

Tendencies in the Historiography of Latvian Philosophy

Andris Hiršs

Latvian Academy of Culture
Email: andrishirss@gmail.com
ORCID <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-6379-2823>

Abstract. This article aims to investigate tendencies in the historiography of Latvian philosophy in the past three decades. This article focuses on the history of ideas and intellectual history as two different approaches in the field of the history of philosophy. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the term “history of ideas” gained popularity in the Latvian cultural discourse. Historians of philosophy were highlighting the close ties between Western and Latvian cultures. However, during the last decade, the approach of intellectual history has been gaining popularity among the Latvian historians of philosophy.

Keywords: Latvian history of philosophy, history of ideas, intellectual history, Lovejoy, Skinner

Latvijas filosofijas istoriografijas tendencijas

Santrauka. Straipsnio tikslas – ištirti Latvijas filosofijos istoriografijos tendencijas per pastaruosius tris dešimtmečius. Autoriaus dėmesio centre dvi pagrindinės filosofijos istorijos rašymo prieigos – idėjų istorija ir intelektualinė istorija. Iširus Sovietų Sąjungai Latvijos kultūriniame diskurse išpopuliarėjo terminas „idėjų istorija“. Filosofijos istorikai ėmėsi nušviesti glaudžius ryšius tarp Vakarų šalių ir Latvijos kultūrų. Tačiau pastarąjį dešimtmetį Latvijos filosofijos istorikai vis labiau renkasi intelektualinės istorijos prieigą.

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: Latvijos filosofijos istorija, idėjų istorija, intelektualinė istorija, Lovejoy, Skinneris

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Introduction

There are ongoing discussions on the advantages and disadvantages of various methodologies in the research of the history of philosophy. In the 19th century, representatives of different approaches began a polemic that is still topical nowadays in the development of the history of concepts, history of ideas, history of problems, etc. methodologies.

There is a continuous interest in Latvia regarding the local history of philosophy. This interest is illustrated by the published books on Latvian philosophers: Teodors Celms (1893–1989)¹; Pēteris Zālītis (1864–1939)²; Pauls Dāle (1889–1968)³; Jēkabs Osis (1860–1920).⁴ In the future, the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the University of Latvia has plans to publish books about Milda Paleviča (1889–1972), Pauls Jurevičs (1882–1950) and other Latvian philosophers. The Institute of Philosophy and Sociology views the investigation of the history of the philosophical thought and concepts in Latvia as the principal focus of philosophical research. The Department of Philosophy and Ethics, which operates as a structural unit of the University of Latvia, also defines the history of philosophy as its key direction of research.

During the mid-1990s, several esteemed Latvian philosophers expressed the imperative need to engage in scholarly discourse concerning methodologies. Philosopher Maija Kūle underscored the significance of using contemporary methodologies to align with the requirements of modern thinking. Following the demise of Marxism-Leninism, historians of philosophy in Latvia have been compelled to embark on the quest for a novel methodological trajectory (Kūle 1996: 5). Philosopher Kārlis Lūsis accentuated the unfeasibility of adhering to the traditional categories of Marxist methodology within the realm of humanities. The philosopher articulated the imperative need to undertake a critical evaluation of the preceding works of Latvian thinkers in the field of history of philosophy, with the purpose of identifying new methodologies (Lūsis 1992: 6).

Despite these intentions, no papers addressing methodologies in the history of philosophy in Latvia have been published since 1990. The absence of a debate does not mean that there are no certain tendencies in this field of research. This article focuses on two principal methodological approaches to this discipline: (1) the history of ideas, and (2) the intellectual history. The primary objective of the author is to demonstrate the discernible transition within the works of Latvian historians of philosophy, whereby a shift becomes evident from a focus on the history of ideas to an emphasis on the intellectual history. The intended aim of this article is to provide a descriptive account of the aforementioned shift over the course of the past three decades, commencing from the

¹ See Kūle, M., Muižniece, L., Vēgners U., *Teodors Celms: fenomenoloģiskie meklējumi*. Rīga: LU Filozofijas un socioloģijas institūts, 2009.

² See Buceniece, E., Cera, I., Priedīte-Kleinhofa, A., u.c. *Pēteris Zālīte: kantiskais ideālisms un laicīgie ideāli*. Rīga: LU Filozofijas un socioloģijas institūts, 2008.

³ See Buceniece, E., *Pauls Dāle: Dievs un "filozofa lieta"*. Rīga: Latvijas Universitātes Filozofijas un socioloģijas institūts, 2013.

⁴ See Hiršs, A. *Persona un personālisms: pārdzīvojot ideālisma sabrukumu. Pirmā latviešu filosofa Jēkaba Oša dzīve un uzskati*. Rīga: LU Akadēmiskais apgāds, 2022.

pivotal year 1990, which marked Latvia's declaration of independence from the Soviet Union. This article does not examine all published articles and books in Latvia regarding the history of philosophy. The scope is restricted to the published research on the history of philosophy in Latvia. The domain of the history of philosophy in Latvia encompasses all philosophical writings originating within the geographical boundaries of Latvia throughout its past, without regard to the racial or ethnic identity of the philosophers and the particular language they used in their texts. Given the proliferation of works on the history of philosophy in Latvia between 1990 and the present, it is almost infeasible to review all such texts. Therefore, this article focuses on the primary scholarly contributions of this discipline.

History of Ideas

Undoubtedly, in the 1990s, in Latvia, the approach of the history of ideas dominated the study of the historical development of philosophy. In the abstract of the first anthology *History of Ideas in Latvia* (1995), its compiler and editor Ella Buceniece asserts that the universe of thoughts and ideas "is an original factor that arranges, structures world, forming cosmos of human sense and meaning" (Buceniece 1995: 575). An approach that recognizes the self-sufficiency and continuity of ideas allows to overcome the traditional historiography allocation of history by regional, national, or provincial principles.

One of the creators of the approach to the history of ideas is the American philosopher Arthur Lovejoy (1873–1962). Lovejoy's approach provides tools in the history of philosophy to explore not separate systems of thinkers, but rather to divide systems into elements. The teachings of philosophers or schools of philosophy at their core comprise a composition of ideas, where originality lies not so much in the introduction of new ideas, but, first and foremost, in a novel arrangement of pre-existing ideas (Lovejoy 1983: 179). The elements of systems were called by Lovejoy "unit-ideas," which is a type of category, implied or clearly formulated presumptions, philosophical theorems, or scientific hypotheses.

In 1990, Latvia declared independence from the Soviet Union. It was essential for Latvian scientists and other intellectuals to highlight the close ties between the Western and Latvian cultures. Historians of philosophy were no exception. This appears to be one of the factors contributing to the popularity of the history of ideas approach. It is important to note that the Latvian community of philosophers had been showing interest in the history of ideas since the 1980s, if not even earlier. In her autobiography, Buceniece discloses that she, along with philosopher Pēteris Laizāns (1930–2005) and historian Alnis Svēlpis (1928–1990), initiated research on the history of ideas in Latvia during the 1980s (Buceniece 2019: 25). The choice to focus on the history of ideas was made in response to the Marxist methodology that dominated historiography during the Soviet period, which required historians to adhere to the Marxist ideology.

The approach of the history of ideas gave the necessary framework to explore the Latvian tradition of philosophy and its close ties with the Western currents of thought.

In her publication from 1991, Aija Priedīte-Kleinhofa expressed the notion that the entirety of the history of philosophy in Latvia “serves as a testament to the profound interconnections with the spiritual values of Europe” (Priedīte-Kleinhofa 1991: 15). Similar tendencies can be observed in other Baltic states. In the preface of the study *Lithuanian Philosophy: Persons and Ideas*, George Francis McLean (1929–2016) emphasizes that the title “reflected the strong emphasis upon the distinctive Lithuanian cultural identity needed in order to support the claim to independence from Russia” (McLean 2000: 5).

Buceniece, one of the leading historians of philosophy in Latvia, was the compiler and editor of the three volumes of *History of Ideas in Latvia*. As Buceniece reveals in her autobiography, during the Soviet occupation, in Latvia, the term ‘history of ideas’ was a neologism: Professor Jānis Vējš proposed it, and the term was thus taken from the Western tradition. These volumes “depict the process of the rapid appearance of the Western European ideas in Latvia and the formation of a new and modern understanding of social and cultural issues, as reflected in respective theoretical texts and literature” (Buceniece 2019: 25). The books on the history of ideas in Latvia are fundamental encyclopedic editions offering a duly systemized overview of the development of the most important ideas throughout the historical course of Latvia. It is noteworthy that the three volumes entitled *History of Ideas in Latvia* do not align with the classical research in the field of the history of ideas. The anthologies encompass a combination of historical-biographical methodology, interpretative translations, and a curated selection of text passages reflecting the diverse perspectives of the authors featured in the anthologies. Nonetheless, the configuration of the anthologies is driven by the researcher’s objective of illuminating the impact of key Western philosophical ideas on the intellectual milieu of Latvia. According to Buceniece, the anthologies unveil the “phenomenology of the Latvian spirit,” which has developed in conjunction with European ideas (Buceniece 2005: 1).

The first anthology is structured into five chapters.⁵ The opening chapter examines the worldviews of Latvians, as depicted in folklore. In the second chapter, analysis is conducted on the emergence of the philosophical thought in Latvia, exploring the influences of humanism and Christianity during the feudal period. The third chapter focuses on the concepts and ideas of Enlightenment. The fourth section deals with the philosophical currents prevalent in Latvia during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The fifth chapter of the book elucidates the significance of philosophical ideas in the formation of the Latvian nation. The second volume of the anthology comprises four chapters.⁶ The opening chapter investigates the concepts of modernism within the context of Latvia. The second section deals with ideas of social activism. This section is divided into three subsections: Marxism, social democracy, and cultural criticism. This section of the book provides insights into the multitude of revolutionary socio-political movements which significantly influenced the intellectual milieu in Latvia during the late 19th century. The

⁵ See *Ideju vēsture Latvijā: no pirmsākumiem līdz XIX gs. 90. gadiem. Antoloģija*, eds. E. Buceniece. Rīga: Zvaigzne ABC, 1995.

⁶ See *Ideju vēsture Latvijā: Jaunā strāva – 20. gs. sākums. Pirmā daļa. Antoloģija*, eds. E. Buceniece. Rīga: RaKa, 2005.

subsequent chapter deals with the ideas of subjectivism, including romanticism represented by Latvian poets. The final section examines the ideas of conservatism. The third volume of the anthology consists of six chapters.⁷ The three initial sections delve into the ideas of positivism, pragmatism, and theological currents in Latvia from the late 19th century to the early 20th century. Sections four and five explore ideas of cultural history and aesthetics. The final chapter examines the ideas of modernism in the Latvian art during the early 20th century. Each chapter presents information on at least two thinkers representing a particular school of thought in Latvia. Several of these thinkers are Baltic Germans who, although not Latvian in terms of ethnicity, resided in Latvia at some point during their careers and gained prominence in the region. For instance, Friedrich Wilhelm Ostwald (1853–1932), a chemist and philosopher was born in Riga and worked as a chemistry professor at Riga Polytechnicum. As stated by the compilers of the anthologies, the most difficult aspect of their work was devising a coherent structure and categorizing various ideas (*ibid.*: 7).

Roger Bartlett, an emeritus professor of the Russian history at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, characterized the publication of the first volume of the *History of Ideas in Latvia* as a “considerable achievement” in his review of the work. Bartlett described this anthology as a valuable and significant compilation, with relevance not only to Latvian readers but also to those with an interest in the subject matter (Bartlett 1997: 156).

The term “history of ideas” gained popularity in the Latvian cultural discourse. Nowadays, students can attend the course *History of Ideas* at Riga Stradins University, whereas the courses *History of Political Ideas* and *Studies in the Sources of the History of Ideas* are being taught at the University of Latvia.

The third volume of the *History of Ideas* was published in 2006. In recent years, other collective works on the history of philosophy in Latvia have been published. Among these studies, two particularly prominent examples include *Academic Humanitarian Tradition in Latvia and Formation of Democratic Culture: Articles and Sources (1920–1940)* and *Latvia: Cultural Migration*. In 2022, the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology published the book *Academic Humanitarian Tradition in Latvia and Formation of Democratic Culture: Articles and Sources (1920–1940)*. This research and the three volumes of the *History of Ideas in Latvia* are relatively comparable in terms of the structure and themes. In the annotation of this study, Buceniece explains that the book “is an anthology – a biographical and theoretical reflection has been prepared for each author, analyzing the theoretical ideas and adding the most significant works or fragments” (Buceniece 2022: 623). The book represents panoramic research on academic ideas in the 1920s and the 1930s, which determined the further development of the academic humanitarian thought.

On a closer look, this study is not similar to the previous three volumes. The focus of the previous volumes was on intellectual movements, such as conservatism, positivism

⁷ See *Ideju vēsture Latvijā: Jaunā strāva – 20. gs. sākums. Otrā daļa. Antoloģija*, eds. E. Buceniece. Rīga: RaKa, 2006.

and Marxism. A recent study, however, sheds light on how institutions and professional groups have evolved. This book includes articles about the Herder Institute in Riga, a private German higher education institution founded in 1927, and Riga Russian University, which was a Russian higher education university founded in 1921.

Another major study *Latvia: Cultural Migration* was published in 2019. This book was a result of the interdisciplinary project *Cultural Migration in Latvia*, funded by the *Latvian Council of Science*. The goal of this project was to provide a new interdisciplinary view of cultural migration in Latvia. As stated by the project participants, the previous research in Latvia covers a variety of different topics, and researchers mostly focus on one individual aspect – art trends and schools – and therefore only provide a fragmented picture of the outset of the Latvian culture. The proposed project *Cultural Migration in Latvia* was a re-evaluation of the position and a broader interaction of the history, philosophy, and the history of ideas, linguistics, folklore studies and other spheres. The project team was seeking a single and holistic perspective, combining diverse developments of distinct fields (Hiršs et al. 2016: 15). Researchers were analyzing the Latvian culture not only as a recipient but also as a donor (Rožkalne 2019: 743).

One-quarter of the study is devoted to the history of philosophy in Latvia. The authors conducted research on a variety of topics in the history of philosophy, including the heritage of Baltic Germans; the influence of the Russian, French, and Spanish philosophy in Latvia, along with many other themes. Historians, linguists, folklorists, literary scholars, and scholars of religion authored the other sections of the book. While the project team described the study as a unique interdisciplinary examination of the cultural interactions that have taken place in the territory of the present-day Latvia since its first settlement, historian Kaspars Zellis noted in his review that the study is multidisciplinary, and it lacks a certain level of coherence (Zellis 2020: 193).

In comparison to the anthologies *History of Ideas in Latvia*, these recent studies reflect a trend towards an approach centered on the intellectual history. The book *Academic Humanitarian Tradition in Latvia and Formation of Democratic Culture: Articles and Sources (1920–1940)* does not contain direct reference to the intellectual history. Nevertheless, in the introduction, Buceniece emphasizes intellectualism, intellectual life, and the intellectual elite. The study is centered on personalities and groups of intellectuals rather than ideas or schools of thought. In describing their project intentions, the team behind the *Cultural Migration in Latvia* project explicitly referred to the use of an approach of the intellectual history (Hiršs et al. 2016: 16). Moreover, the trend toward intellectual history could be viewed as contributing to the issue of coherence, a point that is briefly examined in the third section of this article.

Turn to Intellectual History

The preceding chapter elucidated the role of the history of ideas in Latvia during the 1990s. Following the declaration of independence from the Soviet Union by Latvia, the first published works on the history of philosophy were influenced by Lovejoy's

approach. Conversely, recent collective monographs on the development of the philosophical thought in Latvia have adopted a methodology that aligns closely with the intellectual history. This section will analyze the difference between the history of ideas and the intellectual history, and evaluate how the approach of the intellectual history has influenced works on the history of philosophy in Latvia.

The historian of philosophy Maurice Mandelbaum (1908–1987) distinguished between two motives of Lovejoy's approach (Mandelbaum 1983: 198). One of the motives in Lovejoy's developed methodology is an interdisciplinary approach based on the conviction that research in the history of ideas should cross the borders of nationality and language. The second motive is the teaching of 'unit-ideas'. The first aspect had an invaluable impact on research in the history of ideas, although the approach of 'unit-ideas' has attracted extensive criticism.

Quentin Skinner was one of the harsh critics of this approach. In Skinner's view, Lovejoy's approach can lead to the expectation that each classic writer "will be found to enunciate some doctrine on each of the topics regarded as constitutive of his subject" (Skinner 1969: 7). These expectations may create the mythology of doctrines. For example, the historian may have a disposition to "reading in" a doctrine that some writer had no intention to convey (*ibid.*: 9). Skinner identified the assumption of an inherent, essential meaning attributed to a single idea as a significant drawback of Lovejoy's approach. Moreover, this methodology fails to provide insight into how a specific idea may have been regarded and assessed across different periods. As noted by Melvin Richter, the historian of political thought, Lovejoy's approach does not provide precise understanding of what some concepts actually meant to those who used them. If we see the use of the same word in texts from different centuries, this fact does not provide us with any knowledge of the meaning of this word (Richter 1987: 260). Understanding certain ideas and their importance may thus remain 'unplumbed'.

Another false assumption is that any given text can serve as an "autonomous object of understanding" (Skinner 1969: 32). According to Skinner, historians must endeavor to reconstruct the intricate intentions of the author in order to comprehend the text. In addition, Mandelbaum offered a scathing critique of the methodology of the history of ideas, by noting its failure to adequately discern the originality of thinkers, as well as to examine the historical context and the influences that motivated philosophers, and by questioning its overriding preoccupation with abstract concepts to the detriment of concrete contextualization (Mandelbaum 1965: 35).

Mandelbaum and Skinner are scholars advocating for the study of the intellectual history. American historian Felix Gilbert (1905–1991) defines the approach of the intellectual history as a methodology that analyzes the link between ideas and human activity, while focusing on individual consciousness, group or intellectual product, researching the source and influences (Gilbert 1971: 89). An important part of the intellectual history is the genealogical approach which characterizes the evolution of an individual's thoughts by using marginal materials, such as letters.

The intellectual history has become increasingly popular in the recent years. As stated by Darrin M. McMahon and Samuel Moyn: “intellectual history is currently enjoying a moment of prominence and self-confidence greater than it has known in decades” (McMahon et al. 2014: 3).

The aforementioned examples from recently published studies on the history of philosophy in Latvia can be viewed as integral components of this larger prevalent pattern.

Some scholars have questioned the rigid dichotomy between the intellectual history and the history of ideas. McMahon argues that Skinner’s denunciation of Lovejoy, in certain instances, may be regarded as unjustified. According to McMahon: “Lovejoy himself would likely have been sympathetic to a good deal of Skinner and Pocock’s project, particularly their emphasis on context” (McMahon 2014: 20). Carl Knight, a senior lecturer in the political theory at the University of Glasgow, adduces instances from Lovejoy’s oeuvre to exemplify his profound apprehension of the contextual framework that underpins the quest of scholars in interpreting meaning (Knight 2012: 214). According to associate professor Nicolaas T.O. Mouton, Skinner misinterpreted the methodological principles of Lovejoy. Skinner’s critique was founded on secondary sources rather than on Lovejoy’s original works. Mouton emphasizes that: “[A]ny critic who claims that Lovejoy thought that ideas have fixed essences, and that the historian’s task is to track them down, should provide plenty of evidence. Skinner supplied none” (Mouton 2023: 276). Knight and Mouton contend that Skinner’s own works exhibit an approach that is aligned with Lovejoy’s methodology. The discussions are, in part, concerned with the absence of clearly defined and rigorous methodological principles within the disciplines of the intellectual history and the history of ideas. The historian of philosophy Leo Catana contends that Lovejoy’s seminal work *The Great Chain of Being* does not provide a precise definition of ‘unit-ideas’, thereby rendering the new approach “more of rhetorical declaration [...] than an adequate description of the method actually practiced” (Catana 2010: 93). While the assertion that Lovejoy sought an “unemotional idea” that is “detachable from the soul of man” (Spitzer 1944: 194) might appear exaggerated, one can still interpret Lovejoy’s approach to history as heavily emphasizing ideas, albeit at the expense of delving into the authors of these ideas. Based on this interpretation, it can be inferred that Lovejoy’s methodology does not mandate the identification of direct influence among different thinkers. One can research similarities between some Latvian philosophers’ thoughts, and, for example, the works of Gilles Deleuze (1925–1995) (Buceniece 2013: 43). Researchers may focus on themes and examine the extent to which these ideas (have) shaped the Western culture and the intellectual discourse in Latvia. Occasionally, the philosopher Skaidrīte Lasmane used this approach in her articles concerning the history of philosophy in Latvia. The philosopher delineated philosophical romanticism in Latvia in an article published in the early 1990s. Lasmane outlined the influence of the ideas of humanism and criticism of mass culture on Latvian philosophers during the first half of the 20th century. The philosopher emphasized that the intellectual milieu in Latvia assimilated currents of thought from the Western culture in accordance with the local traditions (Lasmane 1992:7).

The first academically educated Latvian philosopher was Jēkabs Osis (1860–1920). He was a representative of the Tartu personalism school. The founder of the school was the German philosopher Gustav Teichmüller (1832–1888) who came to Tartu from the University of Basel. To explore this philosophical school, one can research the concept or the main idea of personalism. Personalism comes in a variety of forms. The Swedish philosopher Jan Olof Bengtsson explains that the two best-known forms are American personalism and the French school. There are also “strong currents of phenomenological personalism, existentialist personalism, and Catholic personalism” (Bengtsson 2006: 1). A historian may research what kind of similarities there are between the Tartu personalism school and the other currents of personalism. A historian of ideas could define the core idea of personalism and investigate its manifestations in diverse domains of the intellectual inquiry. Another approach would be to focus on the Tartu personalism school and its historical roots. The researcher may then try to describe this philosophical school as a reaction to problematic questions in the philosophy and sciences of its time. It would be important to shed light on the motivations of philosophers in their pursuit of developing a new metaphysics and forming a philosophical school. To fulfill this task, the historian would have to explore the tendencies of philosophy during the second half of the 19th century and study the intellectual network of Tartu personalists. This kind of study under the title *Person and Personalism: Enduring the Collapse of Idealism. The First Latvian Philosopher Jēkabs Osis* was published by the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology in 2022. This research constitutes an integral component of the book series titled *Philosophical Library: Letonika*. In the previous years, this series featured the publication of books which focused on the most influential Latvian philosophers.

The biographical genre has been experiencing resurgence over the past two decades. According to an associate professor at the University Center for Social Sciences and Humanities, intellectual history has had a significant impact on biographical writing, which resulted in a methodological approach that uses scientific methods to examine individuals in a way that not only emphasizes their work and intellectual journey but also their interactions with the political and social context of their lives (Remigio 2022: 16). The biographical works in the *Philosophical Library: Letonika* series can be viewed as examples of this approach.

The monograph *Pauls Dāle: God and the ‘Philosopher’s Case’* by Buceniece examines the life and ideas of Dāle. Buceniece explains that this study: “is the first extensive research on the life and work of the outstanding Latvian philosopher, offering analyses within the context of European philosophy – of his published and unpublished works and of the archival materials” (Buceniece 2013: 335). The research for the monograph titled *The Presence. Life and Work of Latvian and Brazilian Jesuit Philosopher Staņislavs Ladusāns*, which is part of this series, also took place in several archives across the globe. The monograph deals with the life and career of the Latvian-Brazilian philosopher Staņislavs Ladusans (1912–1993), whose scholarly accomplishments are highly recognized in Brazil. According to the author of the book philosopher Māra Kiopē: “the text contains conceptual and meaningful structures, so as to provide key for the understand-

ing of S. Ladusāns' broader range of activities" (Kiope 2015: 493). Another research work in this sequence is the book exploring the ideas of the German philosopher Johann Georg Hamann (1730–1788), who is biographically linked to Latvia. This study also takes the form of an intellectual biography. The philosopher Raivis Bičevskis details the scope of his research, indicating that his analysis extends beyond the philosophical ideas of Hamann, delving into the historical and societal contexts which influenced the formation of the German thinker's worldview (Bičevskis 2013: 9). Furthermore, other volumes in this series, such as *Teodors Celms: Phenomenological Investigations* and *Pēteris Zālīte: Kantian Idealism and Secular Ideals*, not only offer insights into the lives of renowned Latvian philosophers but also provide a broader contextual framework, which aids in comprehending the motivation and intellectual dilemmas of these thinkers.

Philosopher Maris Vecvagars (1953–2016) conducted studies exemplifying the approach of the intellectual history in the field of the history of philosophy in Latvia. The main research field of Vecvagars was the reception of the philosophy of classical antiquity in Latvia. In his publications, the philosopher often explored unpublished manuscripts, letters, and diaries of Latvian philosophers. Vecvagars was interested in the intellectual network of the thinkers. To describe this network historian introduced a new word in Latvian language – 'domvide' (Vecvagars 2013: 44), which can be translated as the 'think-place'.

Some of Vecvagars' articles were published in one of the leading journals for the Humanities in Latvia *Religious-Philosophical Articles*. While the journal focuses on disseminating articles that aim to enhance its readers' knowledge and comprehension of the history of religious and/or philosophical ideas, their contemporary development, and their position within the European culture, publications specifically addressing the history of philosophy in Latvia are scarce nevertheless. For example, within the preceding five-year period, the journal consistently featured articles encompassing a wide array of subjects, such as the history of religion, politics, metaphysics, and various other thematic areas. Simultaneously, there was a conspicuous absence of scholarly contributions to the history of philosophy in Latvia. Nevertheless, when considering a broader timeframe, noteworthy publications pertaining to significant figures in the history of philosophy in Latvia gradually emerged. In the preface to Issue XXII of the journal, Solveiga Krūmiņa-Koņkova, the chief editor, notes that Lovejoy's notion of primeval ideas has lost its appeal to the modern historians. Krūmiņa-Koņkova argues that: "due to the work of Q. R. D. Skinner and J. G. Pocock and their followers, the history of ideas discipline has thus become globalized and amalgamated within a wider field of intellectual history" (Krūmiņa-Koņkova 2017: 9). The predilection for the intellectual history is evident not only in Vecvagars' articles, but also in other publications relating to the history of Latvia that are featured in the journal. The historian of philosophy Svetlana Kovaļčuka is engaged in a scholarly investigation concerning the intellectual interconnections between Latvia and Russia. In her article *Zakov's Riga Archive*, Kovaļčuka delineates the life of the Komi writer and philosopher Kalistrat Zhakov (1866–1926). During the last few years of his life, Zhakov was related to the Baltics. Kovaļčuka endeavors to delineate

Zhakov's relation to Latvia and his influence on the Latvian intellectual society in the first half of the 20th century. In her article, the philosopher placed significant emphasis on archival materials to explicate Zhakov's association with his adherents in Latvia.

In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in archival materials, seen as a valuable resource for furthering research into the history of philosophy in Latvia. The project *Institutum Herderianum Rigense: Herder Institute in Riga as a Science Network in the European Science Network* has received financing from the Latvian Council of Science. The Herder Institute in Riga, whose history (1921–1939) and significance to the birth of the modern science have not yet been adequately examined in Latvia and the rest of the world, is the focus of this project. The project's goal is to examine the correspondence between high-profile scientists in Europe and the personnel of the Herder Institute, as well as to study the networking of the Herder Institute within the Baltics. Numerous scholarly articles have been published on the Herder Institute in Riga and its members. For instance, Buceniece has written articles focusing on Kurt Stafenhagen (1885–1951), the Latvian-German Baltic phenomenologist who was a founding member and professor at the Herder Institute. According to Buceniece, the work of Stafenhagen was not widely recognized in the Latvian society during his lifetime (Buceniece 2022: 313). Nowadays, the ideas of this prominent phenomenologist are being re-evaluated in retrospect (Buceniece 2012: 165). Kūle underscores the need for translating some of Stafenhagen's works into Latvian (Kūle 2021: 42) and emphasizes the importance of continued study of the ideas of the phenomenologist Celms, who was considered "the most prominent Latvian philosopher of his day" (Kūle 1998: 295).

The digitization of archives across the globe, together with the close connections between the Latvian historians and academic institutions abroad, as well as the ongoing Herder Institute project in Riga, portend a forthcoming surge in publications on the history of philosophy in Latvia, thereby illuminating novel facets of this field.

Intellectual History and the History of Philosophy

From the aforementioned examples, we can see that the intellectual history approach is popular among the Latvian historians of philosophy. This section explicates the connections between the intellectual history and the history of philosophy, and contemplates forthcoming challenges for the historians of the history of philosophy in Latvia.

Regarding the nexus between the intellectual history and the history of philosophy, it is important to consider two facets. Firstly, the intellectual history "must implicate all modes of thought if it implicates any one of them" (Gordon 2014: 33). The Professor of history at Harvard University Peter E. Gordon describes this demand as a "strong version of contextualism" (*ibid.*: 33). Given the extensive scope of the region, it would be unfeasible for a single researcher to conduct comprehensive exploration. Therefore, the fulfillment of this task would require a collaborative effort among multiple researchers, likely representing diverse scientific institutions. This endeavor is more challenging than it may seem at the first glance. As stated by the founder and co-director of *The Centre*

for *Philosophical Studies of History* at the University of Oulu Jouni-Matti Kuukkanen, the intellectual history is probably the most interdisciplinary form of history writing that there is, and, “because of its broad scope, intellectual history can sometimes seem shapeless and borderless” (Kuukkanen 2020: 143).

Secondly, it would be wrong to equate the history of philosophy with the intellectual history. The intellectual history scholars can easily establish links between works from other fields and philosophical texts. The history of philosophy and the intellectual history tend to have very fluid boundaries. We may ask: Does the history of philosophy have its own history, or is it a part of the intellectual history? Some philosophers argue that philosophy has its own ‘internal’ history, which does not ‘dissolve’ in the intellectual history (Mandelbaum 1965: 60). Philosophers fit into certain traditions and polemicize with previous philosophers, thus creating a connection between philosophical texts. The historian of philosophy is “examining a philosophical work or a philosophical mind at work, and this later requires analyzing concepts and their interrelations, dissecting and critically examining arguments” (Morgan 1987: 718). At the same time, we can view the history of philosophy as a subdivision of the intellectual history. The Honorary Visiting Professor at the University of York Sarah Hutton suggests that philosophy is an organic part of the intellectual history:

“[I]ntellectual history has many branches, embracing not just the history of philosophy, but also the history of political thought, the history of science and medicine, and the history of religious thought. The content of none of these apparently autonomous strands is divided from the rest” (Hutton 2014: 926).

Our understanding of the relationship between the history of philosophy and the intellectual history depends on the first above mentioned aspect – namely, how we define the objects of the intellectual history and the methods of this approach. According to the historian Riccardo Bavaj, the object matter is a critical issue. There is ambiguity regarding the focus of intellectual historians: whether they should be primarily concerned with probing ideas, concepts, or ideologies. Is the focal point of the intellectual history best placed on individual figures or groups (cf. Bavaj 2010: 3)? Currently, the focus of the scholarly discourse in the history of philosophy in Latvia revolves around examining the prominent individuals or institutional entities. This tendency corresponds with that observed among the intellectual historians who “no longer chase the Hegelian World Spirit (*Weltgeist*) or pursue purportedly unchanging, metaphysically pure ideas in their journey through time” (*ibid.*: 18). Over the last thirty years, substantial efforts have been made towards the study of the history of philosophy in Latvia. Simultaneously, one might inquire whether the anthologies on the history of ideas in Latvia, numerous collective monographs, a book series titled *Philosophical Library: Letonika*, and individual articles already offer a comprehensive survey of the history of philosophy in Latvia. There are virtually no studies about philosophy during the Soviet occupation of Latvia, and researchers have not yet written the history of philosophy in Latvia. We may wonder what subjects should be the focus of this history, and what methodology should be employed

in its composition. The historian's goal may involve identifying methods to unify the various components of the history of philosophy in Latvia into a cohesive whole. An intriguing example of this type of approach is the concept of the Estonian theory. The professor of cultural history Marek Tamm and the biosemiotics professor Kalevi Kull define the Estonian theory as a "local episteme – a territorialized web of epistemological associations and rules for making sense of the world that favours some premises while discouraging others" (Tamm, Kull 2020: 30). Scholars have elucidated that this theory centers on characterizing a "heterogeneous network of cultural communication" and delineates the development of specific regional idiosyncrasies, which reinforces the endeavors of thinkers and fosters a cognitive atmosphere that significantly influences the concepts and issues advanced by those involved (*ibid.*: 31). Tamm and Kull underscore "territorialisation of theory." According to this theory, the unity of space is more important than the temporal unity. This epistemological attitude allows including "in the archive of Estonian theory all the scholarly texts whose authors have been closely linked to Estonia, either through origin, study, or teaching" (*ibid.*: 33). Perhaps an analogous approach could yield fruitful results in the realm of the history of philosophy in Latvia. Firstly, this type of theory could be integrated with the intellectual history approach, which, as demonstrated in this article, enjoys popularity among the historians of philosophy in Latvia. Secondly, similar to Estonia, many non-Latvian thinkers have contributed significantly to the evolution of the philosophical landscape in the region. The Latvian theory could thus serve as a unified framework for the history of philosophy in Latvia, thereby creating a cohesive narrative.

Conclusion

The approach to the history of ideas was predominant in the study of the history of philosophy in Latvia during the 1990s. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, it was important to reflect upon the Latvian culture as a part of the Western world. In the mid-1990s, several esteemed Latvian philosophers emphasized the critical importance of the scholarly dialogue surrounding methodologies. Historians of philosophy were highlighting the close ties between the Western and the Latvian cultures. The approach of the history of ideas provided the necessary framework to fulfill this task. Three volumes of the *History of Ideas in Latvia* were published. The term 'history of ideas' gained popularity in the Latvian cultural discourse. Nevertheless, in the middle of the twentieth century, Skinner and other philosophers criticized the approach of the history of ideas. Lovejoy's methodology did not address the motivation and the historical influences of philosophers. The intellectual history has been developed as an alternative approach. The intellectual history focuses on the conditions of ideas propagation and analyzes the link between ideas and the human activity. We can see that, in the past decade, the approach of the intellectual history has influenced studies on the Latvian history of philosophy. Researchers have been focusing on the intellectual networks of the thinkers; they have been analyzing the manuscripts, letters, and diaries of the Latvian philosophers.

Recently, an increased attention has been devoted towards studying the history of educational institutions. However, there are still many blank spots in the Latvian history of philosophy, and the historians must primarily reflect on some methodological questions so that to fill these intellectual gaps. A forthcoming challenge lies in devising approaches to integrate the diverse elements of the history of philosophy in Latvia into a coherent and unified framework. As posited in this article, a potential avenue to accomplish this objective could involve the development of the Latvian theory.

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