

## Letters from a Young Researcher to Elder Scholars in the Field

Historian Gunvor Kerkkonen, Archivist Reinhold Hausen,  
Professor Rolf Pipping and the Birth of a Doctoral Thesis in  
Medieval History 1929–1945.\*

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### Introduction: Letters as Traces of a Research Process

#### *Aim of the Article*

In ten letters from the Interwar period in Finland, historian Gunvor Kerkkonen (1903–2002) reports to former State Archivist Reinhold Hausen (1850–1942) on the research that, among other things, resulted in her doctoral thesis. After his death, she sent letters to Professor Hugo Rudolf (Rolf) Pipping (1889–1963). Kerkkonen's thesis discussed place names connected to the medieval Cistercian monastery in Padise (Estonia) and the relationship between its landownership and these place names. The thesis also included discussion on the prehistory of the Åland Islands (in the archipelago of Finland), in connection with the medieval place names. Kerkkonen's thesis tried to combine the fields of toponymy, archaeology and history, and the thesis is still an important scholarly work to consider in the context of, for example, the Cistercians and their influence, as well as land ownership in Finland.<sup>1</sup>

The aim of this article is to present and analyse the preserved letters from Gunvor Kerkkonen to Reinhold Hausen and Rolf Pipping from the 1920s to the 1940s that mainly concerned Kerkkonen's research for her PhD thesis about place names in Finland connected to Padise, Estonia. What can the letters reveal about

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\* For information concerning Gunvor Kerkkonen I would like to express my gratitude to her daughters Karin Kerkkonen and Anna-Maria Kantola (née Kerkkonen) for sharing their memories and personal collections with me. I would also like to thank Annette Forsén, Susanna Fellman and Pertti Hakala for important advice and information. I am especially grateful for the time and effort expended by archivist Anita Saarenheimo in helping me find some letters of interest in Martti Kerkkonen's archive, which has not yet been organised. Anni Rissanen at Vantaa City Museum kindly provided me with the book *Padise ja Vantaa*, which is otherwise hard to come by – thank you. With the help of the comments by anonymous peer-reviewers I was also able to improve my text and express myself more clearly. Editors Anu Lahtinen and Jesse Keskiäho receive my humble gratitude for comments to the text and advice on literature. Sarianna Silvonen is given thanks for revising the language. The research and writing of this article have been supported by post-doctoral scholarships from the Funds of the University of Helsinki (Kanslerineuvos Kaarlo ja Irma Koskimiehen rahasto) in 2011–2012 and Niilo Helanderin Säätiö in 2012–2013.

<sup>1</sup> Gunvor Kerkkonen, *Västnyländsk kustbebyggelse under medeltiden* (Svenska Litteratursällskapet i Finland, CCCI), Svenska Litteratursällskapet i Finland (hereafter SLS): Helsingfors 1945.

the researcher's personal views on research and the process of writing a PhD thesis during the Interwar period and during wartime in the 1940s? Could the letters reveal something about the conditions Kerkkonen worked under during the process of researching for and writing her thesis? How did she manage work and married life in addition to her research in the period in question – did she get practical help from anyone? Furthermore, this article adds yet another page to the history of medievalist research in Finland and a detail around the research history of Padise.

The history of research, archaeology and restoration work at large at Padise have been recently discussed in articles in a book<sup>2</sup> presenting the results of the recent research carried out by the Fenno-Estonian EU project 'Padise–Vantaa the Middle Ages Bridge' from 2010 to 2012.<sup>3</sup> In his article on inheritance in Tallinn by people from Uusimaa during the Middle Ages, Tapio Salminen provides some comments regarding Gunvor Kerkkonen's scholarly works in the same field, but his article mainly focuses on the subject at hand, not Kerkkonen herself. For instance, Salminen mentions Kerkkonen's visit to the archives in Tallinn in 1937, but merely briefly in connection with presenting the results of her printed research that he then starts deconstructing in connection with the new findings he has made in the archives more recently concerning the medieval and postmedieval period.<sup>4</sup>

Comparison to other Finnish female historians in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is thus very important. In some of the articles in the anthology *Oma pöytä* [A Desk of One's Own], Mervi Kaarninen, for example, has written about the conditions under which PhD work was carried out during the Interwar period and the wars in the 1940s. A more detailed analysis of the process as reflected in letters is presented in the case of historian Sisko Vilkama (1893–1983), who is therefore a good example for comparison, although Vilkama was ten years older than Kerkkonen and upper-class. It would be interesting to note the feelings attached to setbacks and breakthroughs in the process, but my article focuses more on the external conditions of Kerkkonen's work and how they are described, such as where, when and how she carried out her research.<sup>5</sup> Hence it seems important to

<sup>2</sup> Erki Russow (ed.), *Padise ja Vantaa. Keskaja sild Padise ja vantaa vahel. Keskiajan silta Padisen ja Vantaan välillä*, Vantaan kaupunginmuseo: Vantaa 2012.

<sup>3</sup> PAVAMAB, <http://www.centralbaltic.eu/projects/funded-projects-2/279-sfe/545-padise-vantaa-the-middle-ages-bridge>, seen 1.2.2013. See also the earlier publication by the Finnish researchers, regarding the site of Gubbacka in Vantaa, part of the later project: Andreas Koivisto, Riina Koivisto & Jukka Hako (eds), *Gubbacka. Keskiajan arkea Vantaalla. Medeltida vardag i Vanda* (Museoviraston rakennushistorian osaston julkaisuja 34), Kellastupa: Vantaa 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Tapio Salminen, 'Uusmaalaisen Tallinnanperinnöt 1350–1560. Uusimaalaste Tallinna-pärandused 1350.–1560. Aastal', Erki Russow ed., *Padise ja Vantaa*, 183–258.

<sup>5</sup> Mervi Kaarninen, 'Luonto vetää tikanpojan puuhun ja meillä kullakin on omalaatuisensa luonto. Sisko Vilkama historiantutkijana', Elina Katainen, Tiina Kinnunen, Eva Packalén & Saara Tuomaala (eds), *Oma pöytä. Naiset historiantutkijoina Suomessa* (Historiallisia Tutkimuksia 221), Suomalaisen kirjallisuuden Seura (hereafter SKS): Helsinki 2005a, 250–272; Mervi Kaarninen, 'Pitkä tie professoriksi. Historian naistohtorit 1940–1970', in the same volume, 303–324. Nina Pilke has examined the feelings of students during research for the master's thesis in the field of language and literature in 2008–2010. Pilke's research is not useful for the material in this article, but could be considered in future research. Max Engman has briefly discussed the research process of Professor P. O. von Törne (1882–1940), among others, in a book about scholars at Åbo Akademi, the university in Turku at which Kerkkonen defended her dissertation. But the section about, for example, von Törne's thesis and its reception is limited in Engman's article to merely one page. Nina Pilke, "Känner mig ganska trött i starten". Att utrycka känslor i avhandlingsprocessen', *Käännösteoria, ammattikielet ja monikielisyys* (VAKKI:n julkaisut, N:o 37), Vaasa 2010, 269–279; Max Engman, 'P. O. von Törne', Max Engman ed., *Historiens studium vid Åbo Akademi*, Åbo Akademin förlag: Åbo 1991, 29–59, esp. 34.

shed some light on how the process of research advanced. The case chosen here is the process of writing a PhD by a female scholar in the field of medieval history during the Interwar period.

Kerkkonen's collaboration with Reinhold Hausen is particularly interesting. Although Hausen is among the most important medievalists in Finland, not least due to editorial work for *Finlands medeltidsurkunder*, which is still the standard publication of historical documents related to Finnish history, he has not yet been thoroughly studied in the history of research.<sup>6</sup> Kerkkonen also had an impact on Finnish medieval studies, among others in the field of economic history, and the importance of her research on Padise cannot be denied in the context of 20th-century research. The correspondence between two older, established scholars (Hausen and Pipping) and a young, female doctoral student has not previously been used to illustrate the history of research of the Middle Ages in Finland. Finally, this article shortly discusses the reception of Kerkkonen's thesis.

*Who were the scholars Reinhold Hausen, Gunvor Kerkkonen (née Holmberg) and Rolf Pipping?*

The main characters discussed in this article are three Finnish historians who lived in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Gunvor Kerkkonen, Reinhold Hausen and Rolf Pipping. In the following, their backgrounds are presented briefly. Other scholars mentioned are discussed as they appear in the text.

Gunvor Holmberg was born in 1903 in Helsinki and first studied economy at *Högre svenska Handelsläroverket* before she became a student of history at the University of Helsinki, where she received her master's degree in 1927. During the 1920s she worked in archives and libraries and became passionately interested in this field. She married and had two children (b. 1931; 1940) with historian and State Archivist, Professor Martti Kerkkonen (1905–1990). In 1945, she completed her doctoral thesis at Åbo Akademi. Most of her research was done in the early mornings before her family woke up. She became a docent at Åbo Akademi and worked as a librarian at *Svenska handelshögskolan*, a university of economics in Helsinki, and she also gave lectures in the field of the economic history of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, among other subjects.<sup>7</sup> Gunvor Kerkkonen has been regarded as a 'pioneer' in her profession as well, as a woman conducting research in the field of economic history and working for the professionalisation of libraries. She is said to have been 'somewhat serious-minded with a temperament'.<sup>8</sup> Earlier female historians who had completed their dissertations

<sup>6</sup> Hausen has earlier been discussed in a biographical anthology and as one of the scholars in a thesis on the use of history. Thus, sources such as biographical lexicons are also used to present the scholars in this text. See Elias Orrman ed., *Reinhold Hausen (1850–1942) – Kansallisen arkiston rakentaja*, Art House & Kansallisarkisto: Helsinki 2000; Eva Ahl-Waris, *Historiebruk kring Nådendal och den kommemorativa anatomien av klostrets minnesplats* (Skrift utgiven av Societas Sanctae Birgittae), Societas Sanctae Birgittae: Vadstena 2010.

<sup>7</sup> Tor W. Holm, 'Människor och minnen', *Handskrivna kataloger och metadata. Svenska handelshögskolans bibliotek 1909–1999*, Svenska handelshögskolans bibliotek: Helsingfors 1999, 34–35; Veli-Matti Autio ed., 'Kerkkonen, Gunvor Helena Amalia', *Suomen Historiallisen Seuran matrikkeli 1875–2007* (Studia Biografica 6), SKS: Helsinki 2007, 84; Veli-Matti Autio ed., 'Kerkkonen, Martti Aatto Olavi', *Suomen Historiallisen Seuran matrikkeli 1875–2007*, 85; *Uppslagsverket Finland* 3, Schildts Förlags Ab: Helsingfors 2005, 2.

<sup>8</sup> Susanna Fellman, 'Gunvor Kerkkonen – med brinnande intresse för bibliotek och arkiv', Susanna Fellman & Annette Forsén (ed.), *Hundra år av utbildning och forskning. Svenska handelshögskolan 1909–2009*, Svenska handelshögskolan: Helsingfors 2009, 191: '...något kärv och temperamentsfull'.

had mostly been upper-class, but after 1940, also women from humbler backgrounds defended their theses.<sup>9</sup> Kerkkonen was middle-class, as her father was a teacher. Mårten Holmberg was born in poor conditions, but worked his way up in society. Kerkkonen's daughter claims that he served as a model for his daughter in the pursuit of learning.<sup>10</sup> This was, of course, encouraging. But later on, Kerkkonen was also in need of support from others, namely her elder colleagues, as is shown in this article.

**Fig. 1. Historians Gunvor (née Holmberg) and Martti Kerkkonen with their two daughters Karina and Anna-Maria in 1945, together again in Helsinki after the war. Private collection (Anna-Maria Kantola, Helsinki) published with permission.**



Reinhold Hausen is referred to as a scholar of many talents. He has been regarded as an important pioneer in early photography, as well as significant in other fields, such as archaeology. He was born in 1850 in Sund, Åland, as the son of a doctor. Later on the family moved to Helsinki, where Hausen began his studies in the field of technology, but changed to the humanities. Already as a schoolboy he worked at Dr K. A. Bomansson's (1827–1906) archaeological excavations in Kökar, in the Ålandic archipelago. Both of them belonged to the so-called Historical Section, a society in the 1860s that aimed to do research in Finnish early history at the *Finnish Literature Society* (f. 1831). Hausen also visited the Nordic countries and Germany during his years of studies in

Helsinki and did his PhD thesis on the medieval bishop's castle in Kuusisto. In the 1880s he succeeded Bomansson as archivist in the State Archives, later the National Archives. At first, he had Fennoman sympathies, but later on, in the 1880s, he became a so-called cultural liberal. During the Russification he published books on Finnish history that were considered as politically problematic, and he had to resign in 1916. He still continued to publish his research until the late 1930s.<sup>11</sup>

Hugo Rudolf (Rolf) Pipping, famous linguist and professor at Åbo Akademi,<sup>12</sup> was born in 1889 as one of the sons of professor (Knut) Hugo Pipping, also mentioned by Gunvor Kerkkonen as important for her thesis.<sup>13</sup> In

<sup>9</sup> Kaarinen 2005b, 320.

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Anna Maria Kantola (née Kerkkonen, b. 1940), Helsinki, 15.5.2013.

<sup>11</sup> Veikko Litzén, 'Hausen, Reinhold (1850–1942)', Matti Klinge ed., *Suomen kansallisbiografia* 3, SKS: Helsinki 2004, 609–611; Kari Tarkiainen, 'Mikä mies Reinhold Hausen oli?', Elias Orrman ed., *Reinhold Hausen (1850–1942). Kansallisen arkiston rakentaja*, Kansallisarkisto & Art House: Helsinki 2000, 7–12; Veli-Matti Autio ed., 'Hausen Reinhold Theodor', *Suomen Historiallisen Seuran matrikkeli 1875–2007*, 52; Ahl-Waris 2010, 96–111; Marika Hausen, *Reinhold Hausen. Ålänningen, forskaren, fotografen, historikern 150 år*. Ålands Museum: Mariehamn 2000.

<sup>12</sup> Harro Stammerjohann & Carol Henriksen ed., *Lexicon Grammaticorum: A Bio-Bibliographical Companion to the History of Linguistics*, Max Niemeyer Verlag: Tübingen 2009 (2<sup>nd</sup> edition), 1172–1173.

<sup>13</sup> Kerkkonen 1945, viii. It should be noted that professor Hugo Pipping was an eminent figure in

short, he did his dissertation in 1919 on the medieval Eric Chronicle and mainly remained in the field of cultural history and linguistics during his career. He studied in Sweden during the 1910s and became a professor in 1928 in the recently founded Swedish-speaking university in Turku, Åbo Akademi, and its principal in 1936–1942. Politically he is connected with the Swedish People's Party.<sup>14</sup>

### *Sources and Literary Framework*

The sources for this article are letters from Kerkkonen to Hausen and Pipping. Kerkkonen's letters to Rolf Pipping are held in Rolf Pipping's archive in the archive of Åbo Akademi's library in Turku. Kerkkonen and Pipping continued to exchange letters in the 1950s. The letters to Hausen are kept in Helsinki in the National Archives of Finland, in the archive of State Archivist Reinhold Hausen.<sup>15</sup> The counterparts, that is, the letters from Hausen to Kerkkonen, have not been found, since Kerkkonen does not have a personal archive and rumors of possible letters found in a philatelist's shop in Helsinki could not be verified.<sup>16</sup> Some mentions in Kerkkonen's letters suggest that she received answers, as well as material such as photos to work with. A few copies of letters sent by Rolf Pipping to Kerkkonen remain in Pipping's collection, but they are mainly from the 1950s. Some material of Kerkkonen's is held by her children in Helsinki, and this has also been taken into consideration in writing this article. This material truly forms a gold mine, but should be organized before it can be fully used as source material. A brief look at the material, personal correspondence, and an interview with Kerkkonen's younger daughter, Anna-Maria Kantola, have shed some more light on Kerkkonen's work and life.<sup>17</sup>

The letters are very personal, but could still be considered as being somewhere between the private and the public sphere, that is, the sphere in which the thesis is presented. In this regard, I would like to define private as matters of the family or home and public as matters concerning research, colleagues and the *universitas*. The fields still overlap, as the researcher could be considered as writing her work in connection with both fields. The letters could thus reveal

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Svecoman activity at the University of Helsinki in 1919–1922, during a time of harsh political struggles between supporters of the Finnish and Swedish languages. See Matti Klinge, *Helsingin yliopisto 1917–1990* (Helsingin yliopisto 1640–1990, 3), Otava: Helsinki 1990, 48–49.

<sup>14</sup> 'Pipping, Hugo Rudolf (Rolf)', *Kuka kukin on* (1964), Otava: Helsinki 1963, 730–731.

<sup>15</sup> Helsinki, National Archive (hereafter NA), Reinhold Hausen's Archive 8; Turku, Åbo Akademi's Library (hereafter ÅAL), Manuscripts and Pictures, Rolf Pipping's Collection 208, Letters to Rolf Pipping – K-L. Some other collections have also been used, as Kerkkonen has no personal archive.

<sup>16</sup> Pertti Hakala informed the present author that some letters of Kerkkonen's could possibly be found in a philatelists' shop in Helsinki (personal message, email, 30.6.2011). The shop in question is A. Pischow in Helsinki. After a visit there (10.6.2012) it was clear that looking for the letters was like looking for a needle in a haystack. The postcards in the shop are archived by motive and the covers (of the letters) by their stamps. This is due to the fact that stamp collectors have no interest in the sender, recipient or content of the letters. See also: <http://www.apischow.fi/>, last seen 1.2.2013.

<sup>17</sup> Unsorted letters, maps, photos etc. are held in storage by Kerkkonen's daughters Karin Kerkkonen and Anna-Maria Kantola in Helsinki. According to her daughters, Kerkkonen took pictures of documents in Tallinn with a Leica camera and a support especially designed for her (personal messages, emails from Anna-Maria Kantola 24.1.2013 & 29.1.2013). In May 2013, I was able to visit Kantola and saw the several boxes where material from Gunvor and Martti Kerkkonen is stored in the cellar. The material also includes letters and notes by Kerkkonen's own father, Mårten Holmberg, and her brother Håkon Holmberg. Among the material were notes and maps used by Gunvor, as well as letters from the 1930s until her death in 2002. Kantola will deliver the material to the National Archive during 2013. Some of the material found connected to the Interwar period was photographed, as shown in Figures 4 and 5. Letters from Hausen and Pipping may be included among the material, but they were not found during a first, brief look (15.5.2013)..

something about the process of research, in this case of the process of receiving support for ideas in the thesis. Letters must be considered as representative sources and the writing itself as a performance, especially in the case of older letters. Letters are also material remains, but more importantly, they are an intimate way of communication. As you write, you choose what to include, and you also intend to create a reasonable story for the possible reader. Thus, letters reflect conventions and cultural praxis, but they offer a unique way to get an insight into a time and a place. Modern letters are more intimate, often personal, and should thus be treated with a certain ethical consideration: a researcher should choose what letters to present and why, which is very important.<sup>18</sup> In this case, I have chosen letters from a younger scholar, Kerkkonen, to her elder colleagues, in order to present a glimpse of her doubts and worries, but also advances in the research process for her thesis in the Interwar period. In addition to correspondence with Hausen and Pipping, some other letters were also used as material for this article. For example, one letter to her husband (and colleague, historian Martti Kerkkonen), who was stationed at the front line in the war, remains from 1941, and some material in his archive related to the themes discussed in the present article, including letters describing Gunvor Kerkkonen's research.<sup>19</sup>

The use of letters in an attempt to shed light on the history of research in the fields of archaeology and early history is fairly recent in a Finnish context. During the past few years, scholars in Finland have started to pay attention to personal letters between historians and archaeologists, resulting in a more detailed picture of their processes of research and career developments. In his recent research, Timo Salminen has used letters between 20<sup>th</sup>-century archaeologists in Finland, Sweden and Estonia as sources to determine not only their research interests, but also their contacts and networks, the main aim of their thought and how they overcame the isolation caused by the Second World War.<sup>20</sup> Salminen's work deals with a rather small group of archeologists, but it is still worth mentioning as a study of scholarly networks. The group of historians active in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was larger, and also the number of female professionals was sizable enough that they could actually be claimed to form a group, although a small one. For example, Kerkkonen has been mentioned in the anthology of Finnish female historians published in 2005 as one of the few women (a total of twelve out of 104) who completed their thesis in history before 1970.<sup>21</sup>

Kaarninen states that the war both helped and hindered Kerkkonen's work on her thesis. Women made up 15 % of the historians who earned their dissertations in the 1940s, and they were generally older than their male colleagues (in their 40s). Only one of the women earned her dissertation at the University of Helsinki, although some of them had received their master's degrees there in the 1920s. This was also the case with Gunvor Kerkkonen, who had started to work in archives and libraries like her contemporaries, such as Liisa

<sup>18</sup> Anu Lahtinen, Maarit Leskelä-Kärki, Kirsi Vainio-Korhonen & Kaisa Vehkalahti, 'Johdanto. Kirjeiden uusi tuleminen', Maarit Leskelä-Kärki, Anu Lahtinen, & Kirsi Vainio-Korhonen (eds), *Kirjeet ja historiantutkimus* (Historian arkisto 134), SKS: Helsinki 2011, 20–24.

<sup>19</sup> The letters are in Martti Kerkkonen's forthcoming archive, but the archive is not in order yet (personal message, email from Pertti Hakala, 30.6.2011). I was able to see the material in April 2013, and thus add some letters that concern Gunvor's research.

<sup>20</sup> Timo Salminen, 'Harri Moora, Ella Kivikoski and Scandinavia', *Fornvännen* 107 (2012), 96–111, also available online: [http://fornvannen.se/pdf/2010talet/2012\\_096.pdf](http://fornvannen.se/pdf/2010talet/2012_096.pdf) (last seen 1.2.2013).

<sup>21</sup> Kaarninen 2005b, 303, 306–309.

Castrén (1899–1958) and Saini Laurikkala (1898–1978). Kaarninen observes that the war prolonged their thesis work – as it also slowed the work of their male colleagues, who fought at the front.<sup>22</sup> These observations could be verified, but also slightly revised by means of a closer look at the letters from Kerkkonen to her mentor and other connected sources.

In her thesis from 2011, Elise Garritzen writes about the historians Henry Biaudet (1870–1915) and Liisi Karttunen (1880–1957). They belonged to an earlier generation of Finnish historians, one between Hausen and Kerkkonen, but some aspects of Garritzen's work have been taken into account in this paper, as Biaudet and Karttunen are contemporaries to Pipping. Garritzen's thesis is the latest addition to Finnish historiography and she has, among other things, used a vast amount of letters to reveal details of the research of these two scholars. Garritzen has also to some extent considered aspects of gender regarding Karttunen's work and life.<sup>23</sup> In addition to letters, Garritzen has used reviews of the scholars' works to analyse how the works were received.<sup>24</sup> She also points out that the preface of a thesis is also important, as it shows the network of the scholar in question.<sup>25</sup> The reviews and the preface are thus kept in mind regarding Kerkkonen's thesis.

A comparison to Liisi Karttunen's research process (for her thesis) in a broader sense is not made here, as Karttunen is one of the first female historians to complete a thesis and her work took place during the 1910s. In my opinion, she belongs in a context substantially different from that of Kerkkonen's doctoral studies. Karttunen also remained unmarried, like many of the first female historians in general, in contrast to later female historians, many of whom married and also had children.<sup>26</sup> The first female historian to receive her PhD in Finland was Tekla Hultin (1864–1943) in 1896. Her career is also not without some similarities to that of Kerkkonen, although the differences are again significant and instructive. Hultin finished earned her doctorate before women were fully allowed to study at the University (from 1897 onwards). She was also politically active as an activist against the Russian regime, and later on she was a Member of Parliament. Professor E. G. Palmén helped Hultin with her thesis on mining during the Swedish reign (until 1809) – Palmén also supported Biaudet with his work and topic. Like Karttunen, Hultin did not have a career at the university and also remained unmarried.<sup>27</sup> Hultin was the predecessor of Karttunen and the other later female historians, but she was very different in that she led an active political life.

Politics also played a role in historians' lives in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, as many were politically active in the resistance against the so-called Russification,

<sup>22</sup> Kaarninen 2005b, 309.

<sup>23</sup> Elise Garritzen, *Lähteiden lumoamat. Henry Biaudet, Liisi Karttunen ja suomalainen historiantutkimus Roomassa 1900-luvun alussa* (Bibliotheca historica 130), SKS: Helsinki 2011.

<sup>24</sup> Garritzen 2011, 27–29. Letters have also been used in other recent studies, for example, to determine the extent of the archaeological and popular interest in and use of the ruins of the Birgittine monastery of Naantali. See Ahl-Waris 2010.

<sup>25</sup> Elise Garritzen, 'To the Kind Reader', oral presentation on 19<sup>th</sup>-century prefaces, paper at Historiantutkimuksen päivät, Tieteiden talo, Helsinki 25.10.2013.

<sup>26</sup> Kaisa Tuunainen, 'Yhteisen päämäärän hyväksi. Liisi Karttunen historiantutkijana', Elina Katainen, Tiina Kinnunen, Eva Packalén & Saara Tuomaala (eds), *Oma pöytä*, 140–160, esp. 142; Kaarninen 2005b, 309.

<sup>27</sup> See, e.g., Elina Katainen, 'Ensimmäinen naispuolinen historiantohtori Tekla Hultin', Elina Katainen, Tiina Kinnunen, Eva Packalén & Saara Tuomaala (eds), *Oma pöytä*, 119–121; Venla Kiiski, *Tekla Hultin, poliitikko* (Studia Historica Jyväskyläensia 15), Jyväskylän yliopisto 1978.

such as Biaudet, or in the confrontations between the so-called Fennomans and Svecomans. The Swedish-speaking and Finnish-speaking historians had different ideas about how the history of Finland should be understood and written. For the Swedish-speakers, it was important to stress the long period of Swedish reign and connections to Western Europe. The Fennomans, in contrast, emphasised the clearly Finnish point of view, a history written with the special Finnish conditions always taken into consideration.<sup>28</sup> The disputes over the roles played by Swedish- and Finnish-speaking cultures in Finland originated in the 1870s, in the youth of Reinhold Hausen and his generation of scholars, but the problems created by these disputes were still very much present in the Interwar period, the time of Gunvor Kerkkonen and her generation.

## Letters from Kerkkonen Describing the Process of her Research

### *Letters to Hausen 1929–1937*

In Finland, when people of different generations became friends, it used to be common for the younger person to address the elder not by the first name but as ‘uncle’ or ‘aunt’. It is obvious that Reinhold Hausen and Gunvor Kerkkonen had become close, as she starts her letters by addressing him as ‘uncle’.<sup>29</sup> Kerkkonen had met the former State Archivist Hausen in the 1920s, when she worked in the State Archives in Helsinki. According to her daughter Anna-Maria Kantola, Hausen meant much to her mother: ‘In the State Archives her passion for research was born. She was a researcher at heart for all her life. Nothing was more important to her than research, except for her family.’<sup>30</sup> Kerkkonen started the research for her thesis in the early 1930s while still working in archives and libraries.<sup>31</sup> Kerkkonen's daughter states that her mother had to change jobs from the State Archive (nowadays National Archives) to the Library of the Federation of Finnish Learned Societies because in the 1930s it was not considered proper for a wife and a husband to share a workplace. Kerkkonen thought that her later workplaces were inferior to her previous job as assistant at the State Archive.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Garritzen 2011, 24–26; Pekka Ahtiainen & Jukka Tervonen, ‘Historiatiede oman aikansa tulkkina. Katsaus suomalaisen historiankirjoituksen vaiheisiin viimeisen sadan vuoden ajalta’, Pekka Ahtiainen, Markku Kuisma, Hannele Kurki, Pauli Manninen, Katariina Mustakallio, Matti Peltonen, Jukka Tervonen & Ilkka Turunen (eds), *Historia Nyt. Näkemyksiä suomalaisesta historiantutkimuksesta* (Historiallisen yhdistyksen julkaisuja 5), Historiallinen yhdistys: Helsinki 1990, 11–38; Max Engman, ‘The Finland-Swedes: a case of a failed national history?’, Michael Branch ed., *National History and Identity. Approaches to the Writing of National History in the North-East Baltic Region in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Studia fennica ethnologica 6), Tampere 1999, 166–177; Max Engman, ‘Den blå tråden – finns det en finlandssvensk historiesyn?’, *Finsk Tidskrift* 4/1992, 173–191. For an overview of the historiography of Finland, see Päiviö Tommila, *Suomen historiankirjoitus. Tutkimuksen historia*, WSOY: Porvoo 1989. On Svecoman and Fennomans political ideals see e.g. Matti Klinge, *Ylioppilaskunnan historia* 1–4, HYY: Gaudeamus 1978; Juhani Mylly, *Kansallinen projekti. Historiankirjoitus ja politiikka autonomisessa Suomessa*, Kirja-Aurora: Turku 2002. For an analysis of the so called Fennomans Paradigm in Finnish historiography and the archaeologists' interpretation of Finnish prehistory as reflecting ‘ancient greatness’, see Derek Fewster, *Visions of Past Glory. Nationalism and the Construction of Early Finnish History* (Studia Fennica Historica 11), SKS: Helsinki 2006.

<sup>29</sup> I asked Anna-Maria Kantola about her views of Gunvor addressing Hausen as ‘uncle’, and she thought it could be a term of general courtesy, thus expressing their difference in age and status (interview, 15.5.2013).

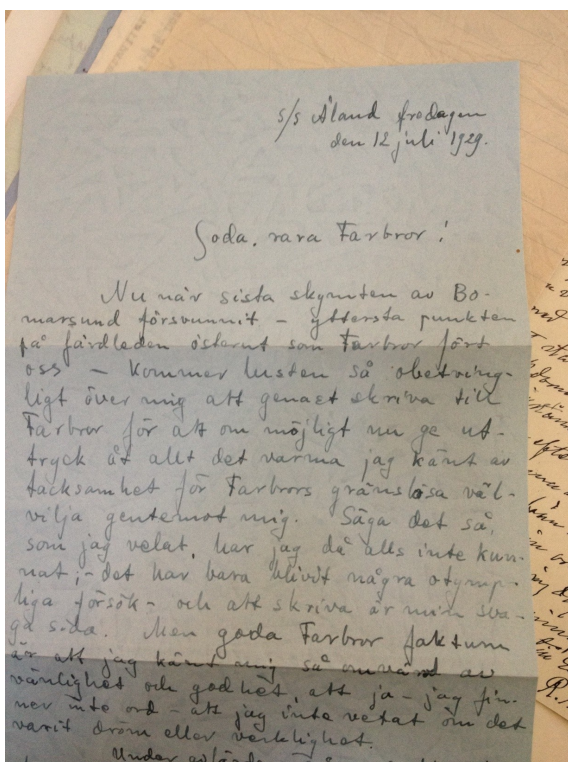
<sup>30</sup> ‘På riksarkivet [sic] tändes forskargnistan hos henne. Forskare var hon till sin själ livet ut. Utöver familjen var ingenting så viktigt för henne som forskandet.’ Personal message, email from Anna Maria Kantola, 24.1.2013.

<sup>31</sup> Kaarninen 2005b, 307.

<sup>32</sup> Interview with Anna-Maria Kantola, 15.5.2013.



Fig. 2. The First remaining letter from Kerkkonen to Hausen. Helsinki, NA, Reinhold Hausen's collection, 8, Kerkkonen to Hausen 12.7.1929. Photo: Eva Ahl-Waris 2013.



The first letter by Kerkkonen to Hausen in the archive of Hausen is dated 12<sup>th</sup> July 1929. In her letter, she thanks him, among other things, for a visit to the medieval castle of Kastelholm on the Åland islands. She is grateful for his kindness during the stay that lasted a week and for showing her places such as Geta, Signilskär [sic], Bomarsund and Mariehamn during a trip that seemed almost magical: 'Åland has been presented to us like magic, and Uncle has cast the spell'<sup>33</sup>, she concludes.

Shortly after this, Kerkkonen appears to start her research regarding place names. In a letter to Emmy Hultman (née Stenbäck), Kerkkonen wrote:

As I have now left the State Archives and completely turned to the private life, I would like to talk with Mrs Professor about our joint work. During the last few years, I have been tormented by my work with the place names, but have not been able to deal with it as I would have liked to. Now I will have the opportunity to deal with my former sins. The rest of this year I have planned to make such arrangements with my house and home as to allow me to reserve 5–6 hours per day for working with my research on place names. As I will now have time for work at my disposal, it would be nice if Mrs Professor and I could make a deal about what to do with next year and its limited budget for the place names. We could agree to share the work so that one could get a clear idea of the amount of work per capita, per year.<sup>34</sup>

The research might not have been intended as a thesis at first, but as some other form of project carried out in collaboration with another person, Mrs Hultman.

<sup>33</sup> Helsinki, NA, Reinhold Hausen's archive, 8, Kerkkonen to Hausen 12.7.1929: 'Som genom ett trollslag har Åland upprullats för oss och Farbror har fört staven'.

<sup>34</sup> Turku, AAL, Manuscripts and Pictures, The Family Hultman 33: Letters to Emmy Hultman H–K, Holmberg [Kerkkonen] to Hultman 1.11.1930: 'Då jag nu lämnat statsarkivet och helt övergår till privatlivet, ville jag gärna med Fru Professorskan något rådgöra om vårt gemensamma arbete. Det har under de gångna åren legat som en pinande mara över mig, att jag åtagit mig ortnamnsarbetet, men inte kunnat sköta det som jag velat, men nu blir jag ju i tillfälle att sona de tidigare försummelsena. Den återstående tiden av detta år har jag tänkt ordna det så med mitt hus och hem att jag hoppas kunna reservera 5-6 timmar per dag för ortnamnsforskningen. Då jag nu alltså får arbetstid till mitt förfogande, vore det väl om jag med fru Professorskan kunde överenskomma, om huru vi för nästa år med dess begränsade ortnamnsbudget kunde tänka oss en uppdelning så att man från årets början kunde överblicka arbetsmättet per år för envar'.

Emmy Hultman was the second wife of Professor O. F. Hultman (1862–1929), who received a personal chair in Swedish language and literature at the University of Helsinki in 1910. Hultman published studies on local history with her husband, who was mainly interested in dialectology.<sup>35</sup> No further letters remain regarding this collaboration, so we should assume the project at hand shortly became Kerkkonen's personal endeavor. She also expressed her interest in the subject to her colleagues. In 1933, at a meeting of *Historiska föreningen* in Helsinki, she held an oral presentation about trade in Helsinge (nowadays Vantaa) before the founding of the city, that is, in the medieval period.<sup>36</sup>

In addition to their meeting at work in the archives, there may also be another reason for Kerkkonen's close relationship with Reinhold Hausen: Hausen's daughter Greta Hausen had studied history and published a series of studies of old place names in Finnish regions in the 1920s. Greta Hausen states in her foreword to one of the books that she had worked with the subject for a long time, ten years, within the Swedish Literature Society. Her work was managed by a committee headed by Professor Hugo Pipping, O. F. Hultman and R. Hausen, among others.<sup>37</sup> Kerkkonen thus needed Hausen's (and Pipping's) help in many aspects of her own project.

A preserved letter from Kerkkonen to 'Dear Uncle' ('Kära Farbror') Hausen dates to June 1934. She claimed to have read his history of the castle Kastelholm and flatters him:

Never has a work on Finnish history given me such a lively insight in, and created such a realistic impression of, ancient days, as this castle history by Uncle, with its evenly flowing local history rich in detail and with insights into the common relations in the realm. – Uncle has clearly written this book thanks to a whole life of dedication to Clio and with the warmest feeling for Ahvenanmaa...<sup>38</sup>

She stated that Hausen '...unites historic understanding with historic feeling' and remembered the trip to Ahvenanmaa that occurred earlier. Here she mentions that the trip was made on Hausen's initiative.<sup>39</sup> The trip to Ahvenanmaa was probably very important for Kerkkonen. Her thesis, when published in 1945, consisted of two parts: the first part regarding the place names related to Padise and the second<sup>40</sup> about the Swedish place names along the southern coastline, also including comments on the archaeological research in Åland and Uusimaa.

Only a few letters from Kerkkonen remain in Hausen's archive, and the

<sup>35</sup> See e.g. Maija Väisänen, 'Hultman, Oskar', Matti Klinge ed., *Kansallisbiografia* 4, 147; Matti Klinge, *Keisarillinen Aleksanterin Yliopisto 1808–1917* (Helsingin yliopisto 1640–1990, 2), Otava: Helsinki 1989, 467.

<sup>36</sup> *Hufvudstadsbladet* 22.11.1933. NB: In the article her title is 'Mrs', while another speaker (male) is referred to as 'Professor'. She had an MA degree in history at that time.

<sup>37</sup> Greta Hausen, *Nylands ortnamn. Deras former och förekomst till år 1600. Utgivna av Greta Hausen*, 3 vols (Skrifter utgivna av Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland CLII), Helsingfors 1924, v–ix.

<sup>38</sup> Helsinki, NA, Reinhold Hausen's archive, 8, Kerkkonen to Hausen 18.6.1934: 'För mig har visst aldrig ett arbete om Finlands historia givit en så levande inblick i, och skapat en sådan gripbar verklighet av forna tider, som just denna Farbrors borgskildring gjort det, med sin jämnlöpande detaljrika ortshistoria och med sina blänkare ut mot rikets allmänna förhållande. – Det är med ett helt liv egnat åt Clio och med den innerligaste varma åländska känsla Farbror skrivit boken...'

<sup>39</sup> Helsinki, NA, Reinhold Hausen's archive, 8, Kerkkonen to Hausen 18.6.1934: '...förener historiskt vetande med historiskt kännande.'

<sup>40</sup> Kerkkonen 1945, 110ff.

next one in line is from 1935. It seems now that her thesis process had sped up and during the following years she became more active in her research. At the same time, her husband earned his PhD in history on the 18<sup>th</sup>-century professor Pehr Kalm.<sup>41</sup>

First of all, in a letter from May 1935 dated in Viipuri, she thanks Hausen for a card, letter and photos of Padise,<sup>42</sup> and comments:

Without Uncle's photos I could never have acquired such a lively understanding of what still remains in Padise, and it was surprising to me that the ruins were so vast and impressive. According to the view I had earlier, based on literature, I thought that the ruins were merely simple foundations. – I would gladly have been Uncle's companion on that trip, but with a little girl one is so tied to the family that I have only taken the trips that I could take with her as a companion, such as to visit Grandmother.<sup>43</sup>

Kerkkonen refers to the difficulties in conducting research and having a family also later on, in her thesis.<sup>44</sup> In 1935, Kerkkonen had visited Helsinki, but had not met Hausen, since he had gone 'south' at the end of April. She said she had done some research in Padise, even if the family had been ill, which had allowed her less time to work. She had had time to go through some manuscripts, but regretted that her Latin was so poor. The text was written by hand, but she had already formed parts of the thesis regarding the place names in Uusimaa, and she poses a few questions about whether the place names correlate with a possible Danish reign in the area during the Early Middle Ages: '– If the idea seems too wild for Uncle I can think it over many times before I make my claim'.<sup>45</sup> Kerkkonen continued to muse over this and stated that she could combine her hypothesis with the fact of medieval peasant trading with Estonia.<sup>46</sup> Later on Kerkkonen carried out further research on this subject.<sup>47</sup>

Kerkkonen mentions that she got quite carried away in her research and that the photos that Hausen sent her '...caught her intensively in Padise' and inspired her to ask if she could use them in her thesis.<sup>48</sup> These pictures were not

<sup>41</sup> *Vem och Vad? Biografisk handbok* 1967, 276; Autio 2007, 85. According to their daughter, Gunvor was annoyed that she was not allowed to be present at her husband's defense of his dissertation, since no wives should attend. Gunvor was not a mere wife, she was also his colleague. Interview with Anna-Maria Kantola, 15.5.2013.

<sup>42</sup> Helsinki, NA, Reinhold Hausen's archive, 8, Kerkkonen to Hausen 11.5.1935.

<sup>43</sup> Helsinki, NA, Reinhold Hausen's archive, 8, Kerkkonen to Hausen 11.5.1935: 'Hade inte utan Farbrors foton kunnat få en så levande uppfattning om vad som ännu funnits i behåll av Padis, och det var för mig en överraskning, att ruinerna voro så omfattande och imposanta. Enligt den litteraturförmedlande föreställning jag hittills haft trodde jag, att ruinerna inskränkte sig till blott anspråklösa fundament rester [sic]. – Hade nog allt bra gärna varit Farbrors reskamrat på färden, men med sin lilla pia är man så familjebunden, att jag endast gjort de resor, jag kunnat göra med henne som resällskap, nämligen till Mormor'.

<sup>44</sup> Kerkkonen 1945; Kaarninen 2007, 307.

<sup>45</sup> Helsinki, NA, Reinhold Hausen's archive, 8, Kerkkonen to Hausen 11.5.1935: '– Förefaller idén Farbror alltför vild, så skall jag betänka mig flere gånger om förrän jag framför den'.

<sup>46</sup> Helsinki, NA, Reinhold Hausen's archive, 8, Kerkkonen to Hausen 11.5.1935.

<sup>47</sup> E.g. Gunvor Kerkkonen, 'Farmän från Björkö och Karelska näset – handelssjöfart innerst i Finska viken under 1500-talet', Rauno Endén ed., *Historiallinen Arkisto* 85, Suomen Historiallinen Seura: Helsinki 1985, 47–139.

<sup>48</sup> Helsinki, NA, Reinhold Hausen's archive, 8, Kerkkonen to Hausen 11.5.1935: '...fick mig så intensivt Padis-tagen'.

published in the thesis, but a letter remaining in Hausen's archive suggests that he sent similar pictures also to others. In this case, the recipient was the Estonian medievalist Paul Johansen (1901–1965) in Tallinn,<sup>49</sup> who sent his thanks for the photos.<sup>50</sup> Johansen seemed to be part of Hausen's network in Estonia, and later on it seems that also Kerkkonen was included.

Kerkkonen wrote that she also sent Hausen parts of the manuscript to comment on: 'I hope that I do not impose too much upon Uncle's time and interest, if I send Uncle the part of the manuscript that I think is in the best condition, in addition to this long discussion by mail'.<sup>51</sup> In the following letter, Kerkkonen claimed to be glad that Uncle thinks that her history of Padise could amount to something, but that it would still need work: 'It [the thesis] still requires a lot of work, both in terms of content and style, I am very much aware of that. I would be very grateful for Uncle's corrections regarding the use of language [i. e., Swedish],' she added.<sup>52</sup> In this letter, Kerkkonen also continued to write about her ideas concerning a Danish influence in Finland and its possible connection to Padise. But these questions were too difficult to discuss in a mere letter, she concluded. Furthermore, Kerkkonen expressed her happiness that Hausen had planned a trip to the Monastery of Valamo in Karelia, and asked him to visit her family in Viipuri too.<sup>53</sup>

Later in 1935 Kerkkonen sent short greetings to Hausen on his birthday, but in the next letter, in April 1936, she wrote more about the progress of her thesis. She also thanked Hausen, who had corrected a paper of hers and included photos of the archives in Viipuri for him.<sup>54</sup> In a following letter, she was grateful that Hausen encouraged her to send more text, but claimed that she had nothing but drafts for the time being. It seems that they had met in Viipuri, since Kerkkonen mentioned that Hausen had praised the Kerkkonens' home.<sup>55</sup> At this time, Martti Kerkkonen was working at the archives in Viipuri and the family lived there.<sup>56</sup>

In 1937, Kerkkonen received a scholarship from the student fraternity Nylands Nation (at the University of Helsinki) for a field trip to Tallinn. She wrote to Hausen about the fact that it had been mentioned in the newspaper *Hufvudstadsbladet*, but clarified that the fraternity had misunderstood her subject and thought she intended to study 'the medieval contacts between Uusimaa and Tallinn'.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, Kerkkonen wrote about how she decided to ask for the grant: '– I decided to write my application in a burst of energy and filled with enthusiasm for my work; but now that I received funding, I feel very worried

<sup>49</sup> *Eesti Elulood* (Eesti Entsüklopeedia 14), Eesti Entsüklopeediakirjastus: Tallinn 2000, 111.

<sup>50</sup> Helsinki, NA, Reinhold Hausen's archive, 8, Paul Johansen to Reinhold Hausen 11.5.1935.

<sup>51</sup> Helsinki, NA, Reinhold Hausen's archive, 8, Kerkkonen to Hausen 11.5.1935: 'Hoppas, att jag inte alltför mycket tager Farbrors tid och intressen i anspråk, om jag utöver det här långa pratet per brev, översänder åt Farbror till påseende den del av manuskriptet, jag har i mest presentabelt skick'.

<sup>52</sup> Helsinki, NA, Reinhold Hausen's archive, 8, Kerkkonen to Hausen 22.5.1935: 'Att den både i sak och betr. stil kräver åtskilligt arbete ännu, är jag livligt övertygad om. Särskilt glad är jag över Farbrors rättelser betr. språkbehandlingen'.

<sup>53</sup> Helsinki, NA, Reinhold Hausen's archive, 8, Kerkkonen to Hausen 22.5.1935.

<sup>54</sup> Helsinki, NA, Reinhold Hausen's archive, 8, Kerkkonen to Hausen 8.4.1936.

<sup>55</sup> Helsinki, NA, Reinhold Hausen's archive, 8, Kerkkonen to Hausen 26.4.1936.

<sup>56</sup> Interview with Anna-Maria Kantola, 15.5.2013.

<sup>57</sup> Helsinki, NA, Reinhold Hausen's archive, 8, Kerkkonen to Hausen 5.5.1937: '...medeltidsförbindelserna mellan Nyland och Reval...'; Salminen 2012, 183–184.

about going and leaving my little girl for 2–3–4 weeks at a time.’<sup>58</sup> She told Hausen that she considered taking pictures of the manuscripts in the archives in order to study the documents peacefully at home:

To be able to get the work done in Tallinn as fast as possible, I have thought that I would dare to take pictures of manuscripts, because it is not possible to get Photostats in that time. Uncle is familiar with the art of photography and probably smiles at my optimism, to think that I could learn such a difficult skill in just a few moments.<sup>59</sup>

Reinhold Hausen was well-known as a photographer among his fellow scholars, and had in fact already in his youth in the 1870s taken one of the first steps in archaeological and historical photography by taking pictures of known ruins and heritage sites in the field.<sup>60</sup> During the Interwar period, taking pictures of manuscripts in archives still appeared to be difficult, and the advice of a more experienced researcher could be valuable also for such practical issues.

Kerckonen’s next letter from May 1937 starts with expressing her gratitude for a letter that seems to have contained advice for her trip to Tallinn: ‘I have memorised all of Uncle’s advice regarding Tallinn well. If I cannot acquire private accommodation (where Mrs. and Dr Mickwitz lived for the winter), I intend to ask Rome’.<sup>61</sup> What she meant by ‘Rome’ remains a question, but the contact in Tallinn, Paul Johansen, was mentioned, and she planned to travel in August. Kerckonen also informed Hausen that she and her husband had practiced taking pictures of manuscripts in the archives in Viipuri, and they thought that the results were good. She also continued to ask Hausen questions concerning the 16<sup>th</sup>-century material in Tallinn related to her subject.<sup>62</sup>

An amusing detail also describes the contacts between the scholars. Kerckonen’s last preserved letter to Hausen in June 1937 informs us that she was grateful for more advice on Tallinn and money that was intended for an ‘assignment’ to deliver chocolate to somebody.<sup>63</sup> Could this somebody have been the contact in Tallinn, Paul Johansen? In a letter to Hausen from September 1937, Johansen wrote and thanked for chocolate he had received. Furthermore, in the same letter, he mentioned their visit to Padise some years earlier.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Helsinki, NA, Reinhold Hausen’s archive, 8, Kerckonen to Hausen 5.5.1937: ‘– Det var i en energisk och arbetsivrig stund jag bestyrde om min ansökan; nu då medlem äro beviljade, känner jag mig allt bra ängslig att ge mig iväg för att stanna 2–3–4 veckor i taget borta från min pia’.

<sup>59</sup> Helsinki, NA, Reinhold Hausen’s archive, 8, Kerckonen to Hausen 5.5.1937: ‘För att kunna göra undan Reval arbetet så snabbt som möjligt har jag tänkt mig våga mig på att fotografera handlingar, eftersom fotostat ej kan i den stunden åstadkommas. Farbror som är kännare på fotografins område ler visst åt min optimism att tro mig i en handvändning kunna lära mig en så svår konst’.

<sup>60</sup> Jari Kukkonen, ‘Rauniot ja luonto valokuvaaja Hausenin etsimessä’, Elias Orrman ed., *Reinhold Hausen (1850–1942)*, 71–76.

<sup>61</sup> Helsinki, NA, Reinhold Hausen’s archive, 8, Kerckonen to Hausen 31.5.1937: ‘Alla Farbrors råd angående Reval har jag nogsammt lagt på minnet. Blir det inte möjligt för mig att få mig inhyst privat (där fru och dr. Mickwitz bott en vinter) har jag tänkt ty mig till Rom’. Gunnar Mickwitz (1906–1940) carried out research in the field of economic and medieval history, among other subjects. He died tragically in the Winter War on the Karelian front. See e.g. Klinge 1990, 138.

<sup>62</sup> Helsinki, NA, Reinhold Hausen’s archive, 8, Kerckonen to Hausen 31.5.1937.

<sup>63</sup> Helsinki, NA, Reinhold Hausen’s archive, 8, Kerckonen to Hausen 14.6.1937.

<sup>64</sup> Helsinki, NA, Reinhold Hausen’s archive, 8, Johansen to Hausen 1.9.1937.



Fig. 3. Postcard (9.8.1937) from Martti and Gunvor Kerkkonen to Martti's mother, Anni Kerkkonen in Janakkala. Helsinki, NA, Martti Kerkkonen's archive. Photo: Eva Ahl-Waris 2013.

A few of remaining letters in Martti Kerkkonen's archive also give us more information on Gunvor's research process.<sup>65</sup> According to Martti Kerkkonen's letter to his mother Anni, Gunvor had been on a short trip to Tallinn in 1935 with her brother Håkon Holmberg (1898–1976), and had examined the archives. She had been there just for one day, but it was good for her, since she could not go to the congress for Nordic historians in Stockholm that year. However, Martti attended the conference.<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, two postcards were sent to Anni Kerkkonen from the research trip to Tallinn in 1937. It seems that Martti was supportive and joined the journey to the archives as Gunvor's assistant photographer.<sup>67</sup> A postcard from Gunvor and Martti to Martti's mother Anni describes their work in Tallinn: 'It is truly an adventure to get to know this city. On Monday we arrived, and the same evening we started working. I have been taking photographs for a couple of days, almost 300 by now. We live with a private family.'<sup>68</sup>

Another card depicting the ruins of the Birgittine monastery in Pirita describes their work in Tallinn further:

Today we have been here already a week. The work has progressed well. In a couple of days we should be ready. On Saturday we visited the ruins of the monastery in Pirita and the spa. Yesterday we took another trip. There are many wonderful things to see here. We live with a German lady and speak German.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Helsinki, NA, Martti Kerkkonen's archive, unorganised; consulted with a special license.

<sup>66</sup> Helsinki, NA, Martti Kerkkonen's archive, M. Kerkkonen to A. Kerkkonen 31.7.1935. During these types of meetings, the Kerkkonens broadened their network in their field. In the spring of 1944, after severe bombings in Helsinki, their two children were sent to live with their colleague Professor Landberg's family in Uppsala in Sweden. The girls returned in spring 1945, around the time when Gunvor defended her dissertation in March. Interview with Anna-Maria Kantola, 15.5.2013.

<sup>67</sup> Helsinki, NA, Martti Kerkkonen's archive, M. Kerkkonen to A. Kerkkonen 10.7.1937.

<sup>68</sup> Helsinki, NA, Martti Kerkkonen's archive, M. & G. Kerkkonen to A. Kerkkonen 5.8.1937: 'On todellakin elämys tutustua tähän kaupunkiin. Maanantaina saavuimme ja samana iltana pääsimme työhön käsiksi. Pari päivää olen valokuvannut asiakirjoja, tähän mennessä 300 kpl. Asumme yksityisperheessä'.

<sup>69</sup> Helsinki, NA, Martti Kerkkonen's archive, M. & G. Kerkkonen to A. Kerkkonen 9.8.1937: 'Tänään olemme olleet täällä jo viikon. Työ on luistanut hyvin. Parin päivän päästä pitäisi meidän olla jo valmiita. Lauantaina olimme Piritan luostarinraunioita ja kylpypaikkaa katsomassa. Eilen taas olimme toisessa retkeilypaikassa. Ihmeen paljon täällä on katseltavaa. Asumme saksal. rouvan luona ja puhumme saksaa'.



Fig. 4. Work and tourism in Estonia 1937. Gunvor and Martti Kerkkonen also visited the ruins of the Birgittine monastery of Pirita, which had become, after its jubilee in 1936, an even more visible object of tourism (see Ahl-Waris 2010, 208–224. Private collection (Anna-Maria Kantola, Helsinki). Photo: Eva Ahl-Waris 2013.

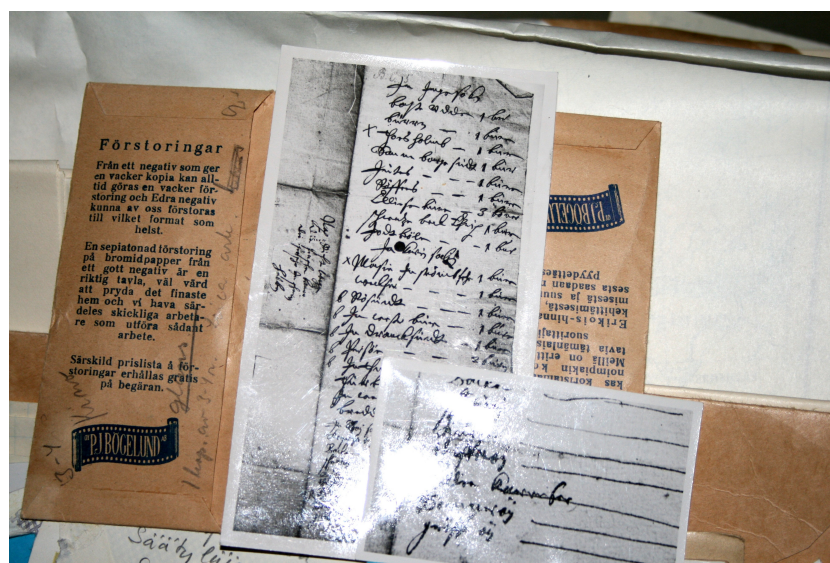


Fig. 5. One of the photos Gunvor and Martti Kerkkonen took during their trip to Tallinn's archives in 1937? The picture appears to show a medieval manuscript in black and white and its covers, although not dated, could derive from the Interwar period. Private collection (Anna-Maria Kantola, Helsinki). Photo: Eva Ahl-Waris 2013.

### *Letters to Pipping about finishing the thesis*

It seems that Hausen had a keen interest in Estonian medieval sites, such as Padise. Due to his age, he probably did not have time to finish all his research and fulfill his interests. In his last years, he still worked with finishing the publication of multi-volume *Finlands medeltidsurkunder*, collecting the medieval documents relating to Finland. Hausen passed away in 1942 and did not see Kerkkonen's finished thesis. In the preface to her book she nevertheless thanked him for his support. She also thanked other authorities in the field, among them Professor Rolf Pipping, and mentioned his father, the late Hugo Pipping, as an important

mentor for her research.<sup>70</sup>

Gunvor Kerkkonen finished her doctoral thesis in the midst of a war, with her husband at the front line. In the preface to her thesis she expressed her gratitude to many authorities, as well as colleagues and friends. Some people represented both colleagues and friends, such as her husband, who was a historian himself.<sup>71</sup>

In Rolf Pipping's archives, some letters remain from the time Kerkkonen finished her thesis. Her first letter to Rolf Pipping is dated to February 1944. She wrote to him due to the fact that she knew him as a child and now approached him because he had started examining her thesis manuscript. She was very grateful for this and especially for his help with the language (i.e., Swedish). Kerkkonen also discussed matters such as terminology, and asked Pipping for advice.<sup>72</sup> According to her daughter, Pipping was the father of one of Gunvor's friends from school, which could also have made it easier to contact him regarding matters related to her thesis.<sup>73</sup> Gunvor had been a good student at school, with excellent grades.<sup>74</sup> Was this typical for a female scholar? Sisko Vilkama is also noted to have been an excellent student in school, and already Tekla Hultin in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was a top-class student.<sup>75</sup> This matter is not discussed further here, but could be investigated in future research.

Later that year, in July 1944, Kerkkonen wrote Pipping to tell him that she had left her thesis for examination and also got it back with comments for the next phase, but she was worried about the tight schedule. It was in the midst of wartime, which she also referred to: '...what will become of my work opportunities depends on how I will get things set for the children now, during changed, serious conditions.'<sup>76</sup> During the summer of 1944, intensive bombings by the Soviet Union caused terror in Helsinki. In 1944, the daughters were sent to Uppsala (Sweden) for safety. They remained there until 1945.<sup>77</sup> But the war finally ended, and in 1945 Kerkkonen's thesis was ready and published. The hardships of war make her case different from the group of women who earned their PhD degrees before the war, among them Sisko Vilkama (1938). Vilkama is said not to have published anything extensive after her dissertation,<sup>78</sup> but neither did Kerkkonen, if we do not count the numerous scientific articles that she published, mostly while continuing in her day job.

In April 1945, Kerkkonen wrote a short note to Pipping regarding the end of the process and the reception of her work. She was thankful for his support, also with arranging grants to publish the book, and for 'agitating' for it. In this letter, we also get a glimpse of how the family lived: the children were safely in

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<sup>70</sup> Kerkkonen 1945, vii.

<sup>71</sup> Kerkkonen 1945, vii.

<sup>72</sup> Turku, ÅAL, Rolf Pipping's Collection 208, Letters to Rolf Pipping – K-L, Kerkkonen to Pipping 21.2.1944.

<sup>73</sup> Interview with Anna-Maria Kantola, 15.5.2013.

<sup>74</sup> Interview with Anna-Maria Kantola, 15.5.2013; Gunvor Holmberg's grades from school, the private archive of Anna-Maria Kantola, Helsinki.

<sup>75</sup> Kaarninen 2005a, 253; Katainen 2005, 120.

<sup>76</sup> Turku, ÅAL, Rolf Pipping's Collection 208, Letters to Rolf Pipping – K-L, Kerkkonen to Pipping 1.7.1944: '...hur det blir med mina arbetsmöjligheter det beror på hur jag får det ställt för barnen under nu förändrade allvarliga förhållanden'.

<sup>77</sup> Personal message, email from Anna-Maria Kantola, 24.1.2013.

<sup>78</sup> Kaarninen 2005a, 250-251.



Uppsala at that time.<sup>79</sup> In the letter she also described the difficult process before the war when she made her research, ‘...practically penniless’.<sup>80</sup> The grant from Nylands Nation for the trip to Tallinn, mentioned in the letter to Hausen in 1937, was not vast, 3 500 FIM (in 2012, approximately 434€).<sup>81</sup> It was not easy to get scholarships during this time, since there were not as many available as later on.

The whole time both Gunvor Kerkkonen and her husband raised a family and worked at archives and libraries. According to Kerkkonen’s daughter, Gunvor thought that working in a library was not as important as doing research, which she valued higher. All her spare time Gunvor sat with her typewriter on her knee, such as during the summer vacations. Gunvor was a career woman who seldom did housework. Her husband Martti often baked and always encouraged his wife to conduct research. According to their daughter, it was his suggestion that Gunvor’s research should be published as a thesis, not as mere articles.<sup>82</sup>

In the preface to her thesis, Kerkkonen gives thanks to the people who had helped her, but also writes about the hardships of finishing her work during the massive bombings of 1944, with her husband at the front. She was also worried about their daughters.<sup>83</sup> Gunvor Kerkkonen’s thesis is dedicated to her parents, Mårten (1854–1932) and Hella Holmberg (1860–1941).<sup>84</sup>

## Reception of the Thesis

Professor Gabriel Nikander (1884–1959) published his evaluation of Kerkkonen’s thesis. He pointed out that Kerkkonen defended her dissertation at Åbo Akademi, despite her earlier studies at the University of Helsinki. Nikander was her opponent from the faculty, suggested by Rolf Pipping. Furthermore, Nikander writes that Kerkkonen was originally the pupil of Professor Väinö Voionmaa (1869–1947) in Helsinki, but due to his resignation, she was advised to turn to Nikander.<sup>85</sup> Also others mention Väinö Voionmaa<sup>86</sup> as the main ideal for Kerkkonen in her research.<sup>87</sup> After describing the contents of the thesis and presenting some of the manuscripts, place names and cartographic material she had used, Nikander pointed out that the work also shed light on the history of colonisation and farming in Southern Finland.<sup>88</sup> Nikander had some critical points, but mainly a positive view of Kerkkonen’s work.<sup>89</sup> Nikander was

<sup>79</sup> Turku, ÅAL, Rolf Pipping’s Collection 208, Letters to Rolf Pipping – K-L, Kerkkonen to Pipping 22.4.1945: ‘agiterat för boken’.

<sup>80</sup> Turku, ÅAL, Rolf Pipping’s Collection 208, Letters to Rolf Pipping – K-L, Kerkkonen to Pipping 18.5.1945: ‘...praktiskt taget utan understöd’.

<sup>81</sup> Kerkkonen 1945, vii. The corresponding sum in euros in 2012 has been calculated with a tool provided online: [http://www.stat.fi/til/khi/2012/khi\\_2012\\_2013-01-15\\_tau\\_001.html](http://www.stat.fi/til/khi/2012/khi_2012_2013-01-15_tau_001.html), last seen 1.2.2013.

<sup>82</sup> Interview with Anna-Maria Kantola, 15.5.2013.

<sup>83</sup> Kerkkonen 1945, vii–ix; Kaarninen 2005b, 307.

<sup>84</sup> Kerkkonen 1945, v.

<sup>85</sup> Gabriel Nikander, ‘Nylands äldsta historia’, *Historisk Tidskrift för Finland* 1/1945, 36.

<sup>86</sup> Väinö Voionmaa (originally named Wallin, born in Jyväskylä) was professor in Nordic history at the University of Helsinki, but also worked as a politician for the Social Democratic Party. He earned his PhD at the age of 24 on the road system in Finland during the Swedish reign. He is regarded as a realist, who used a broader variety of sources than his predecessors, for example, place names. During the Interwar period, he worked as minister twice and participated in the peace negotiations in 1945 and 1946. See Pekka Kaarninen, ‘Voionmaa, Väinö (1869–1947)’, Matti Klinge ed., *Suomen kansallisbiografia* 10, 652–655.

<sup>87</sup> Gunvor Kerkkonen, ‘Länsi-Uudenmaan keskiaikaisesta rannikkoasutuksesta vieläkin’, *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja* 1946, 58–61; Kaarninen 2005, 307.

<sup>88</sup> Nikander 1945, 36–39.

<sup>89</sup> Nikander 1945, 39; Fellman 2009, 190.

professor in Nordic cultural history and ethnography at the new university, Åbo Akademi, from 1920. He was born in Perniö and started his studies in the field of technology before changing to theology and later to history. He was influenced by Professor Gunnar Suolahti in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. On the Swedish side of the language barrier, he alone represented cultural history for a long time during the Interwar period, but he was not active in the political struggle.<sup>90</sup>

It must be kept in mind that all three scholars in this article spoke and wrote Swedish as their mother tongue and that this might also have affected their choice of subjects for their research. This could also affect the reception of their work. Professor Jalmari Jaakkola (1885–1964) was professor in Finnish history at the University of Helsinki and wrote an extremely critical review of Kerkkonen's thesis. Jaakkola completed his thesis on St Eric of Sweden in 1921 and became professor in 1932. He was vastly influential in his time and his series of histories on the Finnish Middle Ages, written in the 1930s and 1940s, is still the only comprehensive continuous narrative on the subject available.<sup>91</sup> Regarding Kerkkonen's thesis, he still has some good things to say at first: 'The book is the result of a rich and versatile collection of sources, a warm affection for the subject and a long and vigorous labour. [...] The main positive thing about the book is especially the rich source material', he wrote.<sup>92</sup> But Jaakkola heavily criticized the bipartition of the thesis, and also accused Kerkkonen of being too romantic in her interpretations. He finally concluded that the thesis contained too many mistakes<sup>93</sup> and that Kerkkonen even failed to prove that she had 'enough knowledge of medieval life'.<sup>94</sup> Thus one could argue that the different viewpoints between the 'schools' of the West-oriented Swedish-speaking historians and the Fennomans, who made claims of Finland's 'ancient greatness'<sup>95</sup>, may also be seen represented in the reception of Kerkkonen's thesis. A full analysis of this must still be left for future research.

Kerkkonen continued to write to Pipping during her career, such as before being named docent in the 1950s, and so on. It is obvious that Kerkkonen felt she was in need of this support. Kerkkonen felt that interest in the Middle Ages was strong in the 1940s, as she claimed in a postcard to her colleague Svante Dahlström (1883–1965)<sup>96</sup> in Turku: 'The Middle Ages have become especially fashionable right now.'<sup>97</sup> Kerkkonen continued to work in the library of the

<sup>90</sup> See, e.g., Eino Jutikkala, 'Nikander, Gabriel (1884–1959)', Matti Klinge ed., *Suomen kansallisbiografia* 7, 72–73; Oscar Nikula, 'Gabriel Nikander', Max Engman ed., *Historiens studium vid Åbo Akademi*, 61–80.

<sup>91</sup> Jaakkola has been criticised himself for his often overly fanciful interpretations of ancient Finnish history. He was born in Satakunta and also functioned as the leader of the student fraternity for this region at the university. See, e.g., Eino Jutikkala, 'Jaakkola, Jalmari (1885–1964)', Matti Klinge ed., *Suomen kansallisbiografia* 4, 363–365.

<sup>92</sup> Jalmari Jaakkola, 'Uusi tutkimus länsiuusmaalaisesta rannikkoasutuksesta keskiajalla', *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja* 1945, 357: 'Kirja kertoo runsaasta ja monipuolisesta lähteiden keräilystä, lämpimästä kiintymyksestä aiheeseen sekä pitkäaikaisesta ja tarmokkaasta työstä. [...] Kirjan pääasiat ovatkin sen lähdeaineistollisella puolella'.

<sup>93</sup> Jaakkola 1945, 357–359.

<sup>94</sup> Jaakkola 1945, 359.

<sup>95</sup> Compare, e.g., interpretations of this dichotomy analysed in Fewster 2006.

<sup>96</sup> Professor Svante Dahlström earned his PhD in history in 1948 and was named professor in Finnish history at Åbo Akademi. Sune Jungar, 'Svante Dahlström', Max Engman ed., *Historiens studium vid Åbo Akademi*, 159–180; *Uppslagsverket Finland*, <http://www.uppslagsverket.fi/bin/view/Uppslagsverket/DahlstroemSvante?template=highlightsearch&search=Dahlstr%F6m,%20Svante>, seen 1.2.2013.

<sup>97</sup> Turku, ÅAL, Department for Manuscripts and Pictures, Svante Dahlström's Letters 12. Letters to Svante Dahlström Hornborg – Knoellinger, Postcard from Gunvor Kerkkonen to Svante Dahlström 6.3.1945: 'Medeltiden har blivit särskilt aktuell nu'.

Federation of Finnish Learned Societies, and later on she worked as librarian at the Swedish-speaking university for economic studies, Svenska Handelshögskolan.<sup>98</sup> In the 1950s, along with other Finnish scholars, she participated in the Nordic project to compile an encyclopedia of cultural history in addition to her full-time work as a librarian. In 1962, she lost the competition for the chair of *Historia* (History, Swedish-speaking chair) at the University of Helsinki to PhD, medievalist Jarl Gallén (1908–1990), as she was ranked third of the candidates. However, she earned the personal title of professor in 1968.<sup>99</sup>

### Concluding Remarks

Both Hausen and Kerkkonen are considered as pioneers in their fields, and even though their research has shortcomings according to present standards, their works still need to be taken into account when studying the Middle Ages in Finland or Cistercian land ownership. It is obvious that Hausen had an interest in Estonia, although it is not very present in his published works. The work of gathering the sources for Finlands medeltidsurkunder (published from 1916 onwards) also took him to the Baltic archives, and hence he could efficiently use his knowledge and his network to help the younger scholar Kerkkonen in the autumn of his years. When he passed away, Kerkkonen found she could write to another authority, Rolf Pipping in Turku. The letters to him also seem very fruitful in shedding interesting light on her relatively long process with the thesis.

Mervi Kaarninen has stated that Finnish female historians between 1940 and 1970 published much of their work and became docents, but had difficulties in getting chairs at the universities. Because they generally earned their dissertations at a late age, in their 40s, their time effectively ran out. This was the case also with Kerkkonen, who worked in archives and libraries and put her family first and foremost.<sup>100</sup> Compared to Sisko Vilkama (1893–1983), who, according to Mervi Kaarninen, worked far from the *universitas* and received support in the form of letters from her supervisor at the university in the 1930s,<sup>101</sup> Gunvor Kerkkonen seemed to be supported by her professor at Åbo Akademi, Pipping, in the 1940s. However, earlier in the process Hausen clearly served as her mentor outside the university.

The main aim of this paper was to give a glimpse of a historian's process of completing her PhD thesis in Finland during the Interwar period. The letters from Kerkkonen are unique, but could still be considered as an example of a younger scholar in need of advice and guidance by elder colleagues outside a formal process. It seems that the fact that the process was rather slow was also due to Kerkkonen's full-time work in archives and libraries. There is no sign of Kerkkonen having lacked support from her husband. In fact, their daughter says that Martti very much supported his wife in her research process. The fact that he also traveled with her to Tallinn in 1937 supports this statement. Kerkkonen asked for advice regarding the substance of her studies, but also needed help with languages (both reading Low German and Latin, and writing the thesis itself in Swedish). She seemed very grateful for the advice and material that Hausen and

<sup>98</sup> Fellman 2009, 191.

<sup>99</sup> Kaarninen 2005b, 307–308; Fellman 2009, 191. The presentations of the candidates for the chair were published in *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja* 1965.

<sup>100</sup> Kaarninen 2005b, 320.

<sup>101</sup> Kaarninen 2005a, 263–264.

later Pipping could give her. She also used them to get feedback on her manuscript in the process of writing, which seemed to be very important to her. Pipping also helped her with advice during later phases in her career.

Mervi Kaarninen observes that the wars themselves did not diminish women's possibilities of getting university degrees and studying, but with the men at the front, it did not allow women more advantages either. In fact, fewer women completed their PhD dissertations in 1940–45 than in the previous five years.<sup>102</sup> Kaarninen does not mention the possible support of a husband, at least for her research subject Vilkama (quite the opposite), nor what a husband and colleague could possibly offer a female historian. The somewhat elder historian Sisko Vilkama was married to an officer, and she herself also belonged to the upper class by birth. She had five children who took a lot of her time. A passion for research still made Vilkama struggle to take time to work.<sup>103</sup> In a sense, this also seems to be the case with Gunvor Kerkkonen: she sat with her typewriter on her lap whenever she had a free moment. Kaarninen does not say if Vilkama had maids to help her run the household. At least, this was the case with Kerkkonen. As I mentioned, Gunvor was also supported by her husband and colleague, Martti Kerkkonen, and also her brother, Håkon Holmberg (1898–1976) is mentioned as a helping hand in the letters. In Martti's letters to his mother, some details indicate that the couple visited the archives together regularly and their children had a nurse, such as in 1940, when Martti had returned from the Winter War. It was a silent time in the archives, he states, because much of the material was evacuated from Helsinki.<sup>104</sup> As the children were sent away from the war in Finland to Sweden in 1944, Gunvor also got more time to finish her dissertation manuscript, in addition to her regular work.

The divided reception of the thesis may reflect the political dichotomy of the time, namely the struggle of the relations between the Swedish and Finnish languages. In the future, Kerkkonen's work should be brought more fully into context with that of others in the field, including her husband, than has been possible within the confines of this article. The fact that neither Hausen nor Kerkkonen have proper biographies is also a problem that should be solved in future research. In the letters Kerkkonen asked for help and received it, and she was also given contacts in Tallinn. More focus on the researchers' networks in future articles could also shed some light on how studies were done in practice and in thought and how the materials used by the scholars, such as photos, moved from one person to another; in other words, how ideas actually spread outside references to published works.

In her scholarly work, Kerkkonen returned several times to questions related to the burghers of Tallinn, the land ownership in medieval Uusimaa, trade between Tallinn and the south of Finland, and similar subjects.<sup>105</sup> General research interest in the land ownership of Padise monastery has been extensive, and the question has evidently been closely tied with interest in medieval conditions in Finland generally and thus connected to a need for a national narrative that could serve nation-building. In most recent research, co-operation

<sup>102</sup> Mervi Kaarninen, 'Yliopisto sodassa – Opiskelua ja tutkimusta rintamalla ja kotirintamalla', Marjatta Hietala ed., *Tutkijat ja sota. Suomalaisten tutkijoiden kontakteja ja kohtaloita toisen maailman sodan aikana* (Historiallinen arkisto 121), SKS: Helsinki 2006, 142–235, esp. 218–229.

<sup>103</sup> Kaarninen 2005a, 260–261.

<sup>104</sup> Helsinki, NA, Martti Kerkkonen's archive, M. Kerkkonen to A. Kerkkonen 11.6.1940; 10.8.1940.

<sup>105</sup> For comments on Kerkkonen's work, see Salminen 2012, 183–187, 210, 231.

between Estonian and Finnish scholars has resulted in other contexts for discussing Padise and Finland. There is more interest in the conditions of the peasantry, since new results in the archaeology of medieval countryside have changed scholarly viewpoints.<sup>106</sup> But there are further facets to the history of research and interest in Padise. Kerkkonen's influence and research should be compared with other earlier and later scholars, towards a broader background, as I hope to have shown in this article and hope to carry out in further studies. As a detailed study, this article sheds some light on the history of academic practice in Finnish medieval studies.

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<sup>106</sup> Russow 2012.