

ABSTRACTS

Endre Bojtár

■ ***Baltic Studies***

Keywords: *Baltic studies, Latvia, Lithuania, comparative linguistics, history, Europe, Crusades, Reformation*

Why are Baltic nations worth studying? Linguistics, especially comparative Indo-German studies can hardly be conceived without some knowledge of the most archaic Indo-German languages, like Latvian and Lithuanian. As Antoine Meillet once stated, anybody interested in the language of our ancestors should listen to the speech of Lithuanian peasants. Similarly, many important historical phenomena like the Crusades or the Reformation cannot be understood without their Baltic ties.

Antoine Chalvin

■ ***Estonia: Home of the Singing People***

Keywords: *Baltic studies, Estonian culture, music, Sängerfest, laulurahvas, laulupidu*
Estonians call themselves a “singing people” (*laulurahvas*). Since 1869, this love for singing crystallizes regularly in the form of large outdoor concerts bringing together choirs from across the country. This tradition of “Feasts of Song” (*laulupidu*) has survived, through various compromises, all the changes of political regime, while reflecting the changes in the historical context. It accompanied the formation and evolution of Estonian national feeling and still plays a major role as a medium of identity, due to its popularity (every five years it brings together 250,000 people, about 20% of the population) and to the patriotic songs that occupy an important part in the program. Paradoxically, this major identity building event is not specifically Estonian: it was modeled on the *Sängerfeste* organized in German-speaking countries, it gives almost no room for traditional Estonian songs, and it also exists in very similar forms in Latvia and Lithuania.

Ferenc Csörtán

■ ***Nations and states between the Vistula and the Narva***

Keywords: *geopolitics, history, freedom, confinement Baltic studies, Vistula, Narva*
The history of the nations (Prussians, Germans, Lithuanians, Latvians, Danes and Swedes, Estonians, Germans, Belarusians, Jews, Voro, Seto) and states (Poland, Prussia, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the Polish-Lithuanian *Rzeczpospolita*, the Terra Mariana/Livonia, Curland, Sweden, Russia,

the Soviet Union, the Third Reich) once comprised between the Vistula and the Narva exemplifies the ways in which the geopolitical situation influences the destiny and the freedom of choice of any society.

László Fazakas

■ ***The Installation of Electricity in Cluj (1894–1906)***

Keywords: *public lighting, installation of electricity, Cluj, modernisation, urbanisation, political debates*

“More lighting” – based on this slogan in 1894 a civilian movement launched its activity to improve the conditions of public lighting and to urge the installation of electricity in Cluj. The political debates, assemblies and negotiations regarding this issue could be characterized as a nearly decade long fight with windmills, which fortunately culminated in a success. However, this long process had a major impact on the city, and profound changes were made. The city devoted an enormous amount of money to the introduction of electricity, more than five million crowns. The economic development stagnated due to the decade long inertia and incompetence of the city leaders, but other urbanization processes also accelerated after the introduction of electricity, in spite of the slow convergence the city of Cluj preserved its central role in Transylvania, and due to its established infrastructure became a truly great city.

Ilgvars Misaāns

■ ***Germans and Their Neighbors in Eastern Baltic Hansa Towns***

Keywords: *Baltic culture, Riga, Reval (Tallinn)*
The paper presents the ethnic aspects of the population of medieval Riga and Reval (since 1917: Tallinn). The ethnic and economic realities of these Hansa cities also exemplify the situation of other Hansa towns of historic Livonia: Dorpat/Tartu, Pernau/Pärnu, Wenden/Cesis, Wolmar/Valmiera etc., as well as in present-day Estonia and Latvia, or Viipuri/Vyborg (Finnish-Swedish town, currently situated in Russia). Founded mostly in the early 13th century, these towns had an important German population, mixed with indigenous Estonians, Latvians and immigrant Swedes (in Reval and Vyborg), or Russians (in Riga). In time, the Germans became the leaders in international commerce, obtaining stronger influence in local administration and over the guilds. Population in these towns spoke different languages – and experienced mutual cultural influences.

Tibor Pásztor

■ ***Baltic Royal Projects 1918***

Keywords: *World War I, German Empire, Baltic states, Lithuania, monarchy, princes*
As dated as it may sound, there were serious plans to install some new monarchies – including new dynasties – in the Baltic states during World War I. In the case of Lithuania the project was very far developed and more or less democratically legitimated. In case of the Baltic states the initiative to establish new monarchies has been supported mainly by the German Empire, which planned to install German princes as heads of so-called “independent” German satellite states. As history tells us, these German monarchic projects could not be realized. The reason for their failure is also a story of a network of inner-German rivalries.

György Schöpflin

■ ***Baltic States in Present-Day Europe***

Keywords: *global financial crisis, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Euro, politics*
Baltic states have recently begun to leave behind the economic crisis that had touched the whole globe, and their economies are currently growing. What is more, Estonians and Latvians have already adopted the Euro, and Lithuanians are currently preparing to adopt it as their currency. The adoption of the Euro has been bitterly paid for: in Latvia, public servants had their salaries reduced by 20–25%. Nowadays, the economic situation seems to improve. Politically, however, these three states are in a very different situation and cannot be reduced to a common denominator. There is a democratic party system and internal conflicts, but in the case of Lithuania and Estonia, the Russian presence does not represent such an important question.

Iván Miklós Szegeő

■ ***Estonians and Russians: The Past 125 Years***

Keywords: *Estonia, 20th century history, Germany, Russia (Soviet Union), Russification*
Estonia is located in the northernmost part of East-Central Europe. During the 20th century, the situation of this region was determined either by Germany or by Russia, viz. the Soviet Union. The lack of influence of the Atlantic powers created “Bloodlands” (Timothy Snyder) out of the Baltic states. In 1939/40, the three small Baltic states could not join their forces against Germany and its ally at the time, the Soviet Union. This essay tries to map the road which led to the independent Estonia. Independence has been reached two times (1920, 1991), but several waves of Russification interrupted the Estonian nation-building process. Russification was sometimes violent, but it was carried out by administrative and cultural/educational measures, too. As a result, there is now a significant non-Estonian, Russian-speaking minority in Estonia. The common history of Estonians and Russians is extraordinarily bloody, and it is marked by a series of tragedies, such as mass-killings, deportations, Russification and partisan war. However, there have also been moments of cooperation between the two nations. This essay deals with the latter, too. It evokes their cooperation in the early 1900s, when Estonian and Russian elites could find a common goal. In 1920, the Estonian “Realpolitik” of the Tartu Peace Treaty was very efficient. However, the currently dominant narratives do not deal with those happier memories of the past. The nation-building process has not been finished, and the Estonian “ethnic democracy” seriously affects the Russian minority, which is a sensitive issue for Moscow, too.

