

# РЕЦЕНЗИИ И АННОТАЦИИ

## Maintaining and renewing traditions: a review of the *Baltic Journal of European Studies* (a Journal of Tallinn University of Technology)

*MALL KULASALU\**, *IRINA SOKOLOVA\*\**

\* Tallinn University of Technology, Tallinn, Estonia; mall.kulasalu@tseba.ttu.ee

\*\* Санкт-Петербургский филиал Института истории естествознания и техники  
им. С.И. Вавилова РАН, Санкт-Петербург, Россия; i\_sokolova@bk.ru

In October 2010 the 24<sup>th</sup> International Baltic Conference on the History of Science was held in Tallinn with a primary purpose to facilitate collaboration between the researchers of the Baltic region, identify common solutions to the problems faced by intellectual community today, define perspectives on the future and prioritise areas for further research.

A special edition of the *Baltic Journal of European Studies* — BJES (a journal issued by Tallinn University of Technology) was published to introduce a wider audience to a selection of the most significant peer-reviewed papers presented at the Baltic Conference on the History of Science. BJES is a successor to an already acknowledged research publication, until June 2010 entitled as *Proceedings of the Institute for European Studies (IES Proceedings)*, which has regularly appeared thanks to the commitment of the Department of International Relations of Tallinn University of Technology. The new title reflects the dynamic development the publication has undergone, conveys a conceptual meaning, and refers to the inevitability of broadening the reach of research contacts by encouraging more authors/researchers from the Scandinavian and Central and Eastern European countries to contribute to the publication.

The collection of selected conference papers provides the reader with a complete overview of the main research trends in the field of history, philosophy and research methodology observed in the conference talks, and also gives an excellent insight into general field-related issues that have recently been under discussion among scholars. The logical structure of the publication enables the reader to gradually explore all the key themes included in the conference programme, and grasp the most topical issues concerning the research done in the particular field in different

European countries. The contents have rather arbitrarily been categorised into five sections. The first one includes the talks of the plenary session, and mostly concentrates on general issues related to the topical developments in specific research activities carried out in the Baltic region. Jānis Stradiņš, in both of his articles — “Foundation of the Baltic Association of the History and Philosophy of Science (BAHPS)” and “The European Academy of Sciences and Arts: Its Impact on Latvia” (a co-author Anita Draveniece) — provides an analytical review of the foundation, history and activities of the association, which is mainly based on his own personal recollections, and scrutinises the position of BAHPS in the European research system deliberating on the feasibility of future cooperation with research institutions within and outside the region. Furthermore, the activities of BAHPS that has successfully carried on the tradition of the Baltic conferences on the history of science, which dates back to the year 1958, have also facilitated the compilation and publication of a truly special issue of the journal of BJES, which has made the talks of this particular conference available to the wider public. The paper presented by Juozas Algimantas Krik topaitis “The Joint Baltic Course of Intellectual Activity: A Relevant Subject for Discussion” represents an attempt to incorporate the dynamic development of the history of science in the Baltic countries during the 20<sup>th</sup> century into a common cultural and social context of the history of these countries. Undoubtedly, the experience of that kind of analysis is topical and valuable under current circumstances, where the globalisation process makes the practice of cooperation and consolidation between different countries inevitable, thereby also revealing the importance of maintaining countries’ original (including scientific research) traditions and cultural identity. A French philosopher Claude Debru’s paper, dedicated to human normativity and the role of logical norms in science — the issue, which has traditionally evoked active discussions among intellectuals, has been chosen to round off the section that deals with general issues.

In the second part of the collection emphasis has been laid on the complex issues related to philosophy and methodology of science. Meta- (post-) scientific knowledge, which is considered to be superior to the experience of scientific cognition, carries a systematic character that has clearly been observed in the papers published in this section. The topicality of the research aimed at ascertaining the relations between different research areas and cognitive activity cannot be discredited, hence it demonstrates the endeavours of intellectual community to discover the new methodological approaches that would complete the scientific picture of the world. Modern day controversial issues, which have given rise to active discussions on philosophy and methodology of science, have also attracted the conference speakers’ attention and been scrutinised in the papers. Special attention should be given to the highlight of this section, presumably one of the most significant and profound articles in the whole collection, presented by Rein Vihalemm, who has found it appropriate to specify the notion “practical realist philosophy of science” and argue the approaches of Karl Marx and some renowned modern day philosophers to the issue (Rein Vihalemm: Towards a Practical Realist Philosophy of Science). The papers which explore the relations between knowledge in scientific and non-scientific world (Peeter Mürsepp: Knowledge in Science and Non-Science), the position of religion in science (Enn Kasak: Some Aspects of Religiosity in Science), Estonian physics culture and formation of the system of cultural normativity of science (Endla L hkiivi: Identity and Rationality: Towards Normative Cultural Studies of Science) and metaphilosophy, which reaches the deep ecology, interpreted as an alternative to the established environmental philosophy



(Jan Radler: Arne Naess' Meta-Philosophy: from 'Empirical Semantics' to 'Deep Ecology') among the others undoubtedly appeal to the reader deserving special regard and deeper insight.

The bulkiest and also the most eclectic part of the journal "History of science, medicine and technology" concentrates on various historical-scientific research issues, involving vivid researches on the history of natural sciences, geological studies, folk botanical knowledge, fighting mental diseases and even the cycling culture in Estonia, which all are, in spite of their diversity, of great cultural and cognitive significance. Institutionalised history of science occasionally needs to be made more available for wider public and re-evaluated due to historical and/or political reasons, therefore the need to critically reconsider the actual contribution of some acknowledged public figures and scientists, and also the importance of the scholarly activities of those who have unfairly fallen into oblivion, was dwelt upon in several conference papers. Probably one of the most intriguing approaches to the issue (Laima Petrauskiené and Jadvyga Olechnovi ien : The Fame of Scientists: Does It Reflect Their Real Contribution to Science?) sheds light to the actual research activities and fame of the two Lithuanian well known biologists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In this section the peculiarities of formation and development of different social and cultural structures, which have contributed to the development of social sciences, a network based on the analysis of the history of the congresses of Russian naturalists and physicians in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Marina Loskutova: Public Science as a Network: The Congresses of Russian Naturalists and Physicians in the 1860s–1910s), and reflections on general historical regularities related to the establishment of scientific research traditions in the Baltic States have also been addressed by different authors. The conference papers published in this section give the reader a multifaceted insight into a diverse range of approaches to history of science, open up new viewpoints, provoke fresh ideas and provide ample material for further research.

The fourth section of the collection categorised as "History of the humanities and education" gives a comprehensive overview of the papers where the issues related to development of lexicography, linguistics and higher education in some countries of the Baltic region in the 17<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> centuries have been analysed from the historical-scientific point of view (Andrejs Veisbergs: Overview of the Early Development of the Lexicography of the Three Baltic Nations from 17th to 19th century), the development and reformation of the Estonian literary language (Helgi Vihma: On the Origin of the Ideas of Estonian Language Reformer Johannes Aavik), the dynamics of educational standards in Estonia after the WWII, the role of important historical figures, such as Woldemar Justus Konstantin Malmberg and Georges Frédéric Parrot in the development of university education in Tartu and Moscow. In addition, general theoretical and methodological problems and developments in pedagogy, and some other topical modern day issues concerning humanities have been set forth in this section.

The collection has been concluded with short informative communications which present the findings of several research teams, for example an overview of the preparation process for publishing an encyclopaedic dictionary, which includes the biographies of the research biologists, who had been excluded from the history of Russian biology, and some useful information about the research institutions and societies, and also periodicals (Anastasia A. Fedotova: Encyclopaedic Dictionary Biology in St Petersburg 1703–2008), and an article that introduces an exhibition dedicated to the bicentenary of Professor Nikolay Ivanovich Pirogov, a Russian surgeon, anatomist, naturalist, scientist and physician, held in the Paul Stradins Museum of the History of Medicine in Riga in 2010. In addition to the abovementioned conference papers the special edition of the *Baltic Journal of European Studies* also contains an overview of all the talks given at the follow-up seminar on the history of natural sciences in Russia, Finland and the Baltic States, which was held in December 2010 in Tallinn.