



Historiography of Latgale within the Context of Political and Ethnic History of the Region

A l e k s a n d r s I V A N O V S
Daugavpils University

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Conventionally, the concept of historiography is used to denote academic historical research, which is conducted by professional historians. However, a constituent part of historiography is knowledge of the past acquired by society. It means that historiography embraces collective representations and notions of historical reality that exist in social consciousness. Thus, in some respect, historiography forms a specific system. Its upper level embraces results of professional historical research that are represented in monographs, articles, dissertations, and other research papers, but the nether level consists of historical myths, stereotypes, bias pre-conceptions, evaluations, and interpretations of the historical past that are formed, borrowed, and adopted by society and/or by social (ethnic) groups¹. Between these two levels there are historical representations, which are reflected in essays and popular works written by amateurs (mainly non-professional historians), as well as by publicists and litterateurs who adapt professional historical discourse for common people interested in historical heritage of their country (see, e.g., S h m i d t 1997).

Actually, the structure of historiography is even more complicated since historical research is closely connected with political activities and political institutions, primarily – with State bodies. As a result, political institutions often use historiography as a specific tool solving political and ideological problems. In papers devoted to theoretical and methodological problems of historical research, scholars ascertain that as often as not historical research is extremely politicized since some historical issues cannot be politically and/or ideologically neutral; in addition, historical research is influenced by State policies, public opinion, historians' social and institutional status, etc. (P r o s t 1996; S t r o d s 1991, 3)².

¹ This theoretical approach is based on the author's interpretation of Benedetto Croce's ideas about the so-called contemporary history. See C r o c e 1923.

² Obviously, the dependence of historical research on policies should be evaluated negatively, because sometimes it finds expression, on the one hand, in excessive engagement in political activities and, on the other hand, in falsifications of historical past. In this connec-

The structure of historiography testifies that historical research performs two different functions. On the one hand, it provides reconstructions of the historical past; on the other hand, it directly influences, but sometimes distorts and deforms public opinion and social consciousness in order to achieve aims put forward by political regimes (A f a n a s ' e v 1996, 9; R o n i s 1995, 32). Historiography also shapes, transforms or supports definite notions concerning ethnic values, national historical heritage, political and social reality. It should be stressed that in historiographic discourse these notions about topical political and social issues are correlated with experience acquired by society in the course of political and ethnic history.

Some of the above-mentioned functions of historiography have been revealed in the monographs devoted to the problems of historical research in the Soviet Union (see, e.g., T i l l e t t 1969). However, theoretical approach to investigation of the social and political functions of historiography appears only in some papers. In this connection, the article written by Kenneth E Nyirady can be mentioned (N y i r a d y 1977). In this paper, the author proposes a thesis that historical research conducted in the Baltic States under the Soviet rule should be treated both as an instrument of political control over the Balts and as an ethnic identity *support factor*³ that balanced the efforts of the totalitarian regime in the Baltic region⁴. The thesis that historical research performs the above-mentioned functions has been confirmed in a number of articles dealing with the problems of the historiography of Latvia (see, e.g., I v a n o v s 2005, 2007, 2009, etc.) and Latgale⁵ (I v a n o v s 2006, 2008; I v a n o v s e t a l. 2003; I v a n o v s , Š t e i m a n s 1999, etc.) written by the author of this paper.

tion, it may be pointed out with assurance that to a certain extent politicization of historical research is inescapable, taking into consideration close interconnections of the past and the present, topicality of many research themes, conformity of research topics with the challenge of an epoch (C r o c e 1923; P r o s t 1996). On the other hand, the degree of politicization of historical research is determined by a political regime: under totalitarian regime, historical research openly serves State authorities and official ideology (A f a n a s ' e v 1996, 20–28); it was especially evident in Latvia under the Soviet rule (see I v a n o v s 2003^b). On the contrary, democracy makes possible for historians to evaluate historical past relatively freely and independently.

³ The *support factor* concept was framed by Edward Allworth (A l l w o r t h 1977). Based on this concept, a number of case studies dealing with the problems of ethnic identity in the Baltic region under the Soviet rule were made.

⁴ “Soviet Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian historians are responding significantly to what they perceive is their nationalities’ current status. Their tendency seems evident both through their selection and <...> interpretation of historical topics. As Baltic society continues to modernize, changing emphasis occurs among the various factors that serve as nationality supports. This movement has given historians changing roles to play as active supporters of Baltic culture <...> [T]he historical interests of a nationality could be considered part of the objective identity factor of cultural maintenance. Increase in emphasis upon this factor may result in the growth of a component of the regulatory factor of group pride <...>” (N y i r a d y 1977, 58).

⁵ Latgale is a historical region that is located in the Eastern part of Latvia.

Although the historiography of Latgale is considered an integral part of the historiography of Latvia, it has many specific features, which are determined by the historical peculiarities of the region as well as by political and ethnic factors that call forth such peculiarities (see in detail in S o m s , I v a n o v s 2002; I v a n o v s , S o m s 2008). Since the historiography of Latgale has always been focused on the historical peculiarities of the region, historical research establishes close and strong ties with the political and ethnic history of Latgale.

In order to reveal the connection of historical research with the ethnic and political history of Latgale, the stages of genesis and development of the modern historiography of Latgale should be described and evaluated along general lines. These stages can be correlated with the changes in the political history of the region, as well as with the stages of emergence, development, and consolidation of ethnic identities in the region. Therefore, this paper places special emphasis on the connection of the historiography of Latgale with different historiographic schools and *national* traditions in historical research, which represent different political powers and ethnic communities in this region⁶.

The modern historiography of Latgale has come to existence due to long-term interaction of different historiographic trends and national schools (traditions) in historical research. This fact once again approves a well-known thesis that historical research is “accumulative” by its nature, since it constantly accumulates facts and historical records that remain in scientific circulation. However, it is doubtful whether the present-day historiography of Latgale is a sum total of diverse fragments – descriptions (reconstructions) of historical facts, interpretations, approaches, concepts, etc. The emergence and development of the modern historiography of Latgale can be regarded as a process of historiographic synthesis of the above-mentioned fragments: some of them have been accepted, others rejected or revised. At the same time, all the fragments retain close connections with a definite historiographic trend – national tradition in historical research, which has brought them into scientific circulation. It means that the historiography of Latgale actually implies notions that have emerged within different ethnic communities, which, in their turn, are closely connected with certain political powers in the region⁷.

For a long while investigation of the history of Latgale was conducted within national historiographic traditions that provided an insight into the Latgalian past as if from outside; as a result, the history of Latgale was ‘incorporated’ into historical contexts of other political and cultural formations – the Russian Empire, Poland-Lithuania (*Rzeczpospolita*), the Soviet Union. Consequently, representations of

⁶ Involvement of different historiographic traditions and national schools in research of the history of Latgale determined another specific feature of the historiography of Latgale: on the one hand, the historiography of Latgale is considered as an integrated, complex phenomenon; on the other hand, the historiography of Latgale is seen as a manifold and even eclectic formation.

⁷ All in all, the patterns of ethnic relations in Latgale reflect the diversity of the history of the region, since every ethnic minority represents a particular historical period of Latgale.

historical data were subjected to priorities and historical (actually, historiographic) stereotypes that were characteristic of the historiographic schools of the above-mentioned states and political formations. Furthermore, in the works written by the representatives of different historiographic schools (with the exception of those written by some few researchers whose life and activities were closely connected with Latgale), the history of Latgalians – indigenous population of Latgale – was not in the focus of attention. It can be asserted that sometimes the history of Latgale was written in accordance with the guidelines drawn up by the conquerors or the representatives of the upper classes; therefore, the principle aim of historical research was to justify the alien domination in Latgale⁸.

The Russian historiography of the history of Latgale provides a striking example that illustrates this thesis (see in detail I v a n o v s et al. 2003, 69–102). An overall insight into this historiographic trend, as well as evaluation of its main tendencies and interpretations, testifies that the works written by Russian historians reveal a certain political trend aiming at justification of the incorporation of the Baltic region (including Latgale) into the Russian empire and exaggeration of ‘positive consequences’ of the Russian rule for the Baltic nations (P o č s, P o č a 1993, 12; Z e i l e 1996, 19; S t r o d s 1989, 15, 17). Although this political trend in historiography emerged in the 18th – 19th century, it took its roots in the medieval Russian historical thought (I v a n o v s et al. 2003, 36–44; Ivanovs 2002). In the 18th – 19th century, Russian historians just renewed some ideas and approaches that had been put forward by medieval Russian chroniclers. At the same time these ideas and approaches were partly revised in conformity with the spirit of the epoch and the demands of the historiography of positivism⁹.

All in all, this political trend received general recognition in the 19th century Russian historiography due to two reasons. Firstly, a historian always, without having a choice, fills a certain government and/or social order, i.e. serves his/her country, quests for historical arguments in order to justify or excuse policies implemented by a State. The dependence of historical research on State authorities became apparent in the first half of the 19th century, when historiography acquired an official status in the Russian empire (starting with Nikolai Karamzin); in the second half of the 19th century – beginning of the 20th century this dependence became even firmer. Secondly, historical research always preserves its national (even ethnic) nature, since it expresses common consciousness of a nation (see e.g. K o i a l o v i c h 1901). Hence, the political trend of the Russian historiography took roots in self-awareness of the Russians; in its turn, the Russian historiography purposefully influenced the Russians’ mentality. For that reason, Russian historians propagated the above-mentioned political ideas not only intentionally, but also unfeignedly; it seems it was their firm belief that their approaches and interpretations were comprehensively substantiated.

⁸ This idea was clearly formulated by Professor Kārlis Počs, see in I v a n o v s et al. 2003, 186–187.

⁹ The traces of positivism can be found in justification of territorial expansion of the Russian empire by means of arguments provided by the so-called geographical determinism.

Evaluating the role of the Russian historiography in the development of the Latgalian studies, we can state that there were some achievements in the fields of historical reconstruction and source studies due to the work done by unprofessional historians – researchers of local history, culture, and lore¹⁰. The Vitebsk Province Statistic Committee and its Secretaries – A. Sementovskii (1863–1880) and Aleksei Sapunov (1901–1907, 1913–1917) – coordinated their activities (Sapunov 1913, 4, 9). The scope of the Committee's research activities was extremely wide: statistics, archaeology, ethnography, geography, history, folklore, etc. To a certain extent, such manifold activities were indicative of dilettantish approach to investigation of different problems. On the other hand, research papers published by the Committee¹¹ laid the foundations of the modern historiography of Latgale. Consequently, the historiography of Latgale accumulated some concepts and stereotypes, which had been worked out by the Russian imperial (actually – national) historiography, and, at the same time, nonprofessional approach in the studies of local history and lore. Due to this heritage in the present-day historiography of Latgale the difference between professional and nonprofessional historical research in some cases does not exist.

Evaluation of the Polish historiography of Latgale is similar to that of the Russian imperial (national) historiography (see in detail Ivanovs et al. 2003, 103–141; Počs, Poča 1993; Zile 1996). Professor Kārlis Počs rather adequately evaluated the Polish historiography of Latgale and Polish authors' works about the history of Latgale: “<...> [Those papers], which directly or indirectly deal with the aspects of the history of Latgale, were written by aliens. <...> those researches, with some few exceptions, were conducted in order to depict activities of a respective <...> group, usually that of landed gentry or another ruling stratum, as well as in order to defend interests of the State and their own group. The original inhabitants of the region often were the object of investigation; however, even those works were written for the representatives of the respective ethnic or social group, not for <...> Latgalians, because all those works were written in Latin, German, Russian or Polish <...>. Moreover, a great many of the authors considered Latgalians to be Slavs (most often – Poles), but their country considered to be Ancient Russia's territory” (see in Ivanovs et al. 2003, 135).

Unfortunately, the professional level of the Polish historiography of Latgale was rather low; it was similar to that of the works published by the Vitebsk Province Statistic Committee. For instance, in the works written by the leading Polish researchers of the history of Latgale Gustaw Manteuffel and Kazimierz Bujnicki (see

¹⁰ Professional Russian historians – e.g. Nikolai Karamzin, Petr Keppen, Sergei Solov'ov, Vitol'd Novodvorskii, Georgii Forsten, Pavel Briantsev, et al. – paid fragmentary attention to Latgale. In their works, the main research topics were as follows: Ancient Latgale, the Livonian War, Russian policies in Latgale in the 19th century (within the context of the so-called Polish Problem); other aspects of the history of Latgale were actually ignored.

¹¹ Among such publications, there can be mentioned *Reference Books of Vitebsk Province (Pamiatnaia knizhka Vitebskoi gubernii)* that were published from 1861 until 1914 (all in all – 33 issues).

in detail Bukšs 1957, 176–187; Zeile 1993), there are many doubtful facts and inexact quotations and references to historical records. Although for the most part these works have lost their scientific importance, they still make an integral part of the historiography of Latgale.

In contrast to the works written by the Russian and Polish nonprofessional researchers, monographs and articles published by German and Baltic German historians – Carl Schirren, Theodor Schiemann, Friedrich Georg von Bunge, Leonid Arbusow sen., Rainhard Wittram – still maintain their heuristic and methodological importance for investigation of the history of Latgale. Most of these works deal with the so-called Livonian period (13th – 16th century) in the history of Latgale. Modern Latvian historians usually lay stress on tendentiousness of the Baltic German historiography of Latvia and Latgale, as well as on some biased interpretations aimed at justification of crusades in the Baltic region and German rule there (see e.g. Zutis 1949; Ivanovs et al. 2003, 66). However, professionalism and positivistic approach demonstrated by Baltic German historians to a certain extent counterbalances their tendentiousness.

In comparison with the Russian imperial (national) and Polish historiography of Latgale, the works written by Germans and Baltic Germans are not widely used in the present-day historical research of Latgale because nowadays researchers actually ignore this period in the history of Latgale. It means that this historiographic tradition takes a marginal position in the modern historiography of Latgale. Possibly, this fact can be explained taking into consideration a rather negligible share of Germans in the ethnic composition of the present-day population of Latgale; in other words, the Baltic German historiography has lost its audience in Latgale.

Thus, until the beginning of the 20th century, representatives of three national historiographic traditions – Russian national (imperial), Polish, and Baltic German – conducted researches in the field of the history of Latgale. Actually, these historiographic schools reflected, described, and justified the political domination of the states of which Latgale has been part – the Order of Livonia, Poland-Lithuania, and the Russian Empire. Meanwhile, the history of Latgale as such was not in the focus of attention of the above-mentioned historiographic schools; as a result, reconstructions of the history of Latgale were fragmentary and incomplete. Although the above-mentioned schools had come to existence simultaneously, their research work was conducted separately; there can be hardly traced any signs of interaction between the national historiographic traditions and their representatives. Systems of references and notes in publications present evidences that can confirm this thesis: in the works written by Russian authors, there are only some few references to the monographs and articles published by Baltic German and/or Polish researchers; and vice versa, Polish and German authors do not refer to the works written by their Russian colleagues. There are also different approaches to selection of primary historical records, main research topics, etc.

It seems that the situation, which had come into existence in the field of historical research, to a certain extent reflected the historical particularity of Latgale,

namely, the aims of the above-mentioned alien powers and conflicting interests of different ethnic communities (Germans, Poles, Russians) and social groups (nobility, landed gentry, State bureaucracy and officials) in the region. Unfortunately, in the 19th – beginning of the 20th century, the interests of the indigenous population of Latgale – Latgalians – were not expressed in historical discourse at all. We can also assume that such reflection of the conflicting interests in the historiography of Latgale was a specific “instrument” (in other words, *support factor*) of ideological promotion of those interests; thus, the historiography of Latgale was an active factor within the system of ethnic and social relations in the region – it supported certain interest groups and ethnic communities there.

Promotion of the conflicting interests of social groups and ethnic communities by means of historical research in Latgale in the 19th century cleared the way for further development of the historiography of Latgale. It seems that in the 20th – beginning of the 21st century the social functions of historiography have become more expressed due to political developments and State’s direct interference in historical research.

Since the First Latgalian Awakening (1904–1907; see Z e i l e 1996, 15, 78–85), the fourth – Latvian – historiographic trend has emerged within the frameworks of the historiography of Latgale. In the 20th century, this trend has become the leading national historiographic tradition in investigation of the history of Latgale. Such Latgalian politicians and public men as Francis Trasuns (1864–1926), Francis Kemps (1876–1952), Margērs Skujenieks (1886–1941) were the first representatives of it.

The emergence of the Latvian national historiography of Latgale was determined, on the one hand, by forthcoming Latgale’s (re)unification with the other historical regions of Latvia. On the other hand, the changing status and role of the Latgalian (Latgale’s Latvian) ethnic community in the developments in the region, integration of Latgalians into the Latvian nation, the diminishing role and status of Russians, Poles, Germans, and other ethnic groups there also promoted the emergence and further development of this historiographic tradition. For that reason, we can agree with Inese Poča, who evaluated the Latvian historiography of Latgale as follows: “<...> for the first time, history was written neither for German or Polish audience, nor from the point of view that furthered German or Polish interests; it was written for Latvians (Latgalians) from the point of view of their interests” (see in I v a n o v s et al. 2003, 150).

Initially, this historiographic trend could not compete with the traditional – Polish, Russian, German – historiographic schools in research of the history of Latgale, since until the 1920s Latvian historians wrote popular essays predominantly. Nevertheless, after the establishment of the Republic of Latvia in 1918, the Latvian national historiography of Latgale has become the leading trend in research of the history of the region. We cannot provide any direct evidences that in the initial stage of the development of the Latvian national historiography of Latgale there was the so-called historiographic synthesis, in other words, organic and flexible in-

tegration of the theses, which had been earlier advanced and substantiated within the frameworks of the Polish, Russian, and German historiography of Latgale, into the forming Latvian national historiography. Nevertheless, it can be logically concluded that this new historiographic tradition was grounded on the factual material and historical records that had been brought into scientific circulation by the above-mentioned historiographic schools. In addition, direct and indirect discussions, which aroused in historiography in the 1920s–1930s, give some evidences that interplay between different historiographic traditions lasted until the late 1930s. It means that specific historiographic manifestations of the interests of the competing ethnic identities can be traced in the Latvian national historiography of Latgale.

Due to institutional support provided to historical research by the Latvian State in the First Republic of Latvia, historical research assumed an official status: historiography was officially seen as a tool of implementation of the nationalities policy in Latvia. Actually, from the point of view of the State authorities, the main aim of historical research was inspiring and spiritual mobilization of the Latvian nation (Eihmane 2006, 14), as well as “Latvianization” of the multi-ethnic society of the First Latvian Republic. This aim was put forward by the State President and Prime Minister Kārlis Ulmanis (1877–1942); he declared that the mission of historiography was to raise sense of national (actually, ethnic) unity, self-awareness of the Latvians, and a feeling of pride in the national historical heritage.

Thus, the authoritarian political regime of Ulmanis used historiography not only as an instrument of maintaining ethnic identity of the Latvians, but also as an ideological and political tool of re-identification of ethnic communities, including Latgalians, since ethnic identity of Latgale’s Latvians differed from that of Latvians living in the other historical regions of Latvia. At the same time, emphasis put on the national historical heritage promoted the development of the historiography of Latgale (see in detail Ivāņovs et al. 2003, 150–161).

In the 1940s, the development of the Latvian national historiography of Latgale was forcibly interrupted, since the Soviet regime inaugurated sovietization of historical research in the country, which predominantly took place in 1940–1941 and since 1944 until the late 1950s (see in detail Strōds 1991; Ivāņovs 2003^a, 2003^b, 2005). The main directions of sovietization were as follows: politicization and ideologization of historical research, partial Russification, and integration of the Latvian historiography into the USSR historiography. There were striking changes in the methodology of historical research also¹².

All in all, this historiographic school in research of the history of Latgale makes a rather contradictory impression (Ivāņovs, Šteimāns 1999, 46–98).

¹² The features of the Soviet methodology of historical research were as follows: an unbalanced approach to the study of different phases and issues of the history of Latvia; reduction of the whole process of history to modern history only; exaggeration of the role of the so-called socio-economic basis and the significance of the revolutionary movement; disregard of the national specifics of the history of Latvia; justification of the policies of the ruling Communist regime, etc.

On the one hand, because of sovietization, historical research in Latgale came under total political control and ideological pressures and eventually developed into one of the factors of the Soviet policies there. Thus, the Soviet regime regarded historiography as an efficient tool for the implementation of Soviet policies and the indoctrination of Latgale's population by creating historical myths that promoted the ruling regime and deformed self-awareness of ethnic groups. On the other hand, in the 1950s–1980s, many qualitative, comprehensive monographs and articles about different aspects of the history of Latgale were published; the authors of those works were professional historians, who maintained traditions of historical research that had been established in the First Republic of Latvia. For the most part, those were researches on the problems of Latgale's prehistory, medieval history, and early modern history; the source base of the researches comprised anthropological (Elvīra Šnore, Ēvalds Mugarēvičs, Tatjana Berga, Ilze Loze, Juris Urtāns, Māris Atgāzis) and archaeological sources (Raisa Deņisova). Some comprehensive research papers were devoted to the problems of Latgale's ethnography (Anna Zariņa, Antonina Zavarina, Saulvedis Cimermanis), agrarian history of the 18th – beginning of the 20th century (Heinrihs Strods), peasants' movements (Jānis Babris), etc. In the 1950s, Professor Boleslavs Brežgo (1887–1957) – the leading researcher of the history of Latgale – published a number of valuable scholarly works devoted to different aspects of the history of Latgale¹³.

However, the positive impression created by the works of the above-mentioned outstanding historians is undermined due to prevalence of ideologically and politically framed works, which are devoted to the problems of the modern and contemporary history of Latgale. For the most part these are publications dealing with the issues of socio-economic and political history of Latgale in the 20th century. Many works purposefully abound in dubious, ideologized theses and openly falsify the history of Latgale. The highest degree of falsification was reached in works treating the events of the 1940s and 1950s: incorporation of the Republic of Latvia into the Soviet Union, World War II, sovietization of Latgale, and the so-called 'construction of socialism' in the region. In these fields, historical research was completely subjected to abstract schemes, whose goal was to indoctrinate the people of Latgale and to re-identify Latvians, as well as other ethnic communities residing in Latgale in conformity with the pattern of the so-called 'Soviet people'. Therefore, we can state that all these publications have entirely lost their heuristic significance.

It must be acknowledged that the Soviet regime did not succeed in achieving the goal of re-identification of the population of Latgale, and the historiography

¹³ The main spheres of his research work were as follows: social and agrarian history, historical cartography, archival studies, editing of historical sources, paleography, epigraphy, etc. It can be argued that up to now in many fields of historical research, works written by Brežgo represent the highest level achieved by the professional historiography of Latgale (Ivanovs et al. 2003, 161–170; Ivanovs, Šteimans 1999, 71–80; Bukšs 1957, etc.). However, many of these works were actually withdrawn from scientific circulation.

of Latgale as an instrument of the Soviet policies in the region played a paradoxical social role there. As Indulis Ronis points out, in spite of the pressures of sovietization and Russification, Latvian historiography “managed to prevent the interruption of historic traditions in the research of ancient history and partially also medieval history of Latvia” (Ronis 1995, 31). It seems that survival of the Latvian national historiographic tradition not only helped to lessen the efficiency of the Soviet historiography of Latgale as a tool of the Soviet rule, but also supported the existence and development of national self-awareness of Latgalians in the 1940s–1980s by means of emphasizing their historical heritage, historical pride, and historical consciousness¹⁴.

In the 1940s – 1980s, the Latvian national historiography of Latgale, which developed in exile, proposed an alternative to the Soviet historiography of Latgale. This historiographic trend thoroughly preserved the traditions of historical research that had been developed in the First Republic of Latvia in the 1920s – 1930s (see in detail Ivānovs, Šteimāns 1999, 7–45). In exile, the leading researchers of the history of Latgale were Bonifācijs Briška, Miķelis Bukšs, Edgars Dunsdorfs, Tadeušs Puisāns, and others. Unfortunately, the level of historical research conducted in exile was not very high. As Professor Strods points out, the characteristic features of the sketches written by Latvian historians in exile are as follows: “<...> opinion diversity, lack of primary historical sources <...> and professional environment, topics that were brought up in the 1930s. Comparing the most significant historical works published in Latvia with that published abroad, we should conclude that [the works published in Latvia] are based on a solid historical source base <...>. Theses proposed in the works published abroad fall within the so-called synthetic literature, where primary sources and literature assume equal roles” (Strods 1991, 5).

Nevertheless, the Latvian national historiography of Latgale in exile was an important factor that promoted the revival of the Latvian national historiography in Latvia in the 1990s: it maintained close connections with the pre-war Latvian national historiography of Latgale and thus handed down some traditions of historical research through generations of historians.

The modern (professional) historiography of Latgale has come into being due to the restoration of independence of the Republic of Latvia in 1991. The process of revival of the Latgalian studies was based on ideas and approaches that had been worked out and substantiated by the Latvian national historiography of Latgale in the 1920s–1930s, as well as in the 1950-s–1980s, when research work was conducted in exile¹⁵. Therefore, the modern historiography of Latgale has also inherited social and political roles of the former Latvian national historiography of Latgale. In the focus of attention of the modern historiography of Latgale there are problems

¹⁴ As it was mentioned above, this paradox was explained by Nyirady.

¹⁵ However, the continuity of the modern historiography of Latgale can be observed not only with the Latvian national historiography, but also with the Soviet historiography of Latgale – especially in the fields of archaeology, anthropology, and ethnography.

related to ethnic identity of the indigenous population of Latgale – Latgalians, as well as different aspects of the ethnic history of the Latgalians. For that reason, this historiographic school has become a factor that strongly affects ethnic self-awareness of the Latgalians, preserves their collective and ethnic identity.

One more argument can be mentioned in order to testify that there exists a close interconnection between the modern historiography of Latgale and ethnic self-awareness of the Latgalians. A specific feature of the present-day situation in the historiography of Latgale is involvement of nonprofessional researchers in regional historical research (Ivanovs 2006). Flowering of amateur Latgalian studies¹⁶ provides evidences that the modern historiography of Latgale little by little exceeds the limits of professional (academic) research and becomes a specific mode of manifestation of ethnic, collective, and regional self-awareness.

Taking into account the fact that the modern (professional) historiography of Latgale supports and, in some respect, frames ethnic identity of the Latgalians, it is quite natural that in the focus of its attention there are predominantly problems of ethnic and regional identity. Therefore, the most topical historical problems and aspects under investigation are as follows: the conception of the history of Latgale based on the notion that regional identity of Latgale is closely connected with its indigenous population (Zeile 1996, 1997; Brolišs 1995; see also Somss, Ivanovs 2002; Ivanovs, Somms 2008); evolution of the Latgalian ethnic self-awareness and the history of the national liberation movement in the region (Zeile's works); political history of Latgale and Latgalian political parties in the 1920s – 1930s (Sergejs Kuzņecovs); the role of Catholicism and Catholic Church in the history of Latgale (Heinrihs Strods, Jānis Broks); the armed resistance movement against the Soviet rule after World War II (Strods); the history of culture of Latgale; biographies of prominent Latgalians, etc.

Unfortunately, the history of other ethnic minorities of Latgale is not in the focus of attention of the modern professional historiography of Latgale. Actually, only some few publications concerning these historical problems can be mentioned, including brief essays on the history of Jews (written predominantly by amateurs; see also Šteiman's works), Poles and Lithuanians (Ēriks Jēkabsons), Byelorussians (Ilga Apine), and Russians (Apine). However, these works do not present an in-depth insight into the problem; moreover, the history of the above-mentioned ethnic minorities of Latgale is revealed within the frameworks of the history of Latvia at large. It seems that insufficient attention to the history of the ethnic minorities in Latgale indicates that these ethnic communities have been partly deprived of their former social, political, and cultural positions in the region.

A brief insight into the history of Latgalian studies shows that any synthesis of different approaches and interpretations of the history of Latgale, which have

¹⁶ At the same time, we can state that scientific level of researches conducted by Latgalian amateurs is rather low. It means that the professional historiography should influence the research work conducted by nonprofessional historians more actively.

been advanced and substantiated by different national historiographic schools, is hardly possible. However, we cannot exclude this possibility. Synthesis of diverse approaches and interpretations is desirable, since factual material, which has been gathered by representatives of different national schools in the historiography of Latgale, is useful for further progress of the Latgalian studies.

The final aim of Latgalian studies is not quite clear, since the aim of investigation of the region that has many distinctive features cannot be entirely scholastic: regional studies, including works dealing with the problems of the history of Latgale, actually preserve, support, and develop regional and ethnic identity. It is doubtful whether conservation of the regional identity of Latgale can be evaluated positively, because accentuation of the regional peculiarities, to a certain extent, preserves detachment of Latgale from the other historical regions of Latvia.

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Aleksandrs Ivanovs

Latgalos istoriografija: politinis kontekstas ir regiono etninē istorija

S a n t r a u k a

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: *politinė istorija, etninė istorija, istoriografija, istoriniai tyrimai, regionas, Latgala, etninės bendruomenės, atramos faktoriai, Latgalos studijos.*

Latgalos, rytinės Latvijos istorinio regiono, istoriografija yra laikoma integralia Latvijos istoriografijos dalimi, bet ji turi ir specifinių bruožų, kuri nusako istorinį regiono savitumą, priklauso nuo politinių bei etninių faktorių. Kadangi Latgalos istoriografija visada savo dėmesį kreipė į regiono istorinius ypatumus, istoriniai tyrimai įgijo glaudžias sąsajas su politine ir etnine Latgalos istorija. Todėl Latgalos istoriografija atlieka dvi skirtingas funkcijas: pirma, ji imasi rekonstruoti istorinę praeitį; antra, ji tiesiogiai veikia visuomenės nuomonę ir socialinę (etninę) savimone. Šiuo atžvilgiu istoriografija gali būti laikoma politinių ir socialinių instrumentu (faktoriumi).

Tam, kad atskleistume istorinių tyrimų sąsajas su etnine ir politine Latgalos istorija, Latgalos istoriografijos genezės ir raidos etapai yra nagrinėjami ir įvertinami pagal visuotinai priimtą chronologiją. Šie etapai gali būti siejami su politinės istorijos pokyčiais

regione, taip pat su regiono etninio tapatumo atsiradimu, raida ir stiprėjimu. Todėl šiame straipsnyje yra skiriamas didelis dėmesys Latgalos istoriografijos ryšiams su kitomis istoriografinėmis mokyklomis ir nacionalinėmis – Rusijos imperijos, Lenkijos, Baltijos vokiečių, sovietine, Latvijos – istorinių tyrimų tradicijomis, kurios atskleidžia skirtingų politinių jėgų ir etninių regiono grupių tikslus.

Aleksandrs Ivanovs

Historiography of Latgale within the Context of Political and Ethnic History of the Region

S u m m a r y

Keywords: *political history, ethnic history, historiography, historical research, region, Latgale, ethnic communities, support factor, Latgalian studies.*

Although the historiography of Latgale – a historical region in the Eastern part of Latvia – is considered an integral part of the historiography of Latvia, it has many specific features, which are determined by historical peculiarities of the region, as well as by political and ethnic factors that have called forth such peculiarities. Since the historiography of Latgale has always been focused on the historical peculiarities of the region, historical research establishes close and strong ties with the political and ethnic history of Latgale. Therefore, the historiography of Latgale performs two different functions: on the one hand, it provides reconstructions of historical past; on the other hand, it directly influences public opinion and social (ethnic) consciousness. In this respect, historiography can be regarded as a political and social factor (instrument).

In order to reveal the connection of historical research with ethnic and political history of Latgale, the stages of genesis and development of the historiography of Latgale are described and evaluated along general lines. These stages can be correlated with the changes in the political history of the region, as well as with the stages of emergence, development, and consolidation of ethnic identities in the region. Therefore, this paper places a special emphasis on the connection of the historiography of Latgale with different historiographic schools and *national* – Russian imperial, Polish, Baltic German, Soviet, Latvian – traditions in historical research, which represent interests and aims of different political powers and ethnic communities of the region.

A l e k s a n d r s I V A N O V S
*Research Institute of Latgale,
Daugavpils University
Vienības iela 13
Daugavpils LV-5410, Latvia
[aleksandrs.ivanovs@du.lv]*