



Conference: “Remembering a pre-modern past in a modern world: Medieval saints and heroes as realms of memory in 19th and 20th Century Central, Eastern and Northern Europe”

October 18-19, 2021

Venue: Online (link provided after the registration)

When the Empires expanded and nations were born during the modern period, various groups and societies in the Middle Ages found historical figures – rulers, saints and heroes – as role models important for the formation of their identities. These medieval men and women became realms of memory (*lieux de mémoire*), symbolic reference figures in which fundamentally important images of local, ethnocultural and later national discourse were embodied, thanks to which the emergence of an ‘imagined community’ became possible. After the Second World War, many of the integrated figures of 19th century national romanticism lost their significance or became re-invented by religious or ethnic minorities, as symbols for rebellious groups or sub-cultures.

In the framework of this conference, we are interested in relevance (irrelevance) of medieval historical figures (saints, heroes, rulers etc.) and events (battles, political acts) for the 19th and early 20th century European societies and what impact the medieval individuals and events had on the formation of modern group identities.

The conference is organised by the project “Saints and Heroes from Christianization to Nationalism: Symbol, Image, Memory (Nord-West Russia, Baltic and Nordic countries)” of University of Greifswald and St. Petersburg State University <https://ej.uz/SaintsHeroes>

The project is financed by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation) and the Russian Science Foundation (RSF).

Register until 15 October by sending an email to Dr. Gustavs Strenga: gustavs.strenga@uni-greifswald.de

Program

October 18

8:45 (all times in CET) Welcome address and introduction by Professor Cordelia Heß (University of Greifswald), Dr. Gustavs Strenga (University of Greifswald) and Professor Alexander Filyushkin (St. Petersburg State University)

09:00-10:00 Session 1: Eastern European saints between the Middle Ages and modernity

Moderator: Cordelia Heß

Liliya Berezhnaya (Catholic University of Leuven): Cult of St Alexander Nevsky in Contemporary Russian Cultural Memory

Alexander Filyushkin: Spiritual and and secular "places of memory" as symbols of the historical policy of the Russian Empire: Poland, the Baltic States, Novgorod, Pskov and St. Petersburg: a comparative analysis

10:15-11:15 Session 2: Remembering medieval battles and heroes

Moderator: Alexander Filyushkin

Jan Rüdiger (University of Basel): The Bold/Bald Count: Tracing the 1½ Memories of Gerhard III of Holsatia (c1290-1340)

Mart Kuldkepp (University College London): A shared heroic past: the 1187 pillage of Sigtuna in Estonian national memory culture

11:30-12:30 Session 3: Remembering medieval battles and heroes in imperial and totalitarian settings

Moderator: Gustavs Strenga

Dmitry Weber (St. Petersburg State University): From hero to event: Heinrich von Plauen and the battle of Grunwald/Tannenberg in German memory from the end of the 19th to the early 20th century

Roman Sokolov, Irina Smirnova (St. Petersburg State University): Film «Alexander Nevsky» by Sergei Eisenstein: "the birth of a hero" or "the film that was wanted to be banned"?

12:30-13:30 Lunch break

13:30-14:30 Session 4: Swedish kings and heroes in early modernity and the age of nationalism

Moderator: Cordelia Heß

Henrik Ågren (Uppsala University): St Erik in Swedish history writing from Reformation to Enlightenment

Christian Oertel (University of Erfurt): The medieval heroes of Swedish romantic nationalism

14:45-15:45 Session 5: Between Catholicism, Orthodoxy and Protestantism: Finnish and Karelian medieval saints

Moderator: Anti Selart (University of Tartu)

Sari Katajala-Peltomaa (Tampere University): Toothaches, ladybugs and patrons or realm – changing fates of saints Henrik of Finland and Birgitta of Sweden

Kati Parppei (University of Southern Finland): “The holy educators of the Karelian tribe” – The integration of Russian medieval saintly cults into Finnish Orthodox “mythscape”, 1896-1940

16:00-16:30 Session 6: Finnish nationalism and representations of a medieval past

Moderator: Anti Selart

Anna Ripatti (University of Helsinki): Race, State and Colonization: The Controversial Monuments of Tyrgils Knutsson in Nineteenth-Century Finland

16:45-17:30 Concluding discussion of the day

October 19

09:00-10:00 (CET) Young scholars session 1

Moderator: Cordelia Heß

Viktor Koronevsky (St. Petersburg State University): «The idea of retrieval» as an ideological component of the celebration of the transfer of the relics of St. Euphrosyne of Polotsk from Kiev to Polotsk in 1910

Carl Burnett (University of Greifswald): Early Medieval Historiography: Narratives and Identities of the North

Tatyana Medvedeva (St. Petersburg State University): The image of St. Elisabeth of Thuringia in the 19th and 20th centuries: veneration and reflection in culture

10:10-10:50 Young scholars session 2

Moderator: Gustavs Strenga

Svetlana Abuzina (St. Petersburg State University): How Ivan the Great Became Ivan the Terrible: On the Issue of Writing and Publishing of the 9th Volume of "History of the Russian State" by N. M. Karamzin

Walter Hochheim (University of Greifswald): German Unification and Lutheranism

11:00-12:00 Session 7: Medieval heroic pasts in the modern Baltic

Moderator: Cordelia Heß

Kristina Jõekalda (Estonian Academy of Arts): Crisis of National Style: Baltic German and Estonian Heroic Imagery from Virgin Mary to Kalevipoeg

Gustavs Strenga: Livonian founding bishops and medieval indigenous 'heroes' during the age of nationalism

12:00-13:00 Lunch break

13:00-13:30 Session 8: Finding place for medieval saints in the modern Empires and national states

Moderator: Anti Selart

Marianna Shakhnovich (St. Petersburg State University): Memorialization of natural loci and veneration of the Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Princess Olga in the North-West of Russia (19th-early 21st centuries)

13:30-14:30 Concluding discussion of the conference