

Leonid Arbusow (1882–1951) und die Erforschung des mittelalterlichen Livland.
Hrsg. Ilgvars MISĀNS, Klaus NEITMANN, Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2014. –
384 S. ISBN 978-3-412-22214-7

Vacys Vaivada
Klaipėda University

For researchers who have encountered Leonid Arbusow's work in any way, 2014 must be a special year. Sixty-three years after the death of this renowned Latvian historian, a collective study has been published which summarises his research, and offers an opportunity to take another look at his life and work. The book's appearance is even more topical for coinciding with the anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation in Livonia. Here we should note that even today, Arbusow's study of this phenomenon remains one of the pillars of writing on the Livonian Reformation.¹

Some readers may need reminding that sometimes in German literature Arbusow's name is accompanied by the epithet '*der Jüngere*', since his father Leonid Arbusow (1848–1912) was also a historian, and the subjects of the work by both father and son are closely related. Arbusow the elder wrote a study about the Livonian clergy from the end of the 12th to the 16th century.² Both men collaborated on the major source publication *Liv-, Est- und Kurländisches Urkundenbuch*. The father worked mostly on the volumes of the second *Abtheilung*, while his son contributed to the third (from 1911). Arbusow Jr studied (Lutheran) divinity in Dorpat (1902–1906), and history at the University of Göttingen (1906–1909). From 1914, he was involved in the activities of the *Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Altertumskunde der Ostseeprovinzen*, where he undertook to study the development of the Reformation in the Baltic provinces. Fate did not grant the younger Arbusow an easy life. He was a professor at the University of Latvia in Riga between 1922 and 1936, when he was forced out under pressure from K. Ulmanis. He took up a position at the Herder Institute in Riga until 1939. After the non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union (1939), he left the country and worked in German-occupied Poznań (1941–1945), before finding work after the war at the University of Göttingen. Despite the difficulties during his later life, his list of publications, as assessed in the appendix to this volume, is very rich, especially between 1935 and 1939, when he was expelled from the University of Latvia. Even during the difficult war years, he published important articles, reviews and textbooks. The intensity of his own work and the search for links between students of history across the Baltic region posthumously won Arbusow Jr recognition from

¹ ARBUSOW, L. *Die Einführung der Reformation in Liv-, Est- und Kurland*. Leipzig, 1921.

² ARBUSOW, L. *Livlands Geistlichkeit vom Ende des 12. bis ins 16. Jahrhundert*. Mitau, 1902.

researchers and institutions, which culminated in 2007 with a conference in Riga devoted to the 125th anniversary of his birth. The conference was organised by the University of Latvia and the Baltic Historical Commission, with assistance from the Herder Institute in Marburg. The proceedings of the conference are presented in the volume under review here.

The book comprises two parts, and an appendix containing a list of Arbusow's published work. A glance at the list of contributors to this volume and their articles offers hope for a conceptual balance. The first part is devoted to Arbusow and his work. The extensive article by Klaus Neitmann, the director of the *Brandenburgisches Landeshauptarchiv*, a prolific specialist in the history of the Teutonic Order and Brandenburg, is outstanding here. Neitmann provides an attractively written and detailed analysis of Arbusow's life and work, distinguishing the major stages in the historian's development. We may concur with his conclusion that the solid and careful analytical studies of the development of the Reformation and source publications make Arbusow one of Latvia's outstanding mediaevalists. Neitmann's study provides a solid basis for the volume as a whole. Ilgvars Misāns, one of the best-known contemporary Latvian mediaevalists, provides a survey of Arbusow's studies of the history of Latvia, within the context of historical writing during his lifetime. Misāns reveals the difficult political context in which Arbusow wrote, a time when the national(ist) understanding of Latvian historical studies was thriving. Arbusow adhered to a conservative Baltic-German understanding of regional history, and this often put him in an ambiguous position. Like Neitmann, Misāns undoubtedly regards Arbusow as one of the leading 20th-century Latvian mediaeval and early-modern historians. Professor Matthias Thumser (Friedrich Meinecke Institute, Free University of Berlin) concentrates mainly on the contribution by Oskar Stavenhagen and Arbusow to the editing and publication of *Akten und Rezesse der livländischen Ständetage*, and the prospects for continuing the series today. Thumser concludes that the first volume of *Akten und Rezesse* was produced mainly by Stavenhagen, with later assistance from Arbusow Jr. The second volume was edited by Albert Bauer, and the third by L. Arbusow Sr. Thumser pays particular attention to Volume Three, and the shortcomings of all three volumes, advertising plans to renew the publication of the series, on which he will work with K. Neitmann. In his article devoted to one of Arbusow's most solid studies, *Die Einführung der Reformation in Liv-, Est- und Kurland*, Dr Bernhart Jähmig, a long-time employee of *Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz*, explores the main circumstances surrounding the writing of the book, and the stages in its composition and structure. The study complements the above-mentioned study by Neitmann. Inna Pölsam-Jürjo, a researcher at Tallinn University's Institute of History, concentrates on Arbusow's studies of ancient Livonian culture in the context of early-20th century historical writing in Germany

and the Baltic region which influenced him. Although Pöltsum-Jürjo notes that Arbusow contributed markedly to studies of ancient Livonian culture, she admits that his main work on the subject appears in studies of the Livonian Reformation, analyses of particular topics in Livonian history, and certain source publications. She notes that especially during the 1930s, Arbusow paid most attention to the former dominant (German) culture. For obvious reasons, only after the war did he look more closely at Latvian and Estonian folklore. An account by Peter Wörster (Herder Institute, Marburg) of Arbusow's material and collections, preserved mostly in Marburg and Lübeck, brings the first part of the volume to a close.

Part Two of the volume contains eight modern studies of mediaeval Livonia, in chronological order. The first two articles deal with the period when the new German order was introduced to the region, mainly by force. Both concentrate on the 13th-century context, and deal primarily with the topic of crusading. Raoul Zühlke (University of Münster) studies the annexation of central places, and their transformation to implement the new order. A precise analysis shows that the key to final success in inculcating German order in Livonia was the transformation of the system of ancient Livonian centres, and its replacement with a new order to assist the functioning of the new system of authority. The author notes interestingly that new fortifications were not built so much against as in line with the flow of the Daugava, starting upstream at Üxküll. In order to safeguard the security of Riga at the mouth of the Daugava, Bishop Albert needed to restrict the activity of the Semigallian port, and later the same policy was applied to other ancient Livonian centres. Tiina Kala (Tallinn City Archive) studies the preaching of the Word of God during the 12th century, which at least at first was done through the use of force. She studies both the forcible and peaceful conversions carried out by monks of various orders, and concludes that the first calls to crusade at the end of the 12th century were designed not to convert the local inhabitants to the new religion, but to strengthen the Church among the neophytes. The author says that the work of propagating the faith among pagans was of secondary importance to colonists. This was the case especially with the Teutonic Order, who had no need whatsoever for the swift and complete conversion of the pagans, which would have been ideologically inconvenient, given the need to portray the pagans as evil and dangerous to westerners. The Rhineland archivist Henrike Bolte assesses the state of the Livonian bishoprics during the Late Middle Ages. She claims that relations between the small dioceses and the Teutonic Order have not attracted much attention from historians, and she intends to amend this shortcoming. Although the Latvian historian Eva Eihmane stresses the crisis in 14th-century Livonia in the title of her article, she also analyses the 15th-century context, noting that in this period papal mediation played a very important part in relations between the Teutonic Order and the Livonian clergy. Paweł Jeziorski (Toruń) deals

with marginal society in the larger Livonian towns during the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period, with particular reference to executioners and whores. He asserts that public contact with such groups came under stricter regulation at the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries, somewhat later than was the case in Germany. Even so, the reaction to prostitution was very similar throughout Latin Christendom. The threat of venereal disease encouraged restrictions in this aspect of public life. Juhan Kreem (Tallinn City Archives) deals with the history of the Teutonic Order in the 16th century, while Thomas Lange, who defended his doctoral thesis at Hamburg on Archbishop Wilhelm in 2013, writes on the archbishop's activities. Given the very complex political life of 16th-century Livonia, especially in mid-century, Archbishop Wilhelm's policies, which led to closer links with the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, had no alternative. The last article in Part Two comes from the pen of Professor Anti Selart (University of Tartu), and discusses the development of the Reformation in Livonia, and confessional aspects of the Livonian War. The author highlights the confessional nature of this conflict.

On the whole, we may say that the volume is quite well balanced, and its academic worth is undoubted. However, given that most attention is paid to Arbusow's published work in the first part of the volume, perhaps it would have been more logical to place his bibliography at the beginning rather than the end of the book. Even so, nothing can dampen the excellent impression the book conveys of the contribution made by Leonid Arbusow Jr to Livonian historical studies.