

FOREWORD

The 500th anniversary of the one of crucial points in the history of European culture – the Reformation – is approaching in two years. We are on the threshold of an outstanding event that shook all the conventional frameworks of religious tradition and restarted the thinking of the society in Central and Northern Europe. The spring of Renaissance humanism, under the symbolic name and content of the Reformation, reached the Nordic centres of education – Wittenberg, Rostock, Greifswald, and the trading centres like Riga, Tartu, Tallinn (Reval) – and changed the world outlook in many countries based on the expanding pragmatism of a new age, and turned it into the social, economical, cultural and religious phenomenon called the Nordic Renaissance. How deep Italian renaissance humanism could touch and activate the intellectual minds of educated society in Switzerland, the Low Countries, Bohemia, Livonia and Scandinavia - these questions have been topics of debate for long time. And this current volume with its list of articles provides a new look at the less investigated problems related to the transfer of the ideas of Renaissance humanism into the culture of the Reformation.

It would seem too ambitious, if we were to define as our main task as providing conclusive answers to all these questions. But the development of European thought in certain fields of research from time to time meets varying outbursts of scholarly interest that correlates to the rise and fall of the volume of theoretical and practical studies. Volume No. 9 of the *Baltic Journal of Art History* with its six generalizing articles and three additional theoretical and practical surveys presents a wide scope of the phenomena in art and architecture from 15th to 17th century. And under the magic number “9” I would like to see not only the magic of the numerology but also the magic of the continuous interest of outstanding scientists in questions related to the birth of modern history, society and culture that, in general, created a system of axiological values that we still use and live within today.

We can feel very proud about the participation of Professor Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann from Princeton University, who in his article “Baltic Reflections”, raises the intellectual temperature of our volume. With his

thoughts on questions related to the *Arte dominium* that deal with the problems of regionalism in the culture of the Baltic countries and the intersection of cultural contacts, Professor Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann stresses that the problem of “the periphery and the centre” has an ambivalent character. He proposes that greater success could be achieved by employing the Venn diagram from mathematical set theory to the analysis of similar questions in the Humanities.

The authors of several other articles deal with the analytical and theoretical approach to reflect on different art phenomena of Reformation period. For example, in his article “Evidence of the Reformation and Confessionalization Period in Livonian Art” Dr. habil. art. Ojārs Spārītis deals with the studies in iconography and composition related to the memorial and devotional sculpture in Livonian part of contemporary Latvia in order to identify early Renaissance features. In her article “Swedish Church Art from the Introduction of the Reformation in 1527 till the Synod in Uppsala 1593” Swedish art historian Dr. art. Inga Lena Ångstrom Grandien offers a wide range of early Protestant artefacts and deep look into their formal, stylistic and cultural history. British art historian Dr. art. Simon McKeown who specializes mainly in emblem studies and the historical and cultural background in his present article “Configuring Virtue: The Emergence of Abstraction, Allegories and Emblem in Swedish Figural Sculpture of the Seventeenth Century” examines the problem related to the transfer of allegoric and emblematic content in Swedish sculpture at the time of Barocco. The victorious march of Gustav Adolph Vasa, the King of Sweden across the countries of Europe at the beginning of the 17th century caused the appearance of a large variety of artefacts and Simon McKeown devotes his energy to describing the complicated meta language of political rhetoric.

Werner von Sengbusch, a German architect with long experience in art studies, provides a serious survey on the origins and authenticity of the Kerckring Altarpiece from St. Annen-Museum in Lübeck. His article “Der Kerckring-Altar von Jacobus van Utrecht. Lübecker Meister von 1520 aus der Brederloschen Gemäldesammlung in Riga, heute in St. Annen-Museum der Hansestadt Lübeck als Stiftung der Familie von Sengbusch” illustrates the attribution of the altarpiece to Flemish painter Jacobus van Utrecht, a counterpart of Jan Gossaert and Jacob Cornelisz from Amsterdam and reveals a fascinating story about the conditions and geography of the migration of the art work. This article serves as an

introduction to the next essay by Dr. habil. art. Juhan Maiste, professor at the University of Tartu, who enriches the volume with his article “A Genius and His Myth: The Known and Unknown Michel Sittow”. With deep knowledge in arts supported by powerful intuition professor Juhan Maiste has investigated the life and creativity of the world-class Flemish painter of the Renaissance, Michael Sittow, migrating over several countries, including Tallinn (Reval). Rich in sources used to reconstruct the hypothetic and proven evidence for the identification of Michael Sittow’s traces and the attribution of his oeuvres.

Since the period of the Baltic Enlightenment, literary journals have including a thematic section called “Miscellanea” and this excellent tradition has also been adapted for our use and offers three separate articles for discussion. In his article “Die Gewölbekomposition der Kirche in Luggenhusen/Lüganuse” Kaur Altoa describes the method of identification and history of the Luggenhusen/Lüganuse Church, as well as characterises a type of Late Gothic vault and its construction. A report by Dr. art. Hilikka Hiiop informs the reader about the researched provided by infrared and chemical analysis of the medieval altarpiece in St. Nicholas Church in Tallinn. This altarpiece is attributed to Herman Rode from Lübeck and its examination provides more reliable evidence on the technology of the production Late Gothic artefacts. The last review written by art historian Holger Rajavee “On Tõnis Tatar’s PhD thesis *The Third Way in Soviet Estonian Art: Between the Avant-garde and the Power-minded*” analyses a new conceptual approach to the evaluation of Estonian art of the Soviet period from 1960s to 1987 provided by art historian Tõnis Tatar.

In conclusion everything included in the *Baltic Journal of Art History* No. 9/2015 can be generalised by paraphrasing a concept once proposed by Estonian art historian Dr. Sirje Helme. Her idea was the following: all research papers are works that cannot be ignored by any other forthcoming treatments related to the art history and theory of European art.

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