

IN SEARCH FOR ALTERNATIVES TO GERMAN DOMINATION: THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE MARITIME PAST IN LATVIAN AND LITHUANIAN NATIONAL HISTORIOGRAPHY

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In the first half of the 20th century, all the states that emerged on the east coast of the Baltic gained access to the sea. Each tried to utilise this to strengthen their economies, but contemporaries had different views on their potential to do so. One example is that the Latvians were labelled as a maritime nation, while the Lithuanians were portrayed as a “continental” nation. This is sometimes still the case today. The research presented in this article shows that despite this judgement, the need to create images of the maritime past of the Latvian and Lithuanian nations manifested in both cases through the historiography that influenced modern national identities. The article focuses on the different representations of the maritime past used by the Latvian and Lithuanian national movements in the late 19th and the first half of the 20th century and examines the origins of these representations as well as the contexts in which they were instrumentalised. The research shows that although the images were different, Lithuanian and Latvian historians used similar strategies to create and disseminate them. These included retrospective identification with mediaeval and early modern societies and attempts to use images of the maritime past to find alternatives to German domination in the region.

Keywords: nationalism, history of historiography, modern national historical narratives, Latvian national movement, Lithuanian national movement

Introduction

Although Lithuanians and Latvians are two neighbouring Baltic nations, their modern identities differ fundamentally in some respects. One of these differences has to do with their historical imagination. Two arguments are often used to explain this. First, there was an old Lithuanian state (the Grand Duchy of Lithuania) in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period, but no “Latvian” political entity. Second, social modernisation (abolition of serfdom and other social changes) took place earlier in the ethnographic Latvian areas than in the future Lithuania.

Another deeply rooted belief is that Lithuanians were a landlocked nation and Latvians a maritime nation. In fact, it was mainly Lithuanian authors (e.g., Jonas Šliūpas or Kazys Pakštas)¹ who considered Lithuanians to be a landlocked nation. Although in 1921 Lithuania gained access to the Baltic Sea, they further referred to Lithuanians as a continental nation in comparison to other Baltic nations (especially the Latvians) both in the interwar period and later. There are various reasons for this. The historian Romualdas Adomavičius says: “The Baltic neighbours, whose political development followed a similar pattern in the interwar period, clearly outstripped Lithuania in terms of navigation. This gap can be explained by the geographical (much longer coastline), ethnic and economic proximity of the Estonian and Latvian nations to the sea.”² This argument seems to have taken root in current historiography. According to Klaus Richter, the maritime capabilities of Poland and Lithuania in the interwar period were viewed with “scepticism” by their contemporaries (foreigners), in contrast to Estonia and Latvia: “Scepticism towards maritime capability pertained particularly to Poland and Lithuania, unlike Estonia and Latvia, which were regarded as maritime states with naval traditions and populations skilled in naval professions.”³

The belief that Lithuanians were a continental nation and Latvians a maritime nation was not only a consequence of asynchronous social modernisation in the future Latvia and Lithuania. As we will see in this article, it was also influenced by the different elements of maritime history developed by Latvian and Lithuanian historians, which “programmed” the differences in the societies’ historical imaginations.

This article deals with the question of whether the popular opinion about these differences between Lithuanians and Latvians is actually justified. The aim

1 Šliūpas 1918, 128; Pakštas 1929, 103.

2 Adomavičius 2012, 16.

3 Richter 2020, 245.

is to show that Lithuanians and Latvians had much in common in the development of elements of maritime history in their early national historiographies, as they pursued the same goal – to oust the Germans.

The article is divided into four sections. They address four objectives of the article: 1) to examine the differences between Latvian and Lithuanian anti-German attitudes; 2) to compare the reflection of anti-German sentiment in Latvian and Lithuanian national historiography; 3) to examine why Latvians and Lithuanians used different maritime elements and how they were used as a means to displace the Germans; and 4) to examine the emergence of the maritime history elements in Latvian and Lithuanian national historiography, examining the hypothesis of the influence of German-speaking historiography. This is the hypothesis that Latvian and Lithuanian national historiographies were influenced by German-writing authors, from whom they “borrowed” some elements, adapted and remodelled them according to their needs, or simply formed an antithesis to them (e.g., to the idea of the “German Hansa”, and thus to the history of the German colonial past).

In the Baltic Sea region, historians have paid some attention to what can be relatively referred to as the invention of the maritime pasts of nations. For example, there have been research on how the past of the Hanseatic League was used to construct the image of the German Empire as a power with a maritime colonial past.⁴ There are also studies on the concept of the “intermarium state” in Polish mental maps.⁵ It can be said that these studies have partly inspired the comparative approach shown in this article to the elements of maritime history that dominated Latvian and Lithuanian historiography. Especially since neither modern Latvian nor Lithuanian historiography has examined this topic separately. Of the Lithuanian historians, only Vasilijus Safronovas has dealt with it in a fragmentary way.⁶

The article aims to show how and why the emphasis on the sea in national historiographies has become an important factor in the formation of modern Lithuanian and Latvian ethnic identity. At the same time, this research is inspired by another question: why, although both nations have access to the sea, Latvians tend to perceive themselves as a maritime nation more than Lithuanians do.

4 Rūger 2007, 154–159.

5 Grzechnik 2014, 81–96.

6 Safronovas 2016, 299–300; Safronovas 2015, 104–106.

On the differences between Latvians and Lithuanians with regard to anti-German attitudes

The expansion of the Teutonic Order into the south-eastern Baltic region in the 13th century changed the development of the prehistoric Baltic societies. Although Lithuania emerged as a state in the Middle Ages and Latvia did not, most of the ethnographic territories inhabited by Latvians and Lithuanians (with the exception of Prussian Lithuania) fell to the Russian Empire at the end of the 18th century.

Under the rule of Tsarist Russia, Latvian and Lithuanian national movements emerged, which, although they formed at different times, had things in common. Both praised their prehistoric and pre-Christian past, condemned “German” military and political expansion and the forced conversion to Christianity, rejected serfdom and embraced “peasant” culture. Although both presented themselves as “oppressed nations”, the Latvian national movement, unlike the Lithuanian one, also used “colonial” language: it portrayed the Germans as the “colonialists” and the Latvians as the “colonised” nation.⁷

The anti-German stance of the proponents of the Latvian and Lithuanian national movements also showed certain similarities. However, their contexts were different. In large parts of the future Latvia, the peasants were liberated earlier than in Lithuania: in the Province of Kurliandīia (Courland, Kurzeme) in 1817 and in the Province of Līfliandīia (Livonia) in 1819. With the exception of the Province of Suwałki, this did not happen in the “Lithuanian” provinces until 1861, as well as in Latgale (eastern part of the future Latvia, part of the Province of Vitebsk in the 19th century). The different conditions under which serfdom was abolished and the earlier modernisation of society contributed to the earlier and more active spread of anti-German attitudes in Latvian society than in Lithuanian society. As a result of the abolition of serfdom, the Latvian national movement was directed against the privileged minority of Baltic Germans who dominated the peasant majority. In addition, secular ideologies destroyed the traditional order that had entrenched the exclusion of non-Germans. The territory of the future Latvia was heavily industrialised and urbanised in the 19th century, whereas the future Lithuania was not.⁸

7 Zālītis 1932, 27; Bračs, Veinbergs 1934, 13; Birkerts 1920, 23–31.

8 Cf. John Hiden’s point: “Riga, that particularly favoured port, offered great attractions to foreign shippers, whose vessels not only could be used to bring in raw materials but could leave full again, this time with timber. On such a basis Riga became the biggest wood-export harbour in Europe and was duly rewarded by a doubling of its shipping trade between 1900 and 1913. Western interest and participation in

The differences in the policies of the Russian Empire were also important. In the Baltic provinces (Pribaltiiskii krai), the Tsarist policy implicitly promoted and tolerated the New Latvians (Young Latvians, *jaunlatvieši* in Latvian) movement⁹ as an instrument to oust the Baltic Germans from their position in the Baltic provinces.¹⁰ In the Northwestern region (Severo-zapadnyi krai), a similar policy encouraged anti-Polish sentiment among the Lithuanians; there the imperial authorities could not use hostility towards the Germans.

However, anti-German sentiment was an important factor in nation-building for both the Latvian and Lithuanian national movements. Only in the case of the Latvians was it more strongly influenced by socio-economic and socio-political reasons. In the Latvian national movement, this sentiment made sense because of the desire for the restoration of historical, but above all social justice. The Latvian national movement used anti-German sentiment to construct the identity of the modern Latvian nation.¹¹ This sentiment manifested itself primarily in the desire to create a counterweight to German cultural domination, and only secondarily as a rallying point for the nation. The anti-German sentiment can

Baltic transit trade was supported by the presence before the war of French, Dutch, Belgian, British and, above all, German capital. Such funds helped to make possible the concentration of industry and commerce in the major towns of what were then the Baltic provinces.” Hiden 1987, 66.

9 For more on the Latvian national movement (*jaunlatvieši*), see: Avotiņa 2003, 150. Social issues were more emphasised by the “New Current”. For more on this, see: Butulis, Zunda 2020, 60–63. Vita Zelče provides a slightly different perspective on the Latvian national movement in the 19th century and its subsequent impact. She argues that the formation of a national identity solved a social crisis (“anomie”) and facilitated the adaptation of the Latvian nation to modernity. According to her, national identity offered a much larger room for living and working, social and psychological comfort, and opportunities for community and individual development. Zelče 2018, 347–376.

10 Vanags 2018, 1156.

11 As Andrejs Plakans put it, “During the ‘national awakening’, a number of prominent Latvian nationalists (...) saw the imperial government as friendly to their cause and established links to the Slavophile movement in Russia proper. However, the Russification policy of the conservative Alexander III (tsar 1881–1894), continuing also under the last Tsar Nicholas II (1894–1917), persuaded most Latvian nationalists that the autocratic Russian crown was as much their ‘enemy’ as the Baltic German hegemon.” Plakans 2008, 9. Although Germans were not the only “enemy” to the Latvian national movement, anti-German sentiment played a more important role than anti-Tsarist sentiment in the construction of the modern Latvian ethnic identity and the creation of the Latvian national historical narrative. This could be explained by the fact that the German factor played a much longer and stronger role in the historical development of the Latvian nation than the Russian imperial factor, and was apparently perceived as more “negative” (a greater evil).

be interpreted as an attempt to improve the position of Latvians. In the Latvian national historical narrative, the Germans were the “enemy” of the Latvians because they had conquered, “subjugated”, and “colonised” them in the Middle Ages. As Andrejs Plakans wrote, “a ‘popular’ narrative of the Latvian past, accumulating in the pseudo-historical writings of Latvian nationalist activists, was constructing a long-term story about the centuries-long travails of the Latvian *tauta* (Engl. nation) that, according to this version, had been blocked from normal historical nation development by the arrival in the 13th century of German merchants and crusaders who in due course established themselves as regional overlords.”¹²

This interpretation was only partially suitable for the Lithuanian national movement, because, in the Middle Ages, the “Germans” conquered old Prussia, but not the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The Baltic German barons had an academic and cultural monopoly in the Baltic provinces of the Russian Empire.¹³ In the Northwestern region of Russia, the Germans had no such monopoly, but they ruled East Prussia and the Lithuanian-speaking part of it, Prussian Lithuania. It was because of the desire to shed light on Lithuanian–German relations in Prussia that the anti-German sentiment was also of some importance for the Lithuanian national movement, although not to the same extent as for the Latvian national movement. Even though Germans and Lithuanians lived side by side in Prussian Lithuania for centuries, Lithuanian nationalism emphasised that it was a relationship between the conquerors and the conquered nation. In the Lithuanian-speaking provinces of the Russian Empire, the historical relationship between Germans and Lithuanians gave less cause for anti-German sentiment.¹⁴ The Lithuanian national movement was primarily anti-Polish and anti-Tsarist, and only then anti-German. It began to create a modern Lithuanian ethnic identity in the 19th century (especially after the failure of the 1863 insurrection) by distancing itself from the Poles.¹⁵ Although the Lithuanian national movement attempted to involve the Polish-speaking Lithuanian nobility in the Lithuanian

12 Plakans 2017, 30.

13 According to Andrejs Plakans, until 1918, the history of the so-called Baltic provinces (Livlandiia, Kurlandiia, and Estlandiia) was written by Baltic German and, to a lesser extent, by tsarist Russian historians and commentators. Beginning in the 1860s, the Latvian “national revival” called for a history of Latvians written by Latvians, but this call was not answered until the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, when several histories (for example, by Jānis Krodziniēks and Kārlis Landers) portrayed the Latvians as a colonised and oppressed people. See: Plakans 1998, 545.

14 For more about the German–Lithuanian historical relations in Lithuania, see: Kaubrys, Tamošaitis 2013, 17–31, 246–253.

15 Jonas Šliūpas was one of the first to establishing this distancing. For more on this see: Vyšniauskas 2016.

nation-building endeavour,¹⁶ once the Lithuanian national movement was born it set a very clear objective from the outset to distance itself from the influence of Polish culture. The essence of this development was succinctly described by Alvydas Nikžentaitis: “In the formation of the modern Lithuanian nation, it was necessary to find the differences between Lithuanians and Poles.”¹⁷ The different visions of future Lithuanian and Polish states (Lithuanians did not accept a union with Poland, while Poles could not imagine a future Poland without Lithuania) further contributed to the deepening of this divide.¹⁸ These differences in opinion contributed to the emergence of the so-called “Vilnius question”.¹⁹

For the construction of the national past and the national territory, however, the Lithuanian national movement needed not only anti-Polish but also anti-German attitudes.²⁰ They were important in connection with the territorial claims to Memel/Klaipėda and Prussian Lithuania. In the 19th century, Latvians had geographical access to the sea and ports, while Lithuanians (with the exception of the inhabitants around Memel (Klaipėda) and the Palanga-Šventoji area) did not. The Latvian national movement was anti-German, but had no territorial claims to Germany. It had no need to unite its ethnographic territories in different empires. For the Lithuanian national movement, future territorial claims against Germany were the result of a desire to unite on an ethnographic basis what the movement eventually labelled Lithuania Minor (Mažoji Lietuva, i.e. the Lithuanian-speaking parts of East Prussia) and Lithuania Major (Didžioji Lietuva, i.e. the Lithuanian-speaking parts of Tsarist Russia).²¹ This aspiration was characteristic of the promoters of the Lithuanian national movement, who had gathered around the newspaper *Auszra* (1883–1886), as *Auszra* had already put forward the idea of Lithuanian unity.²² To achieve this, Lithuanian history writers had to create anti-German interpretations of the past. In order to distinguish the Prussian Lithuanians from Germans, the latter were portrayed negatively – as conquerors, Germanisers, murderers of Lithuanians, and plunderers of their country.²³

16 Mastianica 2016.

17 Nikžentaitis 2001, 63.

18 Nikžentaitis 2002, 9.

19 Mačiulis, Staliūnas 2015.

20 For more on the construction of the Lithuanian national territory, see: Staliūnas 2016, 189–238.

21 Safronovas 2012, 66–80.

22 Anon. (1883). *Isz Lietuvos. Auszra*, 8–10, pp. 289–290; Vėbra 1992, 93–94; Staliūnas 2013, 277–279.

23 For more on this, see: Safronovas 2016, 173–185.

Reflections of anti-German sentiments in Latvian and Lithuanian national historiography

Latvian historiography

Before the First World War, there were not only a few historians among Latvians, but many of them pursued different approaches to historical writing.²⁴ In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Latvian historians rivalled each other in terms of their theories and methodological and ideological approaches. According to Andrejs Plakans, Jānis Krodznieks (1851–1924), who is considered to be the “founder” of modern Latvian historiography, attempted to create an alternative to Baltic German historical narrative at the end of the 19th century. However, Krodznieks faced a challenge from the Marxist-inspired Kārlis Landers (1883–1937), who attempted to overthrow both Baltic German and early Latvian nationalist historical discourse.²⁵

Latvian national history (especially in its initial phase) was strongly influenced by the romanticised view of the oppressed Latvian nation that was characteristic of Baltic German historiography.²⁶ Nevertheless, it formed a counterpoint to the German-biased interpretation of Latvian national history. In this sense, it was anti-German. Latvians were already resisting the cultural hegemony and social privileges of the Baltic Germans in the second half of the 19th century.²⁷ However, the anti-German sentiment manifested itself most strongly in Latvian

24 According to Andrejs Plakans, “The development of Latvian historiography is conventionally divided into (1) a long period (roughly the 19th century) when research in and writing about the Latvian territories was accomplished largely by non-Latvians (Baltic Germans and Russians); (2) a shorter period (roughly the 1890s to the First World War), during which earlier descriptions were challenged by a small number of Latvia historians (e.g., Jānis Krodznieks), some of whom (e.g., Kārlis Landers) used Marxist derived historical materialistic interpretations.” Plakans 2008, 115. He adds that “In the history of Latvian-language historical writing, Landers stood out as the author of a very popular history of Latvia, published in three parts from 1908 to 1909. Written entirely from the historical materialist viewpoint, Landers’s history was one of the first book-length expositions of Latvian history written by a Latvian.” Plakans 2008, 142.

25 Plakans 2017, 30.

26 Andrejs Plakans writes that “Merkel, who in 1796 had authored a book entitled *Die Letten*, which described in detail the evils of Latvian serfdom as he saw them, contributed the notion of Latvians as an ancient people with a remarkable past, conquered in the 13th century and now unjustly subordinated to Baltic German overlords.” Plakans 2008, 186. According to Toms Ķencis, “Merkel was the first one to evoke an idyllic Golden Age before the 13th-century arrival of the Teutonic Order crusaders. (...) Merkel’s writings obtained their greatest effect after some delay, in the Young Latvian circles of the second half of the 19th century.” Ķencis 2018, 1161.

27 Vanags 2018, 1156.

historiography in the interwar period, when the state institutions for historical education were founded. In Latvian historiography, this sentiment was supported by the following elements: the arrival of the Livonian Brothers of the Sword in the Baltic lands, the founding of Riga and the conquest of the Daugava estuary, the wars of the Teutonic Order with the pre-Christian Baltic societies (including the Old Prussians and the Lithuanians), the conquest of Livonia, the forced conversion to Christianity, the loss of political freedom, the introduction and consolidation of feudalism, serfdom and oppression by the Baltic German landlords, the socio-political and socio-economic isolation of Germans and Latvians, the Germanisation of Latvians, the colonisation of Latvia, the national revival of the Latvians in the 19th century, etc.

Of course, the expression of anti-German sentiment in Latvian historiography depended on various political circumstances. The years after 1918 marked the beginning of the “institutionalisation” of this sentiment in Latvia, but its spread was particularly intensified after the coup of 1934. The politics of history of Kārlis Ulmanis from 1934 to 1940 was a continuation and intensification of the previous developments, and at the same time, a reaction to the growing threat to Latvia from Germany (also through its influence on the Germans in Latvia). The anti-German sentiment was connected with the policy of “Latvianisation” of Latvian history, i.e. the rejection of everything German and the desire to see history through a Latvian prism (“in the spirit of nationalism and truth”). Traditionally, anti-German sentiment was more widespread in Latvia than in Lithuania and therefore manifested itself more strongly in historiography and politics of history.

Although Latvian historians rejected the German point of view, they paradoxically had to rely not only on the historical sources collected by the Baltic Germans, but also on their interpretations of history, which viewed Latvian history from the perspective of a privileged minority of conquerors.²⁸ The Latvians countered the “colonial” attitude of the Baltic Germans with two things: 1) the historiographic interpretation of the Latvians as a “colonised” nation and 2) the interpretation of the Latvians as “colonialists”.²⁹ In order to counterbalance the portrayal

28 The *Liv-, Est- und Kurländisches Urkundenbuch* (Source Book of Livonia, Estonia, and Couronia), edited by a team led by Friedrich G. von Bunge in 15 volumes issued between 1853 and 1914, the *Monumenta Livoniae antiquae* (Monuments of Ancient Livonia), edited by Karl Eduard Napiersky in five volumes between 1835 and 1847 and the *Akten und Rezesse der livländischen Ständetage* (Sources and Recesses of the Livonia Estates Diets), in three volumes between 1907 and 1938. Some authors claim that they all “retain their importance for Latvian national history to this very day.” See: Berger, Conrad 2015, 169.

29 Birkerts 1920; Zālīte 1925, 361–419; Švābe 1949, 11–23.

of themselves as a non-privileged majority, the Latvian national movement attempted to change the balance of power so that the Latvians became the dominant group not only statistically, but also politically, socially, and culturally.

The efforts of Latvian historians have focussed on finding the “missing” Latvian state in the past.³⁰ Therefore, Latvian historians focussed on the reign of Jacob Kettler (1642–1682), Duke of Courland, and his Duchy of Courland which had colonies in West Africa and the Caribbean.³¹ They tried to argue that Latvians also played a role in European history.³² Latvian historians also paid much attention to ethnography, mythology, archaeology, hillforts, etc., i.e. the period before the arrival of the crusaders.³³ The anti-German sentiment of Latvians expressed itself in the desire to fundamentally reject the German interpretation of Latvian history and to present their own Latvian alternative. Latvian historians presented the history of the Livonian branch of the Teutonic Order, the periods of dependence on the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the Commonwealth of Two Nations, Sweden and Russia from a Latvian perspective and combined them into the narrative of Latvian history.³⁴

30 “At an official level the spirit of nationalism mentioned above was explained as the duty of historians to demonstrate a continuity of the Latvian nation as if it had prevailed since the 13th century in order to maintain legitimacy of the present authoritarian Latvian state in general and its political system in particular.” Mintauris 2011, 98.

31 According to Mārtiņš Mintauris, the Duchy of Courland was a favourite research topic of that time, “it was yet another way for the authoritarian regime to gain a kind of historical substantiation by using associations with the idealized image of Duke Jacob Kettler (1610–1682) compared to the one of Ulmanis as the new *pater patriae*.” Mintauris 2011, 101.

32 “In 1923, Tentelis published a declaration considering ‘the nearest tasks for Latvian historians’ requesting a comprehensive approach of history while placing an emphasis on themes and subjects connected in particular to the Latvians and their historical impact seen in the European context.” Mintauris 2011, 98.

33 Ģintars 1939; Šmits 1926; Balodis, Tentelis 1938; Brastinš 1926.

34 For example, at the end of his textbook, Teodors Zeiferts gives a list of the “Dukes of Courland, Lithuanian–Polish kings; the chief rulers of Vidzeme, Swedish kings; chief rulers of Vidzeme, Russian emperors; and the chief rulers of Vidzeme, Kurzeme, and Latgale”. See: Zeiferts 1927, 62–63. The chronological division of another textbook is also a typical example of the construction of Latvian history by integrating into it “non-Latvian” periods: Prehistory: 1) Stone Age; 2) Bronze Age; 3) Late Iron Age; 4) Early Iron Age (all four periods of prehistory are given as 1000 BC – 1184 AD). History: 5) the era of the colonisation and conquest of Latvia (1184–1290); 6) the time of the Teutonic Order (1290–1561); 7) the Polish period in Vidzeme and Latgale (1561–1629); 8) the Swedish period in Vidzeme (1629–1710); 9) the Polish period in Latgale (1629–1772); 10) the Ducal Age in Courland (1561–1795); 11) the Russian period, divided into the first period 1710–1818/1819 and the second period 1818/1819–1917; 12) the establishment of Latvia as an independent state. 1918. See: Birkerts 1926, 9.

Lithuanian historiography

The outlines and direction of the development of Lithuanian national historiography were drawn by Simonas Daukantas (1793–1864). For a long time, this historiography did not go beyond the framework created by Daukantas. And when it did, it did not deviate too far from it. The historian Aurelijus Gieda says that in the period from Daukantas to Jonas Mačiulis-Maironis (1862–1932), “broader works of history in Lithuanian were still a rarity”.³⁵ Even in the inter-war period, the number of Lithuanian historians did not exceed 60, but only 43 (71.6%) of them can be categorised as “real” historians. At that time, socially active people (priests, politicians, teachers, etc.) were still writing about history.³⁶ Lawyers, economists, etc. also dealt with history.³⁷ Against this background, it is not surprising that a deviation from the framework created by Daukantas only became apparent in the 1930s.³⁸

Daukantas can also be seen as the pioneer of anti-German sentiment in Lithuanian-language historiography. Before Daukantas, there was no need to construct anti-German images. For example, the 1410 Battle of Žalgiris (Tannenberg, Grunwald), an important site of memory in the culture of ancient Lithuania, was almost forgotten and irrelevant in the 17th and 18th centuries (and not only in Lithuania). However, the ideology of nationalism has led to the need to glorify some of the long-forgotten events of the past. Thus, the Battle of Žalgiris was “re-remembered” in the context of the battles against the Teutonic Order, along with other anti-German images.³⁹ The most important historical actor against whom anti-German sentiment was directed was the Teutonic Order, as it had been a bitter enemy, aggressor of the Lithuanians. Among modern Lithuanian historians, Daukantas was the first to portray the Order in a negative light (though not without some exceptions). The protagonists of the Lithuanian national movement, Jonas Šliūpas (1861–1944) and Jonas Basanavičius (1851–1927), later took up Daukantas’ ideas (and, at the same time, the anti-German sentiment) and developed them further.

Lithuanian historiography emphasised the following anti-German elements: the relations and wars between the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Teutonic Knights, the conquest of Old Prussia, the Battle of Žalgiris, the mediaeval political struggles over Klaipėda and Žemaitija (Samogitia), the loss of access to the Baltic

35 Gieda 2017, 53.

36 Selenis 2007, 26.

37 Ibid., 27.

38 Bumblauskas 2008, 24.

39 Mačiulis, Petrauskas, Staliūnas 2012, 33–73.

Sea, Germanisation and colonisation.⁴⁰ When Klaipėda became part of Lithuania in 1923, historians emphasised everything that had to do with the historical relations between Germans and Lithuanians in the Klaipėda region. They usually perceived the Order as an “external” enemy. It was identified with the perennial German expansion from the Middle Ages to the 20th century.

The inclusion of the annexed Klaipėda region into the Lithuanian state, which had yet to be integrated, meant that the tensions in this region and the dynamics of bilateral Lithuanian–German relations further fuelled anti-German sentiment in Lithuania. Its intensification and subsidence can be divided into two periods: the “calmer” decade of the 1920s and the more active period of 1933–1935. As Nikžentaitis has noted, during this period, “the previously partially positive image of Germans in Lithuanian society (...) took on many negative characteristics.”⁴¹ However, the Lithuanians needed Germany as a geopolitical counterweight against Poland, so anti-German sentiment had its limits. It was only when there was a risk of losing Klaipėda that anti-German sentiment intensified. But after 1936, when the geopolitical context changed and German influence grew, it subsided again: Lithuania did not want to spoil its relations with Germany. Lithuanian anti-German sentiment was less consistent and less intense than that of the Latvians, because in the interwar period the Poles were a greater enemy for the Lithuanians than the Germans. For this reason, Lithuanian history writers adopted a rather defensive, polemical stance in the years 1933–1935; they tried to counter the revisionist German historiography of the time.⁴² The aim of Lithuanian historiography at the time was to defend Lithuanian sovereignty in the Klaipėda region. German influence was to be driven out of the Klaipėda region rather than of Lithuania as a whole. However, this was problematic because Germany had many geopolitical levers at its disposal against Lithuania (especially economically). Lithuania had little to counter this. Unable to respond to the economic and political coercion, Lithuania focussed heavily on anti-German and anti-Nazi propaganda, aimed primarily at the Lithuanian audience. The main elements of this propaganda that supported anti-German sentiment – the history of the Teutonic Order (the past) and the problem of the Klaipėda region (the present) – were interconnected and harmonised.⁴³ The historians emphasised

40 Šapoka 1936, 39–47, 599–633; Sidzikauskas 1936; Daugirdaitė-Sruogienė 1938, 57–70, 97–100, 167–169, 197–198.

41 According to Alvydas Nikžentaitis, “An exception is the period from 1934 to 1936, when intense attempts were made to produce a negative image of Germany and the Germans.” See: Nikžentaitis 2001, 63.

42 Sidzikauskas 1935; Pakarklis 1935a; Pakarklis 1935b; Vileišis 1935.

43 Sužiedelis 1935, 137; Sidzikauskas 1935, 3; Sidzikauskas 1936, 4.

the rule of Grand Duke Vytautas of Lithuania (1392–1430) and his real or supposed “historical mistakes”, especially the Peace of Melno in 1422. They linked these historical mistakes and the need to correct them directly to the present. In this way, the historical storylines (the Lithuanian struggles against the Teutonic Order in the Middle Ages) had to be re-enacted in the 20th century.⁴⁴

Elements of maritime history as a means to counterbalance German influence

The history of the Duchy of Courland and its colonies in Latvian historical narrative

There was only one element of maritime history that stood out in the Latvian national historical narrative: the reference to the colonial experience of the Latvian nation. The content of these references was similar in the works of most Latvian historians: they recounted the most important facts of the history of the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia and its colonies during the reign of Duke Jacob Kettler. The duke’s achievements were presented, focussing on his successful and active economic and industrial activities. In addition to the shipyards, the Duke’s large military and merchant fleet was almost always mentioned. All this was presented as an integral part of the history of Kurzeme (Courland) and Latvia.⁴⁵

The symbolic attempt to create a counterweight to German influence manifested itself in this case in the reinterpretation or appropriation of the past of the Duchy of Courland. The following arguments show how and why this happened: 1) Courland was the most “Latvian” (or at least the most suitable for such a representation) territory of the former Livonian Confederation (the Catholic and Polish–Lithuanian influenced Latgale was not suitable for this). Moreover, in the Middle Ages, before the arrival of the crusaders, the Couronians living there were famous in the Baltic Sea for their shipping and maritime skills. The episode with the Jacob Kettler colonies thus played a symbolic role as a “bridge” in Latvian history between the Middle Ages and the 20th century. 2) The Duchy of Courland was a semi-sovereign territory, suggesting the existence of a separate “Latvian” state. 3) The fact that the Duchy of Courland had colonies in West

44 Tarvydas 1991 [1939], 329–330.

45 Svenne 1925, 43–44; Ventmalnieks [Ādolfs Ģērsons] 1923, 128–130; Švābe 1946, 10–11; Bundurs 1992; Upelnieks 1930; Juškēvičs 1931; Juškēvičs 1993 [1935]; Birkerts 1926, 113–116; Lange 1931, 48–51; Pommers 1930, 131–137; Grīns 1939, 142–149; Miķelsons 1948, 53–55; Rancāns 1924, 117–120; Aberbergs 1924, 89–92; Zeiferts 1928, 28–32; Zālītis 1932, 92–103; Švābe 1925, 193–199; Švābe 1949, 12–13.

Africa and the Caribbean could counter the stereotype of Latvians as a colonised people by suggesting that Latvians themselves were the colonialists. This was particularly ironic given that at the end of the 19th century only Baltic German intellectuals interpreted the terms “colony” and “colonial” in a positive sense when dealing with local history and their national identity; the representatives of the Latvian national movement used these terms with negative implications in their quest for the social and political emancipation of their people. 4) The Duchy of Courland was, according to some Latvian historians, a true maritime state with its own naval and merchant ships and colonies.⁴⁶ 5) The Duchy of Courland concluded trade treaties with France, Portugal, Spain, and England as well as neutrality treaties with Sweden, England, and Russia.⁴⁷ The policy of Duke Jacob Kettler was seen as an attempt to exploit the tensions between the interests of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth and those of Sweden and to present the Duchy of Courland as an equal participant in the great historical affairs of Europe. 6) The Duchy of Courland was Protestant, with the industrial and economic activities and trade of Duke Jacob Kettler, and was therefore a model for interwar Latvian society.

The only detail that was an obstacle in the attempts to appropriate the history of the Duchy of Courland was the fact that Courland was ruled by a German-speaking baron, Duke Jacob Kettler. But for some intellectuals close to Kārlis Ulmanis, the equation between Ulmanis and the 17th-century Duke of Courland seemed perfectly reasonable; they were not bothered by the Duke’s German

46 As Arveds Švābe put it, “the Western part [of Latvia] formed the Duchy of Courland, a nominal dependant of Poland. This Duchy had a proud history of its own. Under Duke Jacob (1632–1682) the Duchy experienced her heyday, for all practical purposes being an independent power. Who is to dominate the Baltic Sea? During that time the Duchy of Courland became one of the main sea powers of Europe, offering serious competition to Holland and Britain. The Duke’s fleet consisted of 44 men-of-war, 15 unarmed ships and 60 merchantmen; for those days a considerable sea power, when Sweden possessed only 30 ships and Denmark 20. The Duke was inspired by the doctrines of mercantilism and his State flourished. He built 70 factories, acquired ore-mines in Norway and two colonies – Gambia in Africa, and Tobago in the West Indies. In 1664, however, these were transferred to England. The Couronian mercantile fleet as well as her navy propagated Latvia’s fame far and wide.” See: Švābe 1946, 10. Arveds Švābe gave great weight to the Duchy of Courland: “In the so-called Livonian Wars, Western Latvia became an independent duchy (the Duchy of Courland), which under the influence of the doctrines of mercantilism developed into a colonial and Sea Power of considerable importance, but which, however, after the great Northern War, came into the sphere of influence of Russia.” Švābe 1946, 15.

47 Ģērmanis 1974, 145–147.

origins or the fact that the Latvians in his domains had the status of serfs.⁴⁸ In the interwar period, this was not a major obstacle, as one could always refer to the fact that ethnic Latvians made up the majority of the population of Courland in the 17th century.⁴⁹

The history of the Duchy of Courland and its colonies was a good counterweight to the various claims of German historiography. All this was related to the Latvian historians' desire to create an alternative to the "monopoly" of the interpretation of Latvian history offered by the Baltic Germans. In this way, they tried to show Latvians as active agents in history and to see in their past the elements of the existence of an independent state.

Compared to the colonial past, other elements of maritime history were rarely mentioned by Latvian historians. An exception is perhaps Roberts Malvess, who in his articles on the origins of seafaring and shipping from the Viking Age to the late 13th century described the influence of "Latvian", "Couronian", and "Estonian" seafarers on economic and political relations in the eastern Baltic. Although his articles were published during the Nazi occupation (when everyone had to interpret the "German factor" in Baltic history with caution), Malvess attempted to present the "heroic history of national shipping and seafaring" from the 9th to the mid-11th century.⁵⁰

Isolation from access to the sea in the Lithuanian historical narrative

There are no references to the nation's maritime colonial past in the Lithuanian national historical narrative. However, another element related to maritime history was developed, which told the story of the "ancient Lithuanians" who were isolated from access to the sea. The reasons for maintaining the different

48 Hanovs, Tēraudkalns 2012, 59.

49 The Lithuanian journalist Justas Paleckis wrote in his outline on modern Latvia: "Latvians had no influence in the governance of the Duchy of Courland. However, by accepting the notion that the nature of the state is not determined by the nationality of the ruler, nor by the ruling class, but by the people who are in the majority, it is now being viewed as a Latvian state in ethnic terms. The Latvian historian Assoc. Prof. Stepermanis says: "The most important classes in the duchy were the peasants and landlords – there were some 500,000 Latvian peasants and about 130 landlord families. There were also many Latvians among the townspeople, e.g. in Jelgava about 2,000 Latvians. This ethnic distribution of the population shows that the Duchy of Courland was a Latvian state in ethnic terms." See: Paleckis 1938, 60.

50 Roberts Malvess (1905–1982), who had worked as a research associate at the Institute of Latvian History since 1937, published several articles in the journal *Izglītības Mēnešraksts* in 1942. These publications were based on research that Malvess had already completed before 1940. Malvess 1942d, 69–71; Malvess 1942c, 163–167; Malvess 1942b, 196–197; Malvess 1942a, 256–260, 292–295, 323–325, 354–357.

elements of maritime history are those already mentioned: Latvians could identify with a maritime colonial past, while Lithuanians could not; Latvians had wide access to the sea, while Lithuanians had to make territorial claims either to the Latvians (for Palanga, Šventoji, or Liepāja) or to the Germans (for Klaipėda) to gain it. In this way, the specific historical, geographical, and geopolitical situation shaped the different relationships to the sea in the modern identities of the two nations.

Lithuanian authors used the story of being isolated from access to the sea as a means to symbolically overcome the Germans. This element of maritime history was used to: 1) justify Lithuanian territorial claims to Prussian Lithuania and, after 1919, to the Klaipėda region; 2) refute the German interpretation of the history of these regions by presenting an alternative Lithuanian interpretation (which was in fact heavily based on the German but pre-First World War interpretation⁵¹); 3) show that the negative influence of the Germans was responsible for the loss of the “seafaring skills” of the Lithuanian nation; 4) show what “historical mistakes” the Lithuanians had made (loss of access to the sea, failure to create a maritime state) and how to correct them (to gain access to the sea, to create a maritime state, to make Lithuanians a maritime nation).

The content of this element of maritime history was quite similar in most works, even if the interpretations of the individual authors may have differed. The element did not change or evolve significantly over the decades; its core remained unchanged. Only the time frame of the narrative somewhat changed.

An important thing to bear in mind is that Simonas Daukantas, who was the first to develop this element, did not refer to the Lithuanians of Mindaugas Lithuania, who had no access to the sea at that time, but to what he called the “ancient Lithuanians”. Daukantas applied this term to all pre-Christian Balts, including the Old Prussians and the Couronians. This led Daukantas to believe that the ancient Lithuanians had seafaring skills, but had lost them (along with access to the sea) due to German expansion and its long-lasting, centuries-long negative effects. By identifying the Lithuanians with the ancient Baltic societies related to them, Daukantas and other Lithuanian authors did much the same as the Latvians, but (unlike the Latvians) they identified themselves with the earlier

51 For example, the history teacher Povilas Pakarklis, in denying the German interpretation, relied on the arguments presented by German researchers before the First World War, and contrasted them with the “politicised” arguments presented by the post-First World War German researchers. Cf. Pakarklis 1935a; Pakarklis 1935b.

history of the inhabitants of Couronia (the future Courland), not with that of the 17th century.

This original idea developed by the Lithuanian authors was only slightly modified in the interwar period, when episodic attempts to write about the isolation of Lithuanians from access to the sea appeared repeatedly, also referring to the time of Grand Duke Vytautas or later periods. However, this element appeared most frequently in works dealing with the history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the 13th to 15th centuries (especially Grand Duke Vytautas' struggle with the Teutonic Order).⁵² Attempts to write about the isolation of Lithuanians from access to the sea in later times were very sporadic.

It is thus clear why, throughout the period from Daukantas in the mid-19th century to the Second World War, the main actors in this narrative remained "Germans" (a term that also referred to Germanic societies, the Teutonic Order, the Duchy of Prussia, the Hanseatic League, etc.) and "Lithuanians" (a term that was also mischievously projected into the past and also applied to the societies of old Prussia and Couronia).⁵³ The explanation that the former had "pushed away" the latter from the sea emphasised the negative long-term consequences of German expansion for the Lithuanian nation, which manifested themselves in all kinds of areas – in the economy, in the social order, in politics or even in cultural (civilisational) development.⁵⁴ Thus, the early 20th century was seen as a direct reflection of the past, in which the same actors, the same powers and the same historical forces were at work as had been in the past.⁵⁵

It has already been mentioned that the promotion of this narrative was mainly related to Lithuanian–German relations and the problems of the integration of the Klaipėda region. Therefore, spreading anti-German sentiment seemed completely legitimate. It was presented as a "correction of historical mistakes" and demanded that present-day Lithuania should return to the sea and defend its national interests in the Klaipėda region⁵⁶ against the revisionism that manifested itself in Germany and in the pro-German part of society in the Klaipėda region.⁵⁷ German policy towards Klaipėda was presented as the continuity of centuries-old

52 Šapoka 1935, 89–90; Daugirdaitė-Sruogienė 1938, 99–100; Šležas, Čiziūnas 1936, 92.

53 Remeika 1939, 138–140; Rimka 1925, 42–43; Pryšmantas 1938, 598–607.

54 Daukantas 1995, 519–520; Rimka 1925, 47; Remeika 1939, 138–140.

55 In the section "The Question of Klaipėda", Stanislovas Tarvydas wrote in his book: "And we must remember that the forces that were present 500 years ago are still at work today." Tarvydas 1991 [1939], 330.

56 Galvanauskas 1938, 47; Bendoravičius 1934, 553; Daumantas 1935, 224.

57 Cf. Safronovas 2010, 32–68.

attitudes.⁵⁸ In turn, Klaipėda (and the Nemunas estuary) was to be presented as an economically and geographically integral part of Lithuania, whose “natural” development had been disrupted by the “Germans” since the 13th century.⁵⁹

The origins of elements of maritime history

Latvian historiography

Latvian historians wrote separate books about the Duchy of Courland and its colonies,⁶⁰ and in general histories of Latvia, they almost always assigned them separate subsections or even sections.⁶¹

But it is an illusion to imagine that this was a politically motivated maritime history element or that it served the needs of Kārlis Ulmanis. This element existed long before Ulmanis came to power.⁶² During Ulmanis’ rule, hardly anything new was created in Latvian politics of history. Rather, it was a period of development and reinforcement of certain pre-existing elements.

Therefore, when it comes to explaining where this element of maritime history comes from, one must draw attention to the historiography of the Baltic Germans. Although Latvian historiography formed an opposition to it,⁶³ it could not exist without its contribution (for example, without the multi-volume historical sources collected and published by the Baltic Germans). This applies in particular to the early phase of Latvian historiography. The Latvian historians also adopted from the Baltic German authors the historical narrative element about the Duchy of Courland and its colonies during the reign of Duke

58 Tījūnēlis 1934, 729; Šležas 1932, 413; Pryšmantas 1925, 1.

59 Sidzikauskas 1935, 11–19; Remeika 1939, 131–132; Rimka 1922, 102; Safronovas 2015, 105–106.

60 Bundurs 1992; Upelnieks 1930; Juškēvičs 1931; Jānis Juškēvičs 1993 [1935].

61 Birkerts 1926, 113–116; Lange 1931, 48–51; Pommers 1930, 131–137; Grīns 1939, 142–149; Miķelsons 1948, 53–55; Rancāns 1924, 117–120; Aberbergs 1924, 89–92; Zeiferts 1928, 28–32; Zālītis 1932, 92–103; Švābe 1925, 193–199; Švābe 1949, 12–13.

62 As the publication dates of interwar Latvian historians’ works that include a maritime historical element about the Duchy of Courland and its colonies show, most of them appeared during the period of parliamentary democracy (before 1934): Bundurs 1992; Upelnieks 1930; Juškēvičs 1931; Juškēvičs 1993 [1935]; Birkerts 1926, 113–116; Lange 1931, 48–51; Pommers 1930, 131–137; Grīns 1939, 142–149; Rancāns 1924, 117–120; Aberbergs 1924, 89–92; Zeiferts 1928, 28–32; Zālītis 1932, 92–103.

63 As Mārtiņš Mintaura argues, “Latvian national historiography, emerged in the Republic of Latvia during the interwar period (1918–1940), positioning itself as clear opposite to the Baltic-German in many aspects, including the issues of cultural history.” Mintaura 2011, 92.

Jacob Kettler, as well as about the Courland's navy and industrial activities. They also adopted a positive interpretation of these activities (at least to a certain extent). The only change was that all this was told from the perspective of ethnic Latvians.

The argument of the adoption is mainly supported by the fact that the history of the Duchy of Courland and its colonies was described by both Latvian and Baltic German authors in a very similar form and with similar content. In terms of facts, Latvian historians did not say anything new; moreover, both Baltic and Latvian historians offered a positive view of colonial activities. This element of historical narrative appeared earlier in Baltic German historiography.⁶⁴ One of the first authors to write in Latvian about the Duchy of Courland and its colonies before the First World War was Kārlis Landers.⁶⁵ His book refers to the two-volume work *Curland unter den Herzögen* by Karl Wilhelm Kruse,⁶⁶ the first volume of which, published in 1833, also contains a chapter specifically focussed on the reign of Duke Jacob Kettler of Courland.⁶⁷

Lithuanian historiography

As mentioned above, the element of isolation of Lithuanians from access to the sea was created in Lithuanian national historiography by Simonas Daukantas. He essentially told the story of German expansion in the Middle Ages, but unlike those who had written about it in German before him (especially Prussian historians), he presented it not from the German, but from the Lithuanian side. In this sense, the Lithuanian isolation from access to the sea was the antithesis of the story of German colonisation of the Baltic region in the Middle Ages.

Daukantas' account of the maritime past of the "ancient Lithuanians" referred mainly to the old Prussians, whom Daukantas regarded as members of the same nation as the Lithuanians. Daukantas drew his knowledge of the importance of the sea for the old Prussians and for old Prussia from the 17th century historian of the Duchy of Prussia, Matthäus Praetorius (c. 1635–1704).⁶⁸ Vytautas

64 Richter 1858, 64–85; Engelhardt 1916, 30–33; Arbusow 1918, 234–246; Struck, Eulenberg 1916, [116]; Arbusow 1890, 161–165; Seraphim 1896, 518–553; Seraphim 1904, 99–139; Tornius 1918, 49–50; Tornius 1917, 14; Schiemann 1916, 16–19.

65 Landers 1908, 66–72.

66 Ibid., 64.

67 Cruse 1833, 136–191.

68 Pretorijus 2004, 403, 407.

Merkys has pointed to Praetorius as an author who influenced Daukantas⁶⁹, and Daukantas himself, on several occasions, in his own works refers to two works of Praetorius.⁷⁰

Another element of the narrative, the negative portrayal of the Teutonic Order, was taken by Daukantas from Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803), an author who was active in Königsberg, Riga, Weimar, and other German-speaking countries in the second half of the 18th century. His four-volume *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (Ideas for the Philosophy of the History of Mankind, 1784–1791), published during the Weimar period, contains a chapter entitled “The Finns, Latvians and Prussians”, which deals with the fate of the Lapps, Finns, Ingrians, Estonians, and Livs, among others. According to Herder, they were pushed northwards by the warlike Germans. “The fate of the peoples of the Baltic Sea is generally a sad page in the history of mankind,” he wrote.⁷¹ Herder also commented negatively on the activities of the Teutonic Order in the Baltic region and its wars with the old Prussians.⁷²

As far as the ideas about the benefits of the sea and trade are concerned, we can also recognise Herder’s influence on Daukantas here, but in this case he is more likely to be seen as a source of inspiration. Daukantas interpreted Herder’s ideas about the benefits of the sea and trade in his own way, creating original elements of Lithuanian maritime history. Herder only alluded to the Lithuanians and other Baltic peoples who suffered under German domination, but for Daukantas his view became the starting point.⁷³

Herder was not the only author of German-language historiography to influence Daukantas. Researchers also acknowledge the influence of the Prussian historian Johannes Voigt (1786–1863). According to Daukantas’ researcher, Roma Bončkutė,

69 According to the Lithuanian historian Vytautas Merkys, “Daukantas knew few Lithuanian sources. (...) For him, Lithuanian chronicles were compensated for by the late chronicle of Maciej Strykowski, the descriptions of Prussian Lithuania by Theodor Lepner, the researches by Matthäus Prätorius on the old Prussian and Lithuanian past, and the famous ‘History of Lithuania’ by Wojciech Kojalowicz”. See: Merkys 1995, 7.

70 Daukantas refers to Matthäus Prätorius’s *Orbis Gothicus* (Book 1, Oliva, 1688) and *Deliciae Prussicae oder preußische Schaubühne* (1690) in his work. Cf. Daukantas 1976, 733. It is not clear how Daukantas could have gained access to the work of Prätorius. Perhaps he could have had access to copies of the work, for example, through Ignacy Onacewicz, who worked in Königsberg. Alternatively, Daukantas may have re-quoted Prätorius from other authors that referred to his works.

71 Herder 2021, 274–275.

72 Ibid., 276–277, 471–472.

73 Ibid.

Voigt's most important work, the nine-volume *Geschichte Preußens* (History of Prussia) provided Daukantas with a reservoir of sea-related images, which he used to depict the importance of the sea in old Prussian and Lithuanian life.⁷⁴

Conclusions

The research presented in this article suggests that elements of maritime history in both Latvian and Lithuanian national historiography emerged under the influence of German-language Prussian and Baltic German historiography. However, Latvian and Lithuanian historians were influenced by them in different ways. Elements of maritime history emerged from their own interpretations of the statements of German-language Prussian and Baltic German historiography. Latvian authors took the story of the Duchy of Courland and its colonies during the reign of Duke Jacob Kettler directly from Baltic German historiography. This enabled them to modify the idea of the Latvians as a “colonised” people and to show that the Latvians also had their own colonies in the past. For his part, Daukantas, who introduced the element of isolation from access to the sea into Lithuanian national historiography, was inspired by some of Herder's ideas, but created this element of Lithuanian maritime history himself (such an element is not explicitly mentioned in Herder's writings). Daukantas adopted Herder's negative assessment of the Teutonic Order and the consequences of its activities for the fate of the peoples of the Baltic, but his interpretation was different.

The development of both elements in Latvian and Lithuanian national historiographies is important because it shows not only the efforts of these modern nations to create a counterweight to German domination, but also their efforts to build a relationship with the sea in the past. The choice of different elements was due to differences in historical development as well as differences in the challenges of the present: for the Latvian national movement, the Germans were the main enemy, while for the Lithuanians, anti-German sentiment was less important; the Latvians, unlike the Lithuanians, had no territorial claim to Germany. However, an important precondition for the emergence of both elements in Lithuanian and Latvian national historiography was the symbolic appropriation of the past: in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Lithuanians needed to convey a sense of connection with the societies of the western Balts (old Prussians, Couronians), and Latvians – with the history not only of the old Couronians, but also that of the 17th-century Duchy of Courland.

74 Bončkutė 2021, 275.

Returning to the stereotypical view of Latvians as a maritime nation and Lithuanians as a non-maritime nation, as discussed in the introduction, it can be argued that this view was influenced by the national historiographies of the two nations: Latvians portrayed themselves as the historically active participants in maritime communication, while Lithuanians portrayed themselves as victims who once possessed the skills of such communication but had lost them. However, the research also shows that this view of the Lithuanians and Latvians was in both cases a historiographic construct. The view that Latvians (as opposed to Lithuanians) are a maritime nation was invented by the Latvian authors themselves and established as an element of modern ethnic identity. The involvement of ethnic Latvians in maritime communication was greater than that of Lithuanians because ethnic Latvians moved from villages to towns earlier than Lithuanians; all major cities (with the exception of Daugavpils) in the ethnic Latvian area were seaports. Nevertheless, the Latvians (and later the Lithuanians) also had to create and instil maritime consciousness in the former peasant society and provide the necessary resources to support it. This explains why it was necessary not only for Lithuanian but also for Latvian historians to “invent” their nations’ maritime past.

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MEKLĒJOT ALTERNATĪVAS VĀCU KUNDZĪBAI: JŪRNICĪBAS PAGĀTNES KONSTRUĒŠANA LATVIEŠU UN LIETUVIEŠU NACIONĀLAJĀ HISTORIOGRĀFIJĀ

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Zinātniskās intereses: jūrniecības vēsture, nacionālisms, historiogrāfijas vēsture

20. gadsimta pirmajā pusē visas Baltijas jūras austrumu piekrastē dibinātās valstis ieguva piekļuvi jūrai. Katra no tām centās šo apstākli izmantot savas ekonomikas stiprināšanai, bet laikabiedriem bija atšķirīgi viedokļi par to potenciālu šajā ziņā. Piemēram, latvieši tika uzlūkoti kā jūrasbraucēji, bet lietuvieši – kā “kontinentāla” nācija. Dažreiz šādi uzskati joprojām tiek pausti arī mūsdienās. Pētījumā parādīts, ka, neskatoties uz šādiem spriedumiem, latviešu un lietuviešu nāciju nepieciešamība radīt sev jūrniecības pagātnes tēlus izpaudās historiogrāfijā, kas ietekmēja to mūsdienu nacionālās identitātes. Raksts pievēršas latviešu un lietuviešu nacionālo kustību izmantotajiem atšķirīgajiem jūrniecības pagātnes atspoguļojumiem 19. gadsimta nogalē un 20. gadsimta pirmajā pusē un analizē šo atspoguļojumu saknes, kā arī kontekstus, kuros tie tika izmantoti. Pētījumā parādīts, ka, lai gan abu nāciju pagātnes tēli bija atšķirīgi, lietuviešu un latviešu vēsturnieki lietoja līdzīgas stratēģijas to radišanā un izplatīšanā. To skaitā bija retrospektīva savas nācijas identificēšana ar viduslaiku un agro jauno laiku sabiedrībām un mēģinājumi izmantot jūrniecības pagātnes tēlus, lai rastu alternatīvas vācu kundzībai reģionā.

Atslēgas vārdi: nacionālisms, historiogrāfijas vēsture, mūsdienu nacionālie vēstures naratīvi, Latvijas nacionālā kustība, Lietuvas nacionālā kustība

Kopsavilkums

Mūsdienās gan lietuviešiem, gan latviešiem ir piekļuve Baltijas jūrai. Tomēr, tā kā lietuvieši nav iesaistījušies jūrniecības darījumos, dažreiz (pat lietuviešu autori) tos joprojām uzlūko kā kontinentālu nāciju pretstatā latviešiem, kuri vienmēr tiek uzskatīti par jūrniecības nāciju. Rakstā analizēta šo priekšstatu izcelsme un meklētas to saknes lietuviešu un latviešu nacionālajā historiogrāfijā. Parādīts, ka patiesībā arī latviešiem – ne mazākā mērā kā lietuviešiem – 19. gadsimtā nācās attīstīt pašiem savas attiecības ar jūru, un viens veids, kā to paveikt, bija izcelt savas “nācijas” jūrniecības aktivitātes pagātnē. Jūras atšķirīgo lomu mūsdienu lietuviešu un latviešu identitātē, iespējams, ir veicinājis

tas, ka nacionālās historiogrāfijas to darīja atšķirīgos veidos, kas savukārt izraisīja atšķirības arī to vēsturiskajā iztēlē.

Salīdzinot abas nacionālās historiogrāfijas 19. gadsimta nogalē un 20. gadsimta sākumā, raksts koncentrējas uz lietuviešu un latviešu vēsturnieku mēģinājumiem radīt zināmus jūrniecības vēstures elementus. Šie mēģinājumi tika veikti atkārtoti dažādos vēstures darbos, un bieži vien to saturs bija praktiski identisks. Taču latvieši un lietuvieši attīstīja atšķirīgus jūrniecības vēstures aspektus. Latviešiem vissvarīgākais tās aspekts bija Kurzemes hercogistes un tās koloniālo aktivitāšu vēsture hercoga Jēkaba Ketlera valdīšanas laikā (1642–1682). Lietuviešu autori visvairāk izvērsa aspektu par Rietumbaltijas cilšu (senprūšu un kuršu), kā arī lietuviešu vai Lietuvas dižkunigaitijas nošķiršanu no jūras. Abi šie elementi bija radušies jau 19. gadsimtā, taču Lietuvas un Latvijas nacionālajā historiogrāfijā (un līdz ar to arī nacionālajos vēstures naratīvos) tie iesakņojās tikai starpkaru posmā.

Abos gadījumos šo jūrniecības vēstures aspektu attīstību spēcīgi ietekmēja pretvācu noskaņojums, kas radās dažādu politisko un citāda rakstura mērķu vārdā. Latviešu gadījumā šie mērķi bija sociāli politiskā emancipācija un baltvācu ekonomiskās, kultūras un politiskās ietekmes pārvarēšana. Lietuviešu gadījumā pretvācu noskaņojumu radīja teritoriālās pretenzijas un vēlme iegūt piekļuvi jūrai (ko Lietuva ieguva tikai pēc Palangas un Sventājas pievienošanas 1921. gadā un Klaipēdas reģiona – 1923. gadā). Latvijas historiogrāfijā pretvācu noskaņojumam bija daudz lielāka loma, taču tas bija raksturīgs arī lietuviešiem. Latviešu autori izmantoja “koloniālo” diskursu, lai pavērstu pretējā virzienā baltvācu historiogrāfijas uzspiesto priekšstatu par latviešiem kā “kolonizēto” tautu un vāciešiem kā “kolonizētājiem” un parādītu, ka pagātnē paši latvieši ir iesaistījušies koloniālās aktivitātēs. Lietuviešu historiogrāfijai tas nebija raksturīgi. Taču arī tā attīstīja jūrniecības vēstures aspektus, lai sniegtu sabiedrībai alternatīvu uzskatam, ka vācu kundzība reģionā bija “dabiska”. Lai to panāktu, lietuviešu autoriem, līdzīgi kā viņu latviešu kolēģiem, nācās būvēt tiltus uz viduslaiku un agro jauno laiku sabiedrībām un politiskajiem veidojumiem. Identificējot latviešus ar Kurzemes hercogistes koloniālo vēsturi, viņi tika atainoti kā aktīvi dalībnieki jūrniecības sakaru tīklā un ne mazāk prasmīgi kā vācieši ne tikai jūrniecības, bet arī koloniālajās darbībās. Savukārt lietuviešiem tika piedāvāts identificēties ar aizvēsturiskajām baltu sabiedrībām (kuršiem, prūšiem utt.), kurus Simons Daukants (*Simonas Daukantas*) dēvēja par “senlietuviešiem”. Lietuviešiem tika stāstīts, ka šīs sabiedrības bija attīstījušas kuģniecības prasmes, taču viduslaikos “vācu” ekspansija bija atņēmusi viņiem iespējas aktīvi darboties jūrniecības sakaru tīklā.

Rakstā arī īpaši analizēti apstākļi, kādos latviešu un lietuviešu historiogrāfijā attīstījās abi jūrniecības vēstures aspekti. Šos aspektus, kas tika izmantoti pretvācu noskaņojuma uzturēšanai, latviešu un lietuviešu vēstures darbu autori paradokšālā kārtā aizņēmas no vācvalodīgās historiogrāfijas. Latviešu autoru gadījumā šī ietekme bija tieša, viņiem šo skatījumu nepastarpināti pārņēmot no baltvācu

historiogrāfijas un vienkārši apmainot vietām lomas. Lietuviešu gadījumā tika izmantotas Prūsijas historiogrāfijas idejas, tās interpretējot no jauna un pasniedzot no lietuviešu skatu punkta.

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