

Foreword

Our journal is keeping and developing its major focus at the same time. In the current issue, two new major geographical regions are involved. The first of these, Central Asia, shares the same recent historical background as the Baltic States, having been part of the Soviet Union. Therefore, re-establishing close academic cooperation that was almost non-existent for a couple of decades following the end of the Soviet era is welcome and even required. Colleagues from Kazakhstan have contributed in different ways. They are my co-authors in a comparative analysis of critical contextual empiricism and practical realism. In addition, there is an interesting informative paper about one of the most central ideas of the great Islamic thinker Abū Naṣr al-Farabi, the concept of the 'virtuous city'. By all evidence, al-Farabi was born in a region what today is Kazakhstani territory.

Another new region added to the list of contributions to *Acta Baltica Historiae et Philosophiae Scientiarum* is Latin America. Diego Pérez Lasserre from Chile presents his analysis of an important issue in the methodology of approaching legal judgments concentrating on determining and reflective judgments.

There is a special reason for the inclusion of the lengthy article by Heldur Sander describing the life and activities of Gottfried Albrecht Germann, the first professor of natural history and the founder of the Botanical Garden of the University of Tartu in the early 19th century. Germann died at the age of 36, apparently from tuberculosis, but has left a very solid mark in the history of the leading university in Estonia. This autumn, the University of Tartu is celebrating its centenary as the national Estonian-language university. Therefore, the most interesting developments and personalities in the history of the University have to be brought to the awareness of colleagues in our field and beyond.

Unfortunately, there are very sad news to convey to our readers. One of the most important academic personalities in the Baltic States, Jānis Stradiņš passed away on November 29 at the age of 85. Professor Stradiņš was the president and vice-president of the Latvian Academy of Sciences. Having his scientific background

in chemistry, he was one of the initiators and regular active contributors to systematic research in the history of science in the Baltic States. For many years, he was the chairperson of the Latvian Association for the History and Philosophy of Science. Jānis Stradiņš also served several terms as the president of the corresponding Baltic Association. He was highly decorated at the state level in Latvia, France and Estonia. Needless to say, Jānis Stradiņš was the member of our journal's Editorial Board. In addition to all the professional achievements and merits, Jānis Stradiņš was a very nice and friendly person, always pleasant to communicate with. A longer obituary to Jānis Stradiņš will appear in the Spring 2020 issue of *Acta Baltica*.

Still, let us end on a positive note. Raul Veede has reviewed a book which makes a difference in the intellectual history of Estonia and the adjacent regions in the first half of the 19th century—the life story of the first rector of the reopened University of Tartu, Georges Frédéric Parrot, by Epi Tohvri, a member of our Editorial Board. The book is so much more than just an extended biography of an outstanding personality. It provides the reader with an understanding of the cultural and academic circumstances of a whole geographical region in a historically significant period.

I am glad to welcome Dr Ramunas Kondratas, chairperson of the Lithuanian Association for the History and Philosophy of Science, as our new Editorial Board member.

Peeter Müürsepp
Editor-in-Chief