EDITORIAL NOTE

This book would never have appeared without the initial idea in 2013 to launch a research project on remembrance of the Great War in the southeast Baltic region. The Research Council of Lithuania generously funded it in 2015, enabling a team of four researchers to start work at Klaipėda University’s Institute of Baltic Region History and Archaeology. They set themselves the task of analysing meanings that were attributed to the Great War during the interwar period, i.e. at the stage when the experience of the Second World War had not yet overshadowed the first. When we undertook to take a closer look at the Lithuanians and the East Prussians, two different societies that experienced the war in a rather similar way, we did not even imagine what still undiscovered mines were waiting for us. This is especially true of Lithuania, where the Great War is still a topic that has scarcely been analysed by historians. The situation of research on the social, cultural and mental effects of this war is no better.

Having realised that the framework of a single project is too narrow to reveal all the aspects that were uncovered before our eyes, arousing our curiosity, my colleague Vytautas Jokubauskas and I decided to hold a special conference to discuss the Lithuanian experience of the Great War, and various aspects of the impact of the Great War on Lithuanian society. The event took place on 19–20 January 2017 in Nida, with kind contributions from the Thomas Mann Cultural Centre and the public institution Neringa Museums. It was attended by researchers from a variety of Lithuanian scholarly institutions. Some papers presented at the conference were made into articles for publication in this collection. The no less important attention paid by the international research community to this topic (which sometimes seems to be even greater than in Lithuania) encouraged us to publish most of the material in English.

In this, the 25th year of operation of the Institute of Baltic Region History and Archaeology, I am pleased to have the opportunity, with this collection of articles, to proceed with historical research on images, memories and identities that were initiated at the Institute two decades ago for the first time in Lithuania.

Vasilijus Safronovas

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1 The project ‘Remembrance of the First World War: A Comparative Analysis of Lithuania and East Prussia (before 1939)’ (grant No MIP-021/2015).