

*Nada Vaverová*

REVIEW ON A BOOK BY PAVEL ŠTOLL:  
Latvian Culture and the Moravian Church. The Czech  
Context of Latvian Cultural Traditions

Štoll, P., *Latvian Culture and the Moravian Church. Czech Contexts of Latvian Cultural Traditions in the 17th-20th Centuries*, Prague: Karolinum 2013, 323 pp., ISBN 978-80-246-2284-2

The monograph created on the basis of the doctoral dissertation *Latvian culture and Moravian Church. Czech Contexts of Latvian Cultural Traditions in the 17th-20th Centuries* by a Czech lettonist provides a detailed insight into permeation of Czech cultural and literary traditions into the Latvian area. Even though the author places his book into the Czech and Slovakian translation and literary-science Baltistic context, it comprises the first systematic research of its kind.

The author assumes a gestalt philology viewpoint and lists two different approaches as methodology sources: a structurally-semiotic based on Tartu school and a receptionally-hermeneutic one. Due to the fact that most of the texts originate in the National Revival era, when the non-aesthetic functions of literature played a significant role, the author chooses Lotman methodology and, in accordance with the connection to domestic Baltistic tradition, its Czech continuation in processing of semiotic-typological studies of the national era culture penned by V. Macura. The researched subject is defined by certain Latvian cultural traditions from the 17th-20th century and their Czech contexts, which have been mediated mostly through German Herrnhut (Czech: Ochránov) passed reform movement of the revived Moravian Church. Inspired by the Moravian Church preacher J. A. Comenius, whose influence is mapped in the work, the monograph employs a triadic division of separate cultural contexts for its structure. The division *Sapientia Mentis* (Wisdom of Mind) notices the beginnings of Latvian education and science popularisation, and thus follows up on Comenius' ideas from the area of paedagogics and didactics, which have met with acceptance in Latvia through the efforts of the pastors E. Glück and probably G. F. Stender as well. Similarly, as the research of

Czech and Slovak literary-science, Baltistics is summarised in the introduction. Fundamental historic and religious facts relating to the Latvian country and typologisation of Latvian National Revival according to M. Hroch are presented in the following chapter. The *Sapientia Mentis* first presents a researched list of facts relating to the influence of Comenius' works in the Baltics. Apart from that, through a literally genetic line represented by his son-in-law, a Moravian Church bishop and politician Petr Figul Jablonský in Klaipėda, and grandson D. A. Jablonský in Lithuanian Biržiai, Comenius' thoughts had been spread by the Tartu university professors and even his textbooks can be tracked throughout Latvia. Since "knowledge is for Comenius inseparably connected with faith in God" (p. 63), further, at least typologically, followers of Comenius had become the above-mentioned pastors. The chapter further treats Czech influences in the culture of Latvian National Revival, noteworthy of which is the Latvian translation of a poem from the compilation *The Hundred-Leaved Rose* by Čelakovský, whose musical rendition is among the most popular Latvian songs to this day. Another important inspiration by the Czech National Revival would be orthography. Whilst this fact is rarely-known nowadays, a professor of the Charles University, Josef Zubatý, was among the godfathers of the modern Latvian orthography.

The second part of Comenius' triad, *Pietas Cordis* (Piousness of Heart), presents an insight into the Latvian Herrnhuterian Movement and Czech-Latvian musical contacts; further it typologises Livon Herrnhuterian culture using Lotman semiotics, and divides texts into primary, secondary and tertiary using Gérard Genet's terms of transtextuality, intertextuality, architextuality, metatextuality and paratextuality combined with the viewpoint of genre-stylistic character. Under these criteria, the primary Herrnhuterian texts are defined as "architexts of Herrnhuterian literature, which were created in the Herrnhuterian community and for its needs" (p. 162) and their vast majority comprises of manuscripts with a distinct religiously-ethical or social dimension. Beletry with Herrnhuterian thematics written outside the Herrnhuterian movement, and not intended for its purposes, is classified as secondary. The author compiles a list of works (among which the chronologically first is the first Latvian realistic novel at all, *Times of the Land-Surveyors* by the Kaudzīte brothers) by important Latvian authors in this chapter, among whom one can find R. Blaumanis, K. Skalbe and J. Veselis. The author then analyses the pivotal works (*Times of the Land-Surveyors* and J. Poruks' drama *Herrnhuterians* and several other his proses) and proceeds from then, via, in Latvian culture frequently appearing so called the "pure in heart", the "white robe" symbol and the good simpleton Antiņš to analysis of tertiary texts, which are all called the "Culture of Heart". The tertiary texts differ from the primary and secondary ones in the fact that they do not specifically mention the Herrnhuterian movement, yet can be genetically or typologically connected to it. This part is concluded with the introduction of life

and work of a Latvian writer, literary researcher and a translator of Czech prose and poetry, Marta Grimma.

In the last part of the triad, *Tranquillitas Vitae* (Peace of Life), the book delves into texts emphasizing social, national or political themes. If until now J. A. Comenius was the main link to the Latvian area among the significant people in the Czech culture and history, this part focuses on the reflection of Jan Hus, especially of his (idealised) life. Besides Jan Hus, this part treats the strongly morally functioning Livon brethren codex, which is compared with the previous German and Comenius' Moravian Church codices.

The entire book is, with systematic consistence, divided into chapters (with the core of the work structured into the mentioned Comenius' triad), sub-chapters and smaller parts; it includes an English résumé, a pictorial supplement and a name index. The author places Latvian reflexions of Czech culture into the European frame using his broad knowledge going beyond Lettonistic literary science and remembers to consider a combination of influences (e.g. the influence of domestic folklore tradition). His research builds on the work of Latvian colleagues pursuing the Latvian Herrnhuterian movement. He also hints at the possibility of further research of the Estonian Herrnhuterian movement. The publication deserves attention of anybody interested in the fates of the Moravian Church, Latvian literature and culture in general.