

Turning Points in Baltic and Central East European Food History – Knowledge, Consumption, and Production in Changing Environments

Institute of History of Tallinn University

Tallinn, Rütli Street 10, auditorium 1

29th–30th August, 2012

The first international conference of the Estonian research project, Baltic Food History, is supported by the tandem cooperation for the advancement of environmental history in Eastern European and Baltic Studies, between KAJAK (Centre for Environmental History, Tallinn) and the Herder Institute in Marburg/Germany.

"Environmental history begins in the belly" (Donald Worster)

Food links people to their environments in the most direct way. Food history is therefore a central part of environmental history, linking external factors such as climate, soil, economy, and politics with the intimate environment of the body itself. (Trans-)cultural food-knowledge, production and consumption mutually shape each other in a constant process of transformation.

Together with global changes (climate change, colonialism, industrialisation etc.), the conference will focus in particular on the specific regional characteristics of the Baltic countries and Central East Europe. This is all the more necessary since, despite the complex inter-ethnic composition, class structures and trade relations in the Baltic area and Poland, there have only been a few comparative studies made of the historical and trans-cultural food culture of the region which draw upon the latest research in this field. The main focus of this international and interdisciplinary conference will be upon the continuities and discontinuities in Baltic food history and in contemporary Baltic food studies:

Possible topics are:

- Knowledge – Knowledge of food and food-cultures between cultural contact and the demarcation of boundaries
- Production – Food as an economic and political resource
- Exchange – Import and export of foodstuffs, transfer of knowledge, techniques and practices
- Consumption and self-sufficiency

This conference constitutes the first in a small series of conferences on environmental history which are being organised in cooperation with the Herder Institute in Marburg and the Institute of History, Tallinn University. The aim of this series is, from a comparative perspective, to reach an appraisal of the state of current research on the environmental history

of the Baltic region and Central Eastern Europe, and to draw impulses from this for further research. We therefore also welcome topics whose focus lies beyond the actual region itself, but which can still offer an important methodological contribution.

We will invite up to 15 academics to the conference. Presentations should be no longer than 20 minutes in length. Young academics are encouraged to present their research projects in poster presentations of around 10 minutes in length.

The language of the conference will be English, but presentations may also be made in German. The organisers will cover the costs of accommodation in Tallinn and if necessary a proportional takeover of the travel costs after (please contact the organizers before).

Please send your abstracts (max. 500 words) to:

- Heidi Hein-Kircher (heidi.hein-kircher@herder-institut.de) and
- Ulrike Plath (ulrike@utkk.ee).

The deadline for applications is April 15th 2012.