childhood: birth baptism, and schooling; 2. The life of orphans; 3. Youth and courting; 4. Betrothal and wedding; 5. Adult life; 6. Married life; 7. Old age; 8. Death and burial. Barons, 1894, XVII; Arājs, 1984, p. 163.

uniformly pleasant, either in a material, or in a moral sense, and the folksongs do not conceal this from us. *Es sev par priekšzīmi spraužu pašu tautas dzīvi, no kuras tautas dziesmas ir viņas garīgā puse, tā sakot, dvēsele priekš miesas. Dzīvā organismā šīs abas puses nav šķiramas, vien otrai dod īstu saturu. Ko dzīve katru reiz priekš acīm stādīja, to dziesma poētiski iztēloja. Dzīve ir bagāta un raiba, un tādēļ arī dziesmu pūrs ir kuplis jo kuplis. Dzīve nav vienmulīgi jauka ne materiālīgā, nedz morālīgā ziņā, arī tautas dziesmas mums to neslēpj.*⁷⁶

In the realization of six volumes, 1894—1915, the classifier amassed a cross section of calendar ritual songs, work songs, religious and mythological songs, bawdy songs, children's games, and riddle songs. Barons and Brīvzemnieks directly collected 86,000 items; Visendorfs led several folklore collecting expeditions, procuring 28,000 additional song texts. Overall, Barons classified 271,996 texts, of which 35,7899 (or close to 36,000) were original examples, and not variants, and over 218,000 had passed directly through his hands. One could compare the breadth of this achievement with the first edition of the Karelian folk epic the *Kalevala*, dating from 1835-36, in which Elias Lönnrot pieced together 22,795 (or close to 23,000) runes.⁷⁷ At the close of the work Barons honored nine hundred contributors – farmers, tradesmen, teachers, clergymen, doctors, and artists – many of whom had written down verses directly from the singer or declaimer, in the open Latvian countryside, providing an anthropological document of important rituals of the

⁷⁶ Barons, letter to Kārlis Treuers, 1890, RLMVM Nr 365503; reproduced in Arājs, 1985, 151; Arājs, 1984, 54-55, and Buceniece, 1995, 440. The English translation is based upon Arājs, 1984, 162.

⁷⁷ The year of Barons' birth in 1835 coincided with the publication of the Finnish

family and life cycle and the agricultural calendar.⁷⁸ Barons conceded that the principal failing of the process lay with transcribers, who had employed the literary language rather than preserving the dialects they had heard in the songs. Editorial problems arose from this neglect of dialectal spellings, as well as the omission of idiosyncratic grammatical inflections and endings, although Barons only allowed for emendations to the transcribed song texts in the event of a singer's memory lapse. Latvian folksong scholarship has revealed further discrepancies between the printed edition and the transcriptions, which are shelved within Barons' cabinet of *dainas*.⁷⁹

To this end, Barons distinguished transcriptions of an older layer of declaiming folksong texts from those that, in his opinion, were neither indigenous nor authentic. Among the radical social changes that came to light in *Latvju dainas* the viability of the folk declaimer and her music were critically important to its classifier, who witnessed how cosmopolitan ballads and romances had supplanted tradition-bearing songs:

And after a time the people themselves began to feel a loss when conditions of life changed, the folksongs appeared out of place and began to sink into silence. Small wonder that servant-girls and young ladies from the estate brought with them and inculcated quite a number of borrowed long love songs.

Ir tauta pate ar laiku sajuta šo trūkumu, kad dzīves apstākļiem pārvēršoties, vecas īsas tautas dziesmas, neatrasdamas vairs savu īsto vietu, sāka pamazām

national epic; see Vīķe-Freiberga, 1989, 22.

⁷⁸ Vīksna, p. 90.

⁷⁹ Barons, 1894 (LD I), XIV; See Arājs, 1985, 209; Elga Melne, 2000, "Vēlreiz par latvju dainu rediģēšanu" [Once again about the editing of (the collection) *Latvju dainas*]. In *Materiāli par Latvijas kulturveidi: fakti un uztvere*. Rīga: Zinātne, 7-14.

*apklust. Tādēļ nav jābrīnās, ka no muižu meitām un jumpraviņām mums ieviesās laba tiesa tapinātu garāku mīlestības dziesmu.*⁸⁰

As a witness to the large number of Latvian peasants who had migrated to cities, thereby losing touch with traditional culture and the music of their farmlands, Barons believed that his native language, customs, and folklore traditions were precious and endangered. As early as in 1860, writing in *Sēta, daba, pasaule* (see above), Juris Alunāns apologized for the paucity of his collected output from Livland, admitting, “In each rural district one could find ten times as many folksongs.” Because of a dearth of folksong collectors, the author continued, “Unfortunately now the folksongs have disappeared from the tongues of Latvians for more than a few days” (*tagad latviešu tautas dziesmas diemžēl jo dienas jo vairāk no latviešu mēles zūd*).⁸¹

The contributors to *Latvju dainas* thus dealt centrally with the declining number of traditional song declaimers (*teicēji*), realistically appraising the changing farmstead culture, of the *sēta*, and noting how the traditional quatrains had become obsolete, “by the day.”⁸² Barons singled out the loss of farming chores, which had been relegated to women or girls, who were the principal carriers of the *dainas* traditions:

Thus for example our girls at the mill certainly no longer grind corn by hand, for this difficult task is done by watermills, windmills or steam-mills; yet our

Melne reviews the scholarship of Anna Bērzkalne, the founder of the Latvian folklore archives, historian Arveds Švābe, folklorist Kārlis Arājs, and others.

⁸⁰ Barons, introduction to *Latvju dainas*, volume one, 1894, XIX: this English translation is taken from Arājs, 1984, 118-19.

⁸¹ Alunāns, “Piebaldzenu dziesmas,” *Sēta, daba, pasaule*, 1860, 48; cited in Biezbārdis, 1873, 214.

⁸² Arājs-Barons, 1984, 26.

songs dedicated to grinding grain, which so vividly teach and extol honest labor, will not lose their power. *Tā, piemērām, mūsu jaunavas gan vairs nemaļ rokas dzirnavās, šo grūto darbu tagad pastrādā ūdens, vēja vai tvaika dzirnavas; taču tādēļ mūsu maltuves dziesmas, kas tik koši apzīmīgi māca un cildina darba krietumu [...] nezaudē savu spēku.*⁸³

The Latvian press also dealt with the popularity of foreign ballads and other cultural imports, printing the diatribe of Kaspars Biezbārdis (see above), who implored the readers of *Mājas Viesis* (“House Guest”):

Latvians, where have you put your folksongs? In which graves have you buried them? [...] Who stole them from you? Where have you lost them? *Latvieši, kur jūs savas tautas-dziesmas likāt? Kuros kapos jūs viņas aprakāt? [...] Kas tev tavas tautas-dziesmas laupija? Kur tu viņas pazaudēji?*⁸⁴

Over a century beforehand, Herder attempted to vindicate his critics by comparing the poetic genius of his private folksong collection (*Naturpoesie*) to the artificial limitations of poetry that had been reduced to the mechanics of syllable counting (*Kunstpoesie*):

Poetry, which ought to be the most vigorous, self-assured daughter of the human soul, became the most insecure, weak, and vacillating. *Die Dichtkunst, die die stürmendste, sicherste Tochter der Menschlichen Seele seyn sollte, ward die ungewisseste, lahmste, wankendste.*⁸⁵

By its sheer breadth of scope *Latvju dainas* served as a monument to the holistic

⁸³ Barons, introduction to *Latvju dainas*, I, 1894, XVII-XVIII; Arājs, 1985, p. 26.

⁸⁴ Kaspars Biezbārdis, *Mūsu tautas-dziesmas*,” *Mājas Viesis* Nr. 27, 1873, p. 213.

⁸⁵ *Auszug aus einem Briefwechsel über Ossian und die Lieder alter Völker*,” Herder,

genius of the *Volk* (“people” or “nation”). In contrast to the artificiality of written literatures (*Kunst*), the collection substantiated Herder’s ideas concerning the natural unity of language, song, and poetry (*Sprache, Lied, Poesie*).⁸⁶ Herderian roots underlie the structure of volume one (1894), in which the *dainas* are situated at the center of family relations and domestic settings, thereby illustrating how the songs (*dainas*) were learned in a long continuous string of songs “that accompany a Latvian from his mother’s warm lap through all of life’s happenings, works and efforts, in joy and sorrow, in good and in bad days.” (*kas pavada latvieti, no siltā mātes klēpja sākot, visos dzīves atgadījumos, darbos un centienos, priekos un bēdās, labās un ļaunās dienās*).⁸⁷ Barons devoted the initial category of *dainas* at the outset of volume one (1894) Barons grouped 1,052 quatrains that refer to the unifying power of singing within the framework of national unity.⁸⁸

<i>Viena meita Rīgā dzied,</i>	One girl sings in Riga
<i>Otra dzied Valmierā</i>	A second sings in Valmiera
<i>Abas dzied vienu dziesmu</i>	Both sing one song
<i>Vai tām viena māmuliņa?</i>	Are they daughters of one mother?

Other important social values of anonymity and objectivity that were consistent with the impersonal source of song culture in peasant society can be seen in the *daina* LD

SW, V, p. 183.

⁸⁶ Herder, *SW*, XXVII, 180.

⁸⁷ Barons, 1894, XVII; Arājs, 1984, 163.

⁸⁸ Hobsbawm, 1983, 14, Anderson 1991, 22-36, cited by Skultāns, 1999, 150-1.

597, and others within this song grouping. These texts attest to the belief that the singer is a physical mediator, who is subservient to the mother as the tradition bearer:

Dziesmu dziedu, kāda bija, I sing the song as it is,

Ne tā manis padarīta. I didn't make it.

To dziedāja māmuliņa My mother sang it

Kad gulēju šūpulī. When I lay in the cradle.

Comprising two lines that are repeated, the terse quatrain, the source of Herder's sub-heading "Latvian song fragments" in the *Volkslieder*, prevailed as the dominant unit of classification in Barons' *Latvju dainas*.⁸⁹ New variants of Barons' classification types continue to be discovered. In regard to the first category of songs pertaining to singing, a variant of LD 454 (volume one, 1894, 833): *Dzidit meitys vokorā, vokorā toli skan* ("Sing girls in the evening, in the evening it will sound far"), was recently recorded in the province of Latgale.⁹⁰ In the introduction to *Latvju dainas* Barons specified the multipart vocal practices of *gavilēšana* and *rotāšana*, which were sung in the open air during mainly from Easter to Whitsunday. Their characteristic melodic formulas were the provenance of the voice (*balsis*) of the principal declaimer, around whom other women gathered to ornament or lend harmonic support to the main melodic line:

⁸⁸ Vīķis-Freibergs, 1996, 52; Constantine and Porter, 2003, 6.

⁸⁹ Andris Kapusts, who is a folk arts administrator in Rīga, has collected and recorded this variant, see *Grodi*, CD, 2000. It also appears on *Pērkonītis*, CD, 2002, Band 4. (see Discography) and *Skandinieki* video example: 4 May 2001. This genre of singing is also well preserved in Kurzeme.

And also maidens would gather from neighboring villages on pleasant spring evenings, year after year, to the same accustomed hill. They have longed to sing together in a group (*rotāt*). It also is well known, that when singing in the evening the voice resounds from a distance and tempts the folk far and wide. *Nu arī zeltenītes jaukos, remdenos pavasara vakaros pulcējās no tuvējiem ciemiem kopā uz zināmā, gadgadu [gadu gados] aprastā kalniņā. Tās sen jau ilgojās sadziedāt kopā lielākā barā jeb ‘rotāt.’ Tās arī it labi zināja, ka vakarā dziedot balss tālu skan un tālu tautas kairina.*⁹¹

When this text is sung in the *Zemgalian* intonation (Latvian: *balss*), the main declaiming part is accompanied with an ornamented response, and vocal drone. *Dziedat meitas vakarā* is a familiar staple to folklore groups, and to festivals and song competitions since the 1980s.⁹²

Displaying a legendary attention to detail, Barons copied texts and annotations onto his personal tobacco paper, accruing 200,000 paper slips. Letters, which described the meaning and content of a song, and when and where it was sung, from over nine hundred correspondents filled two long rows in his custom-made “cabinet of *dainas*” (*dainu skapis*). To the present day the cabinet, with its meticulous specifications and decimal subdivisions, and a replica housed in the Barons’ Memorial Flat in Riga, are Latvian national shrines, attesting to the classification by which Barons was able to publish and disseminate the principal texts of *Latvju dainas* and their variants (see Illustration 21). The legacy of “Father

⁹⁰ Barons, volume 1, 1894, XXII; reprinted in Arājs, 1984, 25-26. On *rotāšana* see also Muktupāvels, 2000, 501.

⁹¹ When sung by Ilga Reizniece and Zane Šmite, formerly of the *Skandinieki*, see also CD *Pērkonītis*, Band 4 (see Discography); *Skandinieki* video example: 4 May

Barons” (*Barontēvs*) – a wise, patriarchal sage with flowing white hair and beard – is strengthened within iconography (see Illustration 20).⁹³ A permanent display of possessions at the Barons Memorial Flat in central Riga has immortalized the rooms in which the collector spent his final years (1919—1923). The importance of the life cycle as Barons’ governing principle of song classification is illustrated in a dramatic centerpiece of a simple wooden cradle that is hung above a wooden casket.

It should be added, as a final note, that the media of *Latvju dainas* has undergone a transformation. Since 2000, the entire corpus of paper slips within Barons’ cabinet of *dainas* was digitally scanned to create a computerized “virtual edition” for scholars. The status of the project was given momentum within the presidential administration of Vaira Vīķe Freiberga, and through the Latvian media. Practicing folklorists within the *kopas* are currently able to expand their song repertoires by having access to texts and their variants by key words, themes, places, and dialects – via a website – (<http://www.dainuskapis.lv>).⁹⁴

2001.

⁹² See Vīķe-Freiberga, 1989, 19; see also Illustration 20, a candle-lit life-size photograph of Barons in the foyer of the Latvian Society Building, a display that marked the 165th anniversary of his birth, 30 October 2000. His effigy is a permanent exhibit in Rīga’s Wax Museum.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* The former President of the Republic of Latvia Vaira Vīķe Freiberga is a folksong scholar who assisted in Latvia’s acceptance of funds for this conversion project. The UNESCO resolution is dedicated to the survival of languages and cultures in small nations: “Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity” (<http://www.unesco.org>). Dr. Imants Freibergs, Aldis Pūtelis of the Latvian Folklore Archives, and others completed the project. See I. Freibergs 1993,

5. Performance, Stage, a False Unity?

The establishment of Riga's Latvian Society (*Rīgas latviešu biedrība*) in 1868 was a turning point for national agitation and growth, which affected the scholarship of folksong and its reproduction.⁹⁵ The material sponsorship of choirs within this Society led to the premiere of the first Latvian-language theatrical performance in 1868, and in 1873 local amateur choirs commemorated the end of serfdom in the first national song festival. Throughout Europe national song festivals had transformed peasant culture to an exacting display of professional performance skills. But the aspirations of Latvian choir directors who composed such works came under criticism, for Germanic folk music idioms threatened to usurp the Latvian *dainas* tradition. Although part of Herder's coveted Latvian song sample in the *Volkslieder* (1779), ritual and declamatory genres were not heard among the song festival repertoires of some one thousand singers – thirty-four choirs from Vidzeme, and thirteen choirs from Kurzeme. Evidently the grassroots popularity of the song genre of *ziņģes* had a determining influence upon Latvian choir directors, who also propagated cosmopolitan performance tastes.⁹⁶

The controversial view of the German-influenced song genre was rekindled following the publication of *Dziesmu rota* ("Adornment of Songs," Part I, 1872). Widely considered the major contribution of Latvian choir director and pedagogue Jānis Cimze (1814—1881), whose harmonized arrangements had been commissioned for the song festival's performances in 1873. Cimze published some 350 choral pieces within the eight-parts of *Dziesmu rota* (1872 to 1889); these he

2000, and 2003.

⁹⁵ Raun and Plakans, 1990, 139.

divided between the more formal Germanic “garden flowers,” on the one hand, and his arrangements of Latvian melodies, the “wildflowers,” on other other. According to generally received opinion Cimze’s efforts to collect melodies reflected the demand for choral music in the schools; his choral idioms suited the requirements of formalized occupational groups having local choirs, and the choirs within the schoolteachers’ training curriculum. Cimze had effectively leveled off the modal and metrical characteristics of the Latvian folksong in arrangements, which had gained him the recommendation of the powerful choral union (*Gesangverein*), representing in the 1870s the German majority within Riga’s population.⁹⁷

Inundating the Latvian and Baltic German newspapers, repercussions from the national song festival in 1873 materialized in a string of essays.⁹⁸ In this longstanding debate the composer of the Latvian national hymn Kārlis Baumanis (1835—1905) wrote on behalf of the young Latvian intellectuals (German: *Jungletten*); an opposing viewpoint surfaced among schoolteachers and active spokesmen of the German upper class (*Altletten*) who were advocates of the Cimze choral idiom. The latter’s arguments centered on the nature and properties of arranging Latvian folksongs for choral performances. Beyond this, however, a deeper source of conflict emerged that led to accusations and insults. Acting on behalf of Cimze, Pastor August Bielenstein found the *dainas* to be child-like, and unsuitable for choral renditions.⁹⁹ While Bielenstein argued to exclude folksongs

⁹⁶ Kirby, 1995, 161, Sneibe, 1997, 67.

⁹⁷ Apkalns, 1977, 155.

⁹⁸ These are evaluated in Apkalns, 1977, 155; Bērziņa, 1989, 43-54, and Zanders, 2002, 230-32.

⁹⁹ See Atis Kronvalds, *Tagadnei*, 1987, 6; Fricis Brīvzemnieks, *Kronvalda Ata piemiņai*, *Austrums*, 1887, No. 5, 311-12;

from the modern cosmopolitan character of staged choir performances, the national poet Auseklis led a rebuttal on behalf of the nationalist faction. He argued to the effect that these choirs were obliged to increase the Latvian content of their repertoires.¹⁰⁰ Allied to this perspective Kārlis Baumanis, who had critically reviewed Cimze's third part of choral music to *Dziesmu rota* (entitled *Lauku puķu* or "wildflower"), protested against the foreign foundation of the melodies. A second critic faulted Cimze's arrangements of Latvian melodies, which "were not set purely or clearly, or in the way that the people sang them."¹⁰¹ He alluded to Herder's principles concerning the folksong as the cradle of the nation's language and history. In this essay of 1875 he considered organic factors, of language and history, which underpinned the traditional continuity of voices: "the sound of souls resounding from one chest to another."¹⁰² In his incendiary review of Cimze's choral representations in *Dziesmu rota*, Baumanis wryly remarked, "You have power, you have authority, you have gold, yet we remain in possession of our language and our highly contested folksongs (*Jums ir vara. Jums ir viltus. Jums ir zelts, latviešiem – vienīgi sava valoda un augstos līmeņos apstrīdētā tautasdziesma*)." ¹⁰³

It was apparent that the aesthetic preferences of Latvian nationalist intellectuals, who favored the purity of the folksong (*daina*), had not triumphed over the professional tastes of choral composers and conductors. In fact, disputes over

¹⁰⁰ Auseklis, *Kopoti Raksti*, Rīga, 1888, 116-17.

¹⁰¹ "Ka tās neesot tik šķīstas un skaidras, kā tauta tās dzied," Aleksandrs 1875, 100.

¹⁰² Varaidošu Zanderis [Vēbers A.] "Kas ir tautas dziesmas," *Baltijas Vēstnesis*, (14 May) 1875, 99-100, see also Bērziņa, 1989, 54.

¹⁰³ "Kārlis Baumanis, [review of] *Dziesmu rota jaunekļiem un vīriem, Treša daļa*, *Baltijas Vēstnesis* (30 October), 1874; idem, "Folgendes offenes Schreiben an seine Hochwohlehrwürden den Herren K. Ulmann," *Zeitung für Stadt und Land*, (15 December) 1874.

criteria of performance and staging threatened to disrupt plans for a third national song festival in 1888. The practice of singing in uniform folk costumes, extra-musical paraphernalia and scenery in the arena, and the mass dimension of the audience's participation, modernized the status of the Latvian folksong, or *daina*.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, folksong collectors, such as Andrejs Jurjāns (1856—1922), participated in the third festival equally as composers, conductors, and performers. Jurjāns commented on performances, which were “brightly executed, polished, and well-prepared”;¹⁰⁵ yet rehearsals, lessons, and recitals of classically trained choir directors were foreign to the folksong tradition. In response to the nationalist cause, however, folksong collections intended for the public's use continued to place emphasis upon the traditions of the past. For example, the publication of Matīss Ārons' *Mūsu tautas dziesmas* marked the occasion of the third festival in 1888; moreover, a second part devoted to the longer folksong sequences (*virķnes*) followed in 1890.

Their convergence with Romantic art forms notwithstanding, the choral performances succeeded in directing the attitudes of people towards national sentiment. Jurjāns later publicized his intention to return his collected and arranged folk melodies back to the people – to the fishermen, shepherds, and night-herdsmen – by means of an outdoor staged performance in the center of Riga. The “life of the folk,” an ethnographic exhibit staged at the tenth All-Russian Archaeological

¹⁰⁴ Benedict Anderson defined the expanse of sound of cultural performance with the term “unisonance,” see Anderson, 1991, 145. Anthropologist Milton Singer discussed the secondary nature of theatrical displays, ceremonies, concerts, and festivals during his field studies in India. His theoretical work on “cultural performances” (1972) was continued by Victor Turner, a social anthropologist, who believed that important changes in political status took place within the physical space of the theatre; Turner, 1988, 22.

¹⁰⁵ Jurjāns, 1980, 34.

Congress in 1896, employed well-known actresses and singers who performed sixty folksongs.¹⁰⁶ Large open-air events became part of the national ethos after 1873 by bringing the rural populace into the city and unifying national culture. In the course of five Latvian song festivals, from 1873 to 1910, the attendance and participation of the native population, on the one hand, and the increased Latvian content of the choral repertoire, on the other, were symptomatic of “national culture” (Latvian: *tautība*). The composer Kārlis Baumanis introduced the word “Latvia” within the premiere of the song lyric *Dievs svētī Latviju* (“God bless Latvia”) at the first Latvian Song Festival in 1873, a Romantic choral composition that became the national hymn of the newly independent Republic in 1920, as it remains the national hymn to the present day.¹⁰⁷ In response to the events of 1873, in which some one thousand singers gathered, the poet Auseklis wrote, “The Latvian nation is a singing nation; let the spirit of singing overflow” (*latvju tauta dziedātāja; dziesmu gars pār tev lai plūst*).¹⁰⁸

6. ‘Mute’ Districts and Singers

Fewer folksong traditions were preserved and recorded in the aftermath of World War I, in which the devastation was accompanied by population loss and changes to

¹⁰⁶ *Uzvedumi latviešu tautas dzīves*, (“Performances of the Lives of the Folk”), 1896, Jurjāns, 1980, 34-35.

¹⁰⁷ Apkalns, 1977, 153-4.

¹⁰⁸ Auseklis, *Par dziedāšanu pie latviešiem* (“On singing among the Latvians”), *Baltijas Zemkopis*, Nr. 29, 1879. In order to accommodate participating Latvian émigré groups, the dimensions of the concert stage on the forested grounds of *Mežuparks* outside Rīga were expanded in 1990 to allow for approximately 24,000 singers and an audience of approximately 30,000. By 1998, the outdoor stage of the 22nd Latvian Song and Dance Festival held 28,864 participants; see Šmidchens, 1996, 27.

patterns of settlement. During the inter-war years of Latvian independence (1918-40) the work of collecting song materials came under national jurisdiction through the founding by the Ministry of Education of the Latvian State of the Latvian Folklore Archives (*Latviešu Folkloras Krātuve*) in December of 1924. A former schoolteacher, its director Anna Bērzkalne (1891—1956) proposed a rationale of archival expansion by applying criteria from the six volume classified listing in *Latvju dainas* (1894—1915). The institution profited from Barons' unpublished handwritten notes and correspondence, among the few possessions, which had been recovered after the war. The new director drew attention to the “mute regions” (*mēmie pagasti*) that lacked representation among the nine hundred named correspondents and contributors to *Latvju dainas*. This uncharted terrain in fact covered 218 out of 526 districts (*pagasti*), and revealed that Catholic inhabitants of Latgale had been largely overlooked in the initial collecting work. Bērzkalne wrote disparagingly on the lack of progress in 224 districts, over half of the nation, which lacked a volunteer force, which in her perception could engage in collecting the nation's main natural resource.¹⁰⁹ Thus the attention that the first Latvian folklore archivists accorded to regional song traditions gradually produced a symbolic map of a larger and more diversified “singing” nation.¹¹⁰ Bērzkalne distributed question sheets to schools, presented books to contributors and children, and offered adult collectors a fee, of four *lats*, for each transcription containing 9,000 letters of folklore text. During its founding years the institution collected 219,361 folksongs, thereby exceeding the scope of the quatrains listed in *Latvju dainas* (217,996). By 2004 these

¹⁰⁹ Bula, 2000, 101, 180; citing Bērzkalne, 1927. See the Internet site devoted the history of the Latvian Folklore Archives <http://www.lfk.lv>. See the Master's thesis of Rita Treija, “Latviešu folkloristi starptautiskajā sadarbībā 1920—1940,” 2008.

holdings encompassed folklore items within 2,130 distinct collections, which had been arranged by collector.¹¹¹

A choirmaster, composer, and musicologist of inter-war Latvia, Emilis Melngailis (1880—1957) collected 4,342 melodies in exhaustive field research across the lesser-explored borderlands of the provinces of Kurzeme and Zemgale, and along eastern Latgalian border areas. Yet the collector allegedly knew each of the 938 singers that he had recorded, a personal familiarity that he bolstered by the claim, “In each province, in each region, if not in each home, I believe the singing is unique.”¹¹² The lively manner of the inhabitants who offered him songs and stories about the “old times” inspired a fieldwork commentary dating from 1924 on the Baltic Sea coast of northern Kurzeme. Melngailis accentuates the dynamic and unrestrained dancing and music making in a remarkable passage:

The stoker of the grain-drying oven had a *stabule* (flute). When he began to play the workers sprang about so wildly (*toll*) even though they had been exhausted.¹¹³

The vivid musical participation given by Melngailis closely resembles a traveler’s account dating from 1841 (see above, Johann Georg Kohl, p. 175). A close similarity may be discovered in Herder’s spontaneous narrative that pervades his *Extract from*

¹¹⁰ Vīksna, 1996, 94-95.

¹¹¹ Vīksna, 1996, gives as an example the teacher Arturs Mežaks, whose donated materials date from 1925 to 1978. In a more recent overview Elga Melne studied the local collector Mārtiņš Bērziņš, who confined his materials to the Umurga district of Limbaži. His is the 556th collection of the Latvian Folklore Archives, comprising some two thousand collections in 2007.

¹¹² The folksong expeditions that began in 1899 continued into the Soviet period. Melngailis published voluminous transcriptions in three volumes, 1951-1953: *Latviešu mūzikas folkloras materiāli* [Materials of Latvian musical folklore].

Correspondence about Ossian and Songs of Ancient Peoples (see Chapter Three), an innovative essay that may be considered as a precedent for comparable expressions, which relate to “freely-acting people,” or to “lyrically dynamic songs.”¹¹⁴

The imagery of Latvian folklore remained a pervasive force in early twentieth century literary movements of Naturalism and Realism, of which Kārlis Skalbe (1879—1945) was the principal exponent. In “Sketch of a Childhood Memory,” amongst the short stories written in 1915, Skalbe gives a vivid description of his native farmstead during *Jāņu Nakts* (St. John’s Night):

We were up to our eyes with St. John’s greenery, and we wanted to sing. [...] Everyone sings. Even old servant Ieva, who on workdays never sets the water down from her shoulders and never looks up, unreels such songs, that the girls’ ears still burn, and so loudly, that all the trees in the forest resound, as if there were a thousand merry devils laughing. *Mēs bijām apkrāvušies Jāņu zālēm, un mums gribējās dziedāt [...] Visi dzied. Pat vecā kalpone Ieva, kura darbdienū nenoliek ūdens nēšus no pleciem un nepaceļ galvu, šķetina tādas dziesmas, ka meitām ausis vien svilst, un tik skaļi, ka mežā skan visi koki, it kā tur smietos tūkstoš jautru velnu.*¹¹⁵

A reminiscence of an impoverished childhood, the short stories of Jānis

¹¹³ Bērziņa, 1989, 91.

¹¹⁴ “Know then, that the more barbarous a people is – that is, the more alive, the more freely acting (for that is what the word means) – the more alive, the more free, the more deep-feeling, the more lyrically dynamic its songs will be, if songs it has!” *Wissen Sie also, dass je wilder, d.i. je lebendiger, je freiwirkender ein Volk ist (denn mehr heisst dies Wort doch nicht!) desto wilder, d.i. desto lebendiger, freier, sinnlicher, lyrisch handelnder müssen auch, wenn es Lieder hat, seine Lieder seyn!* Herder, *SW*, V, 164; see also Chapter Three.

¹¹⁵ Skalbe, *Raksti*, Rīga: Daugava, 1952, 349.

Jaunsudrabiņš (1877—1962) are set in rural Kurland. The poet builds a short story around his memory of playing a shepherd's birch-bark flute (*stabule*) upon the death of his father. In *Jāņi* (St. John's Day) he depicts a full communal observance of seasonal customs that took place in a farmstead during the 1880s:

It was a strange evening and a very strange night. Fires blazed on all the hilltops, songs resounded from all sides, and loud horns could be heard [...] We headed over and saw a whole crowd of neighbors. The [St. John's] *līgo* celebrants approached, but we did not stop singing, until both sides came close together and the melodies began to merge. *Tas bija savāds vakars un pavisam savāda nakts. Visos pakalnos spīdēja ugunis, visās malās skanēja dziesmas un bija dzirdama skaļa taurēšana [...] Mēs vērāmies turpu un redzējām, ka nāk vesels pulks kaimiņu. Līgoja nācēji, bet mēs arī neapklusām, līdz tad abas puses bija tik tuvu kopa, ka sāka meldiņš jukt.*¹¹⁶

The media emerged as a separate powerful institution, which canvassed examples of the *dainas* song traditions, became instrumental to the evolution of their cultural performance. The continuous line of early sound recordings can be traced to the songs of a Latvian prisoner-of-war, who was recorded during World War I by the Vienna *Phonogrammarchiv*. In 1926 the Latvian Folklore Archives (LFK) focused on recordings of an enclave of Catholic *Suiti* in the lowlands of Kurzeme. These are among the wax phonograph cylinders that had been employed until 1947, and in

¹¹⁶ Jaunsudrabiņš, *Baltā grāmata*, Rīga: Liesma, 1971, 170; see also Chapter Two on the significance of Herder's visit to the estate of Gravenheide, and its contribution to *līgotne* song tradition.

2000 were transferred onto the playback medium of DAT (digital audio tape) with the assistance of the *Phonogrammarchiv* of the Austrian Academy of Sciences.¹¹⁷

Because they were not polished nor transcribed by today's standards, early sound recordings represented only an intermediary step in the fieldwork process. From the first use of the magnetic tapes by the Latvian Folklore Archives in 1951, to the end of the 1970s, when radio-cassette recordings replaced them, some 197 magnetic tapes have been preserved.¹¹⁸ Folklorists increasingly arranged “ethnographic performances” for traditional singers in rural villages, becoming the controversial offshoot of their advancements in fieldwork recording methodology. Andrejs Jurjāns, the compiler of *Materials of Latvian Folk Music* (1894—1926, see below), introduced the technique of creating a fieldwork setting – in village centers or town halls – thereby having greater jurisdiction in the quality and content of recordings.¹¹⁹ After the transitional decade of the 1950s, when folklore research became part of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, fieldworkers continued to bestow recognition upon local singers, who aspired to raise their popular standing. Because of the expectations of fieldworkers, accomplished singers altered the local collective knowledge of song repertoires. The recurrence of academic interest bolstered new “regional ethnographic ensembles,” whose organization began in Kurzeme's

¹¹⁷ Wax cylinders, 1926-1933, of circa one thousand melodies, which have been transcribed onto paper. See CD and booklet *Latviešu folkloras krātuves senākie ieskaņojumi, The Earliest Recordings in the Latvian Folklore Archives*, Rīga, 2000. See examples in Appendix 3, Field Recordings Composite, ZD3: *Pieci bērni kumeliņi*, sung by *Suiti* musician Peteris Korāts (1871—1957) from Alsunga, and a Latgalian example, L3, *Nataki spūleite*. Early sound examples are also found in a Soviet *Melodiya* vinyl double LP set (1983).

¹¹⁸ Pūtelis, 2006, 85.

¹¹⁹ Interview with Māris Jansons, the director of the Latvian National Centre for Traditional and Performing Arts. Rīga, 27 September 1999.

Catholic enclave *Bārta* in 1929. Becoming popular in local town halls and collective farm centers, the ethnographic ensembles became the forerunners to the present-day informal folklore groups, *kopas* (see below, and Chapters Five and Six).

During the years of Latvian independence (1918—1940) the newly established media of films was harnessed in order to direct public attention to the wedding festivities of Kurzeme’s seven Catholic parish districts, whose inhabitants are known by the name of *Suiti*. In the marginalized villages and towns of the southwestern Kurzeme border – in Alsunga, Gudenieki, Jūrkalne, Nīca, Bārta, Rucava, and Otaņķi – the *Suiti* preserved a rare ethnographic culture of ritual customs, distinct traditional clothing, and a well-preserved vocal heterophony. Their enclaves held a rare repository of folk instruments – the *stabule* (flute), *dūdas* (bagpipe), and the *kokle*, a small flat wooden board zither that is related to the Finnish *kantele*, the Lithuanian *kankles*, and the Estonian *kannel*.¹²⁰

Ethnographic standards of authenticity developed during the inter-war period of the Republic of Latvia largely on the basis of *Suiti* religious enclaves. In 1935 an important film – *Dzimtene sauc* (“My Homeland Calls”), which was later entitled *Kāzas Alsungā* (“A Wedding in Alsunga”) – was made among *Suiti* traditional musicians. Yet according to participant Margrieta Otaņķe (b. 1915) the film became detrimental to the singing practices of her ethnographic ensemble – “they sent a producer to refine everything so thoroughly that nothing was left of our wedding.”¹²¹

¹²⁰ The ethnographic photographs by Balys Buračas from 1925 to 1936 created a parallel source of nostalgia towards the historical peasantry in the Lithuanian Republic; see Juodakis, 1971. On the *kokle*, see Jaremko, 1980.

¹²¹ The *Suiti* weddings are described in Bērziņa, 1989, 126, Muktupāvels, 2000, 397, and Vīksna, 2000, 61. In 2000 Margrieta Otaņķe directed the Otaņķu *Suitu sievas*. On 4 May 2001 I met the contemporary descendents of the Otanku at the halls of the

The limitations of reproduction and filming of regional customs and rites are applicable to the problematic issues of “inventing traditions,” such as the false cohesion of groups or “imagined communities.”¹²² Added to the problems of recreating the *Suiti* wedding ceremony was the ambivalence of the surrounding Lutheran populace, who had marginalized the *Suiti* and their music. Even in the latter part of the twentieth century these attitudes prevailed: a native of Kurzeme from Liepāja, my grandmother, for example, expressed astonishment at my interest in playing the *kokle*, which was deemed a ridiculous pursuit in Latvian bourgeois society of the inter-war years.

The evolution of Latvian academia during the 1920s is distinguished by the important research of Andrejs Jurjāns (1856—1922) in the early stages of Latvian ethnomusicology. Jurjāns established a basis for melodic analysis from surveys of vocal and instrumental traditional music. He traveled across regions in Vidzeme and Kurzeme (1891-2), where he studied traditional musicians in the Catholic enclaves of Alsunga, Grobiņa, and Gudenieki. A graduate of the prestigious St. Petersburg Conservatory, which fueled his success as an organist and concert performer on the French horn, Jurjāns pursued work as a folklore collector, publishing solicitations for Latvian musical materials to readers of the newspaper *Balss*.¹²³ A new Music Commission within Riga’s Latvian Society provided sponsorship that enabled him to explore a network of family structures of traditional musicians. He described as

University of Latvia where the ethnographic ensemble was a model for the young singers in the audience. They presented me with their cassette from 1998, which the district of Otaņķi had sponsored (see Discography).

¹²² For more on concepts pertaining to modern cultural nationalism, see Lehti, 2004 and Breuilly, 1993, 404.

¹²³ “Latviešu tautas mūzika,” *Balss*, (14 February) 1879.

joyful his experiences of people's seasonal customs, the natural surroundings, and the ethnographic antiquities of his summer expedition, some of these stemmed from chance encounters. Collecting and transcribing seven hundred melodies, the output of his fieldwork journey in 1891, Jurjāns published a ten-part newspaper series, "Observations when collecting Latvian musical materials" (*Ievērojumi, Latvju tautas mūzikas materiālus krājot*). Because of his interests as a systematic musicologist, Jurjāns transcribed folksong and dance melodies and singing styles as well as compiling an organology of the six-stringed *kokles* (tuned d, g, a, h, c', d'), *āžrags* or *bukarags* (goat horns), *sietiņš* (frame drum), and *trideksnis* or *eglītis* (sistrum).¹²⁴ In a paper read to the Music Commission of Rīga's Latvian Society in 1892 Jurjāns focused upon the *līgotne* or St. John's Day (*Jāņu*) song genre; he placed his analysis of modality and melodic structures in the context of Indo-European mythology, sun cults, and music. This research became the basis of the first volume of melodies published by the Rīga Latvian Society, *Latvju tautas mūzikas materiāli* (1894), "Materials of Latvian folk music" (in six volumes to 1926). It is appropriated today in folklore *kopas* as a standard source of reference for obtaining traditional folksongs, round dance or sung dance tunes, and folk instrumental melodies.

Whereas Jurjāns did not always gather the biographical background of singers and participants, his successor in this area of research, the musicologist and composer Emīlis Melngailis,¹²⁵ transcribed melodies and provided contextual data from the same enclaves some fifty years later. In April 1924 the Latvian literary

¹²⁴ His observations during collecting expeditions were presented in a series of essays in *Balss*: (12 February – 17 June) Nos. vii-x, xii-xvi, xxv, 1892, and the melodies appeared in Jurjans' collection of folk music materials, *Latvju tautas mūzikas materiāli*, Rīga, 1894-1922; see also Klotiņš, 1981.

scholar Ludis Bērziņš, (see Chapter Three), who directed Riga's Teachers' Institute, invited *Suiti* folk musicians to Riga where they demonstrated improvised declaiming practices native to the Gudenieki district. In their re-enactment of a “song war” of the wedding cycle, of *apdziedāšanās*, a satirical exchange took place between two declaimers (*teicēji*), with a characteristic third voice providing the accompanying vocal drone.¹²⁶

The recognition and popularity of the first ethnographic filmed reproduction of the Catholic enclaves in recent times has heightened interest into the folklore of remote rural enclaves. The late ethnographic filmmaker Andris Slapiņš (d. 1991, see illustration 22) returned to the *Suiti* region of *Gudenieki* in an award-winning documentary, “Field of Dreams” (*Cerību lauki*). As part of the 23rd Latvian Song and Dance Festival, *Latvijas Televīzija* (Latvian Television) broadcast *kopa* participants from the five largest Latvian ethnographic regions – Augšzeme (Highlands), Latgale (Eastern), Vidzeme and Zemgale (Central), and Kurzeme (Western) – all of them joining in elaborate and lengthy presentations of the ritual segments of weddings that represent distinct regional traditions. One reviewer, however, criticized the attempt at an authentic ritual re-enactment, in which the participation of the *kopas* appeared unnatural and clichéd.¹²⁷

Of the few remaining folk instrumentalists in Alsunga Jānis Poriķis moved to Rīga in 1947 and cultivated music there until the 1990s. In his youth Poriķis had been apprenticed to Nikolajs Heņķis, a master of the *kokle* – a small lap zither related

¹²⁵ *Latviešu mūzikas folkloras materiāli* Bd. I, the first of three volumes, 1951-1952.

¹²⁶ Daugule, 1994, 4; Apkalns, 1977, 43, gives a musical analysis of the family wedding ritual of the *Sāngerkrig*, “song war.” Johann Jakob Harder observed the genre in 1764, see the *Volkslieder* (Chapter Three).

to the Finnish *kantele*, the Lithuanian *kankles*, and the Estonian *kannel*.¹²⁸ Heņķis was among a few *Suiti* musicians to be featured in the Latvian Folklore Archives phonograph recordings after 1926; he was an expert craftsman and musician of the *kokle* at a time when the native folk instrument and its idiomatic method of accompanying dances – with repeated chords, and with repeated bass notes or drone – were rapidly vanishing. Poriķis joined members of Riga's *kopa Skandinieki* in the 1980s (see next chapter) to whom he demonstrated *Suiti* dances and vocal melodies from his native enclave of Alsunga. In a conscious use of rural culture to cultivate notions of authenticity to urban dwellers, Poriķis transmitted *kokles* traditions that had been formerly the sole provenance of the *Suiti*.¹²⁹

An uninterrupted line of oral tradition that is sustained in families and regions the music of the *Suiti*, a small Catholic enclave in Kurzeme, has been preserved in the twentieth century.¹³⁰ This Catholic minority group has developed an affinity for the organization of ethnographic ensembles during the inter-war years of the Republic of Latvia (1918 to 1940) when five ethnographic ensembles were founded in Latgale and Kurzeme, eastern and western borderland provinces in which ten additional ethnographic ensembles emerged in the Soviet era (1945 to 1990). Their repertoires and organization, unlike the *kopa*, rely upon the participation of an older

¹²⁷ Kapusts, 2003, 12. See also CDs issued in the 1990s of the *Suitu Sievas*.

¹²⁸ See Kristina Jaremko, *The Baltic Folk Zithers*, M.A. thesis, University of California at Los Angeles, 1980.

¹²⁹ Interview with the founding director Dainis Stalts, Rīga, 6 May 2001; see also Jakubone, 1990, 20; Muktupāvels, 2000, 389

¹³⁰ Ethnographic ensembles were formed in Kurzeme: Sauna (1954), Bārta (1929, and revived in the 1950s), Nīca/Otaņķi (1954), Alsunga (1923 and revived in 1955), Rucava (1955), Gudenieki (1965), Jūrkalne (revived in 1965); and in Latgale: Aglone (1957), Bērzgale (1958), and Auleja (1960). On this chronology see Ambrazevičs, 1996, 3, Šmidchens, 1996, 131, and Bērziņa, 1989, 116-17.

generation of local retired pensioners, who had remained in their rural homelands. Not least because of the social and economic realities facing the older, rural family structure the distribution of the ethnographic ensemble differs from the urban, youth-oriented “folklore movement” (see Chapter Five).¹³¹

During the presentations by the ethnographic ensembles, or by the urban folklore *kopas*, listeners may grasp not only a sense of their common identity, but they may also learn of their cultural differences.¹³² During a fieldwork excursion in October of 2000 I filmed and recorded a large gathering of over twenty regional *kopas* in Riga, each of which sang two folksongs in commemoration of the 165th anniversary of the birth of Krisjānis Barons (b. 30 October 1835).¹³³ They honored him, as the *Baronstēvs* or the “father” of the national folksong movement, with a display of heterogeneous ethnographic singing practices. This was entirely in keeping with the principles of *Latvju dainas*, a classification that celebrated regional cultural differentiation. In the national folklore festival for children and youth in spring of 2001¹³⁴ each participating *kopa* presented a symbolic pattern of ethno-cultural unity: two distinct routes to Riga became apparent by the order of the presentations, first, of the *kopas* from small towns and districts in Kurzeme: Rucava – Ventspils – Saldus – Riga, and second, being followed by the *kopas* that arrived from the southeast, through Jaunsilava – Livāni – Koknese – Riga. Although folklore reproduction and its performance are commonplace today, the concept of an imagined ethnic collective of Latvians, as it is outlined here, is in fact comparatively recent. Its origins clearly

¹³¹ Interview with Ernests Spīčs, University of Latvia, 30 July 2003.

¹³² Hobsbawm, 1990, 145.

¹³³ *Folkloras koncerts un dainu dziedājums*, 26 October 2000; see Sound Recording Composite.

lie in the writings of a few gifted individuals, who envisioned a unified nation during a decisive era of national awakening, beginning with the publication of Alunāns' *Dziesmiņas* in 1856 and reaching a denouement in the epic poem of Pumpurs' *Lāčplēsis* in 1888.

¹³⁴ Entitled *Pulkā eimu, pulkā teku* (12 May 2001).

Conclusion

This overview of the nineteenth century has shown that the expansive developments in folksong studies may be considered as a determining factor in the “awakening” of Latvian national consciousness. A chronology of folksong collecting projects began shortly after Herder’s years in Riga (1764—1769),¹³⁵ when the acclaimed German thinker motivated local scholars among the parish clergy to furnish a song sample for his international folksong collection, the *Volkslieder* (1778-79). Over a century later, in entitling his opening chapter “Songs – Common Property for all Latvia,” in 1894 Krišjānis Barons fulfilled a monumental task that of an exhaustive collection with scholarly merits, which would replicate Herder’s ideal, “*Ein Volk, das keinen Nationalgesang hat, hat schwerlich einen Charakter.*”¹³⁶ A singular achievement, both as a political campaign and a folksong classification, *Latvju dainas* (from 1894 to 1915) dealt with the lives of some nine hundred named correspondents and anonymous contributors, as well as the surrounding communities and families. Barons made it clear that the decline of rural society and its innate values threatened to undermine an older layer of declaiming tradition, whose cultural significance and genetic link to the past was synonymous with the image of the Latvian nation. *Latvju dainas* atoned for the historic neglect of Latvian farming culture, singing and related musical practices. Drawing on a remarkable systematic attention to detail, and a multitude of song fragments, Barons pieced together a world-view pertaining to the

¹³⁵ Niedermüller, 1989, 51.

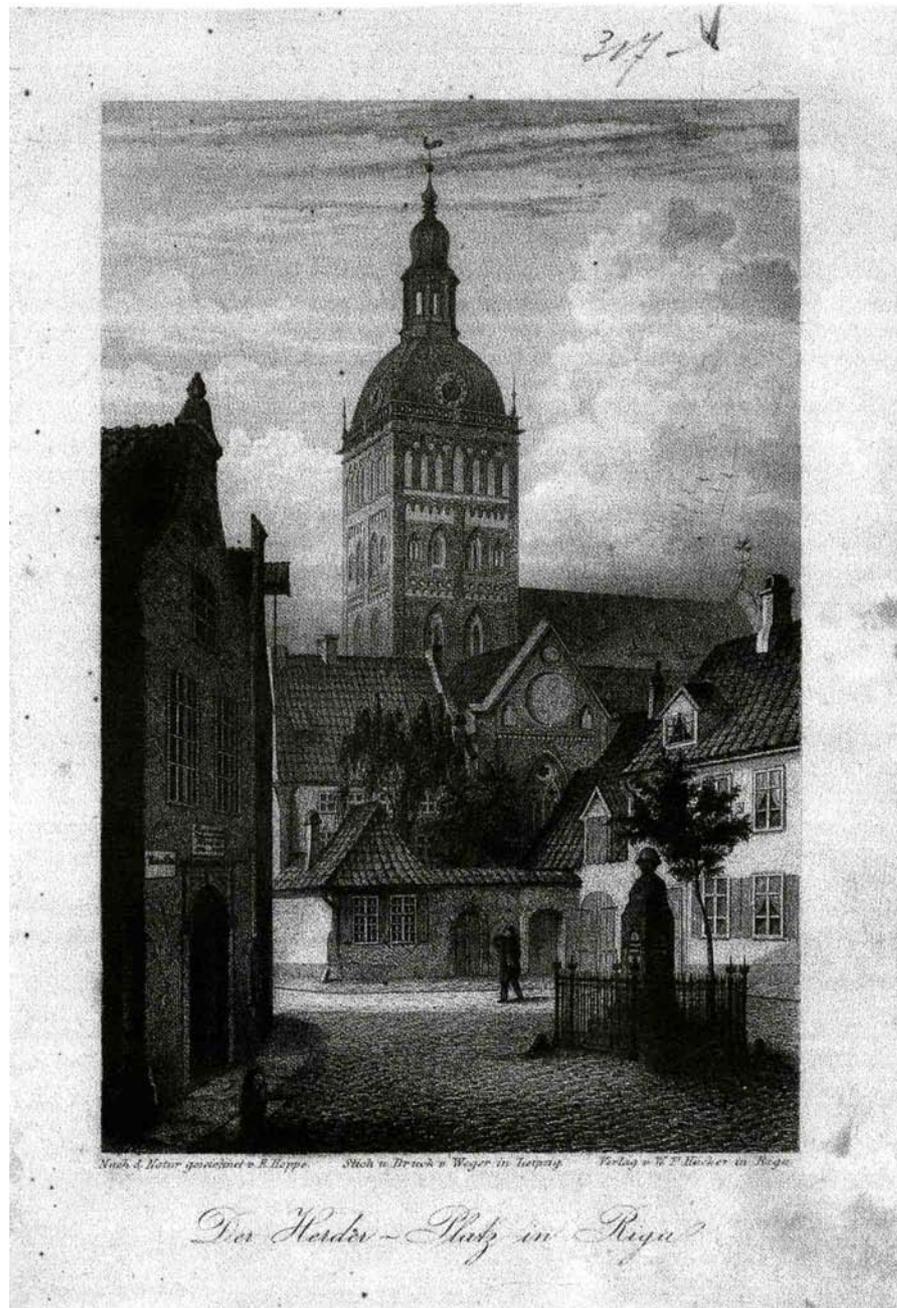
¹³⁶ Herder denied the possibility of national character in the absence of a song tradition. *Von Ähnlichkeit der mittlern englischen und deutschen Dichtkunst, nebst verschiedenem das daraus folget* (On the Similarity of Medieval English and German Poetry, Together with Various Conclusions Resulting from This): *SW*, IX,

native landscape and its history,¹³⁷ a strand of ethnographic documentation that originates with the smaller monograph collections of Bergmann and Wahr, in 1807 and 1808 respectively. Accompanying an efflorescence of Latvian creative novels, paintings, and choral music, and the espousal of Romantic ideas, *Latvju dainas* produced a detailed chronicle of Latvian national culture prior to World War I. Extending into the twentieth century, the legacy of Barons is apparent in the history of folksong reproduction in performance, which developed in the 1920s on the basis of ideas concerning fieldwork documentation, recording technology, and organized techniques of singing in regional ethnographic ensembles.

531.

¹³⁷ Buceniece, 1995, 17.

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18. *Das Herder-Platz in Riga*. Engraving E. Hopp, Leipzig, printed in Riga: W.

F. Häcker [186-?]. Museum of the History of Riga and Navigation VRVM

165020/17.



19. Domkirche (Cathedral), Rīga 2004, by the author.



20. Portrait of Krišjānis Barons (1835—1923). Hall of the Latvian Society Rīga, 31 October 2000, by the author.



**21. *Dainu Skapis* (Barons' Cabinet of Songs), Latvian Folklore Archives
Rīga, 4 November 2000, by the author.**

V. Folksongs of Rebellion (1976—1991)

Introduction

During the period that marked the dissolution of the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic, from circa 1987 to 1991, tightly knit groups, or *kopas*, effectively orchestrated an ethnic resurgence in opposition to Soviet cultural alternatives. In the decade that preceded the “singing revolution,” beginning in the 1970s, these groups generally eluded Soviet jurisdiction by their organization of “authentic” or rural-based folksong activity in Latvian cities. The early history of this “folklore movement” (Latvian: *folkloras kustība*) will be traced, first, to the influential precedent of wide-scale ecological protests, which drew attention to the preservation of land, and second, to the parallel strand of dissident ideology that was the domain of Latvian poets and writers. These currents shared a common purpose of emulating the culture of ordinary rural people and the natural surroundings of their farming communities. In order to recapture the censored aspects of Latvian ethnicity the *kopas* focused on the restoration of the language and structure of the folk song (Latvian: *daina*), as well as related verbal lore and crafts. By drawing on the characteristically indirect and understated voice of the *dainas*, dissident folksingers were able to publicize Latvian nationalist themes regarding the farmstead or the pre-Christian mythological worldview.¹ *Kopa* participants recreated the intonation and spirit of an “open voice” (*atvērta balss*) as if they were singing in the fields. They succeeded in contrasting their manner of vocal reproduction with Soviet-era folksong

¹ Vīķe Freiberga, 1975, 26; Lieven, 1993, 113-14; poems of protest are found in

and dance performances, which, in the end, became peripheral to the growing impetus of Latvian ethnic nationalism.²

Following their first formal appearance in November of 1976, the *kopa Skandinieki* served as the spiritual role model for approximately a dozen new *kopas* and similar clubs or ensembles; by the mid-1980s this number had exceeded one hundred.³ Of these, the larger and long-established *kopas* that joined together between 1976 and 1981 – the *Skandinieki*, *Savieši*, *Senleja* – can be categorized as “secondary reproduction ensembles,” for they studiously acquired much of their song repertoires from the pages of scholarly folk music collections, an activity that entailed the study of folk instrumentation, customs, rituals, folk arts, and crafts.⁴ It may be a moot point among Latvians as to whether these methods of reproduction have insured the continuity of oral traditions.

We can posit that during the planning of *Latvju dainas* (1894—1915) parallel circumstances existed, which led to a heightened consciousness of the folksongs and the importance of collecting them. Addressing the art of the Latvian declaimer, the

Zdanys 1978.

² Boiko, 1995. This chapter draws upon three personal narrative interviews with Dainis and Helmī Stalts, and contains commentary from six other *kopa* participants; interviews are listed in the bibliography. See Jaremko-Porter, 2001, “Commemorating the Latvian Folklore Movement in post-Soviet Context”; idem, 2005, “Ethnomusicology as Counter-history: J. G. Herder and the Latvian ‘Folklore Movement’”; idem, 2007, “A Return to the Rural Idyll.” See also Muktupāvels, 2006, director of the *kopa Savieši* during the early 1980s, and the unpublished dissertation of Guntis Šmidchens, 1996, who was a participant of the *Skandinieki* during his fieldwork in the emergent Baltic states, 1990-92.

³ Muktupāvels, 2000, 398.

⁴ Beitāne, 1996, 10. These *kopas* contain on the average thirty members. On Rīga’s *Skandinieki* and *Savieši*, see below; *Senleja* is based in Sigulda, Vidzeme, and was formed in 1981 as a “family folklore group” (*ģimenes folkloras kopa*), led by Aina Salmane, on accordion, *Senleja* issued a commemorative CD in 2002 of the songs of Vidzeme. They perform wearing eighteenth- and nineteenth-century costumes.

monumental song collection transformed the level of singing practice associated with oral continuity.⁵ The documentation and representation of ethnographic and regional identities in *Latvju dainas* were influential in the era of statehood and independence (1918—1940), when the collection continued to stimulate the conception of Latvian national culture. At the end of the twentieth century a parallel situation arose among the leaders of and participants in the folklore movement, those who renewed the voice of Latvian ethnic separatism by means of their popularity, spontaneity, and acerbic wit. Ethnic consciousness grew within insular, “imagined” communities situated within Soviet urban environments.⁶ These early *kopas* formulated hidden dissident meanings and behaviors from the use of folkloric language and dialectal forms; their rural ethnic values formed a barricade that encircled the urban community.⁷

The present chapter considers *kopa* activism in the “singing revolution” (Latvian: *dziesmotā revolūcija*) that occurred from approximately 1987 to 1991 and preceded the break-up of the Soviet Union. It could be argued that the biographical accounts presented here are no less important to the progress of Latvian folksong scholarship than Herder’s idealization of the Latvian national voice within *Volkslieder* (1778-79), and indeed equally as momentous as the awakening of song traditions in *Latvju dainas* (1894—1915). This task was exacerbated, however, by the barren conditions under the state collective farm (*sovkhos*) and Communist community (*kolkhoz*) since the 1950s. These conditions changed the agricultural work songs of collective assistance that had been sung out of doors, although those

⁵ According to Krišjānis Barons; see Chapter Four.

⁶ On the imagined community see Anderson, 1990; Berlin, 1990, 338; Boyes, 1993.

repertoires survived sporadically among isolated voices or in outlying rural areas. Since the restoration of independence in 1991, the principal folksong collectors in Latvia are the leaders of folklore *kopas*, committed to organizing expeditions and making in-depth observations and interpretative studies of exceptional rural folksingers.⁸ My conversations with them have suggested that a parallel history of collecting exists between the nationalism of *kopa* participants and that of the era of Brīvzemnieks, Barons, and other late nineteenth-century *Latvju dainas* editors and contributors.⁹ Because historically the founding Latvian editors conceived of a national landscape and readership, their underlying rationale for folksong collecting diverged from the broader cultural-historical considerations of German folksong scholars who worked in Herder's shadow (e.g., Bergmann, Büttner and Bielenstein).

Latvian protests of the late 1980s shared the euphoric optimism that accompanied the fall of Communist symbols – of the Berlin Wall, the Warsaw Pact, and the Iron Curtain.¹⁰ In contrast, the singing revolution concluded tragically with the martyrdom of civilians in Rīga and Vilnius in January of 1991. Moreover, a decade of ethnic and constitutional conflict ensued among wide-ranging ethnic groups and nationalities in the Soviet successor nations. International attention turned to the constitutional rights of citizenry for the Russian and Slavic *diaspora*

⁷ See Brauns, 2002, 225; Muktupāvels, 2006, 94.

⁸ Valdis Muktupāvels debates this point in his essay on “language, signs and symbols of authority and rebellion,” 2007, 93.

⁹ To support this assertion Dainis and Helmī Stalts raise the historical significance of Brīvzemnieks as an initiator of change and as a folklore collector, interview, Rīga, 9 May 2001.

¹⁰ For a synopsis of the “singing revolution” see Dreifelds, 1989, 89-91.

that remained in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.¹¹ Publicizing his opinion on the conflicts of post-socialist nationalisms in 1991, Isaiah Berlin¹² reasoned that the crisis at hand exemplified a symbolic manifestation of *Volksgeist*, the concept of Herder that places importance upon one's sense of belonging to an ethnic group or nation and upon the ethical principles of national self-determination. Berlin alluded to heightened displays of traditional folk song that suggest a parallel to "the blossoming of the human spirit, of human morals, the ideal of our imagination,"¹³ and, secondly, to Herder's attribution of the morality of a nation to "intelligence, art, and a fully developed language."¹⁴ Not least because of Herder's ties to Latvian history, his writings have remained relevant to Latvian national development (see below and Chapter Four). That amateur musicians in the 1980s were capable of changing the orientation of national consciousness has renewed Herder's meaning of "humanitarian value" (Latvian: *cilvēciska vērtība*).

1. The Collective Memory of the Third Awakening

Cultural historians who study the collective memory of a people draw upon all representations of their past, including music, which can be contained in biographical accounts, books, films, museums, and other forms of commemoration. The

¹¹ *Managing Conflict in the Former Soviet Union: Russian/American Perspectives*. Edited by Alexei Arbatov, Abram Chayes, Antonia Handler Chayes, and Lara Olson, Boston: MIT Press, 1997.

¹² Gardels, interview, 1991, 19; see Introduction.

¹³ [*Wenn Poesie*] *die Blüthe des menschlichen Geistes, der menschlichen Sitten, ja ich möchte sagen das Ideal unsrer Vorstellungsart; Briefe zu Beförderung der Humanität (Letters for the Advancement of Humanity)*, 1796. Herder, *SW*, XVIII, 57 (*Brief* 88). The translation is from Gillies, 1945, 105; see also Baidam, 1999, 76.

¹⁴ Herder, *SW*, XVI, 600; Forster, 2002, xxviii; Berlin, 2000, 170; Bernard, 1965, 113.

continuity of collective memory among Baltic peoples, however, was broken from 1939 to 1990 by the imposition of official Soviet historiography. As a result of *glasnost* and *perestroika*, after 1986 a period of openness enabled journalists and historians in the political watch group “Helsinki ‘86” to call attention to the “blank spots” of expurgated history.¹⁵ Although museums and former camp sites have been dedicated to restoring the memory of the Holocaust in the Baltic nations, a BBC broadcaster was stunned by accounts from Lithuanians who had little or no knowledge of what took place fifty years ago.¹⁶ A repository of recordings and transcriptions, the national oral history project at the University of Latvia (*Nationālas mutvārdu vēsture projekts*) has evolved since 1992 within the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology; by 2007 it housed approximately two thousand transcribed accounts of life histories of Latvians, as well as émigrés in America. These specialized source materials have restored and expanded the boundaries of Latvian historiography. The project targeted an older generation of Latvians, many of whom share opinions regarding their experience of historical events in the twentieth century.¹⁷ British scholar Vieda Skultāne has recorded accounts of Latvian arrests and deportations, and the lives in exile of Siberian deportees.¹⁸ She drew extensively upon vivid accounts of images and values of Latvian statehood from 1918 to 1940.¹⁹ As a whole, these compelling case studies of standard themes,

¹⁵ Senn, 1990, 104; Dreifelds, 1996, 52.

¹⁶ Cook, 2002.

¹⁷ Skultāns, 1997, 172; Smith, 1994, 121.

¹⁸ Interviews of residents in the parish of Drusti in the central province of Vidzeme were conducted between 1992 and 1993. At the close of the first Soviet occupation of World War II, during the night of 13-14 June 1941, some 15,000 Latvians were transported under harsh conditions to labor camps in Siberia. A second wave of deportations occurred after 1959 as a result of the mass collectivization of farmlands.

¹⁹ Lieven, 1993; Rethmann, 1997, Stradiņš, 1992.

opinions, and cultural representations counter the Soviet official account. Admittedly some narrators exaggerate an aggressive national rhetoric of their heroism and sacrifice during the long occupation, in order to meet current popular expectations.²⁰ Other personal life histories have been compared to “historical ballads” that contain expressive modes of tragedy or comedy.²¹

The collective memory of a people draws on varied representations of the past, including music, which can be contained in biographical accounts, books, museums, and other forms of commemoration. The lives of singers – together with their local and regional affiliations, references to genealogies, and stories about family members – constituted the principal narrative themes, which I elicited from *kopa* leaders and participants during recurrent interviews (2000-7). First, the personal accounts of Helmī and Dainis Stalts, who have led the *kopa Skandinieki* since 1976, had an array of political anecdotes and incidents within the framework of recent Latvian history. Second, the urgency of their tone of voice conveyed how they had risen above the fatalism and passivity endemic to Soviet times. The couple met in *Līvlist*, an ensemble founded in 1972 among an ethnic minority of Livonians;²² they broke away to establish a group in which they could revive legionnaires’ and other soldiers’ repertoires. Their travels across Latvia to perform a nationalistic repertoire of soldiers’ songs, however, provoked a punitive reaction whereby they were compelled to leave their positions at the Ethnographic Open-air Museum.²³ Local

²⁰ Skultāne, 1997, 173; Humphrey, 1994, 26.

²¹ See [www.dzivesstasts.lv]; Bela-Krūmiņa and Garda, 2004.

²² Those of Finno-Ugric and Livonian descent, see Chapter Six; Šuvcāne, 2003, 30.

²³ Other early members of the *Skandinieki*, Valdis Muktupāvels and Ojārs Rode, experienced *vajāšana*. Interviews with Dainis Stalts, Mazirbe, 2 August 2003 and Ojārs Rode, Drusti, 2 October 2002.

Soviet authorities distributed propaganda sheets at their performances, but the *Skandinieki* “just sang the songs anyway.”²⁴ In this resolve they demonstrated an ethos of resistance that became an ideal for the growing folklore movement.²⁵

By way of comparison, a team of British sociologists who conducted a large-scale study with a Russian population during the post-Soviet transitional years encountered an overall lack of cooperation and attitudes of indifference.²⁶ Apparently, after 1991 these factors did not enter into a Latvian oral history project at the University of Latvia, which was mainly directed to an older generation of Latvians. Some of these researchers, who have roots in the West, have achieved a positive analysis of fieldwork interviews, Vieda Skultāns, at the University of Bristol, and Latvian-American scholar Maija Hinkle have noted the presence of trust and rapport in which they received “a true exchange of stories and experiences.”²⁷

On the basis of my eight research trips, I confirm that the use of Latvian was essential to securing the full cooperation of folklore groups, such as the *Skandinieki*. Having recourse to a common language I was able to cultivate the allegiances of Helmī Stalte and Dainis Stalts, who recounted the origins and development of the group. Thus their narratives devoted to the Soviet occupation provide valuable insight into Latvian historiography:

²⁴ Interview with Dainis and Helmī Stalts, Rīga, 7 May 2001.

²⁵ According to the Polish dissident Adam Michnik, 1990; see Dreifelds, 1989, 81.

²⁶ Pahl and Thompson, 1994, 135.

²⁷ Hinkle, 2006, 57.

The success of ‘informals’ [i.e. informal groups] in representing broader moods of the populace depended in part upon their ethnic closeness to the population.

They could deploy Latvian national symbols, flags, emblems, and folk songs.²⁸

Inherent to some narratives was a pronounced animated flow of ideas that clearly mirrored the intensity of the incidents under discussion. For example, when I interviewed a former participant in the *Skandinieki*, Jānis Vītols, in his farmhouse in the town of Druviena in Vidzeme, he spoke freely, recounting how in the late 1970s, he had “dreamed of a future Latvia” after rehearsals when talking with other members of the *Skandinieki*. In this particular narrative he demonstrated inherent characteristics of an “evocative transcript,” in which he countered and embellished the official Soviet version of these events.²⁹

2. ‘A Piercing Awakening’

In 1992 the publication entitled *The Third Awakening (Trešā Atmoda)*, an important compendium of writings and speeches, sharply altered the course of Latvian historiography. When the editor Jānis Stradiņš, president of the Latvian Academy of Sciences, compiled a testimony of writings pertaining to anti-Soviet dissent he concluded that the papers at hand contained striking similarities to the first national literatures of the 1860s and 1870s (see Chapter Four). Alluding to the national awakening, he compared a decisive meeting of the Writers’ Union to a “piercing alarm clock.”³⁰ This editor proposed further that the cycle of three national

²⁵ Aves and Hoskins, 1992, 105-6.

²⁹ Jānis Vītols, 1 October 2002; Jones, 1994.

³⁰ Stradiņš, 1992, 6; see also Kavolis, 1991, 59.

awakenings subsumed an intermediate stage, of the Social Democratic uprising in the early twentieth century.³¹ Clearly, the folklore resurgence of the singing revolution had developed a close identification with a legacy of popular volunteerism, which came to the fore in the six-volume collection of *Latvju dainas* (1894—1915). This unified perception of ethnic communities, folklore research, and traditional folklore performances obtained significance in Latvian historiography in the categorization of national awakenings (*tautas atmodas laikmeti*).³²

With the reawakening of the Latvian *intelligentsia* after 1980, dissident members became speakers at folklore events and traditional musicians joined their ranks in displays of ethnic enthusiasm.³³ At a point in 1989, when Latvians comprised only forty-nine percent of the populace in the Latvian SSR, the playwright Māra Zālīte announced to the plenum of the Latvian SSR Writers' Union that her countrymen were poised "on the threshold of extinction."³⁴ Artists, craftsmen, and folklorists became the spiritual core of the "Green movement" (*zaļā kustība*); their letters inundated the weekly organ of the Writers' Union *Literatūra un māksla* that prominently opposed a hydroelectric dam and station near the city of Daugavpils on the southeast corner of the Daugava River.³⁵ The *kopas* strengthened political activism – avenging what one might call a wounded national spirit redolent of

³¹ For a parallel historical example see Ian Watson, *Song and Democratic Culture in Britain*, 1983. The author gives an account of revivalist communities that initiated resistance behaviors in an oppositional music subculture in response to the ideological conflicts pertaining to workers' rights in Britain.

³² Stradiņš, 1992, and above.

³³ Dreifelds, 1989, 81; Kavolis, 1991, 59.

³⁴ Dreifelds, 1989, 79; Grigorievs, 1996, 120.

³⁵ Muižnieks, 1987

Herder's *Volksgeist* – through nonviolent principles of participation.³⁶ The widespread singing of a traditional Latvian divination song to the "earth mother" deity *Māra* (Barons LD 54865) took on the status of a dissident ecological hymn. In 2003 and 2004 I recorded the song from the repertoire of *Dimzēns* from Jelgava (see CD composite); on 24 July 2004 it was performed with *kokles* accompaniment on a national TV news documentary:³⁷

<i>Pie dieviņa gari galdi</i>	There are long tables at God's place
<i>Baltu klātu galdautiņu;</i>	All covered by white tablecloths;
<i>Tur sēdēja mīļā Māra</i>	Sweet Māra is sitting there
<i>Dvēselītes skaitīdama.</i>	Counting the souls of the deceased.
<i>Villainītes rakstīdama</i>	Embroidering shawls
<i>Izrakstīta saskaitīja</i>	Having counted the pattern
<i>Atdod Dieva rociņai</i>	Gave it to God's hands
<i>Nu Dieviņi, tava vara</i>	Here God, in your power
<i>Nu tavāi rociņai.</i>	Here in your hands.
<i>Manas baltas villainītes.</i>	My white shawls.
<i>Mana balta dvēselīte.</i>	My white soul.
<i>Dod, Dieviņ, kalnā kāpti,</i>	Grant God [that I] climb the hill,
<i>Ne no kalna lējiņāi.</i>	Not descend the hill.
<i>Dod, Dieviņ, otram doti</i>	Grant God [that I] give to others

³⁶ Gardels, 1991, 20-21.

³⁷ This variant was well known throughout Latvia at the time it was sent to me by Velta Leja, Jelgava, 30 May 2003, but it is also found in the collection (1951-53) of Emīlis Melngailis, *Latvju tautas mūzikas materiāli*. See interview with Ilga Reizniece, 3 November 2000, Appendix 3.

Ne no otra mīli lūgti. Not to beg dearly from others.

Public awareness of the loss of language and cultural traditions merged with these environmental concerns. The folklore movement brought a consciousness of ethnic nationalism to activists whose musical participation was, in itself, a means of “awakening.” Rejecting Communist Party allegiance (Russian: *partijnošt’*), those intellectuals who migrated to the folklore movement may have been attracted to the underlying permanence of traditional song culture.³⁸

Cultural issues remained dominant in the emergence of ethnic separatism, as an advisor to Mikhail Gorbachev remarked in 1988: the national awakening was the work of “performers, musicians, and people of this sort,” who were “out of touch with reality.”³⁹ But the rational continuity of history among Latvians had been severed from 1939 to 1990 by the imposition of official Soviet historiography. As a result of Gorbachev’s policies of *glasnost’* and *perestroika* after 1986, a period of openness enabled journalists and historians to call attention to the expurgated “blank spots” of history resulting from the Soviet and Stalinist invasions and occupation, particularly from 1939 to 1941.⁴⁰ Led by the human rights watch group Helsinki-86, founded in Liepāja in 1986, calendar demonstrations in 1987 began to mark the anniversary of mass deportations of June 1941 at the Rīga Monument of Freedom.

³⁵ Vīķe Freiberga, 1975, 17.

³⁶ American Sovietologist Hedrick Smith edited the film “Baltic Requiem” and added commentary. In the following year the film’s maker Juris Podnieks filmed the shooting of three fellow cameramen in Rīga (20 January 1991). Illustration 22 is a photograph taken in 2004 of the stone, which commemorates the site. January 20 is a public day of commemoration in Latvia of the defenders of the Rīga barricades in January 1991.

³⁷ Aleksander Yakovlev, *New York Times* 28 October 1988; see Senn, 1990, 102 and Kirby, 1995, 432.

Approximately 10,000 Latvians demonstrated and sang on 25 March 1988 in a second memorial service held in Rīga's Brother's Cemetery (*Brāļu kapi*). In commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (23 August 1939) "the Baltic way" represented a pilgrimage of one and a half million Latvians, Lithuanians, and Estonians, who linked hands along a route stretching 600 kilometers (320 miles) from Tallinn in Estonia to Rīga, and from Rīga to Vilnius in Lithuania.⁴¹

The national awakening coincided with the first *Baltica* international folklore festivals that began in Vilnius and Rīga, in 1987 and 1988, respectively.⁴² Increasing numbers of folklore activists sang in the vicinity of historical landmarks, monuments, and large public streets. These folklore festivals exemplified the ability of cultural nationalism in Latvia, indeed, to eclipse the political and economic sphere. The public perception of the *kopas* as an alternative culture was now transformed into a national standard. In the streets of Rīga in July 1988 the banned symbols of inter-war independent Latvia – the national flag and the national anthem – were displayed and heard in street processions for the first time after the post-war era of Soviet occupation. In the historical street processions Dainis Stalts, a leader of a *kopa* and not a leader of a political party, carried the banned Latvian flag of Jānis Akurāters (1876—1937), an icon that was housed in the Museum devoted to the author. Other Latvian flags had been only recently sewn together, while others were

³⁸ Senn, 1990, 104; Dreifelds, 1996, 52.

⁴¹ Governments of Western nations did not recognize the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact of 23 August 1939, nor the illegal annexation of the Baltic nations to the Soviet Union from 1940 to 1941, and from 1944 to 1990;

⁴² At the 21st General Assembly of UNESCO's Council of International Organization for Folklore Festivals (CIOFF) the folklore association *Baltica* was

taken from hiding places or museums. Māris Jansons, who is the director of the Latvian National Centre for Traditional and Performing Arts, and of Rīga's *kopa Auri*, was inspired to purchase materials and sew flags on the day of the procession. Julgi Stalte, when interviewed by the BBC, related the means by which participants hid the flags of the former three Baltic States under their long folk costumes amidst massive crowds; this had deterred the threat of Soviet reprisals. A bagpiper from each of the three former Baltic nations accompanied the street procession of flags, epitomizing a national symbolism that was strongly felt, for it successfully united traditional music and politics.⁴³

The singing revolution was a display in which the roles of spectators, politicians, and musicians could not be distinguished. The *kopa Pērkonītis* of the suburban town of Ropaži, near Rīga, described feelings of spontaneous enjoyment when they chose to participate in the festival events:

The beginning took place in 1990. It seemed that the sun, flowers, smiles, and an approaching sense of freedom had startled everyone. How dear and obliging Rīga seemed; even the sun shone differently. We [*Pērkonītis*] were not asked nor invited, but we wanted to sing and we did so. All the large collectives were in the procession, but who would stop us from joining them? We walked, we sang, we rejoiced, and we felt grand.⁴⁴

accepted as an associate member.

⁴³ Interviews with Māris Jansons, Rīga, 3 October 2002, and Dainis Stalts, 7 May 2001; Julgi Stalte was interviewed in Estonia for a BBC radio broadcast, see Evans, 2001.

⁴⁴ *Tas bija 90. gadu sākumā. Notika festivāls Baltica. Liekas, visi bija nobijušies--no saules, ziediem, smaidiem, tuvās brīvības sajūtas. Tik mīļa un pretimnākoša toreiz likās Rīga, pat saule spīdēja kaut kā īpaši. Nebijām, ne aicināti, ne lūgti [...] Mums gribējas dziedāt un mēs to darījām. Visi lielie kolektīvi gāja gājienā, bet, kas varēja*

In the documentary film “Baltic Requiem” footage is devoted to the expressions of the choir members singing at the twentieth Latvian Song and Dance Festival, which was held in the watershed year of 1990. Anatol Lieven, a correspondent for *The Times* (London) who was in attendance, suggested that the choral spectacle evoked Enlightenment ideals of Jean Jacques Rousseau’s *The Social Contract*, and the mass sound imitated the “general will” and “collective good” of society.⁴⁵ Another commentator described the “emotional soaring” of this music, which changed the apathy of thousands of people.⁴⁶ During the year of the dissolution of Soviet rule a British writer of Estonian descent, Clare Thomson, gathered personal accounts that amount to an affirmation of singing as the Estonians’ “greatest strength.”⁴⁷ The worldview of folklore motifs as they relate to singing can be seen after 1990 in the rhetoric of former Estonian Prime Minister, Mart Laar, who declared: “Estonia can sing itself free, and now it is singing its way into Europe.”⁴⁸

The decision, in September 1990, to grant official status to the *Baltica* international folklore festivals by the *Conseil International des Organisations de Festivals de Folklore et d’Arts Traditionnels*, which is constituted under the principles of UNESCO, signified the first official act of recognition directed to the Baltic sovereign states. During the post-communist transition, the leadership of Vytautas Landsbergis, a distinguished musicologist and critic of the national

mums liegt tam pievienoties? Mēs gājam, dziedājām, priecājāties un jutāties lieliski. Ligita Šreibere, commentary, “Pērkonīša atmiņas par Rīgu,”//Pērkonītis/iespaidi.htm; Pērkonītis CD, 2002.

⁴⁵ See Anatol Lieven, 1993, 113; Dreifelds, 1989, 53; Berlin, 2006, 116.

⁴⁶ Dreifelds, 1996, 70.

⁴⁷ Thomson, 1992, 257.

⁴⁸ A speech of 7 September 2001. The procurement of freedom from the knowledge of powerful songs is a narrative theme within the epic runes of the *Kalevala*, (first

composer M. K. Čiurlionis, was exemplary, for his political strength was inherited from a line of nineteenth-century literary scholars. Similarities can be perceived in the biography of Dr. Vaira Vīķe Freiberga, whose authorship of many folklore publications prepared her for a national role as President from 1998 to 2007.

3. Rural Return (*Atgriešanās*)

The likely starting point of the Latvian “folklore movement” (*folkloras kustība*) is the date of 11 November 1976, the inaugural concert of the *Skandinieki*, who became known as a *folkloras draugu kopa*, “the friends of folklore group.”⁴⁹ Significantly, the event took place within the patriotic atmosphere of *Lāčplēša diena* (Day of the Bear-slayer), a commemoration of the military order of Latvian Freedom Fighters and their defeat of German forces in 1919. The momentum that underpinned this event became clear when in 1978 the Academy of Sciences organized a landmark concert featuring rural ethnographic ensembles brought into Rīga. The widely publicized performance celebrated the thirtieth folklore-collecting expedition of the Latvian Folklore Archives. It symbolically renewed the inter-war practice of the former Latvian Republic, in which rural traditional musicians came to Rīga as the mainstay of “folk” music lectures and demonstrations. Moreover, as folklore performances spread to Rīga’s prestigious concert halls, official academic support of ethnographic ensembles and folklore organizations (*kopas*) grew. A nationally recognized poet gave the opening address (of 15 October 1978) in which he

published in 1835-6) and in the Estonian *Kalevipoeg* (“Son of Kalev,” 1857).

⁴⁶ *Pirmie 25: Folkloras draugu kopa Savieši*, Rīga: Traditionālas kultūras centrs, 2007.

described a parallel “renaissance” that was taking place in the neighboring Baltic Soviet Republics. Professors and students of folklore studies who valued authentic native culture initiated the Lithuanian *Ramuva* movement – the term referring to the endurance of pre-Christian sacred groves.⁵⁰ The *Skandinieki* were comparable to folklore groups in Estonia (*Leegajus*) and Lithuania (*Ratilio*), which comprised a unified national image within folklore festivals. The united performance of these three groups in September 1991 marked the start of independence and statehood. The repercussions of ethnographic reproduction spread beyond the borders of the Baltic nations: in the cultural organizations of neighboring Byelorussia the spread of nationalist expression was hidden under a façade of innocuous pastimes. The pursuit of folklore collecting expeditions, folk theatre, or language studies became known there as the “Baltic virus.”⁵¹ A revival movement had spread among Russian folk performers, who reacted against the propagandistic use of folklore at Soviet cultural events. In some respects, the new groups that gathered interest within major Russian universities mirrored the establishment of the Latvian *Skandinieki* or the Lithuanian *Ramuva*. In a parallel fashion, musicologists from Moscow founded ensembles that traveled to rural villages in order to collect music; among these leaders was Dimitri Pokrovsky, who influenced the growth of many similar ensembles.⁵² The use of the vernacular distinguished “alternative” song festivals entitled *Chervona Ruta* (“The Red Rue”), which began in the Ukraine in 1989. This linguistic policy breathed new life into the symbols of separatist independence, for in addition to folklore ensembles language became the common factor within a diverse mélange of rock music,

⁵⁰ Klotiņš, 2000, 5; Skujenieks, 1978.

⁵¹ Mihailisko, 1991.

⁵² Olson, 2004, 9.

political speeches, and Ukrainian Greek-rite religious processions and services.⁵³

In order to atone for negligent archival policies, Latvian folklore activists began to conduct rural field expeditions and to relearn traditional music, crafts, and lore from the previous generation. By formulating a public response to the threatened status of folklore collecting activities, in 1978 the *Skandinieki* began to assemble nationally representative styles of ethnographic singing, which they modeled on ethnographic song traditions and other traditional ways of local “declaimers” (*teicēji*). Urban folklore groups absorbed the “music and wit” from rural musicians, according to the ethnomusicologist Valdis Muktupāvels,⁵⁴ the founder of Rīga’s *Savieši* in 1980. As a counter-strategy to official folklore channels, amateur folklorists and musicians combed the countryside for songs, instruments, folk costumes, crafts, and lore. They learned how to recreate manifold elements of rural living – of customs, crafts, beliefs, dances, games, and costumes – as an alternative way of living, one that closely followed the rotation of the agricultural calendar:

We traveled on expeditions and spoke with people, and worked to finish their tasks, and in this way, we related closely to the singing that is the foundation of their life. Folksongs cannot be pulled out of the environment to which they are organically joined – the country people’s life, their daily work, their occasional joint work celebrations (*talkas*), and the rhythm of the whole year.⁵⁵

Many leaders of the folklore *kopas* are self-educated in the ways and means of

⁵³ Wanner, 1996, 136-55.

⁵⁴ Muktupāvels, 1999.

⁵⁵ Beitāne, 1996, 10; translated by the author.

fieldwork. For example Andris Kapusts, of Rīga's *Grodi* that originated in the late 1990s, embarked on a plan of studying the old folk narrators from rural areas of his native eastern Latvia. He equated his respect for these elders' teachings of the Latgalian music to his interest in Hindu philosophical ideas.⁵⁶

This rural-based expression of Latvian ethnic activism began quietly in the 1960s among an estimated few hundred “flower children” (*puķu bērni*). These outcasts had sought seclusion in barren rural farmlands in order to escape Soviet jurisdiction in the cities. Alfreds Stinkuls (b. 1948) was an early dissident voice, and his family history of deportation had excluded him from higher education. With his close friend Inguna and four others he moved to a small farmhouse, *Mežuplējas*:

We learned farm chores – harvested hay, baked bread and brewed St. John's beer. These were ideal surroundings to listen to foreign radio and the newest music [...] Maybe it began with the “hippies.” We tried to come to the true, live essence of being Latvian.⁵⁷

Rather than seeking this kind of isolation in rural surroundings, the *Skandinieki* traveled in order to awake (*atmodināt*) audiences, to raise the morale of local traditional singers, and to initiate methods of practical organization. Some folklore practitioners owe their beginnings to these *kopa* leaders whom they encountered during politically sensitive tours of towns in Kurzeme in the late 1970s. The entrepreneurship of Dainis and Helmī Stalts of the *Skandinieki* to conduct fieldwork in regions of Western and Central Latvia came under criticism from Soviet folklore

⁵⁶ Interview, Rīga, 6 November 2000

⁵⁷ Aprāne, 2003, 21-22. Alfreds Stinkuls and Inguna G. (pseudonym) chose not to return to Latvia, emigrating to Sweden, and then to Los Angeles, where they opened

circles, although the Stalti believed that they were atoning for the deficiencies of official folklore activity by meeting with local singers:

The beginning was like this (*sākums bija tāds*) [...] and honestly (*patiešām*), the people helped to collect, they came by the cultural centre on their own accord (*par saviem līdzekļiem*) [don't interrupt, Dainis]. They sent some songs on in letters to Rīga. We awoke (*uzmodināja*) the people who came to us for advice about their ensembles.⁵⁸

The *Skandinieki* performances have developed a theatrical mode of presentation when they put neo-pagan rituals into practice and reenact traditional round dances and game dances. It has become customary for them to invite audience participation. In my initial impression of this development, in October 2000, Helmī Stalte invited the audience to sing a formulaic song and to end each line with the Livonian-Finnish expression *ivo*, and with repetitions of *ivo* she created an echo game with the audience.⁵⁹ The group reproduced ethnographic styles of singing that conformed to specific farm tasks and to their status in the agricultural year. When the *Skandinieki* integrated families within their organization of the *kopa*, they responded to the Russian assimilation of Latvian folklore and language traditions. The participation of large families with regional and occupational affiliations provided resilience for the *kopa* in withstanding the policy of Soviet censure. Their pursuit of folklore was “single-minded,”⁶⁰ for they equated participation in the group with abilities of leadership.

a Latvian bookstore in the late 1980s. See also Inguna G. (1982).

⁵⁸ Interview with Helmī Stalte, Rīga, 7 May 2001.

⁵⁹ Rīga, Hall of the Latvian Society, 29 October 2000; on Livonian songs see chapter VI.

Formed among students of the Secondary School of Applied Arts, a second “folklore friends” group (*draugu kopa*) entitled *Savieši* thrived independently in Rīga during the 1980s. Adhering to the model of the *Skandinieki*, this *kopa* also conducted their own fieldwork expeditions, singing songs from the outlying regions of Sventāja and Lubāna. Their twenty-fifth anniversary was celebrated in 2005 with a commemorative CD of broadcasts taken from *Latvijas Radio* 1984—1990, an important resource for understanding the cultural history of Latvia during the 1980s.⁶¹

By generating a “return” (*atgriešanās*) to the land (*zeme*), the folklore movement strengthened lifestyle changes in opposition to Soviet-era ideology.⁶² This outlook can be associated with the veneration of land, or the concept *zeme*, which can pertain to the earth, ground, country, territory, or equally to an ethos of life on Latvian soil.⁶³ In sharp contrast to the composition of Latvian cities that has grown to resemble an ethnic mosaic, the countryside is ethnically homogenous.⁶⁴ Added to this, the recent memory of the Soviet era has been an incentive for returning to the *zeme*, to the land and one’s roots.⁶⁵ One Latvian novelist publicized her decision to move to the countryside, because she believed Rīga was neither ethnically or historically representative of Latvia.⁶⁶

During the Brezhnev regime of the early 1980s Dainis and Helmī Stalts

⁶⁰ Šmidchens, 2000, 5, according to observations dating from the early 1990s.

⁶⁰ Muktupāvels, 2000, 398.

⁶² Tishkov, 1997, 103.

⁶³ Koleda, 2000, 176, citing the Latvian-German writer Valter Nollendorf.

⁶⁴ Schöpflin, 1993, 23; Pabriks and Purs, 2002, 151.

⁶⁵ Ilmārs Mežs, *The People of Latvia, Fact Sheet on Latvia of the Latvian Institute*, Rīga, 2005.

⁶⁶ Nora Ikstena; interview with a BBC radio commentator, Evans, 2001.

searched through rural areas and traveled through barren landscapes of state collective farms (*sovkhov*) and communist communities (*kolkhoz*), establishing a direct working relationship with vital sources of traditional culture such as farming families. As folklore practitioners they revealed their individualism and self-determination, according to the meaning of the expression “*pats skanēt*” – “to resound independently.”⁶⁷ Helmī Stalte presumed that her renewed interpretation of ritualistic activity – of working and singing together – would serve as a source of national dignity, becoming intensely relevant to those who enact it:

We can also look at the past as a continuous time of rebirth that continues to protect and care for the meaningful and valuable that is inherited. [...] Beneath song is something more powerful, as a nationality we also have significant values.⁶⁸

The *Skandinieki* appealed to local folklore practitioners in outlying rural regions to initiate changes in order to restore local song traditions. In Helmī Stalte’s words, she wished to teach others the skills of organizing “the path of folklore.”⁶⁹ Nevertheless the leaders of the folklore movement eventually gravitated to the resources of the radio: “what couldn’t be done physically or financially by traveling.” They broadcast a new repertoire, forming the basis of the radio programs *No tautas krāta dziesmu pūra* (“A Song Dowry Collected from the People”) and *Lai līgo lepna dziesma*.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Interview with Jānis Vītols, 1 October 2002; he explained the derivation of the name *Skandinieki* according to the word for vowel, *patskanis*, which shares the root of *skanēt*, to resound.

⁶⁸ Lasmane, 2001, 18-19; Helmī Stalte, 1989, 2.

⁶⁹ Interview, Rīga, 5 November 2000.

⁷⁰ Interview, 7 May 2001.

By publicizing local ethnographic representation in a national perspective, the *Skandinieki* embarked upon a symbolic collective task (*talka*), whose climax occurred on the streets of Rīga in 1988. The procession of illicit Latvian flags during the *Baltica* international folklore festival successfully “opened windows and doors, and freed tongues,” in Stalts’ view it was the “lark song of the singing revolution.”⁷¹

Within the environment of the *kopa*, when, for instance, they routinely went to the Universal department store for ice cream after weekly meetings, the *Skandinieki* participants would discuss the future, talk, and dream about a free Latvia.⁷² Some participants began not only to dream, but to reconstruct a manner of living in which their regional affiliation to the land and their ethnic descent took priority over their immediate material concerns. In the biographical narrative of Dace Kvelde-Vītola (b. 1962), she spoke of summoning the will to leave urban life altogether, which to her was a difficult feat. Vītola, who had a professional musical background as the daughter of a famous choral conductor, Pauls Kvelde, was a graduate of a prestigious music high school in Rīga. She joined the *Skandinieki* in 1981 and met her husband Jānis Vītols (b. 1959) during rehearsals. This involvement in the *Skandinieki* led them “to embrace the broad and rich world of folklore.” Since 1996 they have raised five children on a farm in central Vidzeme near the small town of Druviena:

⁷¹ Dainis Stalts, 2003.

⁷² Interview with Jānis Vītoliņš, “Brencīši” farm, near Druviena district, Gulbene region, Vidzeme, October 2002. On their *kopa Pērlis* see Illustration 23, and Composite of Sound Recordings File 2: Vidzeme, CD One V9-12.

Our main goal was to create and maintain spiritual fulfillment, ecological purity, and psychological wellbeing connected to principles of unity, simplicity, and an emphasis on becoming closer to the rhythm of nature.⁷³

To varying degrees, narrators have structured their life histories around a dichotomy between rural and urban habitats and life patterns. Several young professionally educated musicians have expressed a sense of ethnic and national devotion (*latvietība*) that has overshadowed their urban and professional careers. Some of the individuals who have inspired this chapter – Māris Jansons (b. 1960), Dace Vītola (b. 1962), Jānis Vītols (b. 1959) and Līga Kļaviņa (b. 1961), share a common pattern of emigrating from Rīga in the mid-1990s and relocating to country farmsteads in central Vidzeme. The academic and personal aspirations of folklore scholar Iveta Tāle (b. 1962) were embodied in the *kopa Saucējas*, an extension of her rural-based study with a prominent folksong declaimer of northern Latgale, Margarita Šakiņa (b. 1926).⁷⁴

A few virtuosic artists have advanced the musical and technical aspects of their performance careers by cultivating an idiosyncratic type of personal expression. I collected an astute commentary from one *kopa* participant who claimed that musical performances currently exhibit a “deepening approach” (*iedziļināšanās*), whereby traditional artists have focused upon creative work reflective of the surrounding

⁷³ Jānis Vītols, interviewed by Pujāte, 2001, 22.

⁷⁴ An exponent of the classic northern Latgalian repertoire, and a skilled knitter and weaver, Šakiņa was born in Viļaka; her songs came to the attention of the local ethnographic ensemble in 1980, after her family relocated in Rekava. See Šakiņa, 1990, and Tāle, 2004; see also Chapter Six.

popular culture.⁷⁵ Accordingly, they no longer were obligated to re-enact folkloric thematic content. The group *Iļģi* (formed in 1981) drifted away from the founding regional orientation of the *kopa* to espouse a pastiche of musical cultures (see Chapter Seven). In contrast to this tendency the *Skandinieki* have continually broadened a commitment to do only “what folklore asks.”⁷⁶ *Dimzēns*, established in 1993 in Jelgava, has a similar group motto that has to do with the importance of building familiar songs and genres: “who seeks, will find” (*kas meklē, tas atrod*). It could be argued that Latvians in the *kopa* have relied on fulfilling ethnic and cultural values because they found it impossible to achieve goals within the wider Soviet system;⁷⁷ secondly, they were altogether free from demands made on them by the Soviet system, or equally from the West, and they lacked modern-day agendas and technologies.

4. Bagpipes, Soldiers, and ‘Wolves’

Dainis Stalts prefaced remarks on the starting point of folksong revival by recalling the importance of soldiers’ songs to his childhood, in his words, when he was “so high” (pointing to his knees).⁷⁸ He began to incorporate the banned soldiers’ songs in rehearsals of the ensemble *Līvlist* as early as 1976, but his motivation to establish and enlarge this singing was the determining factor in creating a new type of folklore ensemble. This, the first urban *draugu kopa*, was literally a collective circle of friends. The *Skandinieki* first performed the soldiers’ repertoire on stage in Rīga in

⁷⁵ Jānis Vītols (b. 1959) of the *kopa Pērlis*, Druviena, 1 October 2002. On East European nationalisms of the early 1990s see Löfgren, 1993, 218.

⁷⁶ Jānis Vītols, Druviena, 1 October 2002.

⁷⁷ Pabriks and Purs, 2002, 47.

1978, well as in politically controversial tours of towns in Kurzeme in the late 1970s – of Talsi, Kandava, and Grobiņa.⁷⁹ One can chart these crosscurrents of dissent arising within Rīga’s urban nightlife of rock performances and discotheques since the war in Afghanistan after 1984. The rock group *Zvaigznīte* (“Small Star”) contributed to the first signs of ethnic nationalism by playing songs of the inter-war era (1918—1939) that eulogized Latvian soldiers in World War I.⁸⁰ What was unusual for the revival of these songs in the Brezhnev era of the 1970s and 1980s, was that they were sung spontaneously in public without professional arrangements.⁸¹ Dainis Stalts interpolated his rendition of a song text – “Remember Dear Folks” (*Atmināti labi laudis*) – which he sang to the melody of a popular folksong – *Nāc pie manis tautu meita* (*Come to me peasant girl*). Other traditional songs of soldiers – *Sarkandaiļa roze auga* (*A red rose grew*) and *Nu ardievu Vidzemīte* (*Farewell Vidzeme*) – were performed spontaneously.

The public persona of Dainis Stalts is defined by a succession of narrative insights and digressions that often reflect his political affairs in the *Saiema* and his leadership in the Fatherland and Freedom (*Tēvzeme un Brīvība*) political party. Before singing on stage he may discuss a newspaper article, or speak to children, such as his grandson, on the stage or performance area. Stalts was awarded a prestigious annual folklore prize by the Latvian Ministry of Culture in 2005, which honored his connection with the beginning of the national awakening, and his life’s

⁷⁸ Interview with Dainis Stalts, Rīga, 6 November 2000; 7 May 2001.

⁷⁹ Šmidchens, 1996, 342.

⁸⁰ Ryback, 1990, 217.

⁸¹ Velta Leja, Jelgava, 6 October 2002.

work that symbolized an ideological foundation for the nation-state, for "being Latvian today" (*latvietība*).⁸²

It is not surprising that a new band that recreated the music of a Latvian soldier's life would become popular following the renewal of independence in the early 1990s. The male ensemble *Vilki* ("Wolves") renewed widespread nationalist sentiments in their lifestyle and repertoires. They pioneered an approach to folklore performance based on practical and social experiences in which musicianship is only one of many activities. The tasks required to revive the complete life of a Latvian soldier far exceeded that of other *kopas*: in an exacting schedule the ensemble visited historic battle locations, commemorated battles, studied strategies, reconstructed the lore of beliefs, ethics, and folk tales, as well as making their own costumes and ornaments. This small group of nine members has remained together for over a decade, demonstrating the capacity of the *kopas* to nurture close friendships:

In 1982 a nationally and patriotically inclined youth group began to travel around Latvia and to collect from all living Latvian riflemen (*Strēlnieki*.) In those times real Latvian history had been thoroughly silenced. Problems at that time with the existing government were huge, even to the extent of summons by the *Cheka* (secret police). There were interrogations and homes were searched. Concerts were banned. I joined the group in 1986 when the structure had greatly changed and we also changed our name to *Liepavots*. Concerts took place very often, as in Latvia we were well known and often invited to perform. At the end of the 1980s we began to collect life histories and songs from World War II veterans, the legionnaires. By 1992 we began to study the

⁸² The daily newspaper *Diena* report of February 2005; Egle, 2005.

old traditional soldiers' songs more purposefully and practice their singing, finding many songs in the archives that were collected by Emīlis Melngailis. We then began to call ourselves 'Wolves' (*Vilki*) because the wolf was traditionally a teacher of the Latvian soldier.⁸³

From painstaking research into the history of the lifestyle, values, ethics and tactics of the Latvian warrior, *Vilki* attempted to revive the ethos of Latvian pre-history that is embedded in the song texts.⁸⁴ A belief in alchemy, for example, is evident on their CD *Dzelzīm dzimu* ("Born for the iron"). In *Asi, asi zīle dzied: Karavīru dziesmas un varoņpasakas* ("Quickly the tomtit sings: soldiers' songs and heroic tales") lyrical thematic elements of Latvian song traditions are accentuated. Sung prior to battle, a soldier compares his destiny to that of a lark on the road. Unlike the Slavic *byliny* and other European folk ballads, specific heroic figures or events are not mentioned and can rarely be adduced from the imagery of the texts. Songs of this kind from the First and Second World Wars have been transcribed from *Strēlnieki*, legionnaire, and partisan participants. Concertgoers who shared the songs were an influential factor of open meetings, demonstrations, ecological marches, and rock music festivals.⁸⁵

Bagpipers have played an important role in events celebrating national renewal. Documented in printed sources from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries and in the texts of the *dainas*, bagpipers were among instrumentalists, called *spēlmaņi*, who accompanied singing and dancing at weddings in farmsteads and taverns. The instruments had been subject to religious and civil suppression, and had died out by the early 20th century, although a few dozen melodies were recorded in

⁸³ Jānis Atis Krūmiņš, interview in Rīga, 26 July 2004.

⁸⁴ Muktuņpāvels, 1998.

the southwest Catholic enclaves of Latvia during the interwar years. These, and a few museum specimens, were the only sources available to folklore revivalists. Until their first use in the *Skandinieki* in the 1980s, the instruments had remained museum relics during the Soviet occupation. Māris Jansons, Rīga's leading bagpipe maker and piper, and other revivalists turned to Igor Tõnurist, the leader of the Estonian folklore ensemble *Leegajus*, who founded an earlier bagpipe renaissance.⁸⁶ The bagpipe revival has aspired to change the national image of the instrument, as stated in notes to the CD *Dūdas Latvijā* (Bagpipes in Latvia): "Scots are not the only Northern Europeans to play the bagpipes."⁸⁷

In assembling an "Ancient Environment Workshop", a number of skilled craftsmen and musicians have reconstructed a ninth-century Latvian village in a hidden locality where they forge metal ornaments and weave costumes as well as play the bagpipes. Since 1999 traditional models have been built in the instrument workshop of Māris Jansons, who in 2004 also began to build Scottish models. The bagpipes are played within a few *kopas* on social occasions and for folk dancing.⁸⁸ From its inception, the National Music Centre has been a privately subsidized private endeavor in which the founder-director Māris Jansons recorded singers and musicians in Latgale and Kurzeme in the euphoria of the first post-independence years. In the period from 1991 to 1993 Jansons initiated as much fieldwork as possible, fearing that the opportune conditions for fieldwork would be changed and

⁸⁵ Vardys 1989, 61.

⁸⁶ Interview with Māris Jansons, Rīga, 2 October 2002.

⁸⁷ *Latvian Folk Music Collection*, Rīga: Upe, 2000; see Discography.

⁸⁸ Illustration Eight.

modernized.⁸⁹ As an ethnographer, musician and teacher since 1990, Jansons directs the folklore *kopa Auri*; at the same time he undertook as many as sixty rural field expeditions from 1990 to 1999. His archives are consulted by practicing folklore *kopas* in Rīga.

5. Mastering the Art of the Situation: *Situācijas māksla*

The first tours of the *Skandinieki* startled listeners who could not reconcile the program with unified socialist internationalism.⁹⁰ Moreover, the group's spontaneous singing had few precedents in the jurisdiction of professional theatrical standards (or *estrādnost'*). What is more, the cultural establishment attacked the vocal style of "bellowing" and its lack of rehearsal. By such means the music of the *kopas* developed in sharp opposition to conventional *bel canto* technique or to the stipulation of the major mode in manipulating tonality, musical parameters that were commonplace in Soviet "self-activity" amateur collectives (*samodejatelnost'*). Performing for Latvian exiles in Voronezh, during the 150th anniversary celebration of the birth of Krišjānis Barons, a Latvian critic from the organ of the Party wrote of the group *Skandinieki* of having the ability to "grab a huge hall so that one wants to join them on stage," adding that their performance was the work of the "devil's powder" (*vella pulveri*).⁹¹ He argued that the group had altered past traditions in singing in an unduly monotonous, loud, and aggressive manner.⁹²

⁸⁹ Interview with Jansons, Rīga, 28 July 2004.

⁹⁰ Dainis Stalts, 1 November 2000; Velta Leja, Jelgava, 6 October 2002.

⁹¹ Daugmalis, 1987, 170.

⁹² Hausmanis, 1985, 3; the citation may be compared to the statement against Latvian ritual singing in the sixteenth century, of Hebrew scholar and cartographer Sebastian Münster (see Chapter One): "when they sing they bark pitifully like wolves and

In the process of creating popular hits (*Schlager*) for the Soviet popular stage, a narrowing sphere of perhaps only thirty tunes was sung or played repeatedly for the Soviet Latvian public. The Latvian composer and pianist, Raimonds Pauls, was called upon to arrange familiar folksongs.⁹³ In contrast with these limited number of Latvian melodies repeatedly broadcast in the media, Helmī and Dainis Stalts dealt with an undocumented field of ethnographic regional singing that lay outside the jurisdiction of Soviet performances.

The response of other groups was to create a context of idealized purity. In their reproduction of authentic folk melodies and texts they searched for clear sounds and propagated suitable timbres – of solemn, soft recitations, monotonous vocal chants, drones, and single bell chimes. The first performances of the group *Iļģi* in Soviet-occupied cities during the 1980s are exemplary:

One could hear the truth, sincerity and the feeling of depth hiding in the primitive scales, the use of drone and violin solos on one pitch, all of this contrary to the over-joyous performances or the stiff ‘authenticity’ of [Soviet] ‘folkish’ ensembles.⁹⁴

The meditative instrumental effects of the group *Iļģi* (formed in 1981) were produced from a refined use of timbres: “the exact timing of bells was as clear as a crystal dish.”⁹⁵ These essential musical and theatrical qualities came into conflict with the expectations of the Soviet cultural establishment, in which they were perceived as

constantly repeat themselves.”

⁹³ Jānis Vītols, an early member and folklore activist in the *Skandinieki* interview, “Brencīši” farm, near Druviena, Gulbene region, Vidzeme, 1 October 2002.

⁹⁴ Ethnomusicologist Valdis Muktupāvels in notes to the 20th-anniversary CD of *Iļģi*, 2002a.

⁹⁵ Jānis Vītols, interview, 1 October 2002, Brencīši farm,

“too monotonous, and too much in the minor mode.”⁹⁶ It is possible to argue that the rendition of these songs was a catalyst in events from 1988 to 1990 that contributed to the collapse of communism.⁹⁷ Certainly, politicized groups such as *Iļģi* changed the lives of an audience that was composed of an impressionable younger generation of Latvians.⁹⁸

A belief in winning national prestige through the correct songs played a role in the first national choral festival in 1873, in which nationalists such as Atis Kronvalds and Kārlis Baumanis opened a debate in the press concerning the appropriate Latvian content of songs that would support the ideals of the awakening (Chapter Four). During his years as editor and classifier of *Latvju dainas* (from 1894 to 1915) Krišjānis Barons observed singing traditions of Latvians remained variegated, for a good singer or song leader knew how to apply each song appropriately on each respective occasion of the calendar and of the life cycle. Barons viewed the manner of composing new sequences, *apdziedāšanās*, to be productive; therefore in regard to the requirements of traditional singing he attributed priority to contextual meaning:

It is not enough pouring folksongs together into one container as though they were uniform grains of corn, one like the other, of which we may scoop up any handful. Songs accompany happenings in life, work, festivities, feasts, etc.

[...] Accordingly singers have to sing certain songs at certain times.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Jaremko Porter, 2001, 61; Khazanov, 1995, 56.

⁹⁸ Folklorist Rita Treija recalls the strong affect during her childhood in the 1980s of performances of *Iļģi*, which she describes as a pervasive “lifestyle folklorism,” (*dzīvesveida folklorisms*), becoming a determining influence to her career. E-mail correspondence 27 May 2008.

⁹⁹ *Nepietiek, saberot dziesmas sevišķos arodos, itin kā vienmuļīgus labības graudus, kas vieni otriem līdzīgi, vai mēs šur, vai tur sauju izkampjam. Dziesmas pavada*

In a letter which outlines the editorial principles of *Latvju dainas* (to Kārlis Treuers, 1890, see Chapter Four), Barons explained that the *daina* traditions poetically reflect, “What life puts before them:”

They have no time to be garrulous or lengthy. It is in their terse abruptness that they display their real poetic force. They are capable of qualifying their subject completely and meaningfully in terse, significant words. They wake emotions in the hearts of their listeners, they open wide vistas to our inward eye, and they stir our own spirit of activity.¹⁰⁰

In Barons’ estimation ethnographic singing styles that were subservient to a traditional custom or rite within a distinct system of musical thought were resistant to change and modernization.¹⁰¹

Whereas present-day Lithuanian calendar songs may appear disconnected or even incoherent, the research of Rimantas Astrauskas at the University of Vilnius indicates that they were once joined into a single cosmological myth. Furthermore, that calendar rites have a grammar within a “closed system” is a well-known tenet of structural anthropology:

dzīves atgadījumus, darbus, godus, dzīras, u .t. t. Dziedātājam tādēļ zinamā brīdī jādzied piedeRīgas dziesmas. Barons, Introduction to volume one, *Latvju dainas*, 1894, XIII; the translation is from Arājs, 1984, 158.

¹⁰⁰ *Viņam nav vaļas, būt plāpīgi garam. Bet īpaši savā stingrā strupumā viņas mums rāda savi īsto dzejas spēju. Viņos īstos kodolīgos vārdos prot savu priekšmetu pilnīgi nozīmīgi raksturot, prot izteiktās jūtas modināt [...]* Barons, Introduction to volume one, *Latvju dainas*, 1894, XIII-XIV; the translation is from Barons-Arājs, 1984, 160.

¹⁰¹ Beitāne, 1996, 10.

Calendar rites with chants and songs performed at their time, make an annual system of ritual holidays where a separate element, i.e., an action, a gesture, a song, a dance, is a separate segment of this system.¹⁰²

During his period of self-education as a *kopa* director and head of the State Folk Arts Centre in Rīga, Andris Kapusts began to study the preservation of cyclical musical traditions. He found that they were at risk due to the current dominance of linear thinking. His own renditions of seasonal declaiming songs are based within a nine-fold circle of birth, baptism, initiation, male and female courting, work, marriage, round dance, and burial. In his opinion, long-established *kopas* such as the *Skandinieki* have acquired their own mannerisms, which may also deviate from cyclical traditions.¹⁰³ Helmī Stalts concurs that today it is problematic to reconstruct a holistic musical situation of rituals and feasts that is in harmony with nature and its rhythms for the natural continuity of the surrounding traditions is lacking:

It is fairly easy to say that folklore is a situational art, but how are the situations created, fulfilled, who overcomes what – do you [overcome] the situation, or the situation [overcomes] you. That is complex. If one is in a natural situation, where everything is inherited, where all goes according to rules [...] but for us it is quite different – we must learn to create this kind of situation. *Ir diezgan vienkārši pateikt, ka folklorā ir situāciju māksla, bet kā to situāciju radīt, piepildīt, kas kuru uzveic – tu situāciju vai situācija tevi. Tas ir sarežģīti. Ja tu esi tādā dabīgā situācijā, kur viss ir pārmantots, kur ir visi*

¹⁰² Astrauskas, 1999, 64, citing Claude Lévi-Strauss.

¹⁰³ Kapusts, accompanying notes to *Ārpus laika*, CD, 2000.

*priekšnoteikumi [...] bet mums jau ir citādi – mums jāprot radīt šī situācija.*¹⁰⁴

A successful performance or rehearsal would be measured according to the performing group's mastery of "completing the moment,"¹⁰⁵ in which everything has its place and meaning. By integrating peasant ritual, dance, games, instruments, and song, the principles for integrating the heritage of two nations emerged in the *Skandinieki*: "Latvians and Livonians have never taken a step or uttered a word without meaning."¹⁰⁶ In this traditional "mastery of a situation" (*situācijas māksla*) the group vied with Soviet performance policies, when they toured throughout provincial Latvia in the late 1970s. Moreover, they placed themselves upon the cutting edge of nationalist expression by interpolating traditional soldiers' songs (*karavīru dziesmas*) from the inter-war Latvian state and from the legacy of World War II legionnaires:

What stunned audiences is how they simply came on the stage and sang legionnaires' and soldiers' songs, such as *Nu ardievu Vidzemīte* ("Good By to Vidzeme") just like that, and nothing more, with no rehearsal, with no arrangement. This was unheard of in Soviet times.¹⁰⁷

Dainis and Helmī Stalts have preserved memorabilia of the collective past in performance program lists for the 1980s; yet often to friends in the audience they improvised many additional songs, speeches, jokes, and dances, all of which have

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Helmī Stalte during the. *Dziesmu dziedu, kāda bija* traditional singing competition. Two compact discs. Rīga: Latvijas Universitātes Etniskās Kultūras Centrs, 2002. See notes to CD *Rotaļas un danči* (Round dances, games, and dances) *Skandinieki*, 2000.

¹⁰⁵ Stalte, 2002.

¹⁰⁶ *Skandinieki, Games and Dances* CD, Rīga Recording Company, 2000.

¹⁰⁷ Velta Leja, Jelgava, 6 October 2002.

gone unrecorded.¹⁰⁸

The larger urban *kopas* have formulated repertoires in response to the close ties between the participants and their audience. During the founding years of the *kopa Savieši*, the members reputedly appeared on stage and conversed with the audience, as if they were familiar guests.¹⁰⁹ In the course of filming the *Skandinieki* at the national children's singing competition held in the halls of the University of Latvia, they instigated a spontaneous reunion of former members, who were in attendance (4 May 2001; see Sound Recording Composite). Mastering the immediate situation they also extemporized a verse that explained my presence: "*Mēs visi dziedam, bet Kristīna tik raksta* [we are all singing, but Kristina just writes]." On another occasion when the *Skandinieki* accepted a national award of honor in the field of folklore (*lielās folkloras gada balvas laureāti*, 31 October 2003), they presented a parable of success in their rendition of a mythological song:

I planted a tall bean (*Stādīju garu pupu*)
In the white sand hill (*Baltā smilšā kalniņā*)
There it grew to heaven (*Tā izauga līdz debesīm*)

Events that involve the *Skandinieki* are often characterized by group participation: the audience may sing refrains or also entire songs; they may clap or join in a dance formation, and all these responses are liable to fill to capacity the large urban settings in which they take place. In tours to Latvian colonies in Russia and Siberia the group raised the morale of deportees, who offered them additional songs. Other groups have evolved similarly; Jānis Atis Krūmiņš of the male *kopa Vilki* obtained songs from former legionnaires who attended their events. A leading musicologist,

¹⁰⁸ Šmidchens, 1996, 346.

however, questioned the communication in large arenas, which had presented a “stumbling block” for the early folklore movement:

Are festivals, where thousands of people amass, the best way to popularize folklore, if in our traditional northern European cultures folklore circulated within the boundaries of one or a few households and was formed for the needs of a small group of people? Will a folklore ensemble not look pathetic encircled by a stadium?¹¹⁰

Spontaneous singing is a priority into the present day, according to the founder of the group *Auri*, Māris Jansons:

Kopas are no longer are obligated to crawl onto the stage [...] this music of festive group songs (*apdziedāšanās*) is alive only when it is used within the appropriate context of a period (*kad lietota atbilstoša laikmeta kontekstā*),

Jansons explores the full melodic freedom of instruments but follows a policy of preserving the folksong texts. These may be shortened so that only a few words or lines are repeated, but the actual wording is strictly maintained. In the case of the *kopa Grodi*, the same generalization applies: their vocal pieces are executed in an “authentic” manner, but the added instrumentation is regarded as an arrangement.¹¹¹ The rule of protecting the language of the song texts in contemporary performance is widespread, and extends to folk-jazz and world music genres. In Jansons’ estimation, this practice may reflect the legacy of the Latvian sample of song texts within

¹⁰⁹ Muktupāvels, 2006, 95.

¹¹⁰ Klotiņš, 1991, 9.

¹¹¹ See notes to *Gimeņu godu dziesmas*. 2001.

Herder's *Volklied*.¹¹² In sum, the contemporary *kopa* presentations circumvent professional musical standards because their traditional culture remains a situational art, whose precondition for success is dependent upon the correct repertoire and place for singing.¹¹³ The performance settings of the *kopas* are not usually identical to those of musical performances, for the environment may complement traditional activities, such as market days or collective farming works. In the scenic Gauja river valley not far from Rīga, group events occur on historic sites near the town of Turaida, in a museum reserve, which is popularly associated with Livonian myths and legends and houses a medieval castle site. The *Skandinieki* worked to recreate an ancient Livonian mythological garden. The area, which had fallen out of use in the 1970s and “resembled a jungle,” according to Dainis Stalts (2003), was cultivated and transformed into a popular performance destination known as the “hill of folk songs” (*Dainu kalns*) along with the adjacent “song garden” (*Dziesmu dārzs*) and sculpture park. In the annual spring children’s festival an open-air balloon was launched from the *Dainu kalns* with a child’s logo illustration (1 June 1998).¹¹⁴ The natural environment of Turaida is conducive to performance seating, which is arranged outdoors, framing a circular area on a single level with the performers. This close proximity encouraged the interaction of the *kopa* and the audience, whereby elements of professionalism and virtuosity are noticeably de-emphasized.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Interview with Māris Jansons, Rīga, 22 July 2004.

¹¹³ Mellēna, 2003, 19.

¹¹⁴ In October 2002 the *Skandinieki* held a similar *talka*, a ceremonial work project that they directed to clearing and cultivating the *Zaķusala* island on the Daugava River within Rīga, for outdoor performances, and historical re-enactments. Lusiņa, 1998.

¹¹⁵ Jaremko-Porter, 2001, 32.

Whereas the *Baltica* international folklore festival is held in a Latvian locality only every three years, smaller-scale national events have elicited greater spontaneity from the audience. At the closing of national folklore events, informal and unplanned occasions of singing may take place away from the stage; in the experience of Helmī Stalte performance energy develops cumulatively in the course of large-scale traditional events, when the background noise grows and the volume of singing increases commensurately in the final songs.¹¹⁶

Administered by the University of Latvia since 1997, *Pulkā eimu, pulkā teku*, a traditional cultural project for children and youth, constructs a framework for annual folklore events. In the course of filming the national singing competition (*dziedāšanas konkurss*) and the spring children's festival, which took place during two weekends in May 2001, I became familiar with fifty-five *kopas* and observed approximately 1,100 children. They also studied me with interest during a rigorous program (*pasākumi*), in which they explored common historical and mythological themes during educational excursions (*izglītojošas ekskursijas*). These open-air activities *vecRīga*, the old sector of Rīga, and the bordering canal and park, as well as in the nearby halls of the University of Latvia. The diversity of costumes, crafts, instruments, dances, and song repertoires represented fourteen regions of Latvia. In *Bastejkalns*, an historical hill site near the Rīga canal that separates the old town from the rest of the city, I filmed the youth *kopas* participating in a tenth-century crafts workshop (“medieval environment workshop” or *senās vides darbnīca*, see Illustration eight), singing together at Rīga's Powder Tower, and at the Freedom

¹¹⁶ Helmī Stalte, interview in Rīga, 7 May 2001; see Composite of Sound Recordings, CD Two, Kurzeme: Livonians KL16, *Tšitšōrlinkist*, 12 May 2001.

Monument, in honor of Mother's day (*Mātes godi*) the participants formed a "grand procession" (*lielā pastaiga*). The leaders of the *Skandinieki* have looked back upon the vicissitudes of the past thirty years, from which they define the necessary stamina and enthusiasm of singing according to this anecdote: when in bleak Soviet times rehearsals would begin half-heartedly and members would arrive "empty" (*tukšī*) and tired, yet by the close of the evening the group would become restored, or "full" (*piepildīti*).¹¹⁷

Conclusion

The contemporary Latvian folklore movement represents an extensive and detailed search for traditions that are in harmony with the natural rhythms of the agricultural year. Approximately two hundred exceptional individuals, the vast majority of whom are residents of Latvian cities, have undertaken a task that marks historical change and transition. In its social organization and musical development the movement has exhibited an insular approach to Latvian and Livonian cultural relativism during the post-independence era. This surge of activity has demonstrated Herder's tenets that "every nationality carries within itself the standard of its own perfection [...] we do

¹¹⁷ Helmī Stalte, interview in Rīga. 7 May 2001.

justice to no nation by forcing upon it a foreign pattern of learning.”¹¹⁸ The rise of this facet of Latvian cultural nationalism has been viewed as a public response to crisis and revolution, in which participants “conjure up the spirits of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battle cries and costumes.”¹¹⁹

From the viewpoint of a former participant in the *kopa Skandinieki* the creative performance energy of the third awakening dissipated after 1991,¹²⁰ a year that is associated with a decline in artistic and intellectual work overall:

Before this we were quiet. Now the quietness and hidden intent had ended, but a *denouement* began. For many poets, writers, and artists, a sense of purpose was lost.¹²¹

After the intensity of the era had abated painters, playwrights, filmmakers, and to a lesser extent leaders of the folklore movement no longer directed their imaginative ideas concerning ethnicity against the Soviet censor. It became noticeable that features of concert-going professionalism had replaced the symbolic righteousness of performances dedicated to the renewal of ethnic musical traditions; for those who experienced the intensity of the “singing revolution” at first hand “the stormy, conflict-laden youth of the [folklore] movement was gone.”¹²² In a speech on the Daugava Embankment on the 18th of November (Latvian Independence Day) in

¹¹⁸ Herder, *SW*, XIII, 384.

¹¹⁹ David McCrone, 1998, 51-52, citing Karl Marx’s *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*.

¹²⁰ This is the viewpoint of an acclaimed Lithuanian poet and scholar of Baltic literatures at Yale University Tomas Venclova, 1995.

¹²¹ Jānis Vītols, *Druvienu*, 1 October 2002; the head of the Latvian Folklore Archives expressed regret that the post-independent folklore festivals had lost their former political efficacy; Dace Bula, *Rīga*, 28 September 1999.

1989, Māra Zālīte, a leading Latvian author and playwright, gave a critical assessment of the national symbolism in the wake of the singing revolution:

We have come here, and standing closely together like drops of water in the Daugava, we have, like the river, only one road [...] We are all tunes of one sound, but the question is, what is this tune?¹²³

Yet in response to the dilemma of constructing a modern identity the post-Soviet years have fostered an imaginative view of folklore performance as an extension of the practical and social experiences of rural life.

¹²² Boiko, 1995, 354; Vīķe Freiberga, 2000, 2; Kavolis, 1991, 59.



**22. Commemorative stone for slain ethnologist and filmmaker Andris Slapiņš
(d. 20 January 1991). Rīga Bastejkalns, 2004, by the author.**

¹²³ Thomsen, 1992, 18.



23. *Baltica 2003: Talka (Communal farmwork), Kopa Pērlis, Druviēna.*

VI: The Life of the *Kopa* (1991-2007)

Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the classification and analysis of fieldwork data, which is a chronicle to the daily and weekly transactions and settings in which *kopa* participants and leaders re-enact traditional folksong genres.¹ Overall, approximately two hundred *kopas* actively cultivated regional identities in 2008, but from these I have selected eight, whose members share a longstanding affiliation with the roots of the folklore movement (*folkloras kustība*). Surrounding each *kopa* are many interrelated activities that evolve around their own fieldwork research: they travel to villages to reach and study an older generation of traditional singers, they collect and study archival records and personal documents relating to sources of regional culture, and they organize and lead the community in celebrations and observances of the agrarian feast days and holidays. It could be argued that a pre-occupation with self-definition and national identity in the large urban groups (*Skandinieki*, and *Dimzēns*) may have resulted from this conscious appropriation of rural culture from several regions.

To some degree, both regional and national allegiances are reinforced through a central network of *kopa* events, which is based centrally in Rīga at the University of Latvia, and through the media's coverage of this activity. Nonetheless,

¹ The classic definition of “participant observations” refers to “a period of intense social interaction between the researcher and the subjects, in the milieu of the latter,” see Rock, 1999, in: Bryman and Burgess 1999, 3, and Bogdan and Taylor 1975, 5.

this chapter will document the remarkable degree to which the *kopa* remains unaffected by cosmopolitan and foreign cultural influences. On the basis of qualitative procedures of participant observation, unstructured interviews, and open-ended questions, I have categorized themes pertaining to kinship and the family, the veneration of land (*zeme*) and home (*mājas*), and the rotation of ritual days within the agricultural calendar year.

As we have seen in Chapter Five, ethnic consciousness intensified among *kopa* participants during the last decade of the Soviet occupation and its dissolution. Common to the biographies of these individuals are the extraordinary measures by which they offset oppressive Soviet jurisdictions in folksong research and performance (see Chapter Five). In the course of field expeditions and tours they met with the rural populace and instigated lines of communication. It is not surprising that new research into the Communist era has contradicted generally held opinions concerning the demise of ethnic and family traditions, and the fate of native (non-Russian) languages of the USSR. Indeed, the viability of the *kopa* in current times attests to the continuity that was achieved in Soviet-era ethnic and religious minority groups, communities, and families, and affiliated educational programs, which embodied Herderian values.² The head of the *kopa Pērlis* explained the creativity and freedoms of Soviet Latvian artists and writers, whom he believed were unencumbered with modern-day Western schedules and competitiveness.³

² This discussion draws on the conclusions of British historians George Schöpflin, 1993, 23 and David J. Smith, 2002, xxii; as well as the Latvian historians Artis Pabriks and Aldis Purs, 2003, 47, and an American ethnomusicologist of Eastern Europe, Mark Slobin, 1996, 8.

³ Interview, Jānis Vītols, Druviena, 1 October 2002.

The individuals who are at the center of this narrative analysis have raised public awareness regarding the ethnic complexity of Latvia's countryside, in the case of the *Skandinieki*, over a period spanning twenty to thirty years.⁴ Even at the outset of the twenty-first century, practicing folklore groups (*kopas*) elect to learn orally declaimed traditions from rural singers and communities of families; re-enactments in the *kopa* are not wholly dependent on published folklore collections of music, nor upon technical resources of urban institutions. During special excursions members listen directly to the bearers of an older layer of Latvian folk song or *daina* traditions, acquiring not only their songs, but for their motivations and philosophies. Experiential knowledge and direct familiarization are procedures that are distinct from concepts of modern cultural nationalism, such as notions of “inventing traditions,” or the “imagined community” that are cited by leading British historians.⁵ Rather than staging separate concert performances, *kopas* take part in collective informal settings, outdoor festivals, and national competitions for individual singers. Their song repertoires address themes that are not wholly imagined, but pertain to their members, affiliated sources, and listeners – a circle known to one another from direct experience.

1. Urban and Rural Subcultures

Several accomplished folksong groups that live centrally in Rīga have developed interests in specific forms of Latvian agrarian society and often emulate a specific

⁴ An observation of Ilmārs Mežs, *The People of Latvia: Fact Sheet on Latvia of the Latvian Institute*, Rīga, 2005.

⁵ See John Breuilly, 1993, 404; Eric Hobsbawm, 1983, 1991; Berlin, 2000, 338; and Schöpflin, 1993, 23.

dialectal and regional style of singing. In their approach to fieldwork they may simultaneously study folklore, ethnology, mythology, and cultural history; they also collect biographical data in an attempt to emulate the personal world of rural declaimers. The success of these endeavors is commensurate with the thoroughness by which they restore elements of regional authenticity, on the one hand, and their ability to minimize the discontinuity of transplanting musical traditions to the urban concert stage and recording studio, on the other.⁶ *Grodi*, for instance, is one of many *kopas* whose participants conduct fieldwork expeditions. In 1987 Andris Kapusts (b. 1960), a senior expert in folklore at the Latvian National Centre for Traditional and Performing Arts, with several of his friends in Rīga, began to recreate music from his native Latgalian (eastern Latvian) regions, which he describes as the “flowering world” beside the Sivers Lake near Krāslava. He shares this musical pastime with his wife Aīda Rancāne, who has followed in the footsteps of her father Andrejs Rancāns; he has his own regional ensemble in which he is an expert of the folk violin (*viņole*) in the Baltinava (Latgalian) tradition. *Grodi* interpret biographical accounts of traditional musicians and singers in the provinces of Kapusts’ childhood (Dagda and Krāslava), which determine the meaning of their transcriptions, performances, or recordings of the cultural end product. The name *Grodi* defines a fragment of folk architecture, in which the grooves in a cement or wood foundation encircle a well and hold spring water from its source; the Latvian public has been enticed to listen, and to “dip their buckets and draw from the well of their musical traditions.”⁷ Admittedly, it

⁶ Tāle, 2004.

⁷ *Baļķu, dēlu vai cementa akas ietvaru, tilta grīdu vai baļķus, kas to satur* (Kalniņa, 2002, 24) or simply “*Baļķi kas ietver aku; tilta grīda arī baļķi, kas to satur,*” *Latvijas konversācijas vārdnīca*, see notes to *Grodi, Ģimenu godu dziesmas* (Family ritual songs) (2001), and *Ārpus laikā* (Outside time) (2000); interviews with Andris

is disconcerting to associate symbolic images of pure well water with a nation that is entering the twenty-first century; nevertheless it is worth noting that contemporary folklore practices may pertain to practical issues of day-to-day life. Outside of Rīga many Latvians in my study still experience difficult living conditions on isolated farmsteads.

Metaphors relating to rural cultural continuity have been frequent in the broader Eastern European historical context of folksong collecting and national aspiration. The experience of Kapusts in *Grodi* is reminiscent of the pioneering efforts by early ethnomusicologists to bring musical folklore to the attention of the urban bourgeoisie. Oskar Kolberg in Poland, Leos Janáček in Moravia (late nineteenth century) and Béla Bartók in Transylvania (early twentieth century) had sought out music, a quest for natural and pure oral transmission within the rapidly disappearing social structure of remoter villages. Bartók honored the music of his native Hungary as “the deep well of peasant culture and musical invention”. With these words he attempted to bring Hungarian musical folklore to the attention of the urban bourgeoisie, collaborating with Zoltan Kodály to collect peasant songs for their initial publication of *Magyar népdalok* (“Hungarian folksongs”) in 1906.⁸

The folklorist Iveta Tāle applies research to folklore traditions of a renowned declaimer (*teicēja*) who became the inspiration for the Rīga-based *kopa Saucējas*. Her study of biography, which may be compared to that of Kapusts (see above), is a principal factor in the group’s methods of folklore reproduction. By emulating the repertoire of the Latgalian Margarita Šakiņa (b. 1926), with whom she studied for

Kapusts (Rīga, 8 November 2000, and 8 August 2003); see Lancere, 2000; Lusiņa, 2000; Sound Recordings CD One, File 3: L23, 24.

⁸ Porter, 2000, 435-44.

seven years – as well as her anecdotes, the meaning of her songs, and her motivation to sing – Tāle learned the required skills of repertoire building, storytelling, and craftsmanship. When returning to an urban environment, however, she discovered that she could not teach this repertoire to others in her *kopa* as an isolated performance model because it was inseparably linked to the traditional declaimer's personal world. From Šakiņa, therefore, the *kopa* acquired anecdotes and local knowledge relating to the sequence of songs and their selection. *Saucējas* has mastered the reproduction of several regional declamatory and polyphonic vocal textures not only of northern Latgale but also the ethnographic regions of Maliena, Selonija, and lower Kurzeme; these textures were objects of archival ethnographic recordings, many of which were undertaken during the late 1990s. The *kopa* publicizes their exuberant manner of singing in the open air; their songs are “shouted, pulled, twisted, exulted, ornamented, roared, or sung” (*saukts, vilkts un locīts, gaviļēts un rotāts, krākts un dziedāts*).⁹

Unlike their own ethnic roots, which are scattered across Latvia, Rīga's university students who participate in the female *kopa Laiksne* (east Latgalian dialect: “water rose”) reproduce polyphonic singing of rural Latgale. With a focus on genres women sing since 1993 they have learned much of the repertoire of Margarita Šakina (see above). They perform in the same everyday clothes that they wear in Rīga, adding elements of ancient dress, chains and ornaments, such as a pouch that holds a wooden flute (*stabule*). When I recorded *Laiksne*'s rehearsal (3 October 2002) they chose the voice of the *talka* (Latgalian: *tolka, or tolku bolss*), which

⁹ Announcement of the CD *Saucējas* released in October 2007. Iveta Tāle read the paper “The Song and Its Performance in the Context of Singer's Experience” at the 34th Conference of the International Ballad Commission (Rīga, July 19-25, 2004).

accompanies a collective work-party of rye harvesting (*rudzu tolka*). They had acquired this form of intonation from Šakiņa.¹⁰ For my recording they selected a “long song or voice” (*garais balss*), in which a repeated part forms a long refrain; this is popular at *talkas* (“working bees”) for manure spreading, hay collecting, and rye, barley and flax harvests. Šakiņa cultivates childhood associations with its rendition. In *Atīt zūses* (“Geese are coming”) the declaimer recalls a provincial scene near her former home:

Atīt zūses klaiguodamas The geese approach cackling
Nu dūnaino jezeriņa;
 From the muddy little lake;
Atīt meitas dzīduodomas The girls approach
 singing
Nu to rudzu teirumiņa. From the rye field.¹¹

According to a Latvian ethnomusicologist who has studied northern Latgalian polyphony, of “singing with a half voice” (*dzīduošānu ar pusboļsu*),¹² in the parish districts of Šķilbēni and Baltinava, native singers continually vary their repertoires, making it difficult for outsiders to learn them sufficiently. Despite the specialized knowledge of these field researchers, Beitāne contends that folklore reproduction groups may not be able to grasp changing traditions:

¹⁰ Margarita Šakiņa, in: *Sieviete*, 1990. The group may have found also satirized my immediate arrival (in November 2002), as I had difficult locating their rehearsal site on the edge of Rīga.

¹¹ For purposes of comparison a variant sung by an older ethnographic ensemble is contained in the Composite of Sound Recordings, CD One, File 3: L16 *Tolka lela, tolka moza. Briežciema etnogrāfiskais ansamblis*, 1982, recording of the Latvian Folklore Archives. A second variant is L17 *Tolka lela, tolka moza.* by *Laiksne*, Rīga, 2002. A third variant L18 is recorded from a *kopa* of youth from the town of Ilžena in the region of Ludza.

¹² This northern Latgalian polyphony in two parts, with a solo upper accompaniment voice is associated with the cuckoo’s song (Latgalian : *zagiuzes bolss*) see *Saucējas*, CD, 2007.

But we see a different kind of creativity when people who have not inherited the tradition directly make their attempts at it. Knowing not very much about the polyphony tradition, but willing to use it, the modern folklore groups often combine ideas of the tradition with principles dictated by general musicality.¹³

Yet the singing of Rīga's folklore *kopas*, such as *Grodi*, *Laiksne*, and *Saucējas*, may be an effective way of communicating with listeners who yearn for authenticity and an escape from their urban surroundings.

I have questioned the standards of reproduction during interviews with Helmī and Dainis Stalts, their daughter Julgi, and former members of the *Skandinieki draugu kopa*: Velta Leja, who is the director of *Dimzēns* in Jelgava since 1993, and Dace and Jānis Vītols, the founders of *Pērlis* in Druviena in 1996. From October 2000 to July 2007 I also studied *Kūkleite* outside of the city of Rēzekne (in Latgale), *Delve*, near Limbaži (in Vidzeme), *Kāndla* in the Finno-Ugric Livonian territorial coastal village of Mazirbe (in Kurzeme), and *Grodi*, *Iļģi*, *Laiksne*, and *Vilki* in Rīga.

2. Kinship, Friendship, Community, and School: *Skandinieki*, *Dimzēns*, *Pērlis*

In the second volume, published in 1785, of the celebrated four-volume philosophical treatise of history, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, Johann Gottfried Herder reduced the culture of a state or society to its primary arrangement of family groupings, whose natural growth he likened to a well-nurtured “plant of nature with many branches.” Moreover, Herder specified an array of family ties – of “father, child, brother, sister, beloved, friend, mainstay” (*Vater*,

¹³ Beitāne, 2005, 123.

Kind, Bruder, Schwester, Geliebter, Freund, Versorger) – and the organic forces (*Kräfte*) that underlie society and its governance:

It is nature which breeds families: the most natural state is, therefore, one extended family (*Volk*) with one national character [...] for a nation and people is just as much a plant of nature as a family, only that it has more branches. *Die Natur erzieht Familien; der natürlichste Staat ist also auch Ein Volk, mit Einem Nationalcharakter [...] denn ein Volk ist sowohl eine Pflanze der Natur, als eine Familie; nur jenes mit mehreren Zweigen,*¹⁴

With a view toward preserving natural diversification, Herder bequeathed a humanitarian notion of liberalism and equality relating to the existence of families, clans, tribes, and other small historical groupings. Herder's important contribution, the concept of cultural pluralism, has clearly maintained its relevance in the present-day Latvian context, in which important social value is assigned to the heterogeneity of regional folklore groups and to their individual families.

In the socio-musical development of the *kopa* as a popular institution, in fact, only a few musical families with two or three generations of participants effectively hold together the largest of the groups (e.g. *Skandinieki* and *Dimzēns*). The interaction that occurs among spouses, siblings, grandparents, and offspring shapes the musical repertoire in a distinctive way. According to my fieldwork observations in Latvia, activities underlying modern secondary folklore reproduction retain the spontaneous play of family musical traditions. Having a historical precedent in the pre-Christian social and political structure, the *kopa* may be compared to large

¹⁴ Herder, *SW*, XIII, 384; XIV, 87.

extended families (*dzimtas*), which, well into the twentieth century, formed the backbone of traditional semi-feudal farming communities.¹⁵ The *Skandinieki* popularized organizational methods of integrating entire families, and generated personal friendships and marriages.¹⁶ The *kopa* theatrically stages wedding or burial rituals. The sustenance of this activity is local knowledge and genealogy; each family participant assimilates elements from older folk culture by studying ethnographic singers, who may be their own relatives. As families change and develop, so do the meanings of accompanying folklore traditions, which are renewed daily.

Flourishing during the 1980s the folklore movement quelled fears that Latvian folklore and language traditions were nearing the point of extinction. A leading playwright who spoke to the Plenum of the Writers' Union in 1988 warned that they were in danger of becoming the last generation of Latvian intellectuals.¹⁷ Interpreting her role in the *kopa*, from the perspective of a mother of three small children, Helmī Stalte objected to the apathy of Soviet society: "we have no right to rupture our link with folk song, nurtured for hundreds of years [...] it is a torch of Latvian consciousness passed on to our children, so that they will not curse us."¹⁸ Her call to preserve native family traditions for one's offspring closely mirrors the rhetoric of Herder-inspired journalism of Jēkabs Zvaigznīte, which incited Latvian political consciousness in the 1860s and 1870s (see Chapter Four). The writings of Isaiah Berlin in 1997 can be applied to the myth of language preservation during the national awakening of the 1980s. Berlin appropriated the concept of *Volksgeist* when

¹⁵ Buceniece, 1995, 581.

¹⁶ Šmidchens, 1996, 189.

¹⁷ Dreifelds, 1989, 79.

¹⁸ The Soviet media reported upon the popularity of the *Skandinieki* as late as 1989 in the cover story to a women's journal *Padomju Latvijas Sieviete* volume 4.

he perceived the “wounding” of material and spiritual life of nationalities within the Soviet Union.¹⁹ This suppression of ethnic and national values heightened support for Herder-inspired in the “singing revolution” (1988-90).²⁰ By way of example, an American doctoral student who lived and performed with the *kopa Skandinieki* at the end of Soviet rule in 1990 perceived that the intensity and devotion to the pursuit and propagation of folklore was “single minded.”²¹

Networks of close kinship, support, and volunteerism, the *kopa* integrated ethnic singing traditions of several generations of families. Within the extended circle that evolves around each *kopa*, family relationships are acknowledged repeatedly. The children affectionately known as the *Skandinieki bērni* (*Skandinieki* children) have been schooled in a self-made regional community. In the early 1990s Guntis Šmidchens observed, “this ensemble did not merely perform music, but was living a life based on folklore.”²² The *Skandinieki* children played next to Dainis Stalts as part of an illicit flag-bearing procession of *kopas* that extended down the main thoroughfare, *Barona iela*, during the Latvian-sponsored international folklore festival *Baltica-1988*. The presence of children has been a vital trademark that symbolizes the survival of the small Livonian ethnic minority community. During the *Skandinieki*'s early performances, Dainis Stalts carried his youngest son Dāvis (b. 1982) on his shoulder,²³ with whom in October 2000 he demonstrated a Livonian *laula* (song). That Dāvis grew to adulthood in the public sphere, and was now as tall

¹⁹ On Berlin's discussion of Herder's concept of the *Volksgeist*, see Berlin, 2006, 232-3; see also Moser, 1956/57.

²⁰ Grigorievs, 1996; see Chapter Five.

²¹ Šmidchens, 2000, 5.

²² Šmidchens, 1996, 156.

²³ In a concert dedicated to Krišjānis Barons, which I recorded at the Hall of the Latvian Society on 28 October 2000.

as his father, is a familial symbol that demarcates a new period of national awakening.

Founders of several *kopas* reviewed below owe their beginnings to the *kopa Skandinieki*, from which they “found their way” and gained an understanding of Latvian and Livonian folklore.²⁴ During these productive years of the folklore movement in the 1980s, folksong scholar Iveta Tāle (b. 1962) claimed that every *kopa* aspired to be called after the *Skandinieki*.²⁵ Velta Leja, director of *Dimzēns* in the provincial capital city of Zemgale since 1993, recalls that seven years of her youth were devoted to playing the violin and singing in the *Skandinieki*; in her opinion she completed not only this, but a “fundamental school of life” (*pamatīga dzīves skola*). To some members who left the group and moved away from Rīga to Sigulda, Liepāja, Jelgava, or Druviena in Vidzeme, Dainis Stalts became a distant “godfather” (*krusttēvs*); they established their own *kopas* that multiplied in “wave after wave.”²⁶ Former members of the *kopa Skandinieki*, violinist Ilga Reizniece and *kokle* (zither) virtuoso Māris Muktupāvels cultivated professional status after 1981 as musicians in the band *Iļģi*. *Kopas* that followed the role model of the *Skandinieki* include *Dimzēns* in Jelgava, the student song and dance ensemble attached to the University of Latvia *Dandari*, and *Vērtumnieki*, formerly called the *Madonas Skandinieki*, a *kopa* that celebrated its twentieth jubilee year in 2001.

The descendants of a Balto-Finnic tribe of Livs (or Livonians) who live mainly in Rīga and other Latvian cities, or in the northern coastal region of Kurzeme, Helmī

²⁴ Mežarups, 2000.

²⁵ Interview in Rīga, 23 July 2004.

²⁶ Interview in Rīga, 7 May 2001.

and Dainis Stalts covet their ancestral clans.²⁷ The surname of Stalts was chosen from Helmī's paternal clan in Kolka; Dainis (born Grasis) has links with the Melnderi, Libens, and Kaupe clans. When interviewed they placed importance on their genealogy of family trees (put at risk by a Soviet ban against this declaration) and references to a distinguished Livonian lineage. With the *Skandinieki* they have renewed Livonian song culture in extensive tours: of Latvia, beginning in the late 1970s, and of émigré communities of America, Europe, and Australia.

The birth of the second of the Stalts' children Julgi Stalte (b. 1978), who was named after the Livonian word for "brave-hearted," became a symbol of the family's determination to resist both Latvian and Soviet assimilation. Julgi's unique linguistic ability was nourished by her knowledge of traditional *laulas* (songs) that she obtained from her maternal grandfather Oskars Stalts (b. 1904) in Kolka, the village at the northern extremity of Kurzeme, and also from his sister Irma Fridrihsone-Stalte (b. 1911).²⁸ It is not only rare in a Livonian family tree for all of one's grandparents to claim Livonian nationality on their passports, but Julgi is among only ten Livonian speakers who have attained a level of fluency, by learning to read and converse, as well as sing.²⁹

At the conclusion of the day's festivities of the children's and youth annual spring fair in Rīga, on 12 May 2001 Julgi, with her parents and the *Skandinieki*, performed a well-documented Livonian Easter song (*Tšitšōrlinkist*). Although its customary function was to awaken the birds and coax them from their winter hiding,

²⁷ See below, "the Livonian Voice." Interview in Rīga, 7 May 2001.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Interview with Valdis Ermanbriks, President Liv (Livonian) Union, 30 July 2004. By 2003 the number of passports stamped with the nationality had declined, falling below two hundred.

Tšitšõrlinkist has now become part of the symbolic rites of procuring health and success during Easter morning rituals. Estonian composer Veljo Tormis (b. 1930) rescued music of the Livonians, as well as Vepsian and Ingermanland Finnic groups around the Baltic area, which were threatened with extinction. His setting of the Easter ritual song *Tšitšõrlinkist* – collected first in 1923 in Mazirbe by Latvian musicologist Emilis Melngailis³⁰ – motivated Julgi Stalte to modify the song for her performances.³¹

On the stage of the Hall of the Latvian Society Julgi Stalte's microphone was a toy for her four-year-old son, Kārlis Oskars, who habitually wanders on the stage with the other “*Skandinieki* children.” The larger *kopas* generate familial traditions; twenty years earlier, for example, journalists wrote of Julgi, who played alongside her mother, Helmī Stalte, during *Skandinieki* performances.³² In the summer of 2002 a traditional Livonian christening for Kārlis Oskars took place in the public's eye at Rīga's Open-air Ethnographic Museum. In that year Julgi established her own group *Kalā jeng* that incorporates Livonian texts and melodies.³³

In the *Baltica* international folklore festival (Kuldīga, Kurzeme, 12 July 2006), the *kopa Dimzēns* reached a peak membership count of thirty-seven participants. Since their founding in 1993 this growth has been accompanied by an influx of young members, whose parents, offspring, grandchildren, and other

³⁰ Šuvcāne, 2003, 28.

³¹ Interview with Dainis Stalts, 3 August 2003. Julgi Stalte's notation is reproduced in Illustration 27.

³² Medīna, 1981. See Sound Recordings, CD Two, File 6 Kurzeme: Livonians. KL 15-17.

³³ For example, Julgi Stalte, 2003, *Līvōd lōlōd* [Livonian songs], a personal collection compiled for the annual Livonian festival, Mazirbe (2 August), Illustration 27.

relatives constitute the backbone of the *kopa Dimzēns* (see Illustration 25). A second group of school-age participants, *Mazais Dimzēns*, has rehearsed separately for youth festivals and competitions since 2000. Twice weekly Zane (b. 1991) and Elīze (b. 1994) – who sing, dance, and play the violin – join their mother (Velta Leja) at rehearsals. Anita Jansone (b. 1987) routinely attends practice with her brother and parents (see Illustration 25). She was placed in the category of “great singers” (*dižie dziedātāji*) in the 2002 annual singing competition “I sing the song, as it was” (*Dziesmu dziedu, kāda bija*). Her friend Inese Mičule (b. 1987) qualified to study ethnomusicology at the University of Latvia.³⁴ I first filmed the group at a public Mother’s Day presentation at the Open-air Ethnographic Museum in May 2001. Three generations of singers and players took part: Vija Jaunosane (b. 1943) (playing a traditional drum *bungas*), her daughter Ieva Šustika (b. 1972), a traditional violin player, and her grandsons Dzintars (b. 1994) and Agris (b. 1991); only a few weeks beforehand the boys had competed successfully in the annual children and youth’s singing competition, *Dziesmu dziedu, kāda bija*. While my findings suggest that the close interdependence of families in the *kopas* may resemble traditional large extended families, it should be noted that this social interaction has grown mainly within urban communities. The following example pertains to a situation in which the survival of smaller groups has been dependent upon building informal ties and relationships. After 2004 Velta Leja of *Dimzēns* began to direct the activities of *Zemgaļi*, a smaller group in the region of Jelgava, in the parish Līvberze; her help was urgent because several key older members had retired.³⁵ In this instance the *kopa*

³⁴ Her singing is recorded in the Composite of Sound Recordings, CD Two, Z10.

³⁵ *Zemgaļi*, which has been active since 1978, in 2007 comprised twenty children and adult participants, whose ages range from six to seventy-six. An older member of the

Dimzēns lent its support to a neighboring *kopa*, who also began to perform jointly with *Dimzēns*. In another example, a wedding ceremony in which I took part, *Dimzēns* performed traditional ritual music (3 August 2003), but clearly, a network of families was in constant view.³⁶ These volunteers undertook the responsibility of transport, as well as insuring the appropriate supply of apparel, crafts, hand-made costumes, and traditional foods. Yet at the height of the festivities this extended circle also found it natural to sing and dance, and their sense of play radiated to a community of families and friends. Group meetings and rehearsals of *Dimzēns* take place on Monday and Friday evenings from 19:00 to 22:00; I recorded a complete evening on 9 February 2007. As many of the rehearsed songs contained two to three vocal parts and an obligatory vocal drone, the director Velta Leja frequently provided the ornamentation (or twisting, *locīt*) of the main melodic line. A seventeen-year old singer, Jekaterina (Kate) Jevdokimova (b. 1989), who moved to Jelgava from the Baltinava civil parish district of Latgale, was in the throes of preparing two folksongs for the annual singing competition in May 2007. The parameters of the event centered on a cycle of bridal dowry songs, perhaps because they are a well-preserved regional folklore activity; for example, ritual wedding songs are popularly utilized in modern-day weddings.³⁷ By learning from the older members of *Dimzēns*, who add a second voice in the recording, Jekatarina began to

group Alberts Mednis (born 1936 in Latgale), is an accomplished player, since childhood, of a regional type of concertina (*ermoņika*). His daughter and granddaughters, also folk instrumentalists, participate in *Zemgaļi*.

³⁶ The wedding music of Kārlis and Linda Freibergs, on a farmstead in southern Zemgale, is contained in the Composite of Sound Recordings, CD Two, File 4: Z4.

³⁷ Kursīte, 2005, 68, writing of her field research in Vārkava in Latgale in 2004. A bridal lament, *Kur gaismena zyla ausa*, of the Latgalian traditional wedding song cycle, is sung by the *kopa Ceiruleits*; see Composite of Sound Recordings, CD One, File 3: Latgale L19.

master the regional intonation of Latgalian dowry songs: *Pūreņu, munu pūreņu* and *Ūsi ūsi, kad laposi* (Ash tree, when will you sprout leaves).³⁸ The concluding piece of the rehearsal (CD Two, Z12) was a contemporary composition of Dina Kalniņa, who directs the *kopa Kokle*, based in Rīga. Dedicated to a whistle, *Ķēvīt' mana svilpastīte* exploits the traditional instrumentation of *bungas* (drum), *kokle* (thirteen-string lap zither), *virole* (violin), *klabata* (wooden clapper), and a folded leaf whistle (*lapa svilpa*).

In the southeastern province of Latgale, on the outskirts of the capital, Rēzekne, the high school of Makašani sponsors the *kopa, Kūkleite* (*The Small Kokle*), of thirty teen-age students who are taught the traditional Latgalian song repertoires. Marija Andiņa, an energetic performer and music teacher, founded the *kopa* in 1992 (see Illustration 24). She is a respected accordion player who frequently accompanies local community events at the local “house of culture” (*kultūras nams*) with her playing and singing. She sings and leads Latgalian psalms in the choir of the small wooden Catholic Church of St. John’s at nearby Pilcene (*Pilcenes Jāņa baznīca*). We encountered each other in the old centre of Rīga, when I photographed the *kopa Kūkleite* (see cover) in May 2001; later we corresponded, and I visited her home and the high school in Makašēni in September and October of 2002. She had been widowed that year and assumed the heavy chores of the family’s farmstead with the assistance of her sons. During my stay we attended social gatherings late into the evenings. She was paid, however, to sing and play the accordion until

³⁸ Collected, transcribed and published by Emilis Melngailis (1951-53) from the declaimers Tekla Viļuma, Dzalbe Genonefa (b. Auleja, Latgale, 1880). The second piece is declaimed by Irēna Vilciņa, Emilis Melngailis collection, recorded from Veronika Čeiča, b. Galēnos 1918. Composite of Sound Recordings, CD Two, Z5 and Z7.

physically (and perhaps symbolically) she lost her voice, and could sing no more. In formal proposals for state funding she attempts to explain the value of her search over the past fifteen years – for “the golden knowledge that was known to her ancestors.” The music traditions that have fortified her resilience have also enriched her immediate family:

I have come from a song-loving Ivon’s family. It was my mother (Anna Ivone), who taught me to love ethnic culture, in the spirit of this wisdom I have brought up my own children and I still regard that it has a great importance in the national self-confidence of a person.³⁹

One of nine children, Marija’s grandmother was renowned for her succulent voice, and her daughter Anna Ivone (b. 1930) directly inherited songs, dances, folktales and riddles. During the past ten years Anna Ivone has been recorded and filmed by folklore researchers in Rīga and has taught her heritage of songs and dances to young groups; finally, she has a reputation for her familial methods of healing with herbs.

Strong family ties to Latgale have been a catalyst for the popular folksinger, Biruta Ozoliņa, who studied the song heritage of her ancestral lineage. Her singing and *kokle*-playing are a valued inheritance, for her mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother’s names are listed in the register of the Latvian Folklore Archives.⁴⁰ Ozoliņa imagines that, by knowing their songs, she has met her deceased relatives personally and perceives how they may have felt. A student of classical music at the

³⁹ Interview and correspondence with Marija Andina, September 2002; *Nataki spūleiti bez skrimsteņa*. (*The spindle won’t turn without the sheave*), which is an unpublished manuscript collection of songs from Latgale dating from 2002. See also Illustration 24.

⁴⁰ Lancere, 1999; Upe CD, *Bolta eimu* (“Dressed in white”); Sound Recordings CD One, File 3: Latgale L21.

Music Academy in Rīga in the 1980s, she chose to follow the folklore movement of the 1980s, following the pattern of classically trained musicians Ilga Reizniece (of *Iļģi*) and Dace Vītols (of *Pērlis*).

Pērlis is the name of the small forest (*sila*) that adjoins four isolated farming households and symbolizes their shared pathway (see Illustration 23). The seventeen members of the group *Pērlis* live in isolated farmhouses on either side of these woods. Dace Vītola and Līga Kļaviņa, its leaders, are music teachers in the local high school. In their decision to leave Rīga (see Chapter Five), Dace and Jānis Vītols maintained that a folk belief had determined their destiny (*liktenis*), which was predetermined, or “placed” (*likt*). Since their birth they have vested authority in these “life’s threads” (*pavedieni*).⁴¹ By articulating beliefs in pagan forces of influence, the *kopa* are inventing a myth pertaining to their current role in sustaining traditions. In another illustration of being rooted in a specific time and place, Velta Leja, who currently directs Jelgava’s *Dimzēns*, perceives that her role as a folklore leader was a blessing bestowed upon her in the cradle.⁴²

In a commemorative tenth anniversary sound recording, *Druvienas tautas dziesmas, Pērlis* (2006) has pieced together a regional repertoire from the town and civil parish district of Druviena, issuing a CD and booklet of twenty musical examples (*Druvienas tautasdziesmas*) and photographs documenting occasions of the *kopa* over ten years. Painstakingly piecing together a local history of music, Dace Vītola located seventeen examples in folklore archives. These were collected and transcribed by Anna Poruka, the sister of Romantic-Symbolist author Jānis Poruks

⁴¹ Pujāte, 2001, 23. See Illustration 25.

⁴² Lapiņa. 1999, 15.

(1871—1911). Her collecting work, which dates from the early 1920s, was deposited in the Folklore Sector of the Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art (formerly the Soviet *Andreja Upīša Valodas un literatūras institūts*), from where it was utilized in the published collection of the musicologist Jēkabs Vītoliņš. (1973).⁴³ Dace Vītola identified concordances of melodies within older collections of Andrējs Jurjāns (*Latvju tautas mūzikas materiāli*, 1894).

The songs of Druviena's *Pērlis* display a balance, which is evenly distributed between adults or parents, and their offspring: for example, between Jānis and Dace Vītols, and three of their five children, Kalvis, Rasa, and Jānītis, who assume the responsibility of the principal declaimer interchangeably. It was natural for their children to declaim many of the verses on their own in a recording made by the Latvian Folklore Archives of St. John's Day songs (on 19 June 2001).⁴⁴

For traditional violinist Ilga Reizniece (b. 1956) a commitment to folklore was an incentive to learn her mother's song traditions, but she also wished to preserve this oral heritage for her four sons.⁴⁵ Consequently, her life changed after she became part of the *Skandinieki* during their early years. She traveled to the countryside to learn songs, games, and dances, and to make costumes and musical instruments. A newcomer to Rīga from the northeast corner of Latvia (Liepna, in the Alūksne parish district) Herta Reizniece was embarrassed to reveal her rural origins, admonishing her daughter Ilga "to keep a finger on her lips," rather than to sing folksongs in the city.⁴⁶ Nonetheless, radio programs with the *Skandinieki* in 1980

⁴³ *Gadskārtu ieražu dziesmas* [Calendar ritual songs]. Rīga: Zinātne.

⁴⁴ See Composite of Sound Recordings, CD One, Vidzeme V9-12.

⁴⁵ Interview in Rīga, 26 October 2000.

⁴⁶ Upheavals created by land reforms after 1918 supported a new urban Latvian

popularized the regional ethnographic singing of Herta Reizniece and her sisters. Because they were accomplished in many styles of voice – wedding (*kāzu balss*), communal work songs (*talku balss*) – Ilga regrets that she did not learn more from her mother and aunts “until it was too late and they had passed away, the songs with them.”⁴⁷ Ilga has focused on her mother’s traditions that are a heritage to her family: the song texts of the *dainas* are “prayers, meditations, and church-going.”⁴⁸

The wives of the members of the male folk assemblage *Vilki* (“Wolves”) in Rīga (see Chapter One) comprise the women’s ensemble *Vilcenes* (“she-wolves”). They differ, however, in the perspective of singing only the family life cycle ritual songs that subsume soldiers’ songs. The *dainas* that are entwined with war may be lullabies, for example, and are applicable to varied situations: many women’s genres were sung loudly outdoors or from hilltops. The *Vilcenes* sing of the sorrows of an orphaned child and of preparations for a warrior’s leave-taking, drawing on mythological symbols that reflect an older pre-Christian stratum of Latvian folksong. In keeping with the poetically refined, lyrical, and allegorical traits in the *dainas*, extraordinary heroic events and personages are not named in texts. Rather, in wartime the soldier laments the fate of a lark’s nest (*Cīrulīti mazputniņi*) or the loss of the cuckoo’s tree (*Dzegužiņa*). *Vilcenes* focus on the ethos of the historical period from the tenth to thirteenth centuries, when indigenous song cultures of the Baltic tribes became established prior to the Teutonic crusades. Their research explores how material culture and folk traditions may have survived on the basis of existing

middle class, but demeaned the status of rural inhabitants., see Seth, 1939, 12; Hope 1999, 47.

⁴⁷ Interview with Ilga Reizniece, 6 November 2000.

⁴⁸ Vāvere, 2000, 8.

repertoires and archaeological specimens. They fulfill prominent roles as wives of the *Vilki* by also creating replicas of ancient clothing and armor, mastering textile techniques of weaving, ornament sewing, lace making, basketry, and needle wickerwork.⁴⁹ In 2000 five teen-agers, including the sons of the *Vilki*, began a folklore group *Vilkači* (“wolf-cubs”), whose songs present the strenuous rites of entering a soldier’s life and of reconstructing fighting techniques.⁵⁰ They accommodate an interest in ancestral song traditions and their popularization through contemporary youth concerts.

Within the national educational program, regional *kopas* may come together to celebrate calendar festivals and commemorative holidays. Festivities for Rīga’s 800th anniversary celebration, on 18 August 2001, which were concentrated in the vast expanse of the Dome Cathedral Square, exemplified the central role of Rīga in folklore research and re-enactment. In her liner notes, the director of the *kopa Perkonītis* recalls the sights, sounds, and smells when she moved to Rīga as a child. References to Rīga occur in traditional song texts, as in the popular battle song from Kurzeme, *Rīgā iešu es, māmiņa* (“I’m going to Rīga, mother”) that was popularly re-enacted by the *Skandinieki* in the early 1980. In finding variations of the theme, “big roads, small roads, all roads lead to Rīga”, their reenactment was established as a collective song (*kopīga dziesma*) for Rīga’s anniversary year. The *Skandinieki* recorded a teaching aid of the collective repertoire and teaching aid in 2001. Girls in the *Perkonītis kopa* from the town of Ropaži, near Rīga, sang this collective song (*kopīga dziesma*) on the

⁴⁹ Lapiņa, 1998, 11.

⁵⁰ Kārlis Krūmiņš (b. 1986, Illustration 7) is the oldest son of Jānis Atis Krūmiņš of the *Vilki*; joining him is Dāvis Stalts (b. 1982), who is linked to the *Skandinieki* as the youngest son of Dainis and Helmī Stalts,

evening of the event, and on their first CD it appears in the opening track.⁵¹

3. Authenticity, Healing, and Knowledge According to the Russian anthropologist, Vladimir Tishkov, group folklore performances display the virtue of “poetic therapy” that effectively relieved hardships, discontent and prejudices of the post-communist period.⁵² After the troubled economic transition of the 1990s Jānis Stradiņš, author of the *Third Awakening* (1992), turned to folklore and cultural sources as incentives for Latvians to remain and work in their titular nation.⁵³ Having raised four sons, the violinist and singer Ilga Reizniece equated the song texts of the *dainas* to “her prayers, her meditation, and her church-going:”⁵⁴

Song is vital for our endurance and is the best antidote to apathy and cynicism.

I can escape the daily struggle of life in the capital (Rīga) only when I remain by my songs. [*Dziesma mums nepieciešamākā noturēšanās, kā pote pret naidu un cinismu*].⁵⁵

At the conference of the Latvian Anthropological Society and the Latvian Folklore Archives, “A Person a Life a Narrative” (31 October 2000), interviews and surveys were conducted among twenty-five families who inhabited a block of flats in Rīga. The survey recorded a popular belief in good fortune: if the birth of a child took place during the 1980s, the energy of the “third awakening” would endow him with good luck (*piedzima bērns atmodas laikā*). Latvian sociologists showed that the

⁵¹ See Composite of Sound Recordings File 1 Vidzeme: R1. *Pulkā eimu, pulkā teku: koprepertuārs*. Collective repertoire of the children’s and youth’s traditional cultural project. Rīga: Latvijas Universitātes Etniskās Kultūras Centrs, 2001.

⁵² Tishkov, 1994, 450.

⁵³ Stradiņš, 2001, 2.

⁵⁴ Vāvere, 2000, 8.

⁵⁵ Bērziņa, 1989, 3.

folklore of the awakening period continued to improve morale ten years after the re-establishment of independence.

Participants and singers in the folklore movement attest to physical changes of energy and behaviors that may indicate the extent of their commitment and involvement. A search for nationalism may assume a messianic and spiritual quality. Recalling early *Skandinieki* performances of the 1970s one member described how he experienced a loss of consciousness (*saplūdums*),⁵⁶ perhaps because the events were far removed from the cold and functional practice of Soviet folklore. It would appear that this natural worldview influenced the behaviors of spectators, according to the playwright Māra Zālīte, who described the start of the *Baltica* international folklore festival (July 1988) at which point her friend extinguished a cigarette on the premise that “it doesn’t go together with folklore,” explaining furthermore that he did not belong to any ensemble, but he wore a folk costume because he wished to show solidarity.⁵⁷ During their first staged presentations the *Skandinieki* popularized a loud manner of calling that replicated the vocal quality of singing in the open air during farming works and physical labors (*saukšana*). In their study of anecdotes, customs, and traditions connected to singing, the *Skandinieki* modeled their approach upon Latgalian declaimer Margarita Šakina (see above), who boasted that “true singing” is the ability to blow out candles by the force of the singers’ breath.⁵⁸ In my fieldwork experience, beginning in October 2000, the *Skandinieki*

⁵⁶ Interview, Jānis Vītols, “Brencīši” farm, near Druviena, Gulbene region, Vidzeme 1 October 2002.

⁵⁷ Zālīte, 1997, 113.

⁵⁸ Stalte, 2000, 5.

have retained this ethos.⁵⁹

While the activities of the *Skandinieki* and the urban *kopas* are regularly publicized, their influence may not be apparent in Latvian academic curricula and research in ethnography and folklore research. There are apprehensions regarding the re-enactment of rural ethnographic singing, which may be misinterpreted outside of native contexts that are invariably regional and rural.⁶⁰ The musical criteria of the *Skandinieki* and the other urban *kopas* may be categorized under the rubric of “cultural performances,” for they became popular among “foreigners and outsiders,” at least according to the contention of some professional archivists and folklorists.⁶¹

In Lithuania, the *sutartinė* revival evoked negative reactions regarding singers who were said to resemble “dissonant howling wolves.”⁶² Controversially received by some city audiences, the folklore revival of the *sutartinė* has been led by the folklore ensemble *Trys keturiose*. Applied to tasks of spinning, hay harvest, rye cutting, and flax pulling, the genre distinctively mimics natural sounds of cackling or hooting, and a variety of other exclamations. Its vocal polyphony may be derived from close intervals of a second between the voices in three or four parts. Despite the perception of voices that are clashing or colliding, for those inside the tradition this system of musical

⁵⁹ “Folksong days” (*Dainu dienas*) in October 2000, for the 165th anniversary of the birth of the folklore collector Krišjānis Barons (30 October).

⁶⁰ On these criticisms regarding folksong reproduction, such as the use of hyperbole or of distorting melodies, often by lengthening the final notes, see Beitāne, 1996, 10, and Note 12 (above), and Ambrazevičs, 1996, 4-5.

⁶¹ Aldis Pūtelis, correspondence, 15 March 2003; on this issue see Jaremko-Porter, 2000, and 2001; see also the Introduction to this thesis.

⁶² Vyčiniienė leads a *sutartinės* ensemble, and has authored notes to the CD *Sutartinės: Trys Keturiose* [Lithuanian Polyphonic Songs], 1998; idem, *Sutartinės: Lithuanian Polyphonic Songs*, Vilnius, 2002; idem, “Articulation of Sutartinės: Viewpoints of Insider and Outsider.” In: *Traditional Music and Research in the Baltic Area*, edited by Rimantas Astrauskas. Vilnius: Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, 2005. 231-43

thought evinces a perfect musical order. Accounts by several traditional singers compiled in 1959 refer to an ideal of “harmonious sounds” having symbolic value.⁶³

Whereas standards of authenticity evolve in teaching manuals, vocal exercises, conferences, and group concerts, they present only one aspect of an exhaustive study by the *kopa*. Ideally, according to one instruction guide, singers should acquire a stamina and physique comparable to those of farm workers who sang during strenuous physical labor.⁶⁴ When training to be a traditional singer in the folklore movement, one may expect obstacles in urban high-rise dwellings, supermarkets, or the office-place. Nevertheless, some adherents of the folklore movement create a small corner in their flats, decorating it with candles and artwork that portrays the past.⁶⁵ In this situation it was a recurrent problem to simply reconstruct or impart the “crucial inner necessity to sing,” as in the example of one teacher who found it impossible to lead her students to a destination, and to announce that it is was “time to sing.”⁶⁶ A deeper commitment practiced by *kopas* such as *Grodi* manifests itself in singing in the framework of the life of country folk. By reproducing the resonant intonation of the “chest voice” (*krūšu balsis*), for example, *Grodi* intends brings to life “the powerful voice of men and women who are hardened by agricultural toil.”⁶⁷

⁶³ The author, Daiva Račiūnaitė Vyčiniienė, cites narratives of singers published in 1959, *Lietuvių liaudies instrumentinė muzika [Lithuanian Instrumental Folk Music]*.

⁶⁴ A collection of essays from the directors of *kopas*, issued by the Centre for Ethnic Culture, University of Latvia in 2000.

⁶⁵ Interview with Andris Kapusts, Rīga, 2000.

⁶⁶ Šmite, 2000, 16.

⁶⁷ In CD notes by Andris Kapusts, 1998. *Meditācija krūšu balsī [Meditation in the resonant voice of the chest]*.

4. The *Kopa* in the Ritual Year

The Baltic Supreme Soviets in 1989 took sweeping measures in order to return to the pre-Soviet past, by their decree to restore many street signs and monuments. In addition the adoption of church festivals as public holidays – Christmas, Easter and All Souls Day – represented life under the independent Baltic governments before 1940.⁶⁸ In its widest sense, the new “ideology of return” rehabilitated discredited authors, politicians, scientists, and former Soviet deportees who became publicly recognized and commemorated as an accepted part of Latvian identity.⁶⁹ Local regional identities and customs also underwent a process of restoration that has been sustained within the communal participation of the folklore *kopas*. Year after year their scheduled activity brings together the seasonal points of the Latvian agrarian calendar and recurrent life cycle song traditions, everyday work life, and some modern Western holidays. Instruction of the *kopas* for children and youth is established in an annual yearbook, a chrestomathy of oral folklore – the appropriate *dainas*, sayings, riddles, as well as traditions of drawing of folk ornaments and symbols – all of which are arranged according to seasonal rites and customs. The leader of the *kopa Vilki* attests to the full extent to which his children “live through the processes of Latvian festivities and rites and are engaged in the learning and regeneration of accompanying song traditions.”⁷⁰

Andris Kapusts, the founder of the *kopa Grodi*, is an avid proponent of astronomical processes, especially the summer and winter solstices and other seasonal rites that fall proportionately between them:

⁶⁸ Tishkov, 1997, 103; Dreifelds, 1989, 89; Sapiets, 1990, 164.

⁶⁹ Dreifelds, 1989, 89.

⁷⁰ Jānis Atis Krūmiņš, of the *kopa Vilki* (“wolves”), interview in Rīga, 26 July 2004.

Waiting for the sun on Easter (*Lielā diena*), rolling the fire wheel on St. John's Day, pulling the heavy (Yule) log from house to house on the winter solstice (*Bluķu vakars*), regaling ghosts in the time of Shades, before St. Martin's Day (*Veļu laiks*), and the tradition of taking a long sleigh trip on Shrovetide (*Metenis*).⁷¹

In the course of becoming familiar with Kapusts and his personal writings, I learned of his world-view that is governed by the eternally returning passage of a person's life. He has drawn a circular model for his *kopa*, to emphasize the continuous rotation of the rites of coming into the world, baptism, initiation, wedding, work, and burial. He objects that contemporary Latvian society has abandoned the ritual knowledge regarding the cycles of the human life and the cosmos.

Latgalian masked processions (*apstaigāšanās*) take place in the winter in the fields, or from house to house, strengthening stamina and morale among their participants. Aīda Rancāne of *Grodi* has lectured on the folk belief that elements of the ritual, its dynamic movement and loud noises, release physical and psychic energies that are essential to living out the remaining days of the year.⁷² While the manner by which these customs are carried out is believed to be proportional to the success of one's crops, the activity nowadays is said to insure one's health and success for the year:

On St. Martin's Day one must rejoice and sing, for then all year *Mārtiņš* will

⁷¹ Notes to *Grodi*, CD, 2000, see Discography.

⁷² Aīda Rancāne, "Latviešu tradicionālas maskas – laika atjaunotājas pārejas ritos," paper read at Rīga, *Latviešu biedrības Līgo zāle*, 30 October 2007. K. Barona konference *Svētki un svinēšana: tradīciju procesi Latvijā*. See also Rūta Muktupāvela, 2000, 83, whose essay distinguished between the Lithuanian and the Latgalian masked processions.

be happy. *Pa Mārtiņiem vajagot priecāties un dziedāt, tad visu gadu Mārtiņš esot priecīgs.*⁷³

Krišjānis Barons began his classification of calendar songs in *Latvju dainas* with Shrovetide (called variously *Metēni*, *Metenis*, or *Vastlāvis*), which may be observed on the 23rd of February, or on the seventh Tuesday lying midway between Christmas and Easter. The traditional season “of ice” (*ledus laiks*) for caroling, masks, and mummary begins in late autumn on St. Martin’s Day and incorporates the winter solstice (*Ziemas svētki*), as well as Shrovetide (*Metenis*). In February 2007, a contemporary festival of caroling, masks, and mummary created a climactic close to these calendar rituals. It was held in the western *Suiti* region of Kurland and featured the crafts, dances, and rites of the Catholic enclave of Bārta. Wassailers, who are known in western Latvia as *keķatnieki*, dress up in costumes of the opposite sex, as animals or birds on stilts, or as gypsies “going-a-gypsying” (*čiganos ejot*). In door to door processions, with songs and games, the wassailers may behave in an unusually aggressive and familiar manner when demanding presents. Smaller public celebrations at *Metenis* generally offer workshops for mask making, a masked procession, songs and games, and a competition for the best masks.⁷⁴

The Latvian Folklore Archives classifies anecdotes pertaining to mummary at *Metenis*, whose customs, behaviors, and songs vary according to regional interpretation. In Piebalga (Vidzeme), for example, a contributor observed that it is the custom for boys to dress as he-goats (*āzi*) and to go about frightening the girls;⁷⁵ this account is from Dobeles in Zemgale:

⁷³ Latvian Folklore Archives: LFK 3, 1745, cited in Šterna, 1998, 170.

⁷⁴ For example, in Jūrmala, near Rīga, 17 February 2007.

⁷⁵ LFK, 637, 104; Šterna, 1998, 81-82.

On Shrovetide evening mummers (*budēļi*) walked about. They were dressed in foolish clothes with horns and blackened faces. In a transformed voice the mummers said roughly ‘bu, bu, bu, bu, [...] my lambs and my kids.’ Mummers are willingly treated with food, drink, and even with money. *Metēņa vakarā staigāja budēļi apkārt. Pārgērbušies ērnotās drēbēs ar ragiem un notraipītiem ģimjiem. [...] Pārgrieztā rupjā balsī budēļi saka: “bu, bu, bu, bu sprinģ mani jēriņi, sprinģ kazlēniņi.” Budēļus labprāt pacienāja ar ēdieniem, dzērieniem, pat ar naudu.*⁷⁶

The custom of warding off evil during the decaying sun of the Christmas season is enlivened in mummary, whose joyful songs of winter solstice with the refrain “*kaladū*” defeat the return of long nights. These song activities have been offensive to Christians for hundreds of years (see Chapter One). Documentation dating from the eighteenth century describes the activity of dragging the Yule log from household to household at the end of the day when the farming work was completed. In the present day, the creative aspects of mummary have been encouraged in annual mask competitions and the rolling of the Yule log (*bluķa vilkšana*). On December twenty-first, several *kopas* take part in the pagan ritual in which the log is dragged through the old town of Rīga. On stopping there is a continuous line of receptions, with accompanying winter solstice (*kaladū*) songs and refreshments, until the log is burned at the final destination.⁷⁷

Lithuanian ethnomusicologist Rimantas Astrauskas, who has studied the annual system of ritual holidays, has noted that each element – an action, a gesture, a song, or a dance – is a separate component.

⁷⁶ Marta Bīlenšteine, Jaunauce and Dobele, Pēteris Šmits, *Latviešu tautas ticējumi*, Rīga, 1940-41.

⁷⁷ Muktupāvels, 2000 (see Discography, Latvian Folk Music Collection).

Although research has pointed to the possibility that these songs were once joined into a single cosmological myth (see Chapter One), some Lithuanian calendar songs may appear disconnected or even incoherent today, as few refrains have any semantic meaning.⁷⁸ Ritual cycles of musical traditions may also be at risk, because of the imposition of modern linear and progressive thinking. There may be a tendency among the long-established *kopas* to celebrate their own rites, such as wedding or other anniversaries, which deviate from Latvian cyclical traditions. According to Andris Kapusts *kopa* members should adhere to the interconnections between ritual songs and the life cycle, because these crossroads contain a source of strength, enabling the singer to overcome a spiritual crisis.⁷⁹ By way of example, the men's *kopa Vilki* scheduled the recording of their CD containing heroic tales and songs to coincide with the “dark time of the year, the time of Shades (*Veļu laiks*), when our ancestors told tales.”⁸⁰

Other narrators have expressed dismay over the transformation of some traditional holidays, particularly the problem of commercial elements from Halloween customs, which have detracted from the silence and gravity surrounding the main autumnal holiday of the Day of Commemorating the Dead.⁸¹ The time of Shades or *Veļu laiks* is a portion of the calendar that begins with St. Michael's Day (*Miķeļdiena*) on the twenty-third of September, and ends on St. Martin's Day (*Mārtiņdiena*), the tenth of November. Although a scholar of folklore has argued, “Latvians have forgotten the original meaning of what has become Halloween, which

⁷⁸ Astrauskas, 1999, 64.

⁷⁹ Grodi, CD, 2000, *Ārpus laika*.

⁸⁰ Notes to *Vilki*, 2002.

⁸¹ Astrauskas, 1999, 60.

is not a time for frivolity and masks, but a serious time,” and yet the ritual significance of this time of year is preserved to some extent through the efforts of the *kopas* and their affiliates.⁸²

Marija Andina (b. 1955) is acknowledged as a virtuoso accordion player in her community near the Makašāņi high school, a suburb of Latgale’s capital city of Rēzekne (see above and Chapter One). She, in turn, takes pride in her teen-agers who participate in the *kopa Kūkleite* (the little *Kokle*), for example, she corresponded to me about their knowledge of the traditional calendar: it divides the year according to equinoxes and solstices and marks the beginning and the end of critical agricultural activities: *Miķeļdiena* (23 September, St. Michael’s Day), *Mārtiņdiena* (10 November, St. Martin’s Day), *Dvēseļu diena* (1 November, All Soul’s Day), *Ziemassvētki* (22 December, Christmas), 5) *Metēņi* (Shrovetide), 6) *Lieldienas* (Easter, and the spring Equinox) and *Jāņi* (22 June, the summer solstice).⁸³ In the broadest sense, all *kopas* and traditional singers coordinate events in accordance with the Latvian ritual calendar. Communications to this author have also become part of these commemorations; this narrative from Ilga Reizniece, who is a primary school music teacher, expresses the passing of time solely in terms of the traditional holidays:

Last week was St. Martin’s time, and the whole time we had to walk about like “Martin’s children” with masks. This week, from *Lāčplēsis* (*Bear-slayer’s*) Day to Independence Day (11-18 November), is patriotic, when I teach the children soldiers’ songs and dances.

⁸² Interview with Andris Ērglis, Krišjānis Barons Memorial Flat, Rīga, 1 November 2000; see Appendix 3, page 349-56.

⁸³ Andina, 2002. The festivities of *Līgo svētki* are categorized according to St. John’s Eve (*Zāļu vakars*, *Zāļu diena*, *Ziedu diena*), St. John’s Day (*Jāņi*, *Jāņu diena*) and St. John’s Night (*Jāņanakts*).

Velta Leja, the director of the *kopa Dimzēns* since 1993, constructs a regional identity for the city and civil parish district of Jelgava by performing folksongs associated with the provincial capital. Within the framework of St. John's Day (Latvian: *Jāņi*), this *kopa* explores song texts that were composed by Anna Brīgadere (1861—1933), the native poetess of Jelgava. The members read, consult, and create music from collections or resources that hitherto have been dormant.⁸⁴

Compiled and edited by Emilis Melngailis (1874—1954), the *kopa's* reliance upon a voluminous collection published from 1951 to 1953, *Latviešu mūzikas folkloras materiāli* [Materials of Latvian Musical Folklore], has been recommended as their “daily bread,” their first practical step in organization.⁸⁵ Unifying the music of many outlying regions and cultures, Melngailis transcribed nearly five thousand melodies in his anthology. A CD comprising twenty-five *dainas*, which the *kopa Savieši* selected from recordings made in their prime years of activity in the mid-1980s, features the examples of Melngailis and his successor, the leading Soviet Latvian ethnomusicologist Jēkabs Vītoliņš, whose collections span wedding songs (1968), work songs (1958), and calendar rites (1973). In addition, *kopas* may seek specific regional songs in the private folksong collections of individuals.

5. The Latgalian Voice

The legacy of Herder may be acutely felt in Latvian dialectal regions where an awareness of language and song traditions has helped to overcome a history of exclusion and prejudice. Leaders of the folklore movement, alongside university

⁸⁴ Velta Leja, *kopa Dimzēns*, Jelgava, 5 August 2003.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

scholars of ethnomusicology and linguistics, have devoted fieldwork expeditions to collecting archaic traits preserved within Latgalian songs and variants, of which many had not as yet been reproduced in folk song collections or in archival recordings. Valdis Muktupāvels, at the University of Latvia, published his findings about the *kokle* traditions of eastern Latvia within a Latgalian-produced journal.⁸⁶ The fieldwork of ethnomusicologist Mārtiņš Boiko in Latgale has directed scholarly interest into musical rituals containing the singing of psalms, particularly during burial and mourning rites.⁸⁷ Members of the *kopa Grodi* who live in Rīga not only perform this music, but also speak the Latgalian language at home, because they are worried about its decline.

Unique artistic productions have stimulated interest in the Catholic province. In the first of a series of recordings devoted to traditional Latvian folksong renditions, Uģis Prauliņš, a Rīga resident and composer, selected and arranged dialect songs from Latgale, which were prominent in the reenactments of the pagan calendar. The composer envisioned a need for distant representations of cultural otherness within the context of modernity:

It's about the constant alternations of seasons outside the city [...] these songs are meant to be a retrospection of a whole year for the inner self of an urban man – at places we hardly ever visit these days.

Although scholars have been drawn to its cultural riches, Latgale is among the poorest provincial backwaters in Europe. This apparent paradox has not as yet been

⁸⁶ Muktupāvels, 1993, “Kuklēj muni Broļeļeni sov’ Orenu Mālenā.” *Tāvu zemes kalendārs* 54: 106-12.

⁸⁷ Boiko, 1999, “The Officium Defunctorum (“Office of the Dead”) and the Mourning Rites in Eastern Latvia.” In: *Ritual and Music*, edited by Rimantas Astrauskas. Vilnius: Lithuanian Academy of Music, 29-37.

resolved in decisions to market recording productions, for example, or in the course of academic interventions.⁸⁸

Latgalians have been subject to conservative and repressive Polish (1561—1772) and Russian rule (1772—1918; 1945—1990). In 1861, the abolition of serfdom occurred nearly a half century after that of neighboring Latvian territories. The Latgalian (High Latvian) language, which was distinct from the literary language spoken by the majority of the Lutheran regions, was preserved in the traditional liturgy of the sung vespers and psalms and it remained at the centre of Catholic services.⁸⁹ A journalist, Francis Kemps, proposed the name “Latgale” to designate the Latvian portion of the Russian Vitebsk *gubernija*, which after 1900 began to foster its own literary and political leaders. The cultural and educational awakening of the province is seen in newspapers written in the Latgalian language: *Zvaigzne* “Star” (1903) and *Gaisma* “Light” (1905).

During the 1920s and 1930s, Maliena in Latgale, because of its rhythmically varied dances, was the favored locality for the fieldwork expeditions of Emilis Melngailis. Melngailis, who observed a wood clearer in the forest, contrasted the gentle, deep sincerity of his Latgalian Catholic-influenced songs with the gruff manner of singing in coastal Kurzeme.⁹⁰ Because the Latgalian language and literatures were banned in schools for forty years in Soviet occupied Latvia, the ethnic group of several hundred thousand became at risk.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Uģis Prauliņš, Upe CD, 1999 (see Discography); Jaremko-Porter, 2001, 141.

⁸⁹ Bukšs, 1977, 207.

⁹⁰ Bērziņa, 1989, 95.

⁹¹ Khazanov, 1995, 98.

As late as in 1995, scientific field recordings of psalm singing (Latgalian: *psaļmu dzīduošna*) showed that Latgalian Catholic repertoire remained comparable to the vocal polyphony of folksongs.⁹² A compact disc and video recording made in a small wooden church near Rēzekne (Pilcenes St. John's Church) in 2000 contain psalms, vespers, and burial songs led by Marija Andiņa and her mother Anna Ivone in the civil parish district of Makašāni (the *kopa Kūkleite* above). Their repertoire of religious songs reflects the evolution of Catholic beliefs within the home, where Latgalian folklore traditions have coalesced within parallel daily and weekly practices.⁹³ Latgalian seasonal and generic ethnographic styles of intonation and polyphony are demarcated according to “voices” (Latvian: *balss*; Latgalian: *bolss*) – for spring, summer, or autumn, and as part of shepherding, communal farming tasks and other collective work, and weddings (*ganu, talku, kāzu*). The cuckoo voice is sung in several regions of Latgale from 23 April to 29 June.⁹⁴ The Latgalian manner of declaiming in a specific intonation or voice (*balss*) has endured for hundreds of years. Melodies that form an archaic layer – with a narrow diapason that can be readily extemporized – are concentrated in regions occurring at opposite poles of the country, in Kurzeme and Latgale. One can hear similarities in a sample of recordings from the Latvian Folklore Archives containing the multipart singing of the *Suiti* ensemble in the western Kurzeme enclave of Alsunga (see Chapter Four), in recordings made from 1939 and 1951. The archaic melodic structure is similar to the

⁹² Boiko, 1999, 31-32.

⁹³ *Vesperas, Psalmi, Dziesmas mirušo dvēselēm*. Psalm-singing of Latgale, and Songs for the Dead, led by Marija Andiņa (precentor), et al. Videocassette recorded by Dzintars Liepiņš in Pilcēnes Jāņa baznīca (Pilcēne, St. John's Church), May 2000.

⁹⁴ Information on *Laiksne* and Margarita Šakiņa have been compiled from journal and newspaper articles, such as Puķīte, 1997, 5; Margarita Šakiņa, *Sieviete*. 1990. On traditional singing among present-day declaimers in northern Latgale see Beitāne, 2006, and Tāle, 2006.

Baltinava example from Latgale in the voice of collective work (*tolka balss*) and in the voice of the rye field (*rudzu balss*).⁹⁵ At both ends of the country these recitative songs, bourdon polyphony, and refrain songs have survived among older singers.

The *kopa Ceiruleits* (“lark”) from western Latgale, in the Preiļi region (*aprinkis*), began as a children’s group in September of 1990. Among its thirty participants in January 2006, twenty-two were under fourteen years of age. The main motivation of *Ceiruleits* is to care for and preserve local and regional traits of poetry and lore, sayings, tales, songs, dances, and instruments; this also includes the traditional tasks of weaving and embroidering and of preparing decorations and dishes for feasts and ritual holidays. *Ceiruleits* has developed a nationally known performance style, although many of their songs and dances are acquired from local folk singers or elderly relatives, whose relationship to the song repertoires is a source of continuous study for the *kopa*.⁹⁶ Agnese Kārkle (b. 1990) recognizes her maternal grandfather, who died in 2003, as the source of her mother’s traditional style of singing. Anna’s father Jānis Vaivods (b. 1932), who lives twenty kilometers from Līvāni, is also descended from a family of folk declaimers.⁹⁷ Anna’s daughter Kristīna and her son Edgars have become students of ethnomusicology at the University of Latvia, as well as teachers of folklore in Rīga and in Latvian–American institutions. Anna Kārkle imparts the ethos of Latgalian song to her *kopa Ceiruleits*:

Songs are our life. They lift us from sorrow and unite us. The members of the

⁹⁵ *Alsungas suitu sievas*, recorded by Bellaccord, c. 1939; *Alsungas suitu sievas*, 1951, LFK magnetic tape (see Composite of Sound Recordings File 5 Kurzeme KS); *Baltinavas etnogrāfiskais ansamblis*, 1993. Website of the Latvian Folklore Archives: http://www.lfk.lv/dziesmas_lv.html.

⁹⁶ Tāle, 2006.

⁹⁷ Bronislava Voivode (b. 1915) Rožupe civil parish district; and Tekla Ušacka, (b. 1905) Vārkavas civil parish district.

kopa have found many of the old singers in the area, who create a wonderful basis for song programs. *Ceiruleits* has a couple of hundred of songs and dances in its collection. Children starting from the age of three sing, play, and dance in the group. Their repertoire consists of children's funny songs and games. The group works with folklore materials from all areas near to the town of Līvāni, where the Daugava and the Dubna rivers meet near to the [Latgalian] provincial border to Vidzeme. They perform in an ethnographic style. On festive occasions the table is set with homemade bread, bacon rolls, fragrant caraway seed cheese, beans, peas, and other homemade delicacies.⁹⁸

In this excerpt from Anna's narrative her familial role of mothering is evident within the extended list of social obligations that are inherent to the *kopa*; her words naturally impart an ethos of excitement and expectation that is mirrored by the children's manner of participation. Year after year, in corresponding with the author she has shared news of national events and the joint celebrations of the ritual calendar: of the *Jāņi* season of the summer solstice, the autumnal solstice (*rudens saulstāvju godi*), holiday merry-making at harvest time (*apjumības*), as well as the Latgalian interpretation of *Kalado*, the scenario of winter solstice rites and the accompanying songs of mummery.⁹⁹

Multi-ethnic song and dance repertoires are shared in an atmosphere of reciprocity among members of *Dimzēns* in Jelgava. Forming a memory of her former Latgalian homeland, the songs of Irēna Vilciņa (b. 1954) were included on the tenth-anniversary CD *Dimzēns* (2003), as were songs chosen by Genādijs Maksimovs, a

⁹⁸ Rancāne, 1994; translated by the author. Conversation with Anna Kārkle, 9 February 2007; *Ceiruleits* was formed in September of 1990; see Rancāne, 1994.

⁹⁹ Anna Kārkle, correspondence, 19 June 2006.

post-war Russian émigré.¹⁰⁰ The foundation of a kindred group, *Zemgaļi*, evolves around the instrumental musicianship of Alberts Mednis (b. 1936, see above), a Latgalian from Baltinava, who from the age of ten was proficient on the accordion (*harmonikas*) and the large chord zither (*citaru*) that characterize Latgalian rural folk bands (*lauku kapelas*).

6. The Livonian Voice

The decline of Livonian speakers in Latvia is an unfortunate example of the drastic cultural attrition of ethnic groups that have populated the marginal regions of Europe.¹⁰¹ The legislature of the Latvian Republic in 1991 addressed the endangered status of a separate Finno-Ugric Livonian language and reinstated the rights of representation of the Union of Livs (*Līvōd It*), as well as a separate newspaper, school, cultural centre, and flag, thereby strengthening the identity of the few remaining members of the smallest nationality and language group in the European Union.¹⁰² The Livs still cultivate an ancestral homeland comprising fourteen traditional fishing villages that lie along the Baltic coast (the *Līvōd Rānda*) of northern Kurzeme; the area has been protected within a state national reserve. The Livs (or Livonians), Karelians, and Vots are small Finno-Ugric language groups that in 2003 were predicted to survive for only fifty years.¹⁰³

In the course of medieval history, Livonian descendants of the indigenous Baltic coastal tribe were never fully assimilated into the Latvian native class,

¹⁰⁰ Interview with Velta Leja, 18 January 2004.

¹⁰¹ Bohlman, 2000: 664; idem, 1993, 127.

¹⁰² Valdis Ermanbriks, interview in Rīga, 24 July 2003.

¹⁰³ Kersti Boiko, chair of the Finno-Ugric language program at the University of Latvia (Rīga, 3 August 2003); see also Mežs, 2005.

notwithstanding the thirteenth-century German conquest and enslavement. Whereas at the height of its authority Livonia – the Latinized name of the tribal nation – contained an estimated 30,000 inhabitants, the Livonian wars with Russia during the late sixteenth century greatly reduced their numbers. A period of separate Livonian national awakening took root during the 1920s, although by the twentieth century this language was no longer in everyday use. In 1923, the Mazirbe coastal village housed a school and a Livonian cultural centre and the Livonian flag was created, at which point also the use of a collective name, of *līvli* (Latvian: *līvi* or *lībieši*), signified the joining of eastern and western dialects.

Among the few members of this ethnic minority, whose Finno-Ugric language is distinct from Latvian or other Indo-European languages, the family members of Helmī and Dainis Stalts of the *Skandinieki* retain a strong sense of Livonian ethnic identity. On the basis of their field research among the coastal villages the Latvian Folklore Archives estimated in 2000 that there remained only twenty Livonian speakers.¹⁰⁴ An eighty-year-old Livonian woman claimed that she bore the “burden of history,” as one of only four remaining native speakers in 1997.¹⁰⁵ The Liv (Livonian) Union in 2003 recorded only three to four native speakers who spoke Livonian as a mother tongue, those who have learned the language (only ten speakers), and a larger number (177) who designated Livonian nationality on passports. Additionally, the probable Livonian ancestry of an estimated five hundred

¹⁰⁴ In 1998 the department of citizenship and immigration of the Latvian Republic surveyed 188 residents who claimed Livonian nationality (a decline from 204 in 1995) Baister, 2002, 191; Erdmane, Helena [et al.] (2000), *Kolkas pagasts. Laudis un folklorā*, an unpublished account of a folklore expedition to the township of Kolka. The Latvian census in 2000 confirmed the estimate of the Latvian Folklore Archives of twenty Livonian speakers.

¹⁰⁵ Reported by the American Press; Specter, 1997, 34.

Latvians, or possibly many more, is undocumented.¹⁰⁶

At the point at which this ethnic group was reduced to a mere handful of individuals, its struggle was all the more desperate than other groups in Latvia. The Livonian ethnic consciousness grew dramatically with the popularity of the *Skandinieki*, becoming the stimulus of the folklore movement in the late Soviet period when this *kopa's* endangered status became linked to the cause of pan-Latvian nationalism. The Soviet authorities had closed the school and cultural centre at the fishing village Mazirbe, and in 1978 they banned the right to indicate “Liv or (Livonian)” (*libietis, libiete*) as an official ethnic nationality on passports.¹⁰⁷ In autobiographical narratives Helmī and Dainis Stalts raised the significance of their initial association with the Rīga choir *Līvlist* in 1976, an act they viewed as symbolic not only of their meeting and union in marriage but also of the protest movement against both Soviet and Latvian forces of assimilation during the 1980s, the prime years in the era of *glasnost*. During attempts by the Latvian Folklore Archives to gather Livonian materials and oral lore, the folklorist Aldis Pūtelis encountered reluctance among the local population, who were hesitant “to reveal the inner folklore which they censor from outsiders.”¹⁰⁸ The folklore researchers perceived that, in traditional discourse, Livonians distinguish eastern “coastal dwellers” (*rāndalist*) from the western “fishermen” (*kalāmīed*); Latvians, on the other hand, who farm the land away from the coast, are categorized as “country people” or “ploughmen.”

¹⁰⁶ Valdis Ermanbriks, the head of the Livonian Union, interview in Rīga, 30 July 2003.

¹⁰⁷ Klaviņš 2000, 7; Stradiņš, 1992, 205.

¹⁰⁸ Pūtelis, 2002.

In their effort to revive the spoken language, since 2000 the Livonian community has staged a popular music and crafts festival in Mazirbe, a small fishing village on the Livonian coast. It is held on the first weekend of August, which commemorates the founding of the Livonian Union on 1 August 1939. Established in 1974, the Livonians within *Kāndla*, the oldest established *kopa* to be documented in my fieldwork, reflect the multi-ethnic composition in Kurzeme's port city of Ventspils. In 2003 the five families within *Kāndla* spanned three generations, and also among them were Estonian members – the name of the *kopa* denotes the Estonian national instrument *kannel* (in Latvian: *kokle*). When I met with *Kāndla* in the Livonian festival in August of 2003 they enjoyed singing highly spirited nonsensical songs when I approached them.¹⁰⁹

A larger Livonian ensemble *Līvlist* was organized in Rīga in 1972. In order to counter the decline of the language the *Skandinieki* have performed Livonian song, or *laula*, traditions in staged national performances.¹¹⁰ In February 2006 the Estonian ambassador to Latvia decorated Helmī Stalte with an order to honor her life's work, which she devoted to popularizing Livonian culture.¹¹¹ At the inauguration ball of President Vaira Vīķe Freiberga in 2003, the striking Livonian costume of Dainis Stalts startled the security guards. He carried a gnarled root of a pine tree, which was a shamanistic staff that he had found near to the fishing village of Košraga. When returned to the Livonian coast (*Līvōd Rānda*) for the annual Livonian festival in August 2003 he held this shaman's staff by him, and explained that it was a source of

¹⁰⁹ Austra Čepelevska, the director (b. 1927), sang with her daughter Anda Fišere, and Ināra Maksimova sang with her granddaughter. See Illustration 26 and Composite of Sound Recordings File 6 Kurzeme: Livonians KL 17.

¹¹⁰ For example, 27 October 2000, see Sound Recordings Rīga R8.

¹¹¹ A feature in the Latvian daily newspaper *Diena* (21 February 2006)

strength that symbolized a man's duty to preserve his culture.

Conclusion

In a leading essay in a popular assemblage of St. John's Day songs (*līgotnes*), a Latvian ethnomusicologist instructs readers to take a folklore source in hand and to learn for themselves "of forgotten richness, which has slept there between the pages."¹¹² It is possible to compare the urgency of this plea in 2004 with a comparable theme of Herder's in 1777, in which he communicated the essence of his forthcoming collection of *Volkslieder*: that every nation possessed a hidden "storehouse and treasury" of thought in its folksongs, which preserved "an impression of a nation's heart, a living grammar, the best dictionary and natural history."¹¹³ Herder offered a vivid description of vivacious singing within his essay *Extract from Correspondence about Ossian and Songs of Ancient Peoples* (1773) while stipulating the necessity to learn of it only from direct experience. The Latvian *kopas* naturally conform to this principle, which they acknowledge as mastering a "situational art." Folksongs in Herder's recollection of provincial Livland impart a source of strength by which the Latvians could conceivably withstand adversity and human tragedy.

The outcome of my field research has reinforced Herder's characterization of folk poetry, which from the present-day standpoint has provided an education for

¹¹² Beitāne, *Praktiskā Jāņu grāmata*, 2004, 37: *un pats pārlicinātos par to bagātību, kas aizmirsta guļ starp grāmatu lapām.*

¹¹³ *Über die neuere deutsche Litteratur*, 1766-67, SW, II, 13; and Herder's essay of 1777 *Von Ähnlichkeit der mittlern englischen und deutschen Dichtkunst*, SW, IX, 522-35, as cited in Chapter Three.

kopa participants within a family and community network. In turn, the *kopa* organizations and network have demonstrably changed the means of commemorating the nation-state and gained a voice in the development of Latvian self-perception. Individual groups have rekindled kinship, support, and volunteerism among family circles, whose ethnic traditions evolve around the intricate structure of the ritual calendar. The beneficial factors of engaging in authentic singing practices in Latvia have reinforced many distinct cultures, dialects, and identities, but particularly those of the Latgalian and Livonian ethnic minorities. The end result is an unusually heterogeneous picture of the nation.



24. Marija Andina, *Kopa Kūkleite* (September 2002).



25. *Kopa Dimzēns*, St. John's Eve, Jelgava city and district (May, June 2001). *Kopa Pērlis*, Druvienu district (October 2002), by the author.



**26. *Kopa Kāndla*, Three generations of singers, Ventspils, Kurzeme
(August 2003), by the author.**

Tšitšõrlinkist, tšitšõrlinkist. Ni um āiga ilzõ nūzõ. Ni tēg maggõnd pitkõ ūnda Iestõ iezõ, pāvast pāvõ.	Čir putniņi, čir putniņi, Nu ir laiks augšā celties, Garu miegu gulējuši Nakšu naktis, dienu dienas.
---	---

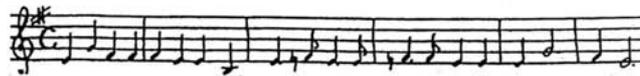
Liebist liestād mādđõ mierrõ, Võjlist liestād mūzõ mierrõ.	Treknas butes mūsu jūrā - Vājas butes citā jūrā.
---	---

Jōvād lūomōd mādđõ mōtsõ, Sudūd, okšid mūzõ mōtsõ.	Labi zvēri mūsu mežā - Vilki lāči citā mežā.
---	---

Jōvād pūošōd mādđõ killõ, Kōzzist pūošōd mūzõ killõ.	Labi puīši mūsu ciemā - Nikni puīši citā ciemā.
---	--

Kierdōd neitsōd mādđõ killõ, Lāiskad neitsōd mūzõ killõ.	Čaklas meitas mūsu ciemā - Slinkas meitas citā ciemā.
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Tšitšõr, tšitšõr



Katrina Volganskis dzim. 1853 Košragā

Rakst. E. M. 1923 Košragā

24 Pec 20



25 Lieldienu leļošana pie kuršiem:



26



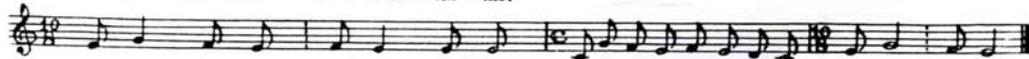
1. Či - čor - lin - kist, čī - čor - lin - kist ni tād āj - ga'm ūl - zo nū - zo čī - čol čī - čol
2. Lie - bist ljes - tad mād - do mjer - ro, voj - list ljes - tad mū - zo mjer - ro, čī - čol čī - čol

Grieta Skadiņš, sk. 3

27



1. Čī - čor - lin - kist, čī - čor - lin - kist



27. *Tšitšõrlinkist* (Easter song, “awakening the birds”) Julgi Stalte, compiler *Līvõd lōlōd* [Livonian songs], 2003. Collected and transcribed in 1923 by Emilis Melngailis from Grieta Skadiņa (b. 1863): *Latvju tautas mūzikas materiāli*, 1951, no. 27.

CHAPTER VII: DEMISE OF AWAKENING

Because the idealization of the historical peasantry was no longer inherent to the plight of the newly organized Latvian working class, at the close of the nineteenth century a new generation of the intelligentsia began to dispel the premise of folklore as the standard of national culture.¹ Proponents of a “New Current” (*Jaunā Strāva*), they publicized an international orientation that was closely identified with the founding of the Social Democratic Party in 1904. Also contributing to the momentous change was the poetic genius of Jānis Rainis (born Jānis Pliekšāns, 1865—1929), who embraced universal themes and values within his literary aesthetics. Thus, during his imprisonment in 1897 for his radical socialist beliefs Rainis translated into Latvian Goethe's *Faust* among other writings. Inspired by the rising industrialized Latvian working class, the playwright redefined nationality (*tautība*) as a complex entity that touched on diverse criteria – educational, judicial, material, and economic.² Following the Social Democratic revolt of 1905, which compelled Latvians to emigrate in greater numbers, Rainis and his wife, the poetess Aspazija (Elza Rozenberg, 1865—1943), lived abroad to 1920. As forced emigrants they experienced an uprooted existence, in which personal and national imagery became interwoven in their literatures.³

¹ Essays that expounded on the decline of the old guard include Jānis Jansons-Brauns, 1894, "Mūsu vecai paaudzei," ("To our old generation"), *Dienas Lapa*, Nr. 123.

² Samsons, 1985, 166.

³ On the life and drama of Aspazija see Stahnke, 1984.

The validity of the idea of *tautība* in the thought of Rainis may be applicable to evaluating the preponderance of anachronisms in the contemporaneous intellectual climate. At the close of the 1980s, Anatol Lieven, a journalist who wrote on the cultural characteristics of the post-Soviet transformation, evoked the views of Rainis when he questioned the signs of an excessive past orientation. Lieven perceived the failings of a dependence upon folklore, which exacerbated the isolation of Latvians from Europe and the West, as it did in the Soviet era.⁴ In this respect, the gulf between the reception of transnational art forms, on the one hand, and the closed network that encircles Latvian ethnic traditions, on the other, has markedly widened.⁵

In the preceding chapters, the history of Latvian ethnic nationalism has been broken down into episodes, in which folkloric modes of expression have been shaped by conditions of foreign domination and oppression. Because of the recent isolation of Latvians in the Soviet collectivity a consensus of Baltic scholars has explored the validity of engaging in postcolonial methodology and criticism, as it has been widely applied to capitalist empires ruled by European colonizers, on the one hand, and to literatures of the non-Western Third World, on the other.⁶ The post-Soviet postcolonial environment is torn between the (Baltic) “Self” and the (Soviet or Russian) “Other,” a dialogue that perpetuates, perhaps unduly, a former era of oppression and subjugation.

⁴ Lieven, 1993, xxxvi.

⁵ Ziedonis, 2003.

⁶ Fifteen Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian scholars and writers, bridging the East and the West, have made a literary breakthrough with their collected essays on “Baltic postcolonialism,” an analysis of the crisis of post-Soviet identity and its portrayal in literatures. A Lithuanian-American university professor and writer, Violeta Kelertas is the principal contributor to the compendium, and its editor for the Rodopi B.V. Baltic series published in Amsterdam, *On the Boundary of Two Worlds*, 2006.

With the expanding number of pan-European performances, evidence of intercultural exchanges taking place within some of the larger folklore *kopas* has emerged, and progress has been made towards integrating constituent cultural elements of minority groups within the nation. Since 1991 the State Folk Arts Center manages folklore festivals and national events, which project an international image and prestige. It is no longer unusual for a regional *kopa*, such as Zemgale's *Dimzēns*, to stage Latvian authenticity abroad.⁷

It is not generally realized that Latvia's "folklore movement" is a modern strand of thinking, a yearning for historical otherness that emerged as a reaction to Soviet modernity. A comparison can be made to the research and performance of "early music," in which the renewed interest into Renaissance or Baroque periods of musical styles reflected expansive post-modern styles following World War II. The paradox of the early music movement, an "intense and often indiscriminate cultivation of history," is its connection with modernity.⁸

Although ethnic folklore groups in Latvia have implemented changes in cultural representation, which allow for greater ethnic and cultural diversity, I argue below on the basis of a lengthy qualitative fieldwork study, that the persistence of staging Latvian ethnic authenticity as the sole voice of the folklore movement is in conflict with dissenting multicultural values in the nation.⁹

⁷ In August 2005 this *kopa* performed with European groups in the *Festival du Folklore Mondial Haguenau*, Strasbourg, and in September 2007 in Sweden.

⁸ Butt, 2002, 147, speaking of the music of "historically-informed-performances," otherwise known as "early music." See also Taruskin, 1988, 152.

⁹ Anttonen, 1993, 18.

1. Too Much of the Past?

An undertone of cynicism underscored the expectations of a second independence or a new Latvian national awakening at the conclusion of the 1990s; the legacy of anti-Soviet idealism had offered few practical solutions to economic hardships or to widespread ethnic and social unrest.¹⁰ A journalist's reference to "a nation of debtors" aptly captured the pessimistic mood of the Latvian public in 1996, although he distorted the words of nationalist poet, Auseklis (Krogzemju Mikus), who wrote in praise of a "nation of singers" in 1879 (see Chapter Four).¹¹ Despite the hallowed realm of national culture, it could be argued that journalists found a need to explore ironic anachronisms freely. During my first research trips (2000-02) I also came across remarks pertaining to the false expectations of an apocalyptic "awakening" during the harsh realities of the re-established Latvian Republic after 1991. It may have been "stylish" for Latvians to reflect on the crisis of Western culture and the decline of moral values in lieu of material rewards. Before an immense congregation at the largest Lutheran church in the old sector, St. John's Church, the minister preached on the "crisis" of Western culture as forming materialistic barrier to the true, indigenous spiritual awakening.¹²

During an interview that marked the new millennium the president of the Latvian Academy of Sciences revealed his skepticism concerning public ritualism

¹⁰ Bula, 2000, 178; interview with Andris Kapusts, in Riga, 4 November 2000; see also Chapter Five.

¹¹ Bula, 2000, 7, and 186.

¹² In the opinion of writer Almantas Samalavičius it became "stylish" in Lithuania to disparage Western culture, while attesting to the moral superiority of Lithuania's historical experience and values, see Kelertas et al., 2006, 410. On the role of churches during the 1980s see Sapiete, 1990.

and specifically contested the past-oriented reminders of ethnic “Latvian-ism” that pervade Latvian cultural events. Professor Jānis Stradiņš contended that folklore practices were no longer advantageous or realistic;¹³ moreover, they would hinder the nation from getting ahead.¹⁴ Progressive social changes since 1991, which have been indicated by Latvia’s urban growth, ethnic assimilation, democratic governance, and the expansion of consumerism, have apparently not quelled this resurgence of Latvian ethnic nationalism.¹⁵ With their intense emulation of the past, the folklore *kopas* that are studied in this work, and their surrounding communities, contribute to this paradox. Yet it should be borne in mind that Latvians who cultivate regional folklore by means of small informal groups, such as the *kopa*, sought personal solutions and insights into their daily problems, as they did in the Communist era when they were estranged from official channels.

Although Latvian artists and writers after 1991 aspired to achieve recognition in the West, programming in the Baltic media, in which the re-creation of traditional music is prominently displayed, may not meet a high standard of artistic integrity. While the *kopas* have created a foundation of public folklore rituals in diverse media (television broadcasts, national educational programs and events), audiences may dismiss folklore presentations as insignificant, old-fashioned, and irrelevant. The *kopa*’s dependence on authentic codes and standards is retained within an “insider’s” perspective that draws on one’s immediate local environment.¹⁶ The recent

¹³ Jānis Stradiņš, 2000, 178. See also Kavolis, 1991, 64.

¹⁴ Stradiņš, 2001, 2-3.

¹⁵ Schöpflin, 1995, 54; Caplan, 1996, 4; these opinions arose during my research in Latvia to October 2007.

¹⁶ Mellēna, 2003, 2. The late Latvian émigré playwright Anšlāvs Eglītis captured the humor of reconstructing a farmstead typical of the Latvian countryside in California.

disruption of émigré family life, as the mainstay of traditional values (as demonstrated in Chapter Six), was found in the booklet to the international folklore festival, *Baltica—2006*. Despite the programmatic theme of “our home” these notes allude to a fragile and distant Latvian homeland. Clearly, young Latvians who emigrated en masse to find work in Europe had profoundly changed innermost familial and folkloric values:

“Our home” (*Mūsmājas*) is a source of strength for a family, from which we are occasionally torn away by the lure of new horizons, or an inner unrest. For some this source flows through Kurzeme.¹⁷

Appealing to ethnic consolidation, Ilga Reizniece, the leader of a public campaign to expand the song repertoires during the summer solstice festivities, was given ample opportunities to air her views in a series of announcements in the daily newspaper *Diena* (May – June 2003, and May – June 2004):

And it hurts me immeasurably, when I hear what resounds within the period before St. John’s Day and on that very evening in all parts of our country (*Un man neizmērojami sāp, kad dzirdu, kas pirmsjāņu laikā un pašā Jāņu vakarā atskan mūsu zemē visas malās un pamalēs*).¹⁸

Nonetheless, at the time of a national campaign to integrate with the European Union, folklore ensembles exhibited highly divergent ideals, from those adhering only to the musical elements of their traditions, on the one hand, and from others who transform traditional music as a source of invention. By the close of the twentieth century ethnic

His play is a parody of folk revivals that are depicted as a delusional and delimiting, see Koleda, 2000, 179.

¹⁷ Ivars Alksnītis, *Baltica—2006, mūsmājas*, 25.

¹⁸ Ilga Reizniece, *Diena*, 4 May 2003, 2.

dissonance, economic tension, and social mobility affected Latvia's young people of various ethnic affiliations, who sought out world music through the Internet. These changes may be symptomatic of the *fin-de-siècle*, the culminating period associated with intellectual revolutions, for a similar conflict was borne out of the New Current of Latvian thought over a century ago.¹⁹

Although the community surrounding the *kopa* generally does not assign priority to cosmopolitan and global cultural tendencies, the popular media has nevertheless fostered freer individualism, specialization, and professionalism among some traditional singers, whose performances have moved away from the ethnic purity that arose during the singing revolution. These changes in emphasis have given way to the generic folk-rock syncretism of "post-folklore" within smaller specialized groups, such as *Skyforger*, *Grodi*, and *Iļģi*, which also sustain a high standard of professional musicianship.²⁰ Despite their quest for authenticity, by the 1990s even mainstay *kopas* such as the *Skandinieki* incorporated extraneous drumming or alien chords and harmonies in their recordings, and they dismissed criticisms of these CDs.²¹

The post-folklore movement represents a development whereby groups absorb progressive foreign idioms and adopt them to stable and traditional Latvian melodies, texts, and instruments. It is debatable whether the exponents of this innovational crosscurrent may be considered as the bearers of Latvian song traditions. Their exploration of electrified instrumental repertoires, new group formations, and

¹⁹ Bohlman, 2002; Evans, 2001.

²⁰ Jānis Vītols, 1 October 2002. On *Skyforger* see Chapter One.

²¹ They remarked that their CDs were "an old stage in an old world," interview with Dainis and Helmī Stalts, 3 August 2003.

advanced studio technology has attracted new listeners from within the enclaves of the Russian and Slavic minorities in Latvian cities.

With the introduction of a Latvian folk-rock idiom, the group *Iļģi* revised the folkloric content of musical performance, which departed from the folklore movement's claim to authenticity, in order to allow for stylistic freedom. A source of change, diversification, and multiculturalism, the folk-rock or ethno-jazz syncretism was known at first as "post-folklore" – a term first used by the band in notes to the recording *Rāmi, rāmi* (1983). Rejecting criteria for authentic reproduction, post-folklore performers exposed the deficiencies of isolationism and monotony, qualities painfully redolent of the Soviet past. The group's violinist compared her musical metamorphosis to the disintegration of "walls" that had prevented her from hearing the outside folk-musical world.²² Distrust of national protocols has underlined her decision to avoid folk costumes or parading in the streets, while her statement to the press – "don't call me a folklorist" — summarized the band's freedom from academic and nationalist expectations.²³

In September 2001 *Iļģi* staged an experimental folk-rock opera using giant puppets while at the same time adhering to the textual authenticity of *Spēlēju, dancoju*, a mystical play composed by Jānis Rainis in 1919.²⁴ Live performances such as these often begin with a simple and clear presentation of the *daina* or a traditional instrumental dance tune, as I witnessed during the World Music Festival in

²² E-mail communication, 24 February 2001. Reizniece listens to Canadian Celtic fiddler Ashley MacIsaac, and new wave Swedish and Finnish ensembles. See Sound Recordings Composite, File 1 Vidzeme: Riga, V4-5.

²³ Rudaks, 1997, 7.

²⁴ Rīga, Upe Records, 2002; see Discography. *Iļģi's* CD *Sow the Wind*, was reviewed in the online journal *Rootsworld*, that Latvian post folklore stands on its own, and is not comparable to more familiar European folk-rock bands, see Dorsett, 2001

Rīga (4 November 2000). While the bands may find Latvian melodies and texts to be a source of creativity, they render Latvian folksong texts intact. It may be argued also that improvised forms flourished in traditional vocal and instrumental practices well before the literary tradition of the nineteenth century, when these songs were collected, arranged, and reproduced in collections. Just as folk declaimers freely chose and connected quatrains in traditional practice, Reizniece, in notes to *Šūpuļdziesmas* (Lullabies), points out that each of the fifteen lullabies, or tracks in the CD, are as distinct as each of her children.²⁵ These distinguishing features came to the attention of a reviewer, who found that *Iļģi*'s recording of *Sēju vēju* (*Sow the Wind*) was unlike comparable European folk-rock bands reviewed in the online journal *Rootsworld*.²⁶ From the standpoint of participant Andris Kapusts from the group *Grodi*, the music composed for the bagpipe was played idiomatically, preserving traditional improvisation within a world music syncretism.²⁷

To varying degrees, post-folklore repercussions are contained in the music of *Iļģi* (since 1981), of *Rasa* (1988-), of *Laiksne* (1992-), and of *Grodi* (1993-). These small groups made up of young musicians diverged from the familial structure of the *kopas* and those that emanated from a single community or region, for they aspired to achieve stylistic pluralism without adhering to authentic claims. These idioms have been influential in regenerating Baltic-American ensembles, for example, that have experimented with changing timbres; the music of a group in Denver, Colorado has integrated Latvian and Native American Indian genres.²⁸

²⁵ In notes to *Šūpuļdziesmas* (Lullabies) (Upe 2000).

²⁶ Dorsett, 2001.

²⁷ Interview with Andris Kapusts, Rīga, 7 May 2001.

²⁸ Jaremko-Porter, 2000a, 99.

But perspectives of folklore performance have been slow to change, arguably because East European cultural forms and products are powerful determinants of national identity. A case in point is the disapproval of commercial world music and its popular markets.²⁹ Native folklorists deride Western consumer products that place their ethnic identity in jeopardy; indeed, some scholars consider Latvian ethnic identity to be as unstable as it was during the Soviet era.³⁰ The reception of local “post folklore” has been equally divided. When questioning the scope of popular and classical recordings within the Upe Records series, “Latvian Folk Music Collection,” a reviewer claimed that mass culture had depleted its Latvian content, the equivalent of the “Macdonaldization” (*macdonaldizacija*) of Latvian music, that is to say, the encroachment of Western aesthetic homogeneity.³¹

On this point, the importance of the Eurovision song competition of 2002 in Tallinn that was won by Marie Naumova, an ethnic Russian who resided in Riga, in addition to its sequel in Riga 2003, invited “abundant contradictions and diverse opinions” from ethnomusicologists, who gained insights into the new nationalisms of Europe.³² In contrast, a composer resident in Riga expressed concern over the institution that fostered “the most common form of music, songs that are arranged according to the rules of today’s technical achievements, with a competition factor, like sports games.”³³ Folklorist Aldis Pūtelis concurred with the spectacle’s limitations:

²⁹ In the opinion of a Polish ethnomusicologist; see Eva Dahlig, 1998.

³⁰ Bula, 2000, 186.

³¹ Daiga Mazversīte, the music editor of *Mūzikas saule* (1999); see Bula, 2000, 54; Jaremko Porter, 2001, 140.

³² Philip V. Bohlman, Glasgow, 30 April 2003.

³³ E-mail correspondence Uģis Prauliņš 4 March 2003.

We have grown accustomed to Eurovision. It does not differ much from the (former) USSR-wide contest *Pesnya XXX* – the same stereotypes, trying to be likable to all of the audience, and retaining as little individuality as possible. The local selection is quite a battle, a peak for the Latvian audience, the actual event being too remote.³⁴

Yet tensions reflecting the uneasy ethnic balance on the day of the Eurovision song contest in Riga, hosted by Naumova and her band *Pētra Vētra* “Brainstorm” on 24 May 2003, caused the closure of a few streets. The atmosphere of music and politics evoked the city’s conflict during the “singing revolution” (1988-1990).³⁵

Founding the record label *Upe* in 1997, a former rock musician, Ainars Mielavs, established an extensive CD series of newly composed folksong accompaniments and arrangements. Mielavs, perhaps misleadingly, marketed the series under the title “folk music collection;” nonetheless, he gave an accurate portrayal of popular groups and musicians of the Latvian “folk scene” in Riga in the late 1990s. His aim was to blend the “breadth of the past,” on the one hand, with the “feeling and sight of this century,” on the other. Combining disparate elements Mielavs organic formation of tradition and regeneration suggests Herderian ideas relating to *Bildung*.³⁶ The first CD of the series interprets the ritual calendar, “Pagan Yearbook”, a recording project of composer Uģis Prauliņš (b. 1954), who utilized traditional melodies, texts, and instruments with electronic sound effects (see Discography). In keeping with the momentum among contemporary professional and interest groups, university students or in the workplace, this diversification may be

³⁴ E-mail correspondence Aldis Pūtelis, 23 February 2003.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Jaremko-Porter, 2001; see the discussion on Herder at the close of this chapter.

seen as a positive development.³⁷ An exposure to traditional culture in the media may offer reasons for educated young Latvians to remain and work in Latvia.³⁸

2. A Multicultural Awakening The resurgence of Baltic ethnic nationalism in the post-Soviet states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania has stemmed from a political movement for self-determination. Latvian homogeneity within the population has also grown in the post-independence period (after 1991), for example, as seen in statistical measures of the acquisition of the Latvian language and the rising number of applications for citizenship. The official 2000 census found that a majority of sixty-two percent of the total population recognized Latvian as their native language, while Russian, or another minority language, was spoken by thirty-eight percent.³⁹ Large pockets of Russian speakers, after 1990, were concentrated within the principal cities: Riga (total population of 734 705), Daugavpils (115 000), Liepāja (95 000), Jelgava (71 000), Jēkabpils, Jūrmala, Ventspils, and Rēzekne (figures not provided).⁴⁰ The number of non-citizens in these cities has declined due in part to increasing emigration from Latvia, according to statistics that were measured prior to European Union accession (1 May 2004).⁴¹

³⁷ Research conducted at the University of Latvia Centre for Ethnic Culture, Guntis Pakalns, 2002, 46.

³⁸ Stradiņš, 2001.

³⁹ Ilmārs Mežs, United Nations Development Programme, Ethnic Minorities in Latvia, Fact sheet of the Latvian Institute, October 2005, 1-5; *Latvija Valsts Valodas Komisija Statistika* (Census 2000 statistics) (www.vvk.lv), see also Metuzāle-Kangare and Ozoliņš, 2005, 317.

⁴⁰ These cities maintained sixty-nine percent of the non-Latvian population, Factsheet of the Latvian Institute, see *Multiethnic Latvia* (www.latinst.lv), 5; *Latvija Valsts Valodas Komisija Statistika* (Census 2000 statistics) (www.vvk.lv), see also Metuzāle-Kangare and Ozoliņš, 2005, 317. In 2006 twenty-three Latvian cities contained a total population of over ten thousand.

⁴¹ This data, which lists the full profile of residents in Latvia, was compiled and

A source of unsolved problematic inequities in cultural as well as political representation, over a hundred ethnic groups define this nation's multicultural composition, which has become more variegated with the recent arrival of ethnic groups from the former Soviet Union, as well as from Asian countries. Governmental strategies have enforced, since 1989, the use of Latvian in economic and social life and the incorporation of numerous bilingual education programs. Consequently, by 2000, the Latvian Institute reported that 75% of Latvia's minorities possessed some knowledge of Latvian.⁴² Russian remained the main language of instruction in 270 state supported schools, however, and these served twenty-eight percent of Latvia's schoolchildren; several TV channels and radio stations broadcast continuously in Russian.⁴³ In 2006, state-financed ethnic minority primary and secondary schools provided instruction in the minority languages of Ukrainian, Byelorussian, Estonian, Hebrew, Lithuanian, Polish, and Roma.

The long-standing mass immigration of Russians to the Baltic region began during the religious persecution of Old Believers and other Orthodox believers, who sought refuge in Latvian-speaking provinces, and particularly in Latgalian-speaking regions, after 1772. In 2005 Old Believers account for a small percentage of Russians in Latvia (circa ten percent), although the majority of Russian immigrants (including ethnic groups from other parts of the Soviet Union) arrived to obtain work as a result of the Soviet occupation. At the beginning of 2005 the ethnic percentage

presented by the Latvian Board for Citizenship and Migration Affairs (January 1, 2004). Ethnic identification in documents: Latvian 1 358 539 (58.2 percent), Lithuanian 32 021, (1.4), Estonian 2 549 (0.1), Byelorussian 89 916 (3.9), Russian 668 410 (28.8), Ukrainian 59 819 (2.6); Polish 57 192 (2.5) Jewish 9 927 (0.5), Other 39 081 (1.7).

⁴² Mežs, 2005.

⁴³ See <http://www.latinst.lv/today>; Galbreath 2005, Mežs, 2005.

within the total population was measured to be 58.6% Latvian versus 28.8% Russian.⁴⁴

Russian musical organizations are active in Riga and other cities with the largest concentration of the *diaspora*. The old layer of Russian Orthodox and Old Believer choir traditions, and the sung liturgy that has survived within ethnic communities concentrated in the eastern Catholic areas of Latvia, have become coveted objects of research among Latvian ethnomusicologists and folklorists. The holdings of the Latvian Folklore Archives include approximately 21,000 items in a host of ethnic minority languages: Livonian, Russian, German, Byelorussian Jewish, Lithuanian, Estonian, as well as fragments of Gypsy folklore.⁴⁵ Yet to all intents and purposes, practicing Russian musical organizations do not assimilate a Latvian-Russian identity, and statistical research of the Latvian Institute in 2005 found that “there were virtually no assimilated Russians in Latvia.”⁴⁶ It is not surprising that in 2001 a Latvian novelist attested that his novel was the only work of Latvian fiction to explore the reality of coexistence between Russian and Latvian urban communities.⁴⁷ On this point Ilga Reizniece (see above) reflected critically on the *Baltica* international folklore festival in 1994, in which no Russian groups had been scheduled: “whoever loves their own people, loves also others.” A similar statement was made in 1998 by the author of the third awakening, Visvaldis Lācis, who quoted Lord Byron –“who does not love their own land can truly love nothing.”⁴⁸ In

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Vīksna, 2004, 2.

⁴⁶ Mežs, “Ethnic Minorities in Latvia,” 2005, 1.

⁴⁷ Pauls Bankovskis, the author of *A Woman of Soviet Latvia*, when interviewed by Evans in 2001.

⁴⁸ Bērsone 1994, 9, who cites Visvaldis Lācis, 1998.

response to my query concerning Russian participation, the director of the *Baltica* festivals within the Latvian State Folk Arts Center in 2001 explained that folklore groups from other nationalities meeting the Latvian folklore movement's "authentic" standards were eligible to perform.⁴⁹ Beginning in 1997 *Baltica* included a Russian performer of *častuški*.⁵⁰ But the participation of a Russian youth ensemble, attached to the Rīga Russian Gymnasium, at the 2006 *Baltica* international folklore festival was an indication of multicultural change. Founded in 1990 by Sergej and Natalija Olenkin, in the "pedagogical folklore studio" *Iļjinskaja pjatnica* ethnographically correct Russian folksongs, round dances, and games are rehearsed, yet this "authentic" repertoire is not an expression of their current lives in the Russian diaspora. In contrast, the Olenkin family routinely travels into Russia, where they gather archival and audio-visual materials to support their extensive teaching activity; additionally, they teach and sponsor Russian folklore groups in Latgale. In 2007, three additional Russian children's and youth choirs, directed by ethnic Russians who reside in Rīga, took part in the annual spring festival and singing competition held under the auspices of the University of Latvia.⁵¹

A post-Soviet development within Latvian international song and dance festivals (*Dziesmu un deju svētki*) held in Rīga is to arrange a separate day of concerts for choral performances of the smallest ethnic groups (*Mazākumtautību*

⁴⁹ Andris Kapusts, interview, Riga, 6 November 2001.

⁵⁰ Novikov, 2000, 50. This nineteenth-century tradition of humorous songs with guitar accompaniment was a product of cultural and economic connections between Russia and the Baltic provinces that were facilitated by railways; *častuški* can be heard in record stores or on the streets of old Rīga.

⁵¹ *Pulkā eimu, pulkā teku, spring festival, 2007*: Riga's Russian youth choir *Zvonnica*, directed by Olga Dergunova, *Berendeika*, directed by Elena Lazareva, and *Karagod*, directed by Tatjana Starovoitenko.

festivāls). Held on 10 July 2008, *Latvijas vainags* (“the Latvian wreath”) is a contemporary offshoot of a Latvian tradition that began in 1873; the festival contained Rīga’s Orthodox choir *Blagovest’*, the Russian youth choir *Akkolada*, the Hebrew choir *Šofar*, the Ukrainian chamber choir *Dnipro*, the Estonian choir *Leelo*, the Polish choir *Visla*, and others. It is important to consider, however, that in the mass dimension of the song and dance festival these groups performed apart from the main arena of Latvian events (5-12 July 2008).

It is possible to perceive strong elements of national awakening that have remained within present-day Livonian and Latgalian ethnic minorities (see Chapter Six). These groups secure moral encouragement from university professors (in Helsinki and Tartu, for example) and other enthusiasts who have mastered these languages, as well as from the advances in academic research into their folklore heritage.⁵² In their establishment of individual folklore events – in localities such as Mazirbe, on the Livonian coastal territory, and in the area surrounding Rēzekne in Latgale – these regional folk cultures are preserved in a peaceful and integrated social environment. When observing a series of cultural events and informal evenings held at the local community center (“houses of culture”) near to Rēzekne, in September of 2002 I witnessed a spontaneous exchange between Russian and Latvian (or Latgalian) participants and guests. They joined together to stage a play, and afterwards, Russian and Latvian group singing and dancing continued until late at night.⁵³ Historically, migration from neighboring regions of Russia dates from the eighteenth century, bequeathing a common stock of cultural elements in rural areas of

⁵² See for example Boiko, 1992 and 1999, or Beitāne, 2005.

⁵³ Research visit to Makašāni, 28 September—3 October 2002.

Latgale. The foregoing example of the inter-ethnic evening program at a community cultural center (*kultūras nams*) near Rēzekne suggests an image of a “protective umbrella” that shields these participants and singers from social discord.⁵⁴ In a similar fashion, the eminent anthropologist Valery Tishkov has viewed group folklore participation in post-Soviet Russia as instrumental to ameliorating discontent and economic strife.⁵⁵ By contrast, the social environments of large cities have been torn by urban relocation, displacement, immigration, and cosmopolitan diversity. The cultural life of Latvian cities continues to pose conflicts that stem from the Latvian majority’s conception of one nation, on the one hand, and the different reality held by the many diverse peoples who live in it, on the other.⁵⁶

3. Future Nations: Herder’s Philosophy of *Humanität*

Under the broad rubric of humanity (*Humanität*), Herder brought together related concepts of human rights, human duties, and human dignity. When formulating his thoughts on the historical process of renewal, the fate of future generations and nations, he studied the process “of becoming,” by which the formation of ideals could advance the cause of humanitarianism.⁵⁷

Humanity is the character of our race; we receive it only as a potentiality, and we must develop it. We do not bring it with us ready-made into the world: it must be the goal of all our efforts, the sum of all our exercises, our guiding

⁵⁴ Interview with Latvian folklorist, Māris Jansons, 5 October 2002, concerning his history of expeditions and recordings made in Latgale since 1990.

⁵⁵ A critical perspective of East European nationalisms during the early 1990s is presented in essays by Löfgren, 1993, 218, Schöpflin, 1995, 37-65, and Tishkov, 1994, 450; see also Chapter Five.

⁵⁶ Wolff, 1994, 2-3.

⁵⁷ Herder, *SW*, IV, 35-6.

principle and value. (*Humanität ist der Charakter unsres Geschlechts; er ist uns aber nur in Anlagen angeboren, und muss uns eigentlich angebildet werden. Wir bringen ihn nicht fertig auf die Welt mit; auf der Welt aber soll er das Ziel unsres Bestrebens, die Summe unsrer Übungen, unser Werth seyn*).⁵⁸

Although Herder did not state the underlying philosophies of the *Volk* and of *Humanität* explicitly, the treatise *Ideas for a Philosophical History of Mankind* is written from this perspective. Yet ten years prior to the first volume of the *Ideas*, in his *Yet Another Philosophy of History (Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit)* 1774, ideas concerning the individuality of a people and the natural creative forces within an organic community began to shape his conception of cultural relativism. The continuous process of *Bildung* has several possible interpretations in Herder's essays, where it may be synonymous with formation, cultivation, as well as with education.⁵⁹ *Kraft* becomes intrinsic to the notion of *Bildung* as an imaginative and creative impulse that emanates from one's family and community,⁶⁰ but the climate (*Klima*) of social and physical environments also acts upon forming and educating. An essential part of Herder's influential analysis is his evaluation of new cultural elements that are appropriated within tradition. In the preceding chapters musical traditions have shaped an organic part of the collective consciousness of their communities. As regards the Latvian folklore movement, ordinary groups and families who constructed an educational experience in

⁵⁸ *Briefe zu Beförderung der Humanität, Dritte Sammlung*, Riga: Johann Friedrich Hartknoch, 1794, in Herder, *SW*, XVII, 138.

⁵⁹ *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, Herder, *SW*, XIII, 348. Barnard, 1965, 93; idem, 1969, 387-8; Bunge, 1993, 15-17.

⁶⁰ On Herder's philosophy of *Kraft* as a "life force" see Barnard, 1983, 242.

opposition to alien Soviet urban modernity (in Herder's sense of the term *Klima*), contributed to the formation of cultural continuity:⁶¹

Musical traditions are among social behaviors of small groups that are consistently shaped by a community to express its cultural particularity and the characteristics that distinguish it as a social entity.⁶²

Presented in this work is a succession of historical episodes, but throughout contrasting contexts the workings of *Bildung* may be elicited. The intrinsic force, which has materialized according to “the imaginative molding of people,” has generally formed the groundwork – the unobtrusive and gradual movements – leading to revolutionary change.⁶³ Taking the example from recent Latvian cultural history (Chapter Five), routine meetings of a few individuals began an educational process (or *Bildung*) that led to the establishment of the *kopas*; this formation was in place long before its strength was manifest on the streets of Riga in 1988. In the history of nineteenth-century folksong research, obscure and anonymous contributors – there are nine hundred listed in *Latvju dainas* – remained near to their homes or farms, although their voices comprised a monumental folksong collection. To the extent that this work focuses on the cultural creative forces of the Latvian *daina* traditions, it has uncovered a constant climate of conflict and struggle underlying attempts at cultural representation.

⁶¹ Anttonen, 1993, 17.

⁶² Bohlman, 1988, 104; 1999, 21.

⁶³ The quotation is from Czech philosopher and political leader T. G. Masaryk, who cites Herder's ideas on nationalism in *Otázka socialní* (1898), two volumes; see Barnard, 1965, 175.

In a radical turn of thinking Herder admired the diversity and the irregular beauty evocative of distant medieval culture. *Yet Another Philosophy of History* that appeared in 1774, ten years prior to the first volume of the *Ideas*, departed from the linear and progressive paradigm of history held by his Enlightenment peers, Herder drew attention to instances in which artistic forms of culture clashed and diverged with opposing techniques and values:⁶⁴

A nation may have the most sublime virtues in some respects and blemishes in others, [it may] show irregularities and reveal the most astonishing contradictions and incongruities [...] But for one who wants to understand the human heart within living circumstances, such irregularities and contradictions are perfectly human. *Die Nation kann also bei Tugenden der erhabensten Gattung von Einer Seite, von Einer andern Mängel haben, Ausnahmen machen, Widersprüche und Ungewissheiten zeigen, die in Erstaunen setzen; [...] Für jeden, der menschliche Herz aus dem Elemente seiner Lebensumstände erkennen will, sind dergleichen Ausnahmen und Widersprüche vollkommen menschlich.*⁶⁵

Herder's emphasis on cultural elements of the past stemmed from an opposition to political uniformity, particularly as it was imposed in his native Prussia where vital traditions had been placed in jeopardy.⁶⁶ Frequent digressions into the life of early communities, such as those of the Greeks and Hebrews, provided him with archetypes of homogenous societies, whose ethnic and political boundaries closely

⁶⁴ Barnard, 1969, 387.

⁶⁵ *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, Herder, *SW*, V, 505-6; see Barnard, 1969, 395-6, and the conclusion to this chapter.

⁶⁶ Herder, *SW*, XIV, 288; Herder, *SW*, V, 575-8; Nisbet, 1999, 124.

coincided.⁶⁷ Herder pointed to the realization of the humanity philosophy⁶⁸ for the nationalities of Eastern Europe, which would develop according to their unique cultural foundations, carrying within them a standard of perfection.⁶⁹

In the spirit of enlightened humanitarianism and rationalism of his day Herder formulated a universal principle of the *Volk*, which became manipulated within the twentieth-century National Socialist political paradigm according to the suppression of diversity.⁷⁰ Yet, in an opposing manner, Herder disparaged repeated customs and ways of doing things; these harmful interpretations of the national community, he continued, would severely limit a nation's capacity to absorb new impressions – “as [if] seeing nothing but your own image in the mirror.”⁷¹ A relevant passage is found in *Yet Another Philosophy of History*: “prejudice, mob mentality, and narrow nationalism arise when the dispositions and the spheres of happiness of two nations collide” (*So jede zwei Nationen, deren Neigungen und Kreise der Glückseligkeit sich stossen – man nennt Vorurtheil! Pöbelei! eingeschränkten Nationalism!*)⁷²

Ideals by which Herder safeguarded individuality, spontaneity, and naturalness within languages and cultures are consistent with Latvia's ethnic and regional diversity as it is epitomized in its manifold folklore groups (*kopas*). On the basis of fieldwork interviews and documentary recordings of the Latgalian and Livonian *kopas* (see Appendices), I would advance the opinion that these voices

⁶⁷ Barnard, 1965, 82-87; 174-75.

⁶⁸ See Chapter Four. Kohn, 1944, 440; Nisbet, 1999, 130.

⁶⁹ Herder, *SW*, XIII, 384.

⁷⁰ Kohn, 1944, 430; Barnard, 1983, 231.

⁷¹ *Briefe zu Beförderung der Humanität*, Herder, *SW*, XVII, 201; see also Herder, *SW*, XIII, 348.

⁷² Herder, *SW*, V, 510.

have grown stronger since the end of the Soviet era. I argue in conclusion that it is essential to take into account factors such as cultural displacement and scattered traditions, which distinguish ethnographic groups and their co-existence in the media, in educational programs, or in national and international festival events. Reciprocal points of contact between Baltic and Slavic cultures may thus affirm the humanitarian ideals of striving, or *Bildung*, within each national community.

In the year prior to his death Herder planned new edition of the *Volkslieder*, “a living voice of nations, even of mankind itself” (*eine lebendige Stimme der Völker, ja der Menschheit selbst*):

Da er [der Sammler, i.e. Herder] indess seine Absicht nicht ganz verfehlt hat, so bereitet er seit Jahren eine palingenisirte Sammlung solcher Gesänge, vermehrt, nach Ländern, Zeiten, Sprachen, Nationen geordnet [...] und aus ihnen erklärt, als eine lebendige Stimme der Völker, ja der Menschheit selbst vor, wie sie in allerlei Zuständen sich mild und grausam, fröhlich und traurig, scherzhaft und ernst, hie und da hören liess allenthalben für uns belehrend.

Inasmuch as he [the collector] has not completely lost sight of his design and purpose, for years he has been preparing a renewed collection of such songs, enlarged, and arranged according to lands, chronological periods, languages, and nations, and explained from these, as a living voice of nations, indeed of mankind itself, as it has been heard in all kinds of circumstances, in this place and that place, gentle or cruel, joyful or sad, playful or serious, and everywhere enlightening for us.⁷³

⁷³ *Adrastea, Band V, Zweites Stück*, appeared posthumously in 1804. See Herder, SW, XXIV, under the heading “*Volksgesang*,” p. 266, and 263-7. Herder’s son Gottfried, a physician, assisted Herder in reading, and nursed him, so that Herder

This new collection of folksongs did not appear, however, Johann Georg Müller interpolated Herder's words into the title of a revised posthumous edition, *Volkslieder, Stimmen der Völker in Lieder* (1807).⁷⁴ In principle, it could be argued that Herder appraised national cultures within the *Volkslieder* (1778-79) equally. Yet it may not be generally understood that Herder modeled his anthology on songs that speak of numerous events, historic periods, and local conditions, although they symbolically convey balance and unity in the relationship between disparate cultural elements.⁷⁵

Despite the worsening severity of his ill health, towards the end of his life Herder worked single-mindedly to continue issues of *Adrastea*, a journal that he had founded and edited, and a showcase for his historical and political thought. Two brief interludes in this series present Herder's views on the pre-Christian roots of the Baltic people. In the first instance, in *Adrastea III* (published in 1802) Herder presents a sympathetic "portrait" of the cultural and religious history of the ancient Prussian tribes, and their successors, the Lithuanians and the Latvians (or *Letts*); he characterizes the idyllic music of "monotonic gentle melodies."⁷⁶

could complete numbers V and VI of *Adrastea*; see Clark, 1955, 433.

⁷⁴ The editor Johann Georg Müller was a Swiss theologian. *Aus dem Herderschen Hause. Aufzeichnungen [...] 1780-82*, edited by Jakob Baechtold (Berlin: Weidmann, 1881) is Müller's diary of his visits to Herder's home in Weimar; Müller's correspondence, from the town of Schaffhausen, with Herder and his wife is contained in *Briefwechsel mit J. G. Herder und Caroline v. Herder geb. Flachslund, 1782-1788*, published in Schaffhausen: Meier, 1952, by the town's council for the two-hundredth birthday of Müller.

⁷⁵ Barnard, 1969, 387.

⁷⁶ *Idyllen sind ihre Lieder in eintönig sanften Melodien, Adrastea Dritter Band* (1802), *Ereignisse und Charakter des vergangenen Jahrhunderts, Eigne Gemälde aus der Preussischen Geschichte. SW, XXIII, 466.*

A polemic discussion of the rights of national religions, the second essay, in *Adrastea IV*, is stylistically rendered as a dialogue between fictional friends (Dietrich and Winnfried), he resumed his inquiry into the historical development of the Baltic and Slavic peoples (he names, among others, the Kurs, Latvians or Letts, Lithuanians, and Estonians), whose religious practices had been brutally curtailed. This digression may stem from Herder's close association with novelist Garlieb Helwig Merkel, who fictionalized the loss of the spiritual core of the ancient Baltic tribes (see Chapter Three). It would appear that Herder was not aware of the extent to which ritual pagan elements had survived in the Baltic Russian provinces, nor would he have imagined that, two hundred years later, sizeable groups of Latvians in the province of Vidzeme would have resuscitated ancient cult sites and sacred stones, and created music and art according to the tenets of the pagan ritual calendar (see Chapter One). Yet Herder's inclusion of a Latvian voice in his international anthology of folksongs prepared the foundation for a renewal of these beliefs; these efforts suggest that he did not view the path of Baltic history as irrevocable. Writing in *Adrastea* Herder yearned for an alternate course that would have shown tolerance for the development of the peoples of Eastern Europe. At the close of this significant autobiographical segment, Herder alluded to the setting of the sun, at which time his fictional friends depart, wishing the sun would bring them and other nations a joyous morning.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ *Dietrich: Die Sonne sank. Sie war einige Sekunden vorher untergegangen, als wir noch ihr Bild zu sehen glauben. Sprechen wir uns morgen bei ihrem Aufgange wieder! Lebe wohl, [...] und bringe dort andern Nationen einen fröhlichen Morgen. Lebe wohl, Winnfried. "Über National-Religionen," Erstes Gespräch," Adrastea, Vierter Band (1802), Leipzig: Johann Friedrich Hartknoch, in Herder, SW, XXIV, 38-49. See also the commentary in Kohn, 1944, 44-50.*

APPENDICES

1. Kopa Events and Interviews

1. Krišjānis Barons: Weeklong festival celebration on the 165th anniversary of his birth: *Krišjāņa Barona 165. dzimšanas dienai veltītie svētki*. Rīga (29 October – 3 November 2000).
2. Fourth International *Kokle* (zither) symposium, Valdis Muktupāvels, chair, University of Latvia, *Līgo* Hall. Lectures and performances of contemporary Norwegian and Finnish kantele music (29-30 October 2000): Hannu Saha, Sinikka Langeland, kantele players, followed by the University of Latvia students' folk dance group *Dandari*.
3. Folklore Concert, Great Hall of the Latvian Society, Rīga 29 October 2000.
 - a) Ethnographic ensemble, Bārta parish district, Kurzeme, founded in 1929. (See Chapter Four). Children participate with an older generation of declaimers. A polyphonic vocal texture with drone singing on the vowel sound “ē.”
 - b) *Ceiruleits*. Children's and youth *kopa* with kokle accompaniments, which was founded in 1990 by Anna Kārkle in Viļaka parish district, Latgale. *Kur gaismēna zyla ausa* is a bridal lament in three vocal parts: solo declaimers, singers who “bend” (*loca*) or vary the melody, and a vocal drone (*vilkšana*).
 - d) *Kopa: Perkonītis*. Youth group from Zaķumuiža, near Rīga (see Introduction). “*Rudeniski es dziedāju.*” [On singing in autumn].

e) *Kopa: Dandari*, at the University of Latvia evolved after 1983, and followed the model of the *Skandinieki*. Folk dancers, with instrumental accompaniments: violin, *kokle* (zither), and bass. “*Sabiles Garais dancis.*” [“Long Dance” from the Kurzeme town of Sabile].

f) *Kopa: Dimzēns*. Zemgale, Jelgava district and city. Velta Leja, director, former member of *Skandinieki*. Dancing, accordion, bass, and *trīdeksnis* (rattled sistrum). Traditional dance entitled *Zemgales Dimzēns*.

g) *Kopa: Kūkleite*. Latgale. Marija Andiņa, director. Instrumentarium of a musical bow with jingles (*čakāns*, also called *velna bungas*) with a figure of an owl, which is a symbol of this *kopa*. Their Latgalian costumes are trimmed with fur, reflecting the Byelorussian border. Traditional Catholic psalm for All Souls Day (*Veļu laiks*).

4. *Dainu dziedāšanas norise* Singing of *Dainas* (29 October 2000 19:00-21:00)

a) Bārta Ethnographic Ensemble

Bārtas vecāsmātes dancis [Grandmothers’ dance from Bārta] b) Group

Songs (with audience): during the second part of the festivities the singing was freer, and the audience added refrains. Helmī Stalte added a formulaic introduction: “This [name] has sung; but this [name] has not sung,” and traditional Livonian *īvo* – as a call and response refrain with the audience. c)

Margarita Šakina (b. 1926), declaimer, Viļaka parish district, northern Latgale. d)

Dainis and Raigo Stalts (father and son): Livonian traditional game song (*laula*):

the singers face each other and rock backwards and forwards. e) Andris Kapusts

and Aīda Rancāne, *Grodi*, demonstrate Latgalian songs with *kokle*

accompaniment. f) Artis Kumsārs of Madona, Vidzeme, group singing with the audience that repeats verses as well as refrains.g) Velta Leja, leader of the *kopa Dimzēns* since 1994, leads polyphonic drone singing (of a single melodic part and accompanying constant drone).h) Zoja Klujeva, Liepāja, Kurzeme. In the early years of the folklore movement she gave one hundred of her songs to the *Skandinieki*.

5) *Dziesmu dziedā, kāda bija*. National singing competition for children and youth. Rīga, University of Latvia, 4 May 2001.6) *Pulkā eimu, pulkā teku*. Spring festival for children and youth. Rīga, 12 May 2001. Mother's Day, Ethnographic Open-Air Museum, Rīga, 13 May 2001.

7) 18th European Seminar in Ethnomusicology, Dr. Rimantas Astrauskas, convener, Vilnius Academy of Music. Druskininkai, 26-29 September 2002. The conference interspersed paper presentations with demonstrations of folk dancing and vocal polyphony (*sutartinės*) and a video documentary of Lithuanian traditional laments.

8) Annual Livonian Festival. Mazirbe, *Līvōd Rānda* (Livonian Coast) Kurzeme (1-3 August 2003).

9) *Atkāzas* (second day in the wedding ritual). Wedding of Linda Greiskane to Kārlis Freibergs. *Dimzēns sēta* (farmstead), Zaļenieku district, Zemgale, 3-4 August 2003.

10) 34th Conference of the International Ballad Commission. Rīga. *Dimzēns*, *Skandinieki*, and *kopas* from Vidzeme, and other provincial districts, demonstrate a range of repertoires: traditional burial songs and theatrical re-enactments (*Skandinieki*

and *Cielava*), and work songs for milling (*Dimzēns*), at the Open-Air Ethnographic Museum, Lake Jugla near Rīga, 24-25 July 2004.

11) *Mūsdienu tautas mūzikas festivāls II* [Second Contemporary Folk Music Festival] Rīga's Old Town [*Vecrīgā*] Large Guild Hall [*Lielaajā Gildē*] 3 November 2000. a)

Oroboro (Latvia): Brazilian idiom, which is accompanied by a light show. b) Algirdas Klova Folk-Jazz Project (Lithuania) led by jazz violinist Algirdas

Klova: jazz improvisations with sections of Lithuanian traditional melodies. c) *Iļģi* (Latvia)

of the *kopa Skandinieki*, Ilga Reizniece, violin, Māris Muktupāvels, *kokle*, and Gatis Gaujenieks, bass guitar, and percussion.

12) Conference at the J. Misiņš Library of the Latvian State Historical Archives, devoted to the two hundredth anniversary of Augusts Bielenstein's birth: "*Dr. Augusts Bielenšteins par latviešu kultūras pamatvērtībām.*" 6 July 2007.

13.) Krišjānis Barons Commemorative Conference. *Latviešu biedrības Līgo zāle*, 30 October 2007. *Svētki un svinēšana: tradīciju procesi Latvijā.*

2. List of Interviews

Andiņa, Marija, and Anna Ivone, Plešaunieki farm, Makašānu pagasts (parish district) Rēzekne rajons (region), Latgale (26-30 September 2002) Ermanbriks, Valdis. President, Livonian Union, Rīga (29 July 2003) Ērglis, Andris. Rīga, Krišjānis Barons Memorial Flat (29, 31 October; 1 November 2000; 11, 13 May 2001; 29 July 2003) Fišere, Anna. Livonian Festival, *kopa Kāndla*, Ventspils (2 August 2003) Freibergs, Imants. Professor of Information Technology, husband of then President Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga, Rīga (10 May 2001)

Jansons, Māris. Director, Latvian National Centre for Traditional and Performing Arts Rīga and Drusti, Vidzeme (Rīga 2 November 2000; Drusti, Vidzeme 2 October 2002; 5-6 August 2003; Rīga 28 July 2004; 27 October 2007) Krūmiņš, Jānis Atis. *Vilki*. Rīga (28 July 2004) Leja, Velta. Jelgava, director, *Dimzēns* Rīga (13 May 2001), Jelgava (6 October 2002); Zaļenieku pagasts (3 August 2003); Group interview, Jelgava (9 February 2007)

Mielavs, Ainars, director Upe Records, Rīga (1 November 2002) Pūtelis, Aldis. Latvian Folklore Archives, Rīga (28 October 2000; 8 August 2003) Reizniece, Ilga of *Iļģi*. Rīga (3 November 2000; 9 May 2001; 5 August 2003) Rode, Ojārs. Drusti, Vidzeme (30 September 2002)

Spīčs, Ernests. Centre of Ethnic Culture, University of Latvia (5 May 2001, 2 November 2002; 31 July 2003; 5 February 2007; 6 July 2007; 25-27 October 2007) Stalte, Helmī and Dainis Stalts, directors, *draugu kopa Skandinieki* Rīga (4 November 2000; 7 May 2001) and Livonian Festival, Mazirbe, Kurzeme (2-3 August 2003)

Tobe, Aina, director *Delve*, Limbaži, Vidzeme (9 July 2007) Vītols, Jānis. *Brencīši* farmhouse near Druviena, Vidzeme. Interview *kopa Pērlis* (29-30 September 2002; 5-6 August 2003) Vītola, Dace and Līga Kļaviņa, as above, *Pērlis*

3. Selected Transcripts

Andris Ērglis, Krišjānis Barona Muzējs (29 October – 1 November 2000)

A native of Cēsis and educated in Jaunpiebalga, Andris Ērglis has worked in Rīga since 1985. During 2000-2 he was completing a Ph.D. in Latvian philology at the University of Latvia, with an emphasis on Latvian language and pedagogy, and teaching methods.

Museum School

The museum devoted to Krišjānis Barons (see Chapter Four) has a school entitled *Sējējīņš*. The first interview (see below) followed the museum programme *Kopā ar māmiņu muzējā* (“Together with mother at the museum”) on Sunday (29 October 2000), which was part of the festival *Krišjānas Baronas dienas*.

Rīga’s *Skolēnu Pils* (Castle of Pupils) and Tukums parish district in Kurzeme. The groups presented round dances and games. There is a regular rotation of pupils, whose ages range from four to eight. They meet weekly to study visual arts, folklore, and museum-related historical topics (*pamati*).

(31 October 2000)

Key features: This discussion followed the Krišjānis Barons’ Sunday festivity at the *Krišjānis Barona Muzējs*. To Andris I raised the subject of personal narratives that had been collected in a sociological survey at the Academy of Sciences. One paper contained an anecdote, which related that a child who was born during the Third Awakening (c.1988-90) would be destined to have good luck.

Andris: In folklore the future has hope. Children come into the world with nothing; they freely enter the world, but at a specific time. The contemporary belief mirrors the Latvian folk motifs pertaining to *Laima*, the deity of fate, and is an example of the personification of the awakening period.

2) CJP: How do you perceive the “singing revolution” in a post-Soviet societal context?

Andris: The Baltic International Folklore Festival in 1988 was actually only a minor incident – a detail or accent in the course of major political changes. The “singing revolution” also attracted an international philosophical movement associated with the Russian painter Nikolajs Rērihs, and the slogan *Miers caur kultūru* (“Peace through culture”). A flag with this designation appeared at a demonstration in June 1988 at the Cemetery of the Brethren, which commemorated the anniversary of the mass Soviet deportations in June 1941.

3) CJP: Why do folklorists value rural culture?

Andris: Because they may distrust the ideology of the city and the mechanisms of folklore ideology. The city is multicultural, whereas 99% of the countryside remains (ethnically) Latvian. But there are a few young folklorists (he suggests Guntis Pakalns and Baiba Meistere), who study contemporary genres – student humour, folklore memorates (personal experience narratives), and personal albums – in this context it is difficult to identify the pretensions.

4) The time of shades: early November (*Veļu laiks*).

Andris: Due to the influence of commercial Western Halloween practices, Latvians have forgotten the meaning of the ritual calendar. This controversy is derived from changing

symbolism that denotes the period from *Miķela diena* (Michael's Day, 27 September) to *Mārtiņa diena* (Martin's Day, 10 November). It is no longer experienced in a natural manner – this is not a time for frivolity and masks, but a serious time.

Second meeting: (11 May 2001)

I return to the topic of Nikolajs Rērihs, having purchased a book on Roerich, Nicholas (1999), *Paintings: from the Collection of the Latvian State Museum of Art*. Rīga: Uguns. Andris: The Rērihs (Roerich) movement represents only one tradition, but many other paths have existed. In the 1930s this movement grew among the intelligentsia, poets, and composers, but not among the workers. Not everyone engages in an orientation towards Eastern cultures. It is a spiritual search (*garīga meklējums*). There are other directions, such as authentic folklore, or post-folklore experiments. Folklore (folklore texts) became the basis of a religion to the *Dievturi*. This religious group founded in Latvia during the interwar years granted too much attention to ritual, and to external matters. Folklore then became a superficial inheritance, and not a living organism. Latvians have diverse subcultures, which are not as homogenous as the movement of *Dievturi*.

Third meeting (13 May 2001)

We viewed videos in the museum that were compiled by Valdis Jurkovskis in 1988:

Andris: We want everyone to come together in this museum: the rural declaimers, as well as the urban ensembles. Yet between the academics and the archivists, on the one hand, and the city's ensembles, on the other, there exists a schism.

[In the video of a concert dating from 1993 at an exhibit of Indian and Japanese art]

Andris: The presentations of supernatural healers, depicted in the video, were common during the first years after the restoration of independence (1990-).

Ilga Reizniece (b. 1956) (3 November 2000)

Ilga: In reference to the Green Movement (*Zaļā kustība*), during the singing revolution activists transformed the folksong text (*Pie dieviņa gari galdi*) into a hymn having a contemporary meaning (see Chapter Five).

CJP: Do folklorists value rural culture exclusively?

In reply to my question concerning rural veneration, Ilga responded by presenting an opposing viewpoint. Because her mother was a newcomer to Rīga, she was in the habit of reprimanding Ilga: “to keep her finger on her mouth, or to close her mouth” (*aizslēdz mutu pilsētā*), so that she would not betray her rural origins. In other words, at one time folklore was an embarrassment that was associated with Latvians having rural origins.

Helmī Stalte (b. 1949) and Dainis Grasis Stalts (b. 1939) Dialogue (4 November 2000)

The first meeting was held at their home, upon their invitation to a meal on Sunday. Helmī and Dainis begin by teaching expressions in Livonian: *Tieno* (thank you) and *Terins* (hello). I present them with a book on Latvia published in America, and they promised to donate it to the Livonian culture house (*Lībiešu tautas nams*) in Mazirbe, Kurzeme. They discussed the Livonian community in Riga, where there has been a Livonian Union since 1923. Before founding the *Skandinieki* they performed together in Livonian singing groups *Kāndla* and *Līvlist*.

Second meeting at Hotel Radi un Draugi, Vecrīga (the old central section of Rīga)

7 May 2001

A discussion preceded the taped interview in which I discussed visits to the Krišjānis Barons Memorial Flat, where I received advice from the curator Andris Ērglis. They immediately suggested that the Latvian nationalist Fricis Brīvzemnieks, who played a greater active role in constructing *Latvju dainas*, is not as well known as Barons, who mainly contributed his skills in classification.

Secondly, when I relate my meeting with a Latvian jazz musician who has traveled to Gambia to study African drumming Dainis points out that Gambia was once a colony of the Duchy of Kurzeme. Stalts often added insights to my interviews, in which he found relevance in historical and political topics, however incidental they were to my questions.

Helmī: Now what did you ask?

CJP: About your daughter, how she began to speak the Livonian language.

Dainis: (*Vispirms sākums ir tāds: mēs iepazīnāmies Līvlistā*). First of all, the beginning was this: we met in the ensemble *Līvlist*. In Latvia it is probably a rare occurrence (*laikam ir retāk gadījumiem*) that both members of a married couple are Livonians. [He reviews aspects of their genealogies]. Oskars Stalts was Helmī's father, and a grandfather to their daughter Julgi. She was young and could acquire more of the language from her grandfather, but not from a school. Children [learn to] speak clearly and freely (*Bērni skaidri, brīvi runā*). Julgi speaks Livonian more fluently than her parents (Dainis and Helmī). Her grandfather (*vecāis tēvs*) would only allow the children

in the family to hear the Livonian language. They were not allowed to hear Latvian spoken on the television, the radio, and so forth.

Dainis: [Dainis continues to place emphasis on the Livonian language, and upon the prestige of Livonian/Latvian bilingualism, but he is more ambivalent concerning his own linguistic capabilities and role]. To be a bilingual Latvian/Livonian is a source of prestige. I use the Livonian language occasionally so that the children can witness this. Livonian songs were accepted in the Soviet era. The Livonian language resounds in the songs. The songs are familiar, but it is difficult for me to express myself freely. My family's origins are in Kurzeme; they are of the clan Grasis. Helmī's clan is from Vidzeme. These (Livonian) clans are connected to the Melnderi, Lebens, and Kaupe. There were soldiers in these clans (*bija karavīri*). I (Dainis) remember hearing soldiers' songs when I was "so high" [pointing to his knees]. I am proud that on both of our passports the designation of ethnicity is Livonian.

Helmī: When the protest movement began in 1978, Julgi was in my stomach (*vēderā*). Therefore she received the Livonian name Julgi, which is translated as "being confident and strong in heart."

Dainis: The movement began as a protest because passports, and other Soviet documents, no longer listed "Livonian" as a designated nationality. This ban was a denial of our rights – of economic and educational rights. The Livonians are the only true indigenous minority in Latvia, with the exception perhaps of the Gypsies and the Estonians. The Russians are a "pseudo-minority," and if they all could vote there would be no Latvia. We began to collect songs for ourselves in 1978 when the Academy of

Sciences announced a curtailment of folklore collecting (*folklora darba izbeigšanās*). The explanation given at that time was that only variants existed, but no original folksongs were being created (according to the Soviet viewpoint). We began by presenting folk music in an afternoon concert at the Dailes theatre (on 14 October 1978). Helmī: We began to tour towns in Kurzeme – Talsi, Kandava, and Grobiņa. In these towns they presented us with their repertoires of soldiers' songs. We collected and wrote down these songs offered by those in the audience. And honestly (*goduprāti*) the people helped to collect; they came by the cultural house, on their own accord (*par saviem līdzekļiem*). They were invited to the culture house. [She interjects] Don't interrupt Dainis. Some song texts were sent on in letters to us in Rīga. We awoke (*uzmodināja*) the people, who came to us for advice. Prior to the *Skandinieki* there were no *kopas* (folklore groups), but only ethnographic ensembles, because in Soviet times there were no informal occasions to sing. We traveled to Siberia and popularized the folklore movement. Despite our impoverished circumstances we raised the status of those who offered us their songs. What we collected, as in a dowry of songs of the people (*tautas dziesma pūra*), we taught others in our radio programmes: "*Lai Līgo Mūsu Dziesmas*" [Helmī interrupts in order to correct the title "*Lai Līgo Lepna Dziesma*"]. We turned from traveling to the resources of the radio – what we couldn't do physically or financially. In the official documents, which were distributed at places where we sang, the Soviets denounced us as "bad people." Our name could not be mentioned, and our home was searched (*vajāšana*). Every programme was censored, but we sang the songs anyway.

CJP: I ask about the former members of *Skandinieki*, whom I was scheduled to meet.

Dainis: Many members who had to move away from Rīga formed their own group or

kopa: in wave after wave, in Madona, Sigulda, Liepāja, Jelgava and other places

(referring to Druviena in Vidzeme). I visit them as if I were a “godfather” (*krusttēvs*) of

their groups. Today the cultural atmosphere has favoured semi-professional groups, such

as *Grodi* or *Iļģi*.

Final topic of the interview: Ilga Reizniece, whom I interviewed earlier, is a former

member of *Skandinieki* and leader of the group *Iļģi*, Dainis and Helmi bring up her long

battle with tonsillitis. During concerts her voice was barely audible, but in time it grew

stronger (they believe) because of the energy of the performance.

4. Composite of Sound Recordings (2000—2007)¹

CD 1: (tracks 1-25)

FILE 1 VIDZEME: RĪGA

R1 *Skandinieki – Rīgā iešu es māmiņa* (“I’m going to Rīga mother.”). Group repertoire study aid for children and youth, in preparation for the traditional cultural project, *Pulkā eimu, pulkā teku*, held in May 2001. See also Introduction for its use in Rīga’s 800th anniversary year. R2 *Pērkonītis*, Ropaži district near Rīga – *Rīga 8001 theme: Rīgā iešu es māmiņa*. R3 *Pērkonītis – No tālienes es pazinu*. Liva Graholska (1985) Children’s and youth festival and singing competition, 4 May 2001. R4-5 *Ilgi – No tālienes es pazinu*. Ilga Reizniece violin, Māris Muktupāvels *kokle*, Gatis Gaujenieks bass guitar, Mikus Cavarts, percussion. Contemporary Folk Music Festival, Rīga, Large Guild Hall, 3 November 2000. R5: CD version *Sēju vēju* [I sow the wind], 2000.

R6 *Skandinieki – Ceļa māte* (The mother of the path). Recorded in Rīga, 4 May 2001. R7 *Skandinieki – Burial songs (Bedības)* from Kurzeme and Lejas Kurzeme (lower Kurzeme) collected by Jēkabs Graubiņš. Announced by Helmī Stalte. *Vasaras svētki* (Summer festival). Rīga, Hall of the Latvian Society, 24 July 2004.

R8 *Skandinieki Dainis Stalts – Livonian folksong (laula)*. Narratives on the Livonian ethnic group by Helmī Stalte and Dainis Stalts. Recorded in Rīga, 4 May 2001.

FILE 2: VIDZEME: PĒRLIS

¹ Commercial and archival recordings are used for comparison, with permission (See also Discography).

V9-11 *Kopa Pērlis – Jāņu dziesmas: (St. John's Day songs). Es jums saku, Jāņa bērni (V9). Lēni, lēni Dieviņš brauca (V10) and Dārga, dārga, tā zālīte (V11).* The three texts are sung to the same melody and are structurally identical. *Kopa* of four farming families founded in 1996 in Druviena in the region of Gulbene. Recorded by Aldis Pūtelis for the Latvian Folklore Archives. St. John's Day, 23 June 2001. V12 *Kopa Pērlis – Raibogovis.* Cumulative riddle song. Dace Vītols, voice, Kristīna J. Porter, Kalvis Vītols, *virole*, (violin drone), Rasa Vītols, *stabule* (wooden flute), James M. Porter, *bungas* (drum). Recorded near Druviena, 5 August 2003.

V13 *Kopa Pērlis – Talkas balss.* Intonation of communal farming works. Jānis and Kalvis Vītols, melodic and drone singing. Recorded in Rīga, at the *Pulkā eimu, pulkā teku* spring festival for children and youth, 12 May 2001.

V14-15 *Kopa Cielava*, of Salacgrīva – Burial songs. Recorded in Rīga, 24 July 2004.

FILE 3: LATGALE [Southeastern Latvia]

L16 *Tolka balss, Tolka lela, tolka moza — Briežciema etnografiskais ansamblis*, 1982. Intonation or voice (*balss*) of communal farming works (*tolka*). Repository of the Latvian Folklore Archives.

L17 *Tolka balss, Atīt zūses klaiguodamas – Laiksne: Folkloras draugu kopa*, female university students, 3 October 2002. Attributed to the northern Latgalian song declaimer Margarita Šakina (b. 1926 Viļaka). The song text is autobiographical. Sung with the voice of communal work (*tolka balss*) and the intonation of a goose (*zosa balss*). L18 *Tolka balss, Atīt zūses klaiguodamas – Kopa Ilžena*, Ludza region. Children's and youth national singing competition, Recorded in Rīga, 4 May 2001. L19 *Gaismēna ausa* ("The light dawns") – *Folkloras kopa Ceiruleits*. Viļaka district. Founded in 1990. Wedding song. Interchange of male and female voices in a dialogue. Folklore Concert, Great Hall of Rīga's Latvian Society, *Rīgas Latviešu biedrības nams*. 29 October 2000.

L20 *Nataki spūleite bez skrimsteņa* (“The spindle won’t turn without the sheave”). Bridal lament – Biruta Ozoliņa. *Bolta eimu*. Upe CD 013, 1999. L21 *Nataki [...]* – Sofija Vuceniece, Līvāni. Recorded by Māris Jansons, 1992. L22 *Nataki [...]* — Ludmila Bule, Rēzekne. Phonograph cylinders, 1926 to 1933. Repository of the Latvian Folklore Archives, 2000.

L23 *Velc peleite* (Lullaby to a little mouse) – *Grodi* (with Aīda and Andris Kapusts). Collected by Andris Kapusts in Dagda. Recorded in the Great Hall of Rīga’s Latvian Society (*Latviešu biedrības nams*), 29 October 2000. L24 *Velc peleite – Grodi: Ģimenu godu dziesmas*, CD 2001. L25 *Zīdi, zīdi rudzu vorpa*. (“The rye flower blooms”) – Laura Spridzāne (b. 1990), Liene Igauna (b. 1987) *Kopa Purineņš*. Gaigalava secondary school. Children’s and youth national singing competition, Rīga, 4 May 2001.

CD 2: (tracks 1-17)

FILE 4: ZEMGALE: JELGAVA: DIMZĒNS

Z1 *Malu, malu visu rīt* – declaimed by Anita Jansone (b. 1987) and Inese Mičule (b. 1987). Jelgava: *Kopa Dimzēns*, Recorded in Rīga, 4 May 2001. Music transcribed in 1931 by Emilis Melngailis from Lavize Alute in Jelgava.

Z2 *Linu druva*. “Field of flax” – declaimed by Velta Leja with the *Skandinieki*. Rīga, Children’s and youth festival and singing competition, 4 May 2001.

Z3 *Dziedat meitas vakarā*. Declaimed by Velta Leja and former members of the *Skandinieki*. Rīga, Children’s and youth festival and singing competition 4 May 2001.

Z4 *Spoža zvaigzne notecēja, Dimzēns*. Wedding of Kārlis and Linda Freibergs. *Dimzēns* farmhouse, Zaļenieku parish district, 2 August 2003. Irēna Vilciņa, Kristīna Jaremko, and *Dimzēns, kogle* and voice. Private archives of Valdis Muktupāvels: see the CD of the *kopa Savieši*, 2007 (see Discography), which was directed in the 1980s by Valdis Muktupāvels and Velta Leja.

Z5-12 Group Interview and Recording Session: *Kopa Kopa Dimzēns*, Directed by Velta Leja 9 February 2007, 19:30 Jelgava Culture House

Participants and their ages:

Jekaterina Jevdokimova (Kate), 17 (Latgalian-Russian, from Baltinava)

Dace Kroģere, 41, declaimer (no. 5) and kokle player (no. 8)

Genādijs Maksimovs, 58, voice and whistle accompaniment (no. 8)

Zane, 16, and Elīze Rubesa, 12, violin (Velta Leja's daughters)

Inese Mičule, 20 (Latvian University ethnomusicology student) voice (no. 6)

Alise Ratkeviča, 15, Raimonds Baumanis, 16, Raimonds Karpjuks, 15

Raivis Kaugelbergs, 20, Elīne and Tālis Jansons, 49, Jānis Lange, 65

Guna Sīle, 64, Terēza Dūdiņa, 56, Irēna Vilciņa, 52

Eight multipart declaiming and bridal dowry songs, folk dancing, kokle and violin accompaniments.

Z5 *Ūsi ūsi, kad laposi* (Ash tree, when will you sprout leaves) – Jekaterina Jevdokimova and Velta Leja. Two parts. Collected, transcribed and published by Emilis Melngailis (1951-53), from Tekla Viļuma, Dzalbe Genonefa (b. Auleja, Latgale, 1880).

Z6 Irēna Vilciņa, *Pūreņu, munu pūreņu*; Dowry song, Latgale. Emilis Melngailis collection, recorded from Veronika Čeiča, b. Galēnos 1918.

Z7 *Trīs māsīņas sasēdušas*. (Three sisters sitting). Two parts with refrain (*Padai, padai, or Bogdai, bogdai*). Emilis Melngailis: recorded in Kurzeme, Sasmakā, from J. Heniņš, and by Andrējs Jurjāns in the 1880s; FS 1495, 2193.

Z8 *Dzied papriekšu brāļa māsa*. Variant from Lielvārde with added lower voice or drone, *vilkt* (“to pull”).

Z9 *Locīdama, es dziedāju, locīdama gavilēju*. Irēna Vilciņa *sauc* (“calls, declaims”).

Z10 *Aiz Daugavas vara dārzs* – Inese Mičule, Terēza Dūdiņa *sauc*.

Z11 *Staiceles Kristīne*, “Kristīne, Kristīne” folk dance of Vidzeme; Velta Leja on folk-violin.

Z12 *Ķēvīt' mana svilpastīte* composed by Dina Kalniņa, *kopa Kokle*, Rīga. *Bungas* (drum), *kokle* (13-string lap zither), *vijole*, *klabata* (wooden clapper), a whistle from a folded leaf (*lapa, svilpa*).

FILE 5: KURZEME: SUITI

KS13 *Nebēdāju piekususi*. (“I am not afraid to be tired”). *Garais sauciens* (“Long call”) – *Otaņķu* ethnographic ensemble. Nīca. Recorded by Māris Jansons, Private archives of Māris Jansons, Rīga, 1999.

FILE 6: KURZEME: LIVONIANS (Balto-Finnic minority)

KL14 *Tšitšōrlinkist*. Awakening, calling to birds. Easter ceremony. Katrīne Krāsone (b. 1891), recorded in 1979, Repository of the Latvian Folklore Archives. KL15 *Tšitšōrlinkist – kopa Kāndla*. Ventspils. Livonian annual festival, Mazirbe, 2 August 2003.

KL16 *Tšitšōrlinkist Putnu saukšanas – Staltu ģimene*. Stalts family (*Skandinieki*). *Līvōd lolōd* [Livonian songs]. Rīgas skaņu ierakstu studija CD 1998. The author filmed a video of Julgi Stalte with Dainis and Helmī Stalts and the *Skandinieki* at the children’s and youth festival. Rīga, 12 May 2001

KL17 *Čuka Nuka* (Nonsense syllables) – *Kopa Kāndla*, Recorded at the Livonian annual festival (a teasing response to my presence). Mazirbe, 3 August 2003.

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