

CULTURAL TREASURE HUNT

Leonardo da Vinci project (2010-2012)

MATERIALS FOR DIGITAL GAME

Tallinn: Old Town Legends

The hundreds of years of its colorful history have given Tallinn numerous stories, legends and myths about different things in and around town. Legends about certain places, about certain aspects in history. And for sure we cannot even imagine, what kind of stories the medieval walls in Tallinn Old Town would tell us, if just they could talk. Here are some of the most famous legends and myths about Tallinn.

Old Thomas, the town's favourite guard

Back in the days of yore, an archery contest was held each spring to see who could shoot a wooden parrot off the top of a high pole. It was a serious annual tradition, reserved exclusively for the men of noble families. One year, so the legend goes, none of the contestants was able to hit the target. A plucky boy called Thomas was in the crowd. He was from a poor family, but had learned archery from a young age. Urged on by his friends, he gave it a shot, hit the parrot, and immediately got into trouble. But instead of having his ears boxed as his mother expected, he was made an apprentice guard. Thomas eventually became an expert soldier, performing many heroic deeds during the Livonian War and serving with distinction to a ripe old age. Years later locals noticed that Town Hall's weather vane, which is shaped like a soldier with a bushy moustache, looked a lot like their hero guard and started calling it Old Thomas in his honour. Nowadays Old Thomas, as legend and weather vane, is a much loved symbol of Tallinn

The legend of St Olav's Church

Legend says that once upon a time the nobles of Tallinn decided to build the tallest church in the world, in hopes of luring more merchants to the city. But where to find a master builder capable of carrying out such a task? Suddenly, a large, quiet stranger appeared out of nowhere and promised to build the church, but the payment he asked was more than the city could pay. The man was willing to forego payment, on just one condition - the city people had to guess his name.

The stranger worked fast and talked to no one. The church was nearly finished and the city fathers grew more anxious by the day. Finally, they sent a spy to sniff out the stranger's name. The spy found the builder's home, where a woman was singing a lullaby to a child: "Sleep, my baby, sleep, Olev will come home soon, with gold enough to buy the moon." Now the city people had the man's name! They called out to the builder, who was attaching a cross on the top of the steeple, "Olev, Olev, the cross is crooked!" Upon hearing this, Olev lost his balance and fell all the way down. Legend tells of a frog and a snake that crawled out of Olev's mouth as he lay there on the ground. Building the enormous structure had required the help of dark powers. Yet the builder's name was given to the church, named after St. Olav.

An additional intriguing detail about St. Olav's comes from the Chronicles of Russow. In 1547, a group

of acrobats visited Tallinn and tied a rope from the top of St. Olav's steeple to the city wall. They performed dizzying tightrope tricks, to the delight and dismay of the city folk.

Historians wrote that St. Olaf's Church or St. Olav's Church (in Estonian: *Oleviste kirik*) in Tallinn is dedicated to King Olaf II of Norway (a.k.a. Saint Olaf, 995-1030). Following several re-buildings, its overall height is now 123.7 meters.

Marzipan or Mart's Bread

Historians might tell you that marzipan, that sweet confection made from almonds and sugar, comes from Persia or Italy, but local legend insists the delicacy was invented right here at Tallinn's Town Hall Pharmacy (built in 1422). Long ago, so the story goes, a town alderman fell ill and summoned the apothecary to prescribe a cure. The expert apothecary knew an elaborate formula he was certain would work, but the alderman insisted that the apothecary test the medicine on himself. As fate would have it, the apothecary caught a nasty cold, so the preparation (and guinea pig) duty fell to his young apprentice, Mart. Being a clever lad, Mart replaced each bitter ingredient with a sweet one. Not only did the tasty remedy work, but the alderman loved it so much that he ordered it in large quantities and made it famous throughout Tallinn and beyond. The sweet bread-like confection became known as *Mardileib*, or Mart's bread.

Legend of Dannebrog

A well-known legend, both in Estonia and Denmark, holds that the Danish flag, the Dannebrog, originated on this very spot, in what's now called the Danish King's Garden. According to the story, Valdemar's forces were losing their battle with the Estonians when suddenly the skies opened and a red flag with a white cross floated down. Taking this as a holy sign, the Danes were spurred on to victory. There is monument of Dannebrog in the Danish King's Garden in Old Town in Tallinn.

The Devil's Wedding

This is a story of one house at Rataskaevu street whose former owner had wasted away his wealth and had no future. One night he became so desperate that he decided to take his life. At the fatal moment a stranger entered the room asking the broke landlords permission to celebrate a wedding on the top floor of his house the following night. In reward he promised the man all the riches but only on one condition: no one would eavesdrop on the feast otherwise it would cost the eavesdropper his life. The landlord agreed.

At the appointed time the carriages started arriving at the door and lights were lit up on the top floor window. Fabulous music sounded and the whole house shook as if under the weight of great number of dancers. When the clock struck one the whole apparition disappeared.

The landlord the day before head over ears in debt was expecting a huge sum of money. At the same time his butler died unexpectedly and before he died the butler revealed he had been eavesdropping on the devil's wedding.

At Rataskaevu number 16 there is nowadays a house with a painted window; the landlord had the corner room walled up forever and to hide the fact he had a proper window with curtains painted on the wall.



Who was Thomas?

1. Danish soldier.
2. Noble man.
3. A plucky boy.



What is overall height of St Olav's Church?

1. 150.5 meters.
2. 123.7 meters.
3. 112.4 meters.



Where was produced Mardileib or Mart's bread?

1. At Tallinn's Town Hall Pharmacy.
2. In the Town Hall.
3. In St Olav's Church.



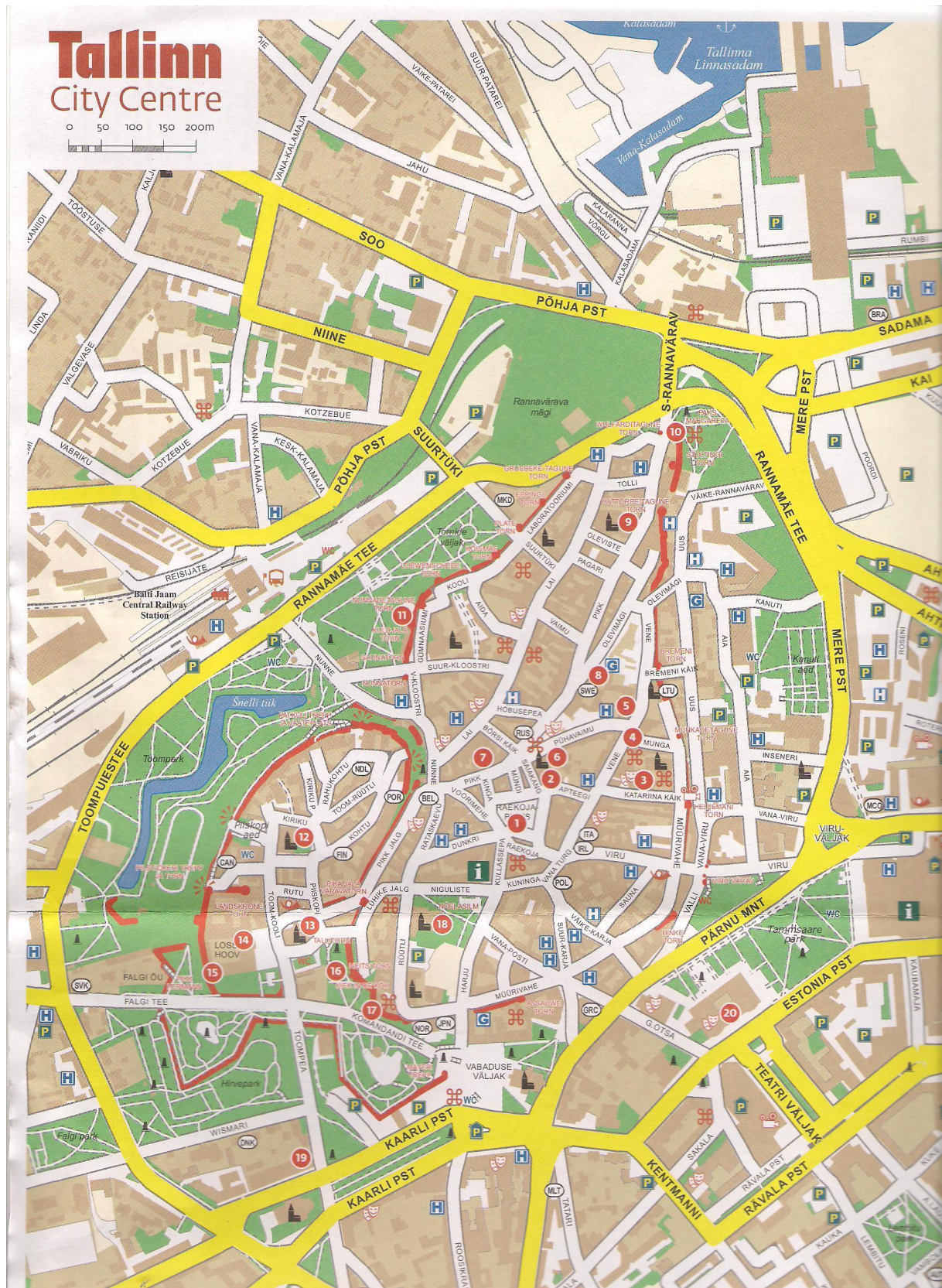
How Dannebrog looks like?

1. White flag with a red cross.
2. Red flag with a white cross.
3. White flag with a blue cross.



What is address of the Devil's Wedding in Tallinn?

1. At Rataskaevu number 16.
2. At Dunkri 6.
3. At Laboratooriumi 4.



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