



UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON  
School of Slavonic and East European Studies

UNIVERSITY OF TARTU  
Faculty of Social Sciences and Education  
Institute of Government and Politics  
Centre for Baltic Studies

Catherine Gibson

**BORDERLANDS BETWEEN HISTORY AND  
MEMORY:  
LATGALIA IN MNEMOHISTORY**

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UCL Student Number: 13047269

Supervisor: Dr. Eva-Clarita Pettai

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## **Abstract**

This study investigates the relationship between how the past appears in collective memory, or ‘mnemohistory’ (J. Assmann 1997), and how history is recorded by historians as part of the historiographical accumulation of knowledge about the past. It argues that this distinction is important for our understanding of geographical borderlands, especially those which have been subject to numerous geopolitical border changes and where there is a divergence between what is remembered of the past in collective memory and what is recorded of the past in History. This study proposes a novel synthesis of concepts by applying Aleida Assmann’s (2011) distinction between functional memory and storage memory to borderlands in order to investigate the palimpsests-like layering of memory that occur there. Based on Aleida Assmann’s (2008a) concepts of ‘canon’ and ‘archive’, an interdisciplinary mixed methods approach to studying functional and storage memory in borderlands is developed using a combination of critical discourse analysis (CDA) of museums, qualitative survey analysis and an expert interview.

This theoretical framework is applied to the case study of Latgalia in eastern Latvia, which has thus far been largely neglected in the literature. The functional memory is studied through an analysis of the historical narratives presented in three museums and the storage memory landscape is examined through an expert survey of professional historians of Latgalia and an interview. The analysis exposes key differences between the functional memory and storage memory: whereas the mnemohistory of Latgalia is largely incorporated within the framework of the Latvian national canon, professional History research represents a more diversified and transnational memory. This study highlights how the mnemohistory of borderlands is subjected to the contradictory dynamics of nationalisation and marginalisation, the ways that the past can be mobilised in both the functional and storage memory realms as part of regional identity movements, and how borderland minorities can construct and maintain narratives about the past which diverge from the national canon. The theoretical framework developed in this study can be applied to further research on mnemohistory in borderlands and border regions.

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# INTRODUCTION

*'a place on the map is also a place in history'*

Adrienne Rich (1986: 212)

*'I prefer to see historians as the guardians of awkward facts, the skeletons in the cupboard of the social memory.'*

Peter Burke (1989: 110)

*'The archive is a kind of "lost-and-found office" for what is no longer needed or immediately understood.'*

Aleida Assmann (2008a: 106)

In February 2015 the Latvian media reported that a poster depicting a scene from the 1917 First Congress of Latgalistics in Rēzekne had been donated to the Latvian National History Museum (LNVM) by Gunārs Ciglis, an antiquities collector, businessman and Gulbenes County council deputy [Figure 1]. During the Congress, delegates from Latgale<sup>1</sup> (then, in eastern Vitebsk *gubernia*) voted in favour of joining the Baltic provinces of Kurlandia (Kurland) and southern Liflandia (Livland) in being part of a future independent Latvian state. The poster was printed in 1935 for schools as part of a campaign to promote 'national unity' during the period of Kārlis Ulmanis' rule. The occasion of the donation of the poster to the museum was used by journalists to reflect on the importance of this event in Latvian history: 'the history of the Rēzekne Congress is *clear proof* of the Latgalian political unity with other Latvians and call to territorially unified, autonomous Latvian establishment'<sup>2</sup> (Sprūde 2015).

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<sup>1</sup> This study is concerned with the uses of the past and the relationship between History and memory. To this end, places were (and are) known by different names to different people at different times. Bearing in mind the importance of language to nationalism and to minimise anachronism, this study uses place names according to the usage of the people in question at the relevant period, for example Dünaburg/Dyneburg/Dvinsk/Daugavpils. Likewise, when speaking about the region of my case study generally, the English-language 'Latgale' (rather than the Latvian *Latgale* or the Latgalian *Latgola*) is used as an ideologically neutral toponym. Names written in Russian and Belarusian Cyrillic are transliterated using the corresponding Library of Congress Romanisation systems. For the letters І, Ъ, Ѡ and V that were eliminated in the orthographic reform of 1918, the Church Slavonic table was consulted.

<sup>2</sup> My emphasis. All translations are mine unless indicated.



**Figure 1.** Poster depicting the First Congress of Latgalistics in Rēzekne, 1935. Photo by Roberta Kaniņa (LNVM).

The transformation of this small meeting of local intelligentsia into a key part of the founding mythology of the Latvian nation-state is an illustration of how events can assume an ‘afterlife’, that is, ‘the past that becomes actual in the present, or the past that haunts the present’ (Tamm 2015: 9). At a time when there are increasing concerns in Latvia about pro-Russian sentiments among a radical minority in Latgalia, this is an example of how broader political and social events (inside and outside of the country) can impact on the afterlife of history. The Congress is used as a symbolic reminder of the historical ‘solidarity’ between Latgalia and the Latvian nation-state (‘Latvijas Nacionālajā vēstures muzejā nonāk interesants plakāts’ 2015).

This study is concerned with the relationship between how the past appears in collective memory, what Jan Assmann (1997) terms ‘mnemohistory’, and how the past is recorded by historians as part of the historiographical accumulation of knowledge. The main argument of this study is that this conceptual difference is important for our



understanding of geographical borderlands<sup>3</sup>, especially those which have been subject to numerous geopolitical border changes such as Latgalia, where a divergence can be observed between what is remembered of the past in collective mnemohistory and what is recorded of the past in History<sup>4</sup>.

The principle aim of this study is to investigate how cultural memories of the history of borderlands differ between History and mnemohistory. Most literature on the relationship between History and memory in borderlands and border regions has focused thus far on mnemonic battlegrounds where conflicting (often national) narratives about the past converge (Traverso 2012). However, these discussions on the relationship between history, memory and borders have been largely empirical and the literature still lacks clear conceptual frameworks. This study contributes to the literature by proposing a novel synthesis of concepts from different disciplines: it applies Aleida Assmann's (2011) distinction between functional memory and storage memory to studies of the cultural memory of borderlands.

By shifting the focus beyond memory politics and the mnemonic contestations of border regions between states, the study draws attention to how multiple layers of historical memory of a borderland can coexist. This palimpsest-like layering of cultural memory is a more subtle and yet at the same time much more pervasive form of 'banal nationalism' (Billig 1995) than the 'hot' nationalism of openly contested border regions. Consequently, the concept of layered or multi-scalar cultural memory developed in this study has the potential to be applied to a wide range of borderlands, and not just those few that are openly contested.

The second claim to originality in this study is that these dynamics will be explored using the case study of Latgalia which has thus far been largely neglected in the literature on history and memory in the territories of former Poland-Lithuania (Zajas 2013). For example, Latgalia and Latvia are noticeably absent from Timothy Snyder's

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<sup>3</sup> I distinguish between 'border regions' as historically, culturally and/or ethno-linguistically distinct territories that bisect state borders such as Kurdistan and Sápmi (Lapland), and 'borderlands' which are largely contained within a single state, such as Latgalia or Silesia (Passi 1996; Donnan and Wilson 1999).

<sup>4</sup> The terms 'History', 'history' and 'historiography' are used in this study to refer to three distinct concepts. 'History', what E. H. Carr (1961) referred to as 'history with a capital H', denotes the formal Rankean and 'scientific' inquiry into mankind's past. This distinguishes it from 'history', meaning simply 'the past' or the aggregate of earlier events. 'Historiography' refers to the body of Historical work on a particular subject, as well as approaches (ie. different methodological schools of History) and genres (ie. political or social History). In English, the distinction is often obfuscated but German clearly separates *Geschichtswissenschaft* (History), *Geschichte* (history), and *Geschichtsschreibung* (historiography).

(2003) book on the successor states of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Nonetheless, Latgalia provides an ideal case on which to study the dynamics and differences between mnemohistory and History. Through an analysis of the extent and means by which the history of Latgalia is remembered in historical narratives and collective mnemohistory, this study reveals that whereas the mnemohistory of Latgalia is present-focused and remembers the history of the region within the conceptual framework of the Latvian nation-state, the historical memory of Latgalia stores a more diversified and transnational understanding of the region's past.

The structure of this study is as follows. Chapter 1 discusses the well-trodden key theoretical frameworks of nationhood, History and memory that underpin this analysis. The discussion argues that these concepts converge around J. Assmann's concept of 'mnemohistory' and A. Assmann's distinction between functional and storage memory. An examination of the implications of these theories for the study of borderlands follows. Chapter 2 frames the case study by, firstly, taking A. Assmann's concepts of 'canon' and 'archive' as a starting point for developing a novel methodological approach to investigating functional and storage memory in borderlands and, secondly, discussing its application to the specific case of Latgalia. The case selection and key methods of analysis used in this study are discussed and a brief historical overview of the region is also given. Chapter 3 begins with an account of how Latgalia is remembered in functional memory based on an analysis of three history museums. This is then compared to how Latgalia is remembered in storage memory based on data collected from Latgalian history experts. The study takes an interdisciplinary approach, combining social science and humanities methods of critical discourse analysis (CDA) of museum exhibitions, qualitative survey analysis and an expert interview (outlined in Chapter 2.2), to allow for an original insight into the workings of cultural memory of borderlands. In my conclusion, I draw together these various strands to reflect on the specific case of the cultural memory of the Latgalia and the potential wider applicability of this analytical approach for other borderlands.

# 1. LINKING HISTORY, MEMORY AND BORDERLANDS

This chapter weaves together the literature from three interdisciplinary fields that are rarely integrated in order to develop the key theoretical concepts informing this study. It begins with the broad concepts of history, nation-building and collective memory, and then applies them to the specific case of borderlands.

## 1.1 Nationhood and History

This study adopts a critical stance towards nations as entities that are socially constructed (Gellner 1996; Anderson 1983; Hobsbawm 1983). This approach avoids reifying the nation as something that is primordial, organic and self-contained (Özkirimli 2003; Connor 2004). Even Anthony Smith, who argues that contemporary national identities have pre-modern roots, acknowledges that modern nations are ‘fashioned’ from the motifs and myths of pre-modern ethnic groups or ‘*ethnies*’ (1986: 179). This line of thinking has been particularly important for research into Central and Eastern Europe. The reorganisation of political space along ostensibly national lines occurred only relatively recently in the wake of the collapse of the multi-ethnic, religious and linguistic empires of the Romanovs, Habsburgs and Ottomans after World War I. This was based on the political principle that the ‘political and national unit should be congruent’ (Gellner 1983: 1) and, more specifically, that each ethno-linguistic group should have its own nation-state in fulfilment of the ‘normative isomorphism of language, nation and state’ (Kamusella 2006; 2009). This credo of ‘national self-determination’ was given legitimacy by Woodrow Wilson and Vladimir Lenin following World War I, although it is important to note that the process was far from complete: not every self-identifying ethno-linguistic group received its *own* nation-state and there were many minorities left on the ‘wrong’ side of state borders, making them the target of violent population transfers, ethnic cleansing and (re)nationalisation policies in the ‘bloodlands’ of twentieth century Europe (Synder 2010).

Rogers Brubaker, however, presents a methodologically-informed challenge to these discussions which he sees as being grounded in a fundamentally developmentalist

view of nations which takes for granted the very concept of ‘nations’ as entities (1996: 14-15). This applies to ‘primordialist’ and ‘perennialist’ interpretations as well as to ‘modernist’ or ‘constructivist’ explanations. For example, despite Snyder’s (2003) openly de-constructivist approach, he still takes the nation as its end-point. Instead, Brubaker argues that ‘we should think about nations not as substance but as institutionalised form, not as collectivity but as practical category, not as entity but as contingent event’ (1996: 18). He urges that we should avoid conceptualising nations as ‘categories of practise’ and instead think of them as ‘categories of analysis’ (1996: 15). Taking its lead from Brubaker, this study is concerned with ‘nationhood’ as an institutionalised cultural and political form and ‘nation’ as a category of social vision and division. In a similar vein, I use the term ‘identification’ to convey the importance of agency and to avoid reifying ‘identity’ as an object (Brubaker and Copper 2000: 14).

To this end, this study focuses on the means by which nationhood is constructed and maintained. For while academics have generally reached a consensus on the constructed nature of nationhood, there are wide-ranging explanations as to exactly *how* it is constructed. Benedict Anderson famously advanced the notion of the nation as an ‘imagined community’ (1983) to explain how a group who had never met face-to-face might identify as a collective. Anderson argues that national identification involved projecting sentiments of belonging and kinship beyond direct experience, but only up to the specific edge or boundary of the imagined community. Anssi Paasi builds on this by emphasising that this ‘imagined community’ also has a geographical dimension and national identification involves “‘circumscribing” and signifying territories in space’ (1996: 53).

As identification with the nation-state cannot rest on social relations, cultural identification - that is, shared knowledge and practises, representation, rituals and symbolism - plays a key role. Different theorists propose different ways in which nationhood is constructed through culture. Anderson (1983) argues for the importance of the spread of vernacular literature after the Reformation, the rise of print capitalism and the advent of mass readership in fuelling the development of national “‘imagining”’. This sits alongside the other so-called ‘modernists’ such as Ernest Gellner (1983) who stresses that mass education at the time of industrialisation was key to the genesis and cultivation of national sentiment. Central to all these theories however is the idea that

once national sentiment has been generated it needs to be actively maintained. While ‘nationhood provides a continual background for [states’] political discourses, [and] for cultural products’, this place cannot be taken for granted (Billig 1995: 8). Instead, nations must be constantly reproduced or performed through a ‘complex of beliefs, assumptions, habits, representations and practices’ (ibid.: 6). This elides with Brubaker’s view of nationhood as ‘institutionalised cultural and political form’ and ‘nationness’ as an event (1996: 21).

The past plays an important role in this process, investing the space of the nation with historical meanings that construct the nation as coherent, continuous and discrete. For Anderson (1983), a shared history – elements of the past remembered as well as elements forgotten – is crucial to the construction of an ‘imagined community’ whereby individuals and groups identify as part of a wider collective with a common present and future. The relationship between the past and the nationhood can be traced to the development in the nineteenth century of History as a discipline which occurred alongside the emergence of the ideology of nationalism and established itself as a profession closely linked to the construction of nation-states (Applegate 1999: 1159).

Historians have an important role in shaping knowledge about the past. On the one hand, historians can be regarded as one of the key ‘inventors of tradition’ (Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983) - the set of practises which inculcate myths, values and norms – which imply continuity with the historic past and provide legitimacy for the nation. At the same time, the past is not only the realm of the professional historian. Michael Billig (1995) developed the concept of ‘banal nationalism’ in reaction to the Marxist tenants of the likes of Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger who focus on the uses of history in the political struggle for hegemony among various social groups and who, consequently, focus only on nationalism in its most overt displays. Instead, Billig argues that the historical institutionalisation of nationhood is not only part of the master narrative that elite supporters of the nation-state or professional historians impose from the top-down to assert control over their citizenry, but permeates ordinary, everyday experiences. Billig reminds us that ‘banal does not imply benign’ (*Ibid* 6) and suggests that nationalism is actually most powerful in these banal forms the more normalized a nationalistic discourse becomes, the more powerful its mobilizing potential is and the

harder it is to challenge. However, as Billig laments, ‘the banal episodes, in which nationhood is mindlessly and countlessly flagged, tend to be ignored’ (*Ibid* 38).

## 1.2 Cultural Memory and *Mnemohistory*

Delving deeper into the relationship between how the past is understood in History and in memory, it is helpful to turn to the literature on memory studies. Much historical literature on memory examines the past only on the personal level, focusing on autobiographical memory and oral History methods (Thompson 2000). However, it is not especially helpful to historians concerned with larger groups. In this respect, the literature on collective memory suggests how individual memories of the past are established and confirmed through dialogue with others. This approach has more in common with the study of *histoire des mentalités* of the latter generation of the Annales School which studied the mind-sets of past cultural and social groups over the *longue durée*.

In the early twentieth century, Maurice Halbwachs most famously developed the concept of socially constructed ‘collective memory’ (1950: 131-5) to describe how *what* we remember is directly associated with *how* we remember and the social context within which the process of remembering occurs (Ricoeur 2004). As A. Assmann elaborates,

the individual’s memories become part of an intersubjective symbolic system and are, strictly speaking, no longer a purely exclusive and unalienable property. By encoding them in the common medium of language, they can be exchanged, shared, corroborated, confirmed, corrected, disputed, and even appropriated. (2008b: 99)

Moving beyond the social frames of memory, J. Assmann (1999) had already earlier proposed a four-part typology of collective memory: material memory (objects), mimetic memory (imitation), communicative memory (oral discussion), and cultural memory (written and visual carriers of information). The distinction between communicative and cultural memory is important for this study: communicative memory corresponds to the period when multiple eyewitness narratives circulate orally

and contest each other<sup>5</sup>, whereas cultural memory refers to a longer phase when the people who directly experienced the events have died and a society only has fragments and stories left as a reminder of past experience (Assmann 1999: 48-65). Earlier, J. Assmann described cultural memory as corresponding ‘to what Derrida calls “archive” and Bernstein “tradition”’ (Assmann 1997: 27). As this study examines the long historical perspective, the focus will thus be on ‘cultural memory’. Yet, according to J. Assmann, cultural memory ‘comprises that body of reusable texts, images, and rituals specific to each society in each epoch, whose “cultivation” serves to stabilise and convey that society’s self image’ (1995: 132). These objects constitute a kind of ‘objectified culture, designed to recall fateful events in the history of the collective’ (Kansteiner 2002: 182). Accordingly, it is unclear how cultural memory differs from ‘material memory’ (object), especially relating to museums, which J. Assmann identifies as being part of cultural memory.

Setting this contradiction aside, the concept of cultural memory nevertheless enables us to understand the role that representations of the past have in the construction of nationhood. As J. Assmann states, ‘cultural memory preserves the store of knowledge from which a group derives an awareness of its unity and peculiarity’ (1995: 130). It determines the general framework within which the past acquires meaning. Linking to Brubaker’s notion of the nation as an event or happening (1996: 21), cultural memory centres on ‘fixed points [consisting of] fateful events of the past, whose memory is maintained through cultural formation (texts, rites, monuments) and institutional communication (recitation, practise, observance)’ (Assmann 1995: 129). This relationship between past events, their narration and constructions of nationhood is rooted in the ideas of G. W. F. Hegel, who was interested in explaining how ‘the State [...] presents subject-matter that is not only *adapted*<sup>6</sup> to the prose of History, but involves the production of such history in the very process of its own being’ and which becomes ‘the perennial object of the formation and constitution of the State’ (1861: 63-4). Thus, cultural memory studies have tended to abandon the positivist investigation of the past in favour of research into the multiple ways in which images of the past are communicated and shared among the members of a community.

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<sup>5</sup> In this respect, oral History is one method of researching communicative memory (Thompson 2000).

<sup>6</sup> Emphasis in original.

Later, J. Assmann further refined his definition of cultural memory, describing it as both differentiated and exclusive (2008: 117) as not every member of the community is endowed with the legitimacy to influence the content of cultural memory and it is intrinsically related to power and tradition. He coined the term ‘mnemohistory’ (*Gedächtnisgeschichte*) to describe this phenomenon:

Unlike history proper, mnemohistory is concerned not with the past as such, but only with the past as it is remembered. It surveys the story-lines of tradition, the webs of intertextuality, the diachronic continuities and discontinuities of reading the past. (1997: 9)

Again, this concept builds on Hegel’s distinction between past events and narrations of the past:

[...] the term History unites the objective with the subjective side, and denotes quite as much the *historia rerum gestarum* [narrations of history], as the *res gestae* [what actually happened] themselves; on the other hand it comprehends not less what has happened, than the *narration*<sup>7</sup> of what has happened.’ (1861: 63)

Like Hegel, J. Assmann is concerned with the translation of the past over time. J. Assmann does not see History and mnemohistory as in opposition, but rather regards mnemohistory as a branch or sub-discipline of History (*Ibid* 9) or, as Hegel terms it, a discipline which ‘unites<sup>8</sup> the objective with the subjective’ (1861: 63). J. Assmann, however, argues that mnemohistory’s main departures from conventional History are that it is not concerned with the *synchronicity* and *factuality*<sup>9</sup> of the past, but instead studies the *actuality* of the past (1997: 9). We find a similar distinction elsewhere, such as Peter Burke’s concept of History as ‘recorded’ past and memory as ‘represented’ past (Burke 1989: 99) or in Pierre Nora’s view of ‘history [as] ... the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer. Memory ... [as] a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present’ (1989: 8).

There have been various applications of mnemohistory to historical research. Marek Tamm (2013: 464) suggests that one of the earliest examples is *Le Dimanche de Bouvines* (1973), in which Georges Duby argues that the importance of the Battle of

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<sup>7</sup> Emphasis in original.

<sup>8</sup> My emphasis.

<sup>9</sup> Taking my lead from Burke, I interpret Assmann’s use of the term ‘factuality’ not in the positivist sense, but as meaning ‘anomalies’ (Burke 1989: 113). Nonetheless, Assmann’s opposition of the supposedly objective history with subjective mnemohistory is problematic. I return to this point below.



Bouvines in 1214 lies not in the event itself, but in the way it was subsequently interpreted. More recently, Tamm himself edited a collection on *The Afterlife of Events: Perspectives on Mnemohistory* (2015). However, both these works take an event-centred approach to mnemohistory. While Brubaker has shown that ‘nationness’ can be viewed as a contingent event or ‘happening’ (1996: 21), it is not limited to this. Mnemohistory can also be applied to master narratives of nationhood; indeed, this was J. Assmann’s original context for developing the term ‘mnemohistory’ for how historical narratives of Egypt’s past accumulate over time and are actualised in the present.

Although A. Assmann does not specifically use the term ‘mnemohistory’, preferring to formulate her arguments around ‘cultural memory’, she is clearly dealing with the same concept of the usable past. This study puts the works of these two theorists together to show how A. Assmann makes an important practical elaboration on J. Assmann’s theory of mnemohistory. Instead of J. Assmann’s more abstract focus on the opposition between objectivity (*factuality*) and subjectivity (*actuality*), with its positivistic assumption that History is objective and factual, A. Assmann proposes that we distinguish between ‘functional memory’ (*Funktionsgedächtnis*) and ‘storage memory’ (*Speichergedächtnis*). In the former, fragments of the past are ‘culturally framed’: ‘unstructured, unconnected fragments are invested with perspective and relevance; they enter into connections, configurations, compositions of *meaning*’ (2011: 127). The latter refers to the ‘amorphous mass’ of ‘unused and unincorporated memories that surround the functional memory like a halo’ (*Ibid* 123-5). This distinction is helpful for our understanding of the relationship between mnemohistory, which can be seen as a form of ‘functional memory’, and History, a type of ‘storage memory’. Collective agents, such as states and nations, create functional memories by adapting versions of the past and defining goals for the future. It makes a political statement and profiles a distinct identity. Storage memory, on the other hand, has ‘no virtual ties to the present and no bearing on identity formation’; it is the preserver of memories that are not considered relevant by the present frames of functional memory (*Ibid* 127). Both functional and storage memory are subjective ways of remembering the past, but the different social contexts in which they emerge result in the construction of different cultural memories of the past. This theme will re-emerge in the next chapter.

A. Assmann argues that when researching the past and the memory of the past in the present, it is important to distinguish between functional memory (mnemohistory) and storage memory (History). However, we should not examine these two approaches in isolation, but rather in terms of ‘creating a perspective, separating a visible foreground from an invisible background’ (2011: 125-6).

[T]he borders between functional memory and storage memory remain permeable [...] Without this border traffic between the different realms of cultural memory, drawing upon a reservoir of unused possibilities, alternatives, contradictions, criticisms, and unremembered incidents, change would be excluded and memory would be fixed and made absolute. (*Ibid* 130)

An understanding of these ‘borders between functional and storage memory’ is particularly relevant for the study of borderlands. It provides a framework to explore how the history of a borderland may be used as a tool for constructing a sense of nationhood in the functional memory of the inhabitants. Equally, it draws our attention to how History can function as a ‘kind of “lost-and-found office” for what is no longer needed or immediately understood’ (Assmann 2008a: 106).

### **1.3 Borderlands in History and Mnemohistory**

While there has been a burgeoning body of scholarship on borderlands and regions since the 1980s, interest specifically in their history has only recently started to become more widespread (Kuroopka 2010; Bartov and Weitz 2013; Readman et al. 2014). This represents a shift away from concerns of ‘where the border is’ to the ‘b/ordering of space’ (van Houtum 2005: 675) and its social construction (Diener and Hagen: 2009). Indeed, Lloyd Kramer claims that ‘the history of borderland regions, peoples, and cultural exchanges has become one of the most innovative areas of contemporary historical scholarship’, and that ‘borderlands are geographical, political, and social spaces where lines between cultures become blurred, and this blurring of boundaries extends also to the influence of borderlands history on the familiar categories of historical analysis’ (2014: 312).

This study follows stead by arguing that the writing of the history of borderlands and regions necessitates a rethinking of some of the basic theoretical and methodological assumptions we make about writing traditional (nationally-orientated)

History (Gibson 2015a). Moreover, this is particularly pertinent to Central and Eastern Europe where the stability of borders has often been the exception rather than the rule.<sup>10</sup> The geographical landscape of much of Eastern Europe, consisting of rolling hills, small lakes and marshland, forests and farmland, yields no obvious topographical borders between Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, Russia, Ukraine and Poland. Most rivers bisect states rather than mark boundaries between political entities. Instead, borders have often ‘migrated’ over populations throughout history (Bös and Zimmer 2006). For example, the poet Adam Mickiewicz was born in Zaosie in the Russian Empire 1798, in a region which until the Third Partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1795 had been part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and which is now the village of Zavošse in Belarus. Lithuania and Belarus claim Mickiewicz (or Adomas Mickevičius in Lithuanian, Adam Mitskevich in Belarusian) to be part of their national literary-cultural heritage and although he is best known as Poland’s national poet because he wrote in Polish, from a contemporary geographical perspective he never actually set foot in Poland. More recently, the multiple border movements in the last century in the border region of Transcarpathia gave rise to a humorous anecdote:

A visitor, encountering one of the oldest local inhabitants, asks about his life. The reply: “I was born in Austria-Hungary, I went to school in Czechoslovakia, I did my army service in Horthy’s Hungary, followed by a spell in prison in the USSR. Now I am ending my days in independent Ukraine.” The visitor expresses surprise at how much of the world the old man has seen. “But no!,” he responds, “I’ve never left this village!” (Batt 2002: 155)

Although both these are extreme examples, the phenomenon of ‘migrating borders’ occurred to some degree throughout much of Central and Eastern Europe.

In spite of this, in the collective memory of nation-states, especially those inhabitants not living in the affected borderlands and border regions, there is often a ‘hyper-stability of border structures’ (Zhurzhenko 2011: 66). Borders are imagined as being fixed and naturally occurring, even when they are not. For example, the border treaty signed in February 2014 formalising the border between Estonia and the Russian Federation, which is also the external border of the European Union and NATO, at the time of writing has yet to be ratified by the Russian Federation. Territoriality is a key

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<sup>10</sup> Some borders, however, have remained relatively stable. The eastern border of the Holy Roman Empire with the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth or the boundaries between the Kingdom of Hungary, Poland-Lithuania and the Czech Crown survived for almost a millennium until 1918, and correspond closely to present-day borders. For an overview of border changes in the region, see Magocsi (2002).

instrument for the construction and legitimisation of nationhood and for the symbolic mapping out the ‘geo-body’ of a nation (Winichakul 1994; van Houtum 2012). As John Coakley writes, ‘ethnic communities feel a strong association with a particular, so-called “national” territory and use historical, pseudo-historical, or even mythical arguments to press claims to it’ (1993: 2). Elsewhere Ken Coates writes that ‘the modern state created, imposed, maintained, and empowered boundaries, not just by establishing border crossings and implementing custom duties but also in creating and sustaining a sense of national distinctiveness’ (1997: 166). This link between imaginings of nationhood and space means that border changes resulting in territorial gains are perceived by the state as corrections to bring about the ‘normative isomorphism of nation, state and language’ (Kamusella 2009), that is, in line with the perceived natural and rightful ‘geo-body’ of the nation-state. Border changes resulting in the loss of territory are perceived as illegal occupations of national homelands.

There is a vast literature on how historical memory, nationhood and territoriality function as catalysts for conflicts (Traverso 2012).<sup>11</sup> For the most part, this applies to the “hot” nationalism of headlines in current affairs, such as the border conflicts between Israel and Palestine on the Left Bank and, more recently, the Russian annexation of Crimea. However, borderlands and border regions can also provide fuel for more subtle and yet more pervasive ‘banal nationalism’ at the constellation of different national Histories and mnemohistories.<sup>12</sup> Situated at the locus of ‘migrating borders’ throughout history, these places today feature prominently in the functional and storage memory of multiple nation-states and ethno-linguistic groups and constitute important sites for the recovery and negotiation of memories. Even though the following examples are of regions that are not the sites of “hot” memory conflicts today, it must be noted that many of these regions were previously sites of tensions, conflicts, and wars. Detailed studies have been conducted on the Polish-Ukrainian border region that includes the city of Lemberg/Lwów/L’vov/L’viv (Zhurzhenko 2011), the role of Transylvania in both Hungarian and Romanian national mythologies (Kürti 2001; Blomqvist et al. 2013), the multiple (re)constructions of Albania’s borders (Kalemaj 2014), the

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<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, in most cases border-drawing has not resulted in open conflict, especially in the Baltic region: the Estonian-Latvian and Latvian-Lithuanian borders were established in 1919 and 1921 respectively through the work of commissions arbitrated by the British (Alston 2002).

<sup>12</sup> This is not always the case and some borderlands and regions have simply been forgotten in History and mnemohistory such as the *kresy* region, today in central Ukraine (Brown 2005).

Wilno/Vilnius region in the Polish and Lithuanian nationalist narratives (Snyder 2003), as well as in the lesser-known (internationally) Belarusian (Bazan 2014) and Jewish canons (Shneideman 1998), and the Kaliningrad oblast of the Russian Federation which is also part of the Germanic and Lithuanian mental maps (Sezneva 2000).

However, conceptual approaches that link history and mnemohistory as well as broader comparative frameworks have rarely been applied to studies of borderlands as ‘the emphasis on case studies of particular border localities persists’ (Wilson and Donnan 2012: 13). Addressing this gap, this study applies A. Assmann’s concepts of storage and functional memory to the study of how History and mnemohistory shape the cultural memory of borderlands. In doing so, the focus shifts away from the ‘geopolitics of memory’ (Zhurzhenko 2007) and the negotiation and contestation of memories of the past between states, to how multiple memories of the past are recovered and negotiated within a single nation-state in its relationship to its borderlands.

So far, there has been a tendency in the literature to focus either on storage or functional aspects of collective memories of the past. Studies focusing on the functional memory of borderlands have addressed diverse topics as the memory wars in the Ukrainian-Polish borderlands (Zhurzhenko 2013), Transylvania in Hungarian and Romanian imagination (Kürti 2001), and the German past in Kaliningrad (Berger 2010). Another popular approach has been to look at how particular historical events have been remembered in functional memory, such as the Shoah in Ukraine (Fainberg 2013), or the role of particular places, such as the myth of the Brest Fortress in Belarus (Marples and Rudling 2009). Anthropological approaches have also made a strong contribution to investigating functional memory in borderlands (Wilson 2012), for example, the development of a regional memory in Zagoria (southern Albania) (Pistrick 2008). Studies focusing on storage memory have looked at how the past is remembered mainly through the lens of historiography (Zahra 2005). However, there is very little crossover between these two approaches. This study develops a multi-scalar theoretical framework incorporating functional and storage memories of borderlands. The theoretical concepts developed in this study and applied to the case of Latgalia also have wider comparative potential, which have been largely missing from the literature that has thus far generally focused on single case studies (Baud and van Schendel 1997).

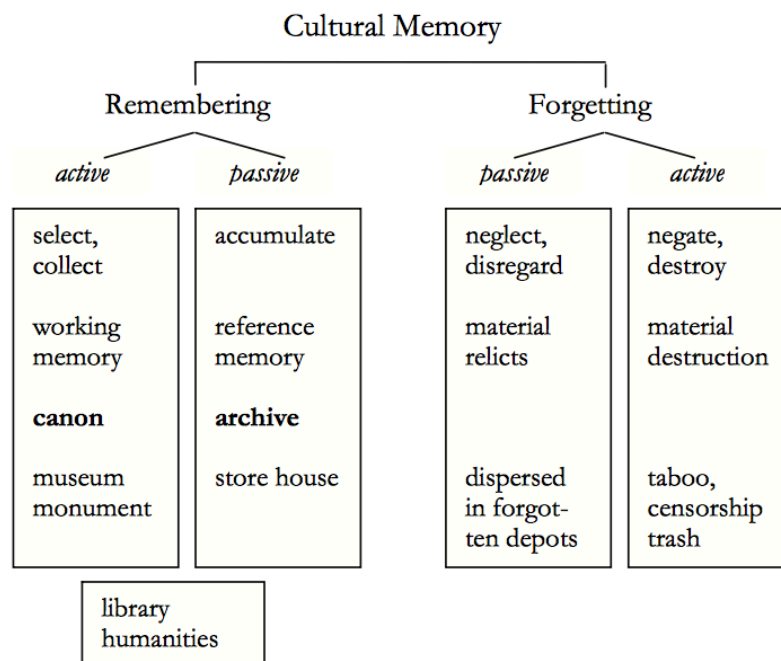
## 2. RESEARCHING CULTURAL MEMORY AND THE CASE OF LATGALIA

This chapter continues the theoretical discussion of A. Assmann's concepts of functional and storage memory outlined in Section 1.2 but from a methodological perspective. Her concepts of canon and archive provide the starting point for the choice of mixed methods (museums, surveys, and expert interviews), tools for data analysis (CDA), and case study selection (Latgalia).

### 2.1 The Canon and Archive

A. Assmann (2008a) uses the examples of the canon and archive to illustrate her concepts of functional and storage memory [Figure 2]. The national canon comprises the actively circulating 'working' memories that keep the past present, whereas the archive is the depository for 'reference memory', those documents and artefacts that are not needed for the present but which are nonetheless deemed important enough to preserve them (*Ibid* 101). The archive thus constitutes the 'meta-memory' or 'second-order memory that preserves what has been forgotten' (*Ibid* 106). Both the canon and archive provide a useful methodological starting point for empirically investigating the differences between storage and functional memory, but with several modifications. Moreover, while the focus of this study is on what is remembered of the history of Latgalia, Assmann's schema draws our attention to omissions and what is 'forgotten'.

The first modification to Assmann's schema concerns the distinction between the canon as an *active* form of remembering and the archive as a *passive* depository of memory, which she compares to Jakob Burckhardt's distinction between 'messages' (functional memory) and 'traces' (storage memory) of the past (2008a: 99). However, this somewhat underestimates the role played by historians and archivists as 'remembrancers' (Burke 1989: 110). Indeed, A. Assmann acknowledges that 'the archive is not just a place in which documents from the past are preserved; it is also a place where the past is constructed and produced' (2011: 13). This is important for two reasons. Firstly, it reminds us that archives are not neutral or all-inclusive. Burke



**Figure 2.** A. Assmann's schema showing "The Dynamics of Cultural Memory between Remembering and Forgetting" (2008a: 99)

reminds us that their contents are shaped by the agency of those who work and manage them which influences what should be preserved or forgotten:

historians have considered different aspects of the past to be memorable (battles, polities, religion, the economy and so on) and [...] they have presented the past in very different ways (concentrating on events or structures, on great men or ordinary people, according to their group's point of view). (1989: 99)

Secondly, the storage memory contained in the archives can be used by historians to provide a corrective and counterbalance to the national canon. Burke continues that:

Writing and print [...] preserve records of the past which are inconsistent with the myths, which undermine them – records of a past which has become awkward and embarrassing, a past which people for one reason or another do not wish to know about, though it might be better for them if they did. (*Ibid*: 110)

Thus, rather than focusing on the contents of archives, as A. Assmann implies, this study analyses the work and role of historians who work with the stored archive material. This material can both be used to 'invent traditions' and maintain national mythologies that form part of the functional memory or to challenge the national mnemohistory through exposing the 'skeletons in the cupboard' (*Ibid*).

The second modification to Assmann's model concerns her suggestion that functional memory be thought of as the national 'canon'. This is methodologically problematic as a 'canon' is a narrative or discourse, not an object.<sup>13</sup> Thus, in order to investigate functional memory we need to look at the 'canon' as it manifests in a particular '*lieux de memoire*' (Nora: 1989). A. Assmann (2008a) suggests that national history museums are one such site and a useful analytical tool with which to study construction and representation of a state's functional mnemohistory. In the literal sense, museums only have the space and resources to exhibit a tiny fraction of their artefacts, often only between 1-10 per cent of the total collection (Gardner 200 7); the selection of displays, the presence or absence of objects and events meriting representation, gives an insight into what is considered to be the usable past as opposed to the storage memory, what remains in the dusty archives and storehouse. Functional memory also influences the mode of exhibition, including captions, texts, display design and broader contextualisation and methods of narration, the beginning and end points, chronology and themes (Macdonald 2003: 3). This is all under the auspices of authoritative objectivity, supported by the provenance of the artefacts and expert knowledge. Museums also host a range of associated activities, temporary exhibitions, workshops, educational projects and school visits which reinforce the national canon and functional memory (Trofanenko 2008).

This study acknowledges that the most sophisticated museums can challenge accepted narratives and present contested certainties. However, for the most part, national history museums shy away from presenting a dramatically revisionist account of national history and reaffirm the national canon. In part, this is due to the fact that national history museums are often funded, partly if not wholly, by the state. Nevertheless, in order to build up a more rounded picture of the functional memory of a borderland in history museums on both a regional and national level, this study adds a crucial comparative perspective and analyses three museums which cover the history of Latgalia (see Chapter 2.3).

Finally, it is important to add a caveat about reception. In the literature, there has been a shift in focus from the institutions that produce functional memory to the audience's reception (Kansteiner 2002). Individuals do not just passively receive the

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<sup>13</sup>,Here, we might question the comparability of Assmann's terms 'canon' and 'archive'.



information presented to them in a museum; visitors bring their own social context, knowledge and preconceptions which shapes how they interpret the past as it is presented in the museum. Visitors are ‘remembrancers’ in their own right. However, as the primary focus of this study is on mnemohistory, I follow J. Assmann in understanding:

mnemohistory [as] reception theory applied to history [...] but “reception” is not to be understood here merely in the narrow sense of transmitting and receiving. The past is not simply “received” by the present. The present is “haunted” by the past and the past is modelled, invented, reinvented, and reconstructed in the present. (1997: 9)

The notion of the multiplicity of memory is useful because it allows us to understand the relationship between History and mnemohistory as the co-mingling of reception, representation and contestation, linking to A. Assmann’s notion of background and foreground memory (2011: 126). This multi-scalar and multidirectional approach allows exploration of the ‘politics of location that articulates local concerns with national and transnational scales’ (Rothberg 2014: 655). Consequently, from a methodological perspective, this study focuses on the reception of the past in the present rather than, for example, visitors’ reactions to museums or comments in visitor books. Moreover, this study is restricted to an analysis of the present-day functional and storage memory of Latgalia otherwise the study would need to incorporate changing historiographical trends and *histoire des mentalités* which are beyond the scope of this project. A full account of the cultural memory of Latgalia in the *longue durée* has yet to be written.

## **2.2 Methodology and Case Selection: Why Latgalia?**

This study focuses on Latgalia, the region of east Latvia which today borders Belarus, Lithuania and Russia. Throughout its history, this region has been the site of many ‘migrating borders’ and has consequently formed part of the history of many different geopolitical entities. For this reason, it provides an ideal example to investigate the layering of cultural memory. The empirical section (Chapter 3) involves three main steps. The first two steps build up a picture of the functional and storage memory of the history of Latgalia to establish *what* is remembered of Latgalia’s past in each instance

and, more importantly, *how* it is remembered. In the third step, the results are analysed and compared using the above-mentioned theoretical frameworks.

As noted earlier, the functional memory of Latgale is examined through the lens of History museums. I analyse the permanent exhibitions of one national history museum, the National History Museum of Latvia in Riga (LNVM), and two regional museums focusing specifically on the history of Latgale, the Latgale Culture and History Museum in Rēzekne (LCHM) and the Daugavpils Regional and Art Museum (DRAM). These three case studies all play a role in the construction and maintenance of the functional memory of Latgale.<sup>14</sup> This will allow comparison of two museums of regional history with the functional memory of Latgale's history presented on the national level. Moreover, in order to eschew the traditional paradigm of centre and periphery, I look at the museum in Rēzekne which is located in the Latgalian heartland and centre of the so-called Latgalian "second-awakening"<sup>15</sup>, and the museum in Daugavpils which, while situated in Latgale, is located in a city with a high proportion of ethno-linguistically non-Latvian (and/or non-Latgalian) inhabitants. A summary of the three museums is given in Table 1.

Finally, no museums covering the history of Latgale in any substantial way currently exist in Belarus, Lithuania, Poland or Russia<sup>16</sup>, territories which Latgale has a shared history with, otherwise I would have included these in my study too. The exception is the recent virtual museum project which will be discussed along with the activities of historians in Chapter 3.3 as an example of new initiatives reframing the cultural memory of Latgale.

I visited each of the museums twice between November 2014 and March 2015. My analysis was informed by critical discourse analysis (CDA) which investigates language, discourse and communication by attempting to '*uncover, reveal or disclose*'

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<sup>14</sup> In 2013 there were 111 officially accredited museums in Latvia (Garjans 2014: 2). These three museums were selected based on their content (History, Archeology, Ethnography) and their coverage of Latgale, in whole or in part. The decision was made not to include the museums in Naujene, Ludza, and Krāslava as these museums are very small, have a local emphasis, and mainly include exhibits on ancient history, nature, and ethnography.

<sup>15</sup> Besides the museum, the city is also the location of Rēzekne Higher Education Institute, the Latgalian Publishing House and the cultural centre GORS (the 'Embassy of Latgale') which play an active role in promoting Latgalian regional identity.

<sup>16</sup> Although in 2007 there was a one-month temporary exhibition at the Russian National Library on 'Latgalian books in Russia, 1917-1937' (Andronov & Leikuma 2007).

Name	Inaugurated	Initiated	Main Actors	Ownership	Collection	Territory Covered	Time Span	Location
National History Museum of Latvia	1894	1876	Civil Society	Civil society (originally); Independent state agency (present)	Archaeology, Ethnography, History	Historical territory of Latvia only	9000 BC to 12 <sup>th</sup> century; 1918-1953	Riga
Latgale Culture and History Museum	1990	1959 <sup>1</sup>	State	Municipal	Local History, Ethnography, Art	Latgale region	Pre-history to present	Rēzekne
Daugavpils Regional and Art Museum	1938	1925	Civil Society	Municipal	Local History, Ethnography, Art	Daugavpils region	Pre-history to present	Daugavpils

**Table 1.** Overview of museums in comparative analysis<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As a branch of the Ludza History Museum; from 1961 as Rēzekne Local History. In 1990 it was renamed the Latgale Culture and History Museum to reflect the nature of its collections from across the region.

<sup>2</sup> The table and the information for the National History Museum are adapted from Ķencis and Kuutma (2011: 498).

the ‘underlying *ideologies*’ and ‘strategies of *manipulation, legitimisation, [and] the manufacture of consent*’ (van Dijk 1995: 17-18).<sup>1</sup> As CDA is specifically concerned with power relations, it is a useful tool to analyse the construction and maintenance of historical canons within the context of nation-states. Although CDA primarily deals with (verbal) language, other semiotic ‘texts’ such as visual images and sounds can also be incorporated (Fairclough 1995; van Dijk 1995: 18).

Sotiria Grek applies CDA to museums and proposes three levels to be considered:

the *textual* level, where content and form are analysed; the level of *discursive practise*, ie. the socio-cognitive aspects of text production and interpretation; and finally, the level of *social practise*, related to the different level of institutional or social context. (2005: 220)

This schema links the three dimensions (*textual, discursive and social*) like nested matryoshka dolls (see Figure 3): the analysis moves from (1) *describing* the specific displays in the museum, to (2) *interpreting* how meanings are actively produced, and finally (3) stepping back to consider the socio-historical conditions that *explain* the production of meaning. This approach allows me to examine ‘how narratives are built, what types of messages are put together and across through the use of text panels, video shows, as well as specific choices of artefacts and artworks’ (*Ibid* 220). CDA helps to ‘deconstruct the different layers of meaning by imposing a critical questioning of the visual communication’ (*Ibid* 221).

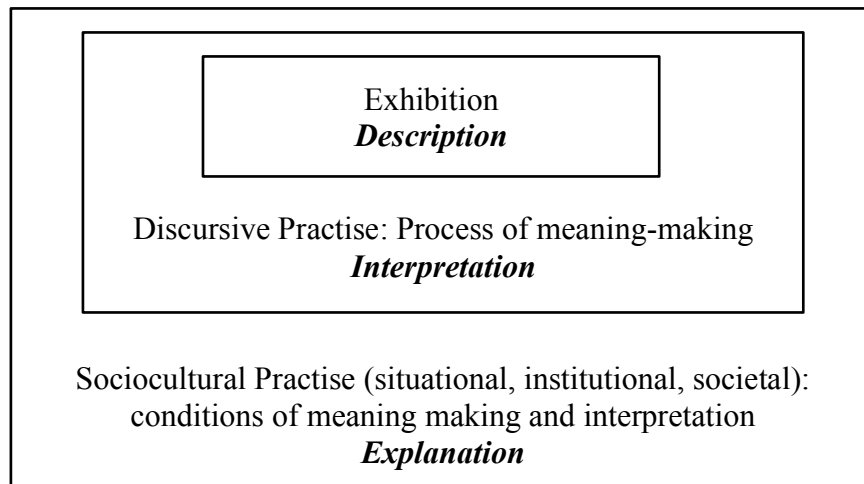
Moreover, special attention is paid to the relative space given to different topics and their positioning because, like cartography, museums delineate territories and power relations (Hooper-Greenhill 2000: 17). In order to compare how the different periods of Latgalian history are represented in the three museums, an original qualitative comparative schema was developed.<sup>2</sup> The different periods of Latgalian history (outlined in Table 2, Chapter 2.3) were coded in each of the three museums according to the following categories:

- *No mention* - not mentioned in the museum
- *Brief mention* - the period is mentioned and some artefacts may be displayed, but no further details are given

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<sup>1</sup> Emphases in original.

<sup>2</sup> This comparative method was developed by the author as no studies comparing museums in a similar manner could be identified.



**Figure 3.** CDA framework for analysing museum exhibitions. Adapted<sup>21</sup> from Grek (2005: 222).

- *Moderate mention* - some details are given about this period in one or two display cases, often just about one aspect of the period
- *Extensive mention* - information about a wide range of different aspects of this period are presented over multiple display cases or a whole room

This enabled a comparison of which, and to what degree, different periods were represented in the three museums, and the identification of patterns and discrepancies between museums.

The next step in my analysis investigates how Latgalia is presented in storage memory using the work of historians. Rather than analysing written works by historians, they were asked directly about their research work and assessment of the current state of research on Latgalian history. For this I conducted a small-*n* survey of ten experts during the 7<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Latgalistics at Rēzekne Higher Education Institute (Rēzeknes Augstskola, RA) from 21-23 November 2014 [see Appendix II]. While this choice of methodology was partly informed by my limited Latvian language skills required to conduct an in-depth analysis of Latvian language texts, the methods of surveying and expert interviews were also used because it provided an extremely useful tool to gain insight into issues of agency and motivation in the making of storage memory. The questionnaire developed for the survey was divided into three sections: (1) personal information about the respondent; (2) their research and professional

<sup>21</sup> I omit Grek's application of this schema to her case study of educational practises in museums as it is not relevant for my study.

activities; (3) their opinions on Latgalia in History and cultural memory. It consisted of closed, Likert response scale and open-ended questions that allowed respondents to elaborate on a particular point further. Indeed, many respondents returned paragraph-long answers to questions. The key questions the survey was designed to address were:

- What aspects of Latgalian history are included in storage memory and what is missing?
- What research is currently being done which is contributing to the construction and maintenance of the storage memory of Latgalia?
- What is remembered of the history of Latgalia in the Latvian national storage memory?
- Are there connections between the historians' work in the realm of storage memory and functional memory?

The questionnaire was distributed to 27 conference participants in total who held either a Master's or higher degree and for whom the history of Latgalia was the topic of, or formed an important component of, their own research. 15 questionnaires were returned of which ten were eventually analysed based on the relevance of the responses to my research questions: responses from linguistic scholars whose work did not have a historical dimension were excluded, as were two responses with very short answers where the respondents did not give consent to answer follow-up questions. Detailed responses came from four scholars from RA, two scholars who work jointly at Daugavpils University (DU) and RA, one scholar from DU, two scholars from the University of Latvia (LU) in Riga, and one scholar from St Petersburg State University but who collaborates closely with researchers at RA and LU.<sup>22</sup> Among the respondents were six professors and associate professors, two doctoral students and/or research assistants, and two Masters students. Moreover, the respondents' expertise covers the whole breadth of Latgalian history from the medieval period, to the seventeenth-nineteenth centuries, early twentieth century, the contemporary period and Latvian and Latgalian historiography. As the total number of experts on Latgalian history is very small, this sample represents a substantial share of all the researchers working on Latgalia. Several respondents were also contacted for follow-up questions asking them to expand on particularly interesting or illuminating responses to the survey. To

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<sup>22</sup> The questionnaire was provided in two languages, English and Russian. The majority of respondents answered in Russian and the responses have been subsequently translated by the author.

supplement the data gathered from my questionnaire, one in-depth expert interview was carried out with Dr Aleksandrs Ivanovs from the Latgale Research Institute at DU, currently the only expert on Latgalian historiography.<sup>23</sup> Open-ended questions were asked to allow for more narrative responses and follow-up questions. Both the survey responses and interview transcript were analysed using CDA .

## 2.3 Overview of the History of Latgalia

Before launching into my analysis of how the history of Latgalia features in functional and storage mnemohistory, a brief overview of the history of Latgalia is necessary for readers unfamiliar with the region's past. What follows is a brief account of the changing political borders and rulers of the territory of Latgalia, and the demographic changes to the region's inhabitants. These factors shaped the different political, cultural, religious and linguistic influences on the region throughout its history.<sup>24</sup> Maps depicting important border changes are included in Appendix I.

### Germanic Era, c. 13<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> Centuries

By the tenth century, five Baltic ethno-cultural groups inhabited the territory of present-day Latvia: Curonians (*kurši*), Livonians (*līvi*), Lettgallians (*latgaļi*)<sup>25</sup>, Selonians (*sēļi*), and Semigallians (*zemgaļi*) [Map A]. The Lettgallians were the largest and most socio-politically advanced. At the end of the twelfth century, Germanic traders arrived in the region accompanied by preachers who attempted to convert the local 'pagan' or scripture-less population to the Christian faith. They were met with protracted resistance and in 1202 the Order of the Brothers of the Sword was founded to convert the local population. In 1236 the Brothers of the Sword were defeated at the Battle of Saule and its remnants were incorporated into the Teutonic Order. In the thirteenth century, the ecclesiastical state of Terra Mariana, or Livonia, [Map B] was established on the territories of present-day Latvia and Estonia. While the cities of Riga, Cēsis, Limbaži,

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<sup>23</sup> I contacted several other prominent Latvian historians but they were reluctant to answer my questions as they claimed they were not experts on Latgalian History and historiography. They recommended that I contact Dr Ivanovs.

<sup>24</sup> This section is a reworking of the more detailed account of the multi-ethnic and multilingual history of Latgalia in Gibson 2015b.

<sup>25</sup> In Latvian, there is a difference between *latgaļi* (ancient Lettgallians) and *latgalieši* (modern-day Latgalians).

Koknese and Valmiera were part of Northern Germanic trading organisation, the Hanseatic League did not reach to eastern Livonia. The Reformation reached Livonia in 1521 and by the middle of the sixteenth century the majority of the population had converted to Lutheranism.

### **Polish-Lithuanian Rule, 1561-1772**

In 1557 the (largely Protestant) Livonian Confederation and the (largely Catholic) Polish-Lithuanian Union signed a defensive alliance against Ivan the Terrible. However, in 1561 the weakened Livonian Order was dissolved and the region of present-day northern Latvia and southern Estonia (known as the Duchy of Livonia) was assigned to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. In 1569 when the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Kingdom of Poland formed the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, Livonia became a joint domain. In the early seventeenth century, however, the majority of the Duchy of Livonia was conquered by Sweden during the Polish-Swedish War (1621-1625). Only a quarter of the territory previously controlled by Poland-Lithuania remained in Polish-Lithuanian hands, along with the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia. The Polish-Lithuanian lands became known as the Livonian Palatinate or Inflanty (also called Polish Livonia, as opposed to Swedish Livonia). They remained part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth until 1772 [Map C], apart for an eleven-year hiatus during the Russo-Polish War (1654-1667) when the territory was partially captured by Russia under Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich and the city of Dyneburg (today's Daugavpils) was renamed Borisoglebsk. The two and a half centuries spent within the borders of Polish-Lithuanian political and cultural influence had a long-lasting impact in Latgalia. As a result of the Counter-Reformation, Catholicism, known there as the 'Polish faith', was consolidated in the region. The Polish language was spread and enhanced by immigration from ethnically Polish, Lithuanian and Ruthenian (today's Belarusians) lands. After the split of the Orthodox Church in 1653, Old Believers settled in Inflanty to escape persecution.

These border changes influenced the development of the autochthonous Baltic ethnolect of Latgalian.<sup>26</sup> Latgalian first appeared in printed form during the mid-eighteenth century. The first printed Latgalian book was produced by Polish-speaking

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<sup>26</sup> Historically known as Pol. *język lotewski inflant polskich/język inflantsko-lotewski* (the Latvian language of Polish Inflanty/Inflanty-Latvian language), and more recently, Pol. *język łatgalski* (Latgalian).



priests in Wilno (Lith. Vilnius) using Polish orthography and the Latin script. This distinguished it from the written Latvian developed by Baltic Germans in Swedish- and later Russian-ruled Livland, as well as in the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia, which were both influenced by German(ic) orthography and printed in Gothic Fraktur type. The strong influence of Polish is especially evident in nineteenth century Latgalian before standardization, particularly influencing Latgalian vocabulary connected to the Catholic faith (Rembiszewska 2009; Stafecka 2009; Leikuma 2008: 230-232). Today, Latgalian is one of the most important markers of Latgalian regional identity, yet linguists are divided as to whether Latgalian is a dialect of Latvian (which is also the official stance of the Latvian government) or a separate language.<sup>27</sup>

### **The Russian Empire and Latvian (and Latgalian) National Awakenings, 1772-1918**

In 1772, Inflanty was incorporated into the Russian empire at the First Partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and was apportioned to the Pskov and later Vitebsk *gubernia* of the Russian Empire [Map D]. In the early nineteenth century, the western provinces of the Russian Empire continued to be run by the Polish-Lithuanian nobility with Polish as the language of administration and education (Pavlenko 2011). After the 1830-31 uprising of Polish-Lithuanian nobles, which also spread to the territories of present-day Lithuania and Latgalia, elements of imposed Russification<sup>28</sup> were first implemented.<sup>29</sup> Russian was implemented as the language of administration, judiciary and education in state-funded schools (Thaden 1981). Alexander II's 'Peasant Reform' of 1861 emancipated the serfs in Latgalia. However, the serfs in Kurlandia and Liflandia had already been emancipated forty years earlier in 1817-1819, which contributed to the different levels of socio-economic development between the regions. Moreover, following the 1863-4 Polish-Lithuanian noble uprising there was a ban from 1864-1904 on publishing in the Latin alphabet; this was not extended to the Baltic provinces of Estland, Courland and Livland.

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<sup>27</sup> On the language debates surrounding Latgalian, see Lazdiņa and Marten (2012).

<sup>28</sup> The English term 'Russification' is rather misleading. It merges two distinct Russian terms, *obruševanie* ('imposed russification'), signifying administrative, religious, economic, educational, and language policies, and *obrušenie* ('voluntary assimilation'), denoting linguistic assimilation, change in ethnic self-identification, and conversion to Orthodoxy (Pavlenko 2011: 332-3; Staliūnas 2007; Thaden 1981).

<sup>29</sup> The process could not happen earlier because the Russian language was only codified between the 1750s-1820s. Before that, the majority of literate people in the Russian Empire were literate in Polish, German or French, not Russian.

The second half of the nineteenth century witnessed significant changes to the population of Latgale. The tsarist authorities initiated large-scale resettlements of rural Orthodox populations from Russia to the Baltic *gubernias*. Latgale was also home to a large Jewish population as it fell within the Pale of Settlement, the area in the Russian Empire in which permanent residency for Jews was allowed, unlike the other Latvian-speaking Baltic *gubernias*. Finally, between 1861 and World War I an estimated 50,000 economic migrants from Latgale, around 10 per cent of the population, moved to Siberia. Consequently, there are Latgalian-speaking communities in Siberia to this day (Reinsone 2014).

Between the 1850s and 1880s in the Baltic *gubernias* of Līvlandia (Livland) and Kurlandia (Kurland), the Latvian intelligentsia of the ‘Young Latvian’ cultural and literary movement led the first ‘national awakening’. Yet they were faced with the reality that Latvian-speakers of the Baltic provinces had never considered themselves as a collective, let alone a *Volk* (Latv. *tauta*).<sup>30</sup> However, based on the imperative of ethno-linguistic nationalism, the Latvian ‘dialect’ spoken by the Latgalians was rationale for their inclusion in the ‘imagined’ Latvian *tauta*, and by extension, in a future Latvian nation-state. The main task was to dilute the cultural importance of provincial boundaries (Plakans 2011: 51). Indeed, the name Latgale or Latgola (referring to the ancient Lettgallians [*latgaļi*] from which all Latvians are alleged descended) only gained currency after 1900; before that the region was referred to as Polish Livland or Inflanty in Latvian and Baltic German texts (Plakans 2011: 51-2).

Later, the Latgalian-speakers also underwent their own ‘national awakening’ which was begun by members of the Polish-Lithuanian nobility such as Gustaw Manteuffel and Celina Plater, as well as Stefania Ulanowska (a Polish ethnographer), who compiled extensive collections of Latgalian folklore and songs. After the 1905 revolution which began in St Petersburg and spread to the Baltic and western provinces, the ban on Latin script printing was lifted and language restrictions were repealed, leading to an upsurge in periodicals in Latgalian and emergence of local intelligentsia. The two most important champions of the Latgalian cause were Francis Kemps (Latg. Franĉs Kemps) (1876-1952), who wanted to maintain distance between Latvians and Latgalians and even argued for Latgalian independence, and Francis Trasuns (Latg.

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<sup>30</sup> The Latvian word *tauta* has no direct English translation. It derives from the Germanic Romantic works of J. G. Herder and J. G. Fichte and the idea of *Volk* (a people, an ethnic nation) as distinct from the political-nation (Latv. *nācija*, a translation of the Ger. *Nation*) (Plakans 2011: 53).

Fraņcs Trasuns) (1864-1926), who was in favour of unity among eastern and western Latvian speakers (Plakans 2011: 55-56).

### **Independent Republic of Latvia, 1918-1940**

In the last years of World War I, the establishment of an autonomous and independent Latvia was discussed. In March 1917 at the First Latgalian Congress in Rēzekne, a general meeting of 238 delegates from diverse Latgalian organisations voted in favour of joining the Latvian nation-state, but with the proviso for considerable autonomy in whatever new language-based polity emerged. A significant minority of attendees led by Francis Kemps objected, desiring a stronger statement of separateness and warning that joining a Latvian nation-state would jeopardise their traditional way of speaking and writing (Plakans 2011: 57).

Latgalia remained in the Russian Empire and then Bolshevik Russia until the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (1918) between the German Empire and the Bolsheviks, whereby the Bolsheviks renounced the Russian Empire's claims to its western territories, the future nation-states of Belarus, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Ukraine. Latvia was included in the proposed Baltic German-led United Baltic Duchy, but this collapsed after the defeat of the German Empire in November 1918. Fighting continued in the region after the end of World War I<sup>31</sup> and the Polish army played an important role in the liberation of Latgalia from the Red Army at the Battle of Dyneburg/Daugavpils/Dvinsk in the winter of 1919. After the fighting ended, a dispute ensued between the Latvian and Polish governments regarding several rural municipalities around the city of Grīva on the southern bank of the river Daugava and in parts of Ilukste municipality, which had large proportions of Polish inhabitants (Zielińska 2002: 361; Gierowska-Kałużaur 2011). The Belarusian national movement also laid claim to parts of southern and eastern Latgalia [Map E]. From 25 March 1918 to 5 January 1919, the same territories fell within the same area claimed by the short-lived Belarusian People's Republic<sup>32</sup> (1918-1919) [Map F]. While this claim came to nothing - the Belarusian People's Republic was replaced by a Communist government

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<sup>31</sup> The Latvian War of Independence in Latvian historiography and the Polish-Soviet War in Polish and Soviet/Russian historiography.

<sup>32</sup> Also known historically as the White Ruthenian Democratic Republic and Belarusian Democratic Republic to distinguish it from the similarly named Communist republic.

in January 1919 and the Rada (Council) went into exile – it was the source of tensions among Latvia’s Belarusian minority in the mid-1920s (Jēkabsons 2001; Apine 1995).<sup>33</sup>

Latgalia was the least “Latvian” region of the new state: in 1920, its population was ethno-linguistically 53.3 per cent Latvian<sup>34</sup>, compared to Kurzeme 83.0 per cent, Vidzeme 82.0 per cent, and Zemgale 78.3 per cent. Latgalia had a large number of minorities: Russians (19.7 per cent), Belarusians (13.4 per cent), Jews (6.1 per cent), and Poles (6.1 per cent) (Plakans 2011: 57-58), the proportion of which was much higher in big cities such as Daugavpils, Rēzekne, Ludza and Krāslava. As Map G shows, in 1897 there were hardly any ethnic Latvians in Dvinsk and in 1935 they only comprised a third of the population. This large proportion of minorities, combined with Latgalia’s eastern “peripheral” geographical location (from the perspective of Riga), ‘perpetuated its image as a borderland (Latv. *nomale*) in constant need of further “integration”’ (*Ibid* 58). While socio-economic changes, such as the Agrarian Reform that redistributed hamlets into individual farmsteads, helped to integrate Latgalia, these were not accompanied by significant changes in the cultural make-up of the region. As Map H depicts, Catholicism remained strongly institutionalized all over Latgalia and there were large clusters of Orthodox inhabitants, Old Believers and Jews, especially in urban centres (*Ibid* 59).<sup>35</sup>

In 1934 the former independence fighter and first prime minister of the Latvian republic Kārlis Ulmanis overthrew the democratically elected government in Riga with the help of the military riding on the slogan of “national unity”. The promotion of ‘Latvianisation’ policies during his authoritarian rule led to a decline in the use of Latgalian in education and print media as well as in the number of minority schools across the country (Purs 2002). To this day, Ulmanis continues to be celebrated by some in Latvia as one of the great unifiers of modern Latvia (Onken 2003: 167-179).

### **Soviet Union – Nazi Germany – Soviet Union, 1940-1991**

As a result of the secret protocol of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact between Stalin and Hitler in 1939 that demarcated ‘spheres of influence’ for both totalitarian regimes,

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<sup>33</sup> At first, the BSSR only consisted of the former Minsk *gubernia*, but large parts of the Vitebsk/Vitsebsk were transferred from the RSFSR to the BSSR in 1924 (along with areas of the Gomel/Homel and Smolensk regions), creating the Latvian-Belarusian border.

<sup>34</sup> Many probably identified as Latgalian, but ‘Latgalian’ was not an available option in the census.

<sup>35</sup> Map G shows that Jews made up around a quarter of the population of most cities in Latgalia. Despite this, Judaism is not mentioned by name on Map H and represented as ‘other confessions’.

Latgalia once again experienced a shift in political and cultural borders. Latvia was first occupied and then incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1940-1 and again after World War II from 1944/5-1991. The most significant territorial change took place in 1945 when the Abrene district (renamed Rus. P'talovo, until 1938 known as Latv. Jaunlatgale [New Latgale]) was transferred to the Russian SFSR (Anderson 1988) [Map I]. The period from 1940-1991 also witnessed substantial changes to Latgalia's demographics. The large Jewish population was almost completely extinguished during the Nazi occupation (1941-1944), especially during the mass murders of summer 1941. In June 1941 and in 1949 the Soviet regime carried out large-scale deportations of the local population to Siberia. From the late 1940s, thousands of Russian-speaking Soviet citizens began immigrating to the Latvian SSR for work, not least to the eastern region of Latgalia where there was already a large Russian-speaking community from before the war. This led to the growing dominance of the Russian language in most spheres of local everyday life.

### **Independence Regained and Entry into the Europe Union, 1991-present**

Latvia regained its independence in 1991 and since 2004 has also been a member of the European Union. Administratively speaking, Latgalia only formally exists today as one of five planning regions after the municipality reform of 1 July 2009. In Latvian national symbolism, however, Latgalia continues to be important: it constitutes the third star on the Freedom Monument in Riga and the coat of arms, and one of the four historical regions of Latvia mentioned in the Constitution (*Constitution of the Republic of Latvia* 2009).

Latgalia has been part of the Latvian state for almost one hundred years and the majority of inhabitants identify themselves as members of the Latvian state. At the same time, vestiges of the multiple geopolitical borders changes and historical and cultural influences remain: Latgalia continues to be the least ethno-linguistically "Latvian" region of Latvia and there are recurring, but not insignificant, rumblings of irredentism and separatism from a small pro-Russian minority of mostly Soviet-era settlers.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, the Latgalians of Latgalia have retained their distinct regional identity, which

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<sup>36</sup> Most recently, the Latvian media reported on a logo of a People's Republic of Latgalia which had been circulating on social media ("Prokrieviskie" 2015).

is mainly due to their still existing Catholic faith, cultural traditions, and the widespread everyday use of the Latgalian dialect/language.<sup>37</sup>

<b>Period</b>	<b>Politics and Rulers</b>
<b>1207 -1561</b>	Livonia ( <i>Terra Mariana</i> )
<b>1561-1569</b>	Duchy of Livonia, Grand Duchy of Lithuania
<b>1569-1621</b>	Duchy of Livonia, Joint domain of the Kingdom of Poland and Grand Duchy of Lithuania
<b>1621-1772</b>	Inflanty Palatinate, Joint domain of the Kingdom of Poland and Grand Duchy of Lithuania
<b>1656-1667</b>	Partially occupied by the Tsardom of Russia during the Russo-Polish War (1656–67)
<b>1772-1918</b>	1772-1802 Pskov <i>gubernia</i> and 1802-1918 Vitebsk <i>gubernia</i> , Russian Empire
<b>1918-1940</b>	Republic of Latvia
<b>1940-1941</b>	Latvian SSR within the Soviet Union
<b>1941-1945</b>	Nazi Germany
<b>1945-1991</b>	Latvian SSR within the Soviet Union
<b>1991-present</b>	Republic of Latvia Since 2004, member of the European Union

**Table 2.** Main geopolitical border changes in the history of Latgalia. This periodization also forms the basis of my comparative analysis of the representation of the history of Latgalia in the three museums.

<sup>37</sup> In the 2011 census, 32 per cent of Latgalia’s population (69.7 per cent of those who identified as ethnically Latvian, and 96.7 per cent of those who identified their home language to be Latvian), affirmed that they ‘use Latgalian, subtype of the Latvian language, on a daily basis’ [TSG11-08] (CSB 2011).

### 3. CULTURAL MEMORY OF LATGALIA

Section 3.1 of this chapter analyses the three history museums, moving from the broad location of Latgalia in the Latvian national narrative to local constructions of narratives and displays of regional identity markers. The aim is to examine how the representation of Latgalian history features in the overall functional memory narrative constructed by the museums. Section 3.2 analyses the storage memory of Latgalia's history constructed in the work of professional historians. Finally, the results of both analyses are compared and discussed in Section 3.3.

#### 3.1 Latgalia in Functional Memory

The **Latvian National History Museum** (LNVM) is the oldest of the three museums analysed. The idea to establish the museum was developed by the Science Committee of the Riga Latvian Society in 1869 to portray the history of the Latvian nation and was closely tied to the Latvian 'national awakening' movement. Following Latvia's declaration of independence in 1918, the collection was declared the property of the state and provided with rooms in the Riga Castle. Upon its inception in 1920, the museum was called the Latvian Ethnographic Museum, yet four years later it was renamed the State History Museum. During the period from 1920-1940, the museum collections flourished. Despite ideological restrictions throughout the Soviet period, the museum continued to collect and popularise Latvian historical artefacts and it played an active role in the events of the late 1980s leading up to the regaining of independence (Kļencis and Kuutma 2011: 508-12). In 2005, the museum was renamed the National History Museum of Latvia and in May 2014, the permanent exhibition moved to new premises on the capital's main avenue Brīvības Boulevard 32, the former building of the Faculty of History and Philosophy of the University of Latvia. Today, the museum contains four permanent exhibitions on the history of Latvia. The second floor houses an exhibition on (1) 'The Ancient History of Latvia'<sup>38</sup> and the third floor presents exhibitions on (2) 'The Republic of Latvia 1918-1940', (3) 'The Occupation of the Republic of Latvia and Annexation to the USSR, 1940-1941', and (4) 'The Totalitarian

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<sup>38</sup> The first two rooms of 'The Ancient History of Latvia' exhibition will not form the focus of my analysis as they cover ancient History and archaeology.

Occupation Regime's Repression of the Latvian Population 1940-1953'. These exhibitions were re-opened at the time of writing, however the ethnographic and other exhibitions were scheduled to open in summer 2015 (LNVM 2015). Still, as this study is interested in the main periods and narratives about the history of Latgalia in functional memory, this did not seem reason enough to exclude this museum from the study. The current exhibitions were compared with how the same periods were represented in the other museums.

'The Ancient History of Latvia' exhibition covers the period from the first to twelfth centuries and the 'cultural-ethnic regions' (*kultūretniski reģioni*) of the Latgaļi, Kurši, Zemgaļi, Sēli, and Livs, who inhabited the territory of present-day Latvia. The map of these regions is superimposed over the contemporary map of Latvia to suggest a link between the ancient ethno-cultural groups and the contemporary inhabitants of Latvia. Cultural commonalities between these ethno-cultural groups are emphasised through the exposition of similar metal artefacts, fragments of clothing and headdresses from each of the regions and archaeological evidence of comparable burial practises. The museum presents these ethno-cultural groups as cultural precursors to the modern Latvian nation. This corresponds to Anthony Smith's argument that 'there is a felt filiation, as well as a cultural affinity, with a remote past in which a community was formed, a community that despite all the changes it has undergone, is still in some sense recognised as the "same" community' (Smith 1991: 33).

The museum shows how by the eighth to tenth centuries, the territory of present-day Latgalia was almost entirely inhabited by the Latgaļi. This particular ethno-cultural group is well represented in the museum: a quarter of the exhibition is devoted to the Latgaļi (six out of the twenty-four display cases), second only to the Kurši (seven display cases). Moreover, separate display cases are devoted to the Kivtu cemetery located in the Zvirgzdenes pagasts (north of Ludza) and to the hillforts and open settlements found in the area which today lies in the Salienas pagasts (southeast of Daugavpils), the centre of an important pottery culture. This strong representation continues into the next room covering the eleventh to thirteenth centuries. Here, the historical narrative focuses on the construction of hillforts, the flourishing of the four proto-states on the territory of Latgalia (Koknese, Jersika, Tālava, Atzele) and the incorporation of the territory into the Livonian Order. Overall, it can be inferred that the history of the Latgalian territory features rather prominently in the functional memory



of Latvia's early history: the Latgāļi are presented as the most culturally and socioeconomically developed ethno-cultural region and as one of the four communities that formed the perceived origins of the modern Latvian nation.

Visitors to the museum then proceed to the third floor for the exhibition on the 'The Republic of Latvia 1914-1940'. In contrast to the muted grey pallet of the ancient history exhibition, the twentieth-century displays are mounted on a dark red and white background, the Latvian national colours, which immediately sets the tone of this exhibition: the narrative of how Latvia became independent and the 'golden years' of the 1920s and 1930s. In contrast to the division of the ancient history exhibition into the different ethno-cultural regions, the interwar exhibition tells the history of Latvia from a united and national perspective.

There is one mention of the history of Latgālija in the room devoted to the period from 1914-1920, namely, the joint operation between the Latvian and Polish army to liberate Latgālija from the Red Army in January 1920. The victory is presented as paving the way for peace talks which culminated 'on 11 August 1920 [when] Latvia and Soviet Russia signed a peace treaty, in which Russia forever waived the Latvian Land and the Republic of Latvia declared full independence and sovereignty.' Thus, the battle for Latgālija in the winter of 1919-1920 is portrayed as one of the final events of the Latvian 'War of Independence' and a pivotal event in the formation of an independent Latvia. This is reaffirmed by the next point in the chronological 'story' of Latvian independence that visitors are directed to, a display case containing a copy of the 1922 Constitution of the Republic of Latvia, where Article 3 states that 'The territory of the State of Latvia, within the borders established by international agreements, consists of Vidzeme, Latgāle, Kurzeme and Zemgāle.'

However, there is also a subtext to the presentation of the battle in that it portrays Latgālija as somehow different from the other regions of Latvia. Latgālija is the only region with an information panel dedicated to the process by which it was incorporated into the Republic of Latvia. Shaded red on the map, Latgālija is portrayed as the last remaining outpost of the Red Army which had to be won in order for Latvia to become independent. This might suggest the contradictory attitudes towards Latgālija circulating in functional mnemohistory: Latgālian history is incorporated as an integral part of the Latvian national canon, yet the mode of narration reinforces perceptions that Latgālija is somehow different from the rest of Latvia.

The second room on the third floor focuses on the interwar period and presents a glorified narrative of economic reform and prosperity. The only place where Latgale is alluded to is a photo of the Freedom Monument in Riga, unveiled in 1935 and featuring the female figure of Milda holding aloft three gilded stars, symbolising the constitutional districts of Vidzeme, Kurzeme and Latgale. The rest of this room is dedicated to the economic successes of the interwar period: the introduction of a national currency (the *lats*), manufacturing and exports. Special attention is given to factories producing radios, telephones and cameras for export to western Europe, emphasising the westward orientation of the interwar Latvian economy. Mention of Latgale is noticeably absent from this room which that focuses primarily on Riga, Kurzeme and Vidzeme. One explanation might be that as the easternmost region with a primarily agricultural economy, Latgale is not perceived as having much to contribute to this national narrative of industrialisation and europeanisation.

The third exhibition is about the occupation and annexation of Latvia to the Soviet Union during 1940-1941 - a period that is often referred to in academic and popular historical writing as 'the year of horror' (*Baigais gads*). Here, the narrative shifts to loss of independence and victimhood. This section contains one mention of Latgale, the Song Festival which took place in Daugavpils on 15-16 June 1940. It is remembered as the last free song festival in interwar Latvia, during which President Kārlis Ulmanis cancelled his trip to Daugavpils, the Latvian government conceded to the ultimatum from the Soviet Union and the assembled choirs and audience sang the Latvian national anthem for the last time.

Finally, in the fourth room there is a small exhibition about the repression of the Latvian population by the two totalitarian occupation regimes from 1940-1953. The contents of this exhibition are very similar to those presented in the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia. The display panels contain information about the deportations of 1941 and 1949, the Holocaust, political repressions, the role of the Latvian Waffen-SS<sup>39</sup> and the destruction caused during World War II. There is an interactive screen that invites visitors to explore various life stories of individuals who experienced some of these events through letters, photographs, diary entries and oral history recordings. There is only one main figure from Latgale, Gustavs Pļavnieks (1893-1942) from

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<sup>39</sup> A Latvian Legion that fought in the ranks of the Nazi German army and remain a controversial topic in Latvian History (Ezergailis 1997).

Daugavpils. This is also the first time in the museum where some of Latvia's minorities are mentioned, Jews and Russian-speakers, in what is otherwise a predominantly ethnolinguistically Latvian (understood by the museum to mean both Latvians and Latgalian) narrative.

As is to be expected in a national museum, Latgalia is included only where it fits with the common history for the Republic of Latvia. This corresponds to Paul Robert Magocsi's argument that national histories do not tell the history of a particular state, but rather the dominant nationality, in this case the 'Latvians' of Kurzeme and Vidzeme (2004: 121). Nonetheless, some tentative conclusions about functional mnemohistory of Latgalian history can still be drawn. The first is that the ancient *Latgaļi* play a rather prominent role in the functional mnemohistory of Latvia's ancient history as the most socio-economically and culturally developed ethno-cultural region. Linking to Smith's (1991) argument about the ethnic origin of nations, the *Latgaļi* are perceived as one of the four ethno-cultural groups to which the modern Latvians trace the roots of their nation. Secondly, the functional mnemohistory of the first half of the twentieth century follows the chronology of the independent Latvian nation-state: its formation, flourishing, occupation and disappearance. Latgalia plays a less important role in the twentieth century national canon and is completely absent from the narrative of economic developments during the 1920s and 1930s. The two events from modern Latgalian history which feature prominently in the national canon and are specifically identified as taking place in Latgalia, the 1920 battle for Latgalia and the 1940 Song Festival in Daugavpils, are examples of the powerful 'afterlife of events' (Tamm 2015) and the way in which events are mythologised and incorporated into the national canon. The importance of these events has been attributed subsequently as they later became to be considered pivotal moments in the Latvian national historical canon. The depiction of these events also highlights the two contradictory dynamics at play in the functional mnemohistory of Latgalia. On the one hand, the inclusion of these events brings the history of Latgalia into the national canon and places the region in a prominent place in functional mnemohistory. At the same time, it continues to contribute to the perception of Latgalia as being a separate 'othered' region as there are no events which are specifically linked to the historical regions of Kurzeme or Vidzeme.

While this analysis is partially incomplete – at the time of writing, the remaining exhibitions are yet to be opened - these conclusions are supported by the layout of the

previous exhibition located in Riga Castle: the majority of the museum was also devoted to the ancient history and twentieth century periods. The period from the thirteenth to nineteenth century was only depicted from an ethnographic and cultural perspective and, even then, Latgale played a minor role. The only significant mention of Latgale in the museum guide to these periods concerns carved wooden crucifixes, a reference to the Latgalian Catholic culture (*Guide to the National History Museum of Latvia* 2006: 27).

In contrast, the **Latgale Cultural and History Museum (LCHM)** claims to portray the regional history of Latgale. Thus rather than analysing the extent to which and how regional history features in the broader national narrative, the focus is now on the ways in which regional history and mnemohistory is constructed and situated within the broader national canon. The museum was founded in 1959 as a branch of the Ludza Local History Museum and started working independently as Rēzekne Local History Museum in 1961. In 1990 the museum was renamed Latgale Culture and History Museum as the collection was thought to be representative of the whole Latgale region. Still, the main focus of the history exhibition remains on Rēzekne and its surroundings (LCHM 2015). The museum currently has one permanent exhibition about regional history situated on the ground floor, 'Rēzekne at the turn of ages', and spans two rooms. The rooms upstairs house pottery and local art exhibitions. The historical exhibition begins with a timeline that lists the main periods and events in the history of Latgale. This timeline provides the framework within which the displays can be understood as, in contrast to the LNVM, this museum has very few narrative descriptions or explanations except for captions to the artefacts.

The period up to the nineteenth century is dealt with briefly, occupying only a third of the first room. The exhibition begins with a display of archaeological items from the ninth to twelfth centuries when the first wooden castles were built. The founding of the town of Rositten in 1285 is mentioned and how it became 'a castle district [*pilsnovada*] centre of the Livonian Order'. There are photos of the archaeological work done in the 1980s at the *Rositten Schloss*, whose ruins still stand today. The narrative then moves to 1559, when the town became Rzeżyca<sup>40</sup> and 'part of Poland'. While the town actually became a domain of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania

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<sup>40</sup> This is an unusual semi-phonetic latvianization of the Polish-language Rzeżyca.

and then a joint domain of the Commonwealth after the Union of Lublin in 1569, the museum simply presents this period as one of Polish rule and portrays the Commonwealth as an early modern Poland.<sup>41</sup> The territory is labelled on the map as Polish Vidzeme (*Poļu Vidzeme*) to match its counterpart, Swedish Vidzeme (*Zviedru Vidzeme*), suggesting that this period is remembered within the framework of the later formation of the Latvian nation-state. There is no mention of ‘Inflanty’ during the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries. The only detail given about this period is the rather general statement that ‘Jesuit missionaries had a major role in the implementation and strengthening of Catholicism’, which continues to be one of the distinctive characteristics of Latgalia. In support of this Polish Catholic influence, there is an illustration of a church altar from a publication by Gustavs Manteifeļ, a Baltic-German/Polish amateur historian and ethnographer famous for his publications in Latgalian. However, his name is spelt as the Latvianised Gustavs Manteifeļ rather than the Polish-Germanic Gustaw Manteuffel that he himself used, and is a subtle example of the Latvian national framing of the Latgalia’s history.

Visitors are told that in 1772 the town was incorporated into the Russian Empire and became known as Rēzhitsa<sup>42</sup>, however the museum narrative jumps straight to the second half of the nineteenth century which is depicted as a key moment in the history of the region. The exhibition focuses on three aspects of this period. The first is the building of the St Petersburg-Warsaw road and the St Petersburg-Warsaw and Ventspils-Moscow-Rybinsk railway lines, which all passed through Rēzhitsa and increased the importance of the town. The second is the ethno-linguistic and confessional diversity of the town’s inhabitants. There is a photo display of people connected to ‘Rēzekne at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries’ showcasing the diversity of the town’s inhabitants: a Jewish merchant and the Jewish gymnasium, Russians, Poles, a group photo of Old Believers, and members of the Polish Vitovsky noble family. Finally, the Latgalian regional identity is also highlighted through photos of important Latgalian cultural figures and activists: Konstance Daugule-Kempa (1891-1947) (writer and wife of the Latgalian ‘national awakener’ Francis Kemps), a group photo of members of the Young Latgalian movement in St Petersburg, and the high

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<sup>41</sup> The museum follows Polish historiography and functional memory in viewing the Commonwealth as an early-modern Poland, in contrast to the Lithuanian and Belarusian narratives.

<sup>42</sup> This is a Latvian-based transliteration of the old Russian-language Рѣжица. The alternative spelling, Rēzhica, is also used in the museum.

school diploma of Boleslavs Brežgo (1887–1957), who went on to become one of the leading professional historians of Latgalia.

The exhibition then moves to the formation of the Republic of Latvia at the end of World War I. Relatively little space is devoted to the war itself - there are some artefacts from the time of the German occupation - and instead two events linked to the independence process are emphasised. The first is the April 1917 First Congress of Latgalistics where the decision ‘on the self-determination of Latgale, separation from Vitebsk province and joining the other Latvian regions’ was taken. There are five photos showing the conference proceedings and a large wall-mounted photo of the delegates. The second prominent event is the battle for Latgalia in January 1920, portrayed as the ‘Liberation of Rēzekne’, with details of individuals who were awarded the Order of Lāčplēsis (the first and highest Latvian military award) for their actions. Special mention is also given to Staņislavs Kambala (1893-1941) who was the only Latgalian representative to take part in the declaration of Latvian Independence Act on 18 November 1918. He was also an important political figure in the early 1920s as a member of the Latgale Peasant Party (1920-22) and vice chairman of the Constitutional Assembly. These are more examples of the ‘afterlife of events’ (Tamm 2015), moments in history that have been instrumentalised as important for the Latvian national canon and Latgalian regional functional memory.

The second room of the exhibition is dedicated to the twentieth century. Beginning with the First Republic of Latvia, like in the LNVM, this period is ‘characterised by a wide range of construction and cultural growth’. However, whereas Latgalia was absent from this narrative in the LNVM, the LCHM showcases the prospering of Rēzekne too during this period. Photos are displayed of the many public buildings, educational institutions and ‘luxurious buildings of the period of Latvian independence’, including the Catholic and Lutheran churches, banks and local administrative buildings. Like in the LNVM, economic growth is emphasised: there are photos of the main street lined with shops, traders and markets, factories and workers, bridge-building and railway workers, and a display with a dressing table and various luxury items. Education also features prominently: there are school class photos, copies of educational diplomas, and photos of the Rēzekne Higher Education Institute and Russian and Polish gymnasiums.

The museum narrative moves to World War II and immediately the tone changes. Compared to the previous sections, this period is presented rather superficially. There are a series of photos showing Rēzekne before and after the war to convey the level of destruction as a result of bombing by Soviets and Germans. In contrast to the LNVM where there is a strong narrative of victimisation, in the LCHM this is only alluded to. The photos of destroyed buildings are lit with a crude red flashing light evoking an association with Soviet terror and framed by barbed wire, evoking associations with deportations and the gulag (Onken 2005: 274). The only specific information about this period is one display containing letters and photos of the Lozda family who were deported to Siberia in 1941. No information is given about the 1949 deportations. There is even less about the Soviet period, just mention that Rēzekne became industrialised and the fifth largest industrial city in Latvia accompanied by several photos of factories. Only a token gesture is paid to this period; it is characterised by omissions and forgetting. This is in stark contrast to the LNVM which follows the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia in presenting the events of the triple occupation in graphic detail, *lest we forget*.

Instead, the LCHM narrative quickly moves to the contemporary period which portrays Rēzekne as the Latgalian cultural centre, revolving around the Higher Education Institute, the Latgale Culture Centre and the Publishing House. The city is also described as the 'cultural centre of the Catholic clergy' in Latvia, accompanied by photos of important Latgalian priests and the Heart of Jesus cathedral. This represents a shift from the diversity of the late nineteenth century and interwar period to a Latgalianisation of the history of Rēzekne. There is a separate display panel devoted to the 'United for Latvia' monument (referred to as the 'Latgale Freedom Monument' or 'Latgales Mara') that stands in the middle of Rēzekne, the activities of the Latvian Popular Front (*Tautas Fronte*) in Rēzekne in March 1990 and the regaining of independence. The exhibition ends with a panel on 'Rēzekne at the turn of the 21st century' which includes photos of local cultural festivals such as the musical festival organized by Latgalian TV, the city festival with photos of young residents dressed in medieval costumes and an international dance festival. Particular emphasis is placed on famous people from the region: the winner of the Miss Latvia competition, the photographer Jānis Gleizds, the musician Iveta Apkalna and a panel about the discovery of a Finnish cinema celebrity, Teuvo Tulio (Theodors Tugajs), with roots in Latgalia.

Overall, the LCHM portrays a much more detailed functional memory of Latgale's past than the LNVN, as can be expected of a regional history museum. However, there are still several overarching similarities with the LNVN. A similar emphasis is placed on the early history and the economic and cultural prosperity of the interwar period. This suggests that although the functional memory is orientated towards the region, rather than the nation, narratives about Latgale's past continue to be framed within the Latvian national historical canon. At the same time, the functional memory of Latgale's history in the LCHM differs in three ways from the LNVN. The most obvious is the relatively little space devoted to World War II and the Soviet period. Instead, the museum chooses to focus on regionally specific aspects of Latgale's history, which leads us onto the next two differences. The LCHM emphasises the ethno-cultural diversity of the region's inhabitants during the late nineteenth century and interwar period, something that is completely absent from the LNVN. As the museum's promotional flyer suggests, the

[The] exposition of Rēzekne city['s] history tells about the city that is the heart of Latgale and its history during seven centuries since [the] 9th century, when Latgalian wooden castles were built, until contemporary Rēzekne. Rositten, Rzeżyca, Režica, Rēzekne – these are historical names of the city. All the time, Rēzekne was a crossroad for different folks [sic. peoples] – the Germans, the Swedes, the Russians, the Poles, the Jews and the Gypsies who were conquerors, merchants, pilgrims and tourists. (Latgale Culture and History Museum n.d.)

This regional diversity is presented as a unique regional characteristic and the different cultural and political influences on the region are emphasised through the changing names of the town. However, the representation of the diversity of the inhabitants ends with the interwar period. The contemporary history section focuses just on the native Latvian (Latgalian) inhabitants of the city, excluding from the narrative a large part of its Russian-speaking, Soviet-era immigrant population.<sup>43</sup> Finally, in contrast to the LNVN, the LCHM gives a prominent place to Latgalian regional characteristics such as Catholicism, Latgalian national awakening and the unique Latgalian culture. This is particularly evident in the section on the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, the time of the Latgalian 'national awakening' and the post-1991 period. This framing is perhaps a reflection of the present-day function of Rēzekne as the centre of

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<sup>43</sup> In 2011, ethnic Russians comprised 46.59 per cent of the population of Rēzekne and ethnic-Latvians 46.96 per cent. [TSG-062] (CSB 2011).



the Latgalian culture and intelligentsia movements. Moreover, while the change of the museum name in 1990 suggests that the museum is dedicated to regional history, we can question how representative it is of the whole history of the Latgalian region. The museum can thus be said to represent a particular Latgalian regional functional memory of the territory's past.

Moving to another important regional museum, the final section of this analysis focuses on the **Daugavpils Regional and Art Museum (DRAM)** that covers the city of Daugavpils and surrounding region. The idea to establish the museum was developed in 1925 and popularised by the aforementioned historian Boleslavs Brežgo. The first exhibition was opened in 1933 in the Daugavpils Teachers' Institute. In 1938, the Daugavpils Department of the National History Museum opened on Saules Street 5/7 with financial support from the Latvian Culture Fund. After the Soviet re-occupation in 1944, the museum was renamed the Daugavpils National Historical Museum, but it functioned as a regional museum. In 1959 the museum moved to its current premises at 8 Rīgas iela. Since 1991, the museum has been named Daugavpils Regional and Art Museum to reflect the regional nature of its collection (DRAM 2015). Today, there are four permanent exhibitions:

1. 'The region in ancient times' and 'The region within the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (1561-1569) and Polish-Lithuanian State (*Rzeczpospolita*) (1569-1772)'
2. 'The region within the Russian Empire (1772-1917)'
3. 'The region within the Republic of Latvia (1918-1940)'
4. 'Daugavpils region within the USSR (1940-1991)'

The museum has not changed much since the Soviet period and many of the information panels in the museum date from the early 1990s. As a result, the museum presents yet another functional memory of the history of Latgalia that is shaped by the discourses of the Soviet period and is perhaps a reflection of the city's large Russian-speaking population.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> In Daugavpils in 2011, there were 50,013 ethnic-Russians, as well as Russian-speaking Belarusians (6,774) and Ukrainians (1,795). By contrast, the ethnic-Latvian population numbered only 18,447. It is only slightly bigger than the ethnic-Polish population (13,278) [TSG-062] (CSB 2011). It must be noted that not all of Latgalia's ethnic-Russian population are Soviet-era settlers. A sizeable 'local' Russian-speaking population, including many Old Believers, was living in the region before World War II [see Map H for data from 1897 and 1935] but this is not reflected in the present census data (Pazukhina 2010).

As in the other two museums, the first room of the DRAM begins with the ancient *Latgāli*. It focuses on the economic, political and cultural centre of Jersika. Information is presented about the life, handicrafts and trade of the *Latgāli*, who, like in the LNVN, are presented as ancient Latgalians. The museum narrative quickly moves to the destruction of Jersika in the thirteenth century by Germanic knights. There is little said about this period except that the ‘German invaders’ built the Dünaburg castle in 1275 marking the beginning of the city, similar to the *Rositten Schloss* in the LCHM.

The narrative then jumps to the sixteenth century when ‘the German invaders were replaced by Polish magnates’ and Dinaburg became the centre of the Inflanty province. Unlike the LCHM which portrays this as a ‘Polish’ period, the DRAM refers to this period more accurately as the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth or *Rzeczpospolita*, not attributing national characteristics to pre-national multi-ethnic polities. Moreover, there is notable mention of the brief period in the seventeenth century when parts of the territory of Latgalia were conquered by the Tsardom of Russia: ‘in 1656 Dinaburg was conquered by Russia and renamed Borisoglebsk, but after 11 years it was returned to Poland and was part of it until 1772’. This description, presided over by a picture of tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich, establishes connections between the territory of Latgalia and Russia prior to the eighteenth century. The rest of this section looks at how Dinaburg grew in importance under Polish-Lithuanian political and cultural influence as a trade and customs junction on the western Dvina river. As in the LCHM, the main information given about this period is concerned with the spread of Catholicism.

The next room describes the incorporation of Dinaburg into the Russian Empire after 1772, after which it steadily grew in importance. The building of the Dinaburg fortress in 1810 against the growing threat of Napoleon’s invasion is presented as a key moment in the history of the city: it ‘brought about great changes both in the planning of the town and in its everyday life’. Despite not being finished when war broke out in 1812, ‘the fortress had a great role in the defence of Russia’s western borders’. The prominent place in the museum given to the fortress and recently updated information panel is likely linked to the large-scale renovation work on the fortress over the past few years which has raised its public profile.

The second room dedicated to this period covers the second half of the nineteenth century when ‘Dinaburg became a significant centre of Vitebsk province

from 1802 as well as the second largest industrial centre of Latvia'. These two themes, the city as a Russian imperial city (renamed Dvinsk in 1893) and economic development, shape the narrative about this period. The museum contains much material about the economic development of the city, such as the flourishing of factories and the building of railways and highways. The St Petersburg-Warsaw line made the city a strategic junction and its population increased. Economic prosperity spilled over into the cultural sphere too. The museum describes how by 1913 there were 39 educational establishments in the city, several theatres, seven libraries and many churches. The emphasis on economic and cultural prosperity is similar to narrative about Rēzekne during this period in the LCHM. The DRAM, however, goes into more detail and also presents information about cultural 'Russification' measures such as the imposition of Russian language in schools and the 'printing ban in the Latvian language from 1871-1904'. The narrative about this period also has a remarkably strong Marxist overtone: this period is described as the era of 'capitalism', the abolition of serfdom in 1861 is covered in detail (the majority of population of Latgale were peasants), as are the mass demonstrations by 'workers [...] welcoming the overthrow of tsardom' in 1905-07. None of these aspects are portrayed in the other museums. This is probably because many of DRAM's exhibits have not been changed since the Soviet period and continue to reflect Soviet historiographical and mnemohistorical trends in which the 1905 'revolution' played a prominent role (Reichman 1983).

The next section is about the period of Latvian independence. It begins with Dvinsk as a front line city in World War I and the 1917 Rēzekne conference in which 'the decision was adopted about separation of Latgale from Vitebsk province [and] uniting with other provinces of Latvia'. A copy of the declaration of the congress and the group photo of the participants, including Francis Trasuns, are displayed. There is a brief mention of the joint Latvian and Polish efforts to liberate Daugavpils under the leadership of General E. Ridzīns-Smīgliņš accompanied by a photo of the Latvian-Polish border but, compared to the LNVM and LCHM, less attention is devoted to this event. Instead, in keeping with the Marxist overtones of the previous room, there is a display case with pictures and newspaper clippings devoted to the impact of the Russian Revolution on Latgale, depicting meetings and demonstrations of workers and soldiers as they greeted the news.

Visitors then move to the next room about the interwar Republic. As in the LNVM and LCHM, the functional memory of the interwar period of Latvian independence is first and foremost characterised by economic prosperity: the huge impact of the 1920 agrarian reform and the *lat* currency. There is also information about the economic achievements of the Ulmanis period, such as the drive for electrification and the building of the Unity Bridge over the river Daugava. Education also plays an important role in the functional memory of this period: there is mention of 41 educational institutions by 1934, including Polish, Russian, and Belarusian gymnasiums. Yet, in contrast to the other museums, the DRAM also displays information about social problems during this period suggesting that it was not all as glorious as it might seem. To underline this, the example is given of how poor medical care was at the time as many qualified specialists had fled to Russia during World War I. As in the LNVM, the narrative about the interwar period ends with the 1940 Song Festival in Daugavpils, displaying pictures from the events accompanied by the caption that this event marked the last time that the Latvian national anthem '*Dievs, svētī Latviju!*' [God, Bless Latvia!] was sung in a free Latvia.

Visitors then move upstairs to the final section of the museum about Daugavpils within the USSR. The first section deals rather briefly with the loss of independence in 1940: one display provides information about destruction in World War II, the Daugavpils Jewish ghetto, the prisoner of war camp Stalag 340 and the Holocaust in Latgalia, as well as about the Latvian Legion and anti-Soviet partisans (forest brothers). There is an adjoining room with a collection of objects from World War II but without any explanatory information. Instead, the narrative quickly moves to 1944, which is described as the Soviet 'liberation' of Latvia. Whereas in the LNVM the term 'liberation' is applied to the 1920-1921 'Battle for Latgalia' and in the LCHM to the 'liberation of Rēzekne', the word is used here in a radically different context that diverges from the Latvian national narrative of occupation and re-occupation. This is the most obvious indicator in the museum of the continued presence of a Soviet functional mnemohistory. To support this narrative of 'liberation', strong emphasis is placed on the benefits of this period for the city; this cannot be further from the narrative of the Soviet period in the LNVM. While the LCHM also mentioned that Rēzekne became industrialised during the Soviet era, the DRAM goes much further. Half the room is devoted to the achievements of industrialization, modernization,

factories, the building of tramways, electrification, plumbing and sewage system, railways and bridges. Agriculture and farming achievements are showcased along with photos of medical facilities and the nursing school (in direct contrast to the poor medical facilities described from the interwar period that the visitor will have just seen), the sporting achievements of youth and local music events. By the end of the Soviet period, Daugavpils is portrayed as a thriving industrial centre, the second city of Latvia, and home to several famous people: the birthplace of the artist Mark Rothko, Solomon Mihoels, and Oskar Strok. The exhibition ends with a display case about the 1990 Latgalian song festival as symbol of national unity, the Baltic Way and regaining of independence.

Overall, the DRAM presents yet another functional memory of the history of the region that directly contradicts the national meta-narrative and mnemohistory as presented in LNVM and LCHM in fundamental ways. The early periods are presented within the framework of Russian imperial historiographical traditions, a strong socialist and Marxist narrative runs through the museum where the nationalist-capitalist era is not presented as unequivocally positive (in contrast to the glorification of this period in the LNVM and LCHM) and, crucially, it displays the Soviet re-occupation as liberation. On the one hand, DRAM presents a counter-narrative of recent history that also finds its reflection in the broader memory politics of the re-independent Latvian state (Cheskin 2012). These conclusions are supported by the fact that the DRAM is also the only museum where the information was displayed equally in Latvian and Russian throughout, suggesting a different target audience to the LNVM and LRCM's Latvian and English-language displays and in keeping with the ethno-linguistic demographics of the city.<sup>45</sup> On the other hand, the continued institutionalisation of this Soviet functional memory in the form of a state museum is likely to be less the result of particular ideological motivations and rather the lack of funding from the state to update the museum, symptomatic of the general neglect and indifference towards Latgalia in Latvia. It is reminiscent of Theodor W. Adorno's association of museums with mausoleums:

The German word, "museal" (museumlike), has unpleasant overtones. It describes objects to which the observer no longer has a vital relationship and

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<sup>45</sup> In contrast, despite ethnic-Russians making up almost half the population of Rēzekne, the information in the LCHM is presented in Latvian with summaries in English and Russian. Again, this is testament to the Latvianisation and Latgalianisation of the functional memory presented in the LCHM.

which are in the process of dying. They owe their preservation more to historical respect than to the needs of the present. (1967: 175)

This theme of both the mnemonic and financial ‘forgetting’ of the Latgalian borderland in Latvia re-emerges in the survey responses and expert interview.

### **3.2 Latgalia in Storage Memory**

The study now moves towards the other ‘type’ of memory discussed earlier, namely the storage or archival memory defined by A. Assmann. Moving beyond the ‘foreground’ functional memory in order to further determine what is remembered about the history of Latgalia in the ‘background’, the following section seeks to understand how the storage memory of Latgalia has been remembered through the work of historians. Based on responses to a small-*n* survey as well as an interview, three main trends in the storage memory of the history of Latgalia were identified. These are dealt with in turn.

#### **Latvian National Storage Memory**

Among the experts on Latgalian history surveyed, there was a general consensus that the storage memory of Latgalia’s past is first and foremost incorporated into the national history of Latvia. The majority of research into the history of Latgalia is conducted in Latvia, by Latvian researchers and as part of the history of Latvia. The respondents felt that most periods of Latgalian history are generally covered in Latvian storage memory, if sometimes only briefly (3, 8).<sup>46</sup> In the research outputs of historians, particular attention has been paid to the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, especially the events and process leading to the ‘development of unified state of Latvia’ (7), such as ‘the First Congress of Latgalistics in 1917 in Rēzekne’ (6), as well as the history of Dvinsk/Daugavpils, the largest city in Latgalia (2). The history of the ancient *Latgaļi* has also been researched: ‘in the 20<sup>th</sup> century there were lots of archaeological excavations of mounds and cemeteries in Latgalia’ (10). Famous people from Latgalia, such as the activities and works of Latgalian writers, artists and Catholic priests, are included in the national storage memory but their specific connection with Latgalia is not always accentuated (3, 7). When asked about the current trends in the historiography of Latgalia, Aleksandrs Ivanovs (2015) presented a similar picture:

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<sup>46</sup> See bibliography for details where the respondents consented to be named.

In the structure of the historical community in Latvia, I would think that about 70 per cent of historians do their research within the 20<sup>th</sup> century. From time to time, ancient Latgalianians are studied since they have established some proto-states [...] It is a rather important period in the history of the Latvian nation [...] Other research topics appear spontaneously, there is not any system that can be traced.

The lack of a 'system' connecting the different research is characteristic of storage memory, which A. Assmann describes as the 'amorphous mass' of 'unused and unincorporated memories that surround the functional memory like a halo' (2011: 123-5).

This trend towards the nationalisation of the history of Latgalia suggests that along with the implied continuity of sovereignty of the reinstated Republic of Latvia in 1991 with its interwar counterpart, there was also continuity in historiographical traditions with the 1930s. Ivanovs also felt that 'there is such continuity' (2015). For with Latgalia's incorporation into the independent Republic of Latvia in 1918, Latvian national historiography became the leading trend in researching the region, replacing the earlier German, Polish-Lithuanian and Russian historiographical schools (Ivanovs 2009). With the institutional support of the Latvian state, historical research enjoyed official status and historiography was deployed as a tool for inspiring and mobilising the Latvian nation as well as the "latvianisation" or "(re-)unification" of the multi-ethnic society (Ivanovs 2009: 78).<sup>47</sup> The trend towards the Latvianisation of Latgalian History intensified in the 1930s during Ulmanis' authoritarian rule: he declared in 1937 that the mission of historiography was to raise the sense of national (or rather, ethnic) unity and self-awareness of the Latvians and pride in their national historical heritage (Ivanovs 2009: 79). The poster commemorating the First Congress of Latgalistics produced for schools in 1935, discussed in the introduction [Figure 1], is a product of this political drive to use History to construct and propagate a narrative of Latvian nationhood with Latgalia as an integral part.

### **Complicating the Picture**

Probing deeper, however, reveals that the storage memory of Latgalia is not so straightforward. For while acknowledging that Latgalia's history is incorporated into the

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<sup>47</sup> The establishment of the Open Air Ethnographic museums outside Riga in 1924 to showcase the architectural and folk heritage diversity of the four historical regions of Latvia is a prime example of this trend.

storage memory of the Latvian national history, eight out of ten of my respondents felt strongly that Latgalia was ‘under-represented’.<sup>48</sup> When asked to justify this, two different patterns of responses emerged. On the one hand, some argued that Latgalia is often forgotten about (3). As one respondent described:

When I was studying at university there were courses which had the name Latvia/Latvian, and these courses were devoted to events on the territory of Latvia until 1918, but *these courses did not remember Latgalia*.<sup>49</sup> For example, in a course dedicated to the development of archeology as a science in Latvia the teachers talked a lot about events in Kurzeme and Vidzeme in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> [...] but they did not mention what happened in Latgalia, even though there were also local landowners digging archeological sites of ancient Latgalians and making hypotheses about their findings. Or in the course of the development of Latvian national consciousness [...] the Latgalian national awakening is not mentioned. (10)

This is an example of how borderlands are often sites of intense (re)nationalising efforts laying claim to territories which have often historically been part of another polity. This suggests that the process of incorporating Latgalia into the Latvian historical storage memory has led to a homogenising of the past of the constituent historical regions into a coherent national narrative. A recurring theme was that the specific characteristics of Latgalia are not fully represented: ‘this is a unique region, which unlike others has retained its identity and has a unique cultural-historical environment’ (2). Several respondents noted how ‘it diversifies the otherwise unified vision of Latvian history’ (7), ‘it shows how rich the history of Latvia is’ (8) and how the creation of a nation-state ‘may be an ambiguous process’ (8). Moreover, ‘regional studies allow us to compare (for example, the abolishment of serfdom) and understand why the region evolved the way it did and how regional differences developed’ (10).

On the other hand, other respondents felt that the history of Latgalia was ‘under-represented’ for this very reason: ‘the history of Latgale is presented in the national historiography as something separate, in many cases as an “appendix” to the Latvian history’ (6), and is presented as ‘something additional’ to the main history (9). For where the history Latgalia has featured in the Latvian storage memory, there has been a tendency to focus on regional ‘peculiarities’ such as Catholicism and the relative sense of deprivation and detachment from the rest of Latvia (Ivanovs 2009: 8-9). As one

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<sup>48</sup> Question 3b. The remaining two respondents felt that Latgalia was ‘well-represented’. No respondents felt that Latgalia was ‘over-represented’.

<sup>49</sup> My emphasis



respondent noted, Latgale 'has always been marginalized as a regional case that is optional for deeper investigation. Having a different religious and ethnic background, people of Latgale are often perceived as "others", stereotyped' (7). Another suggested that this is in part 'historically determined by the print prohibition in the 19th century, Karlis Ulmanis' coup in 1934 and the Soviet period after the Second World War; Latgalian studies have only been "alive" and "free" in the last 20-30 years' (8). These historical factors have contributed to the marginalisation of Latgale from the main narrative of Latvian history. As Ivanovs explained, often 'they ["Riga" historians] do not see Latgale and the Latgalian population as an integral part of the Latvian nation [...] it is very symptomatic' (2015).

Magocsi argues that this is characteristic of many borderlands, which often play a marginal role in the national historical narrative as they are perceived as geographically "remote" from the national heartland and power centres, socio-economically "backward" and "peripheral" to the national narrative due to the presence of minorities (2004: 121). Yet Europe is a continent of regions as well as states, both transnational (e.g. Galicia, Silesia, Polesia or Carpathian Ruthenia) and subnational (e.g. Latgale, Samogitia, Kashubia or Bavaria), reflecting the, oftentimes, ethno-linguistic and confessional diversity of the inhabitants of these lands. However, this diversity has often been overshadowed due to the nationalising of functional memory. In this respect, historians and storage memory can act as a corrective to the functional memory of the national canon. Indeed, all the experts surveyed for this study felt strongly that the history of the borderland region of Latgale should have an important role in Latvian national history: 'the history of Latgale is an integral part of the history of Latvia' (8) and only with the inclusion of Latgale can 'a collective history be created' (4). Thus, two contradictory dynamics are at work in how the borderland region of Latgale features in Latvian cultural storage memory as represented by professional historical research: the nationalisation and selective amnesia towards the unique characteristics of the region, and the focus on regional peculiarities and the "othering" of the region. Andrejs Plakans reaches a similar conclusion about Latgale (2011).

Ivanovs proposes several factors which might account for these views:

Possibly the explanation can be based on local consciousness. The Latgalians [...] have [a] notion of relative deprivation from the processes within the nation-state. [...] They are detached from other regions of Latvia and are convinced that other Latvians from other parts of Latvia see them as people who are

underdeveloped, who differ from their natives who are living in Kurzeme and Vidzeme [...] (2015)

Many of my respondents have personal connections to Latgalia and, for many, their interest in studying the region is linked to their regional Latgalian ethno-linguistic self-consciousness. Indeed, among the experts I surveyed there was a strong feeling that the main elements of Latgalia's history missing from the Latvian national storage memory are associated with regional Latgalian identity (3, 5, 8, 10). This includes the history of the 'Latgalians in the course of the development of the Latvian ethnos and nation' and the 'Latgalian language' and 'cultural heritage' (1, 2, 3). The development of Latgalian language was a recurring theme. For example, when asked about what elements of the history of Latgalia should be given more attention, one respondent listed:

Print ban (1865-1904) and consequences of it; Latgalian folklore; first printed books; first institutions for higher education; joining of Latgale to Latvia, historical congress in Rēzekne in 1917; Latgalian activists; Russification of Latgale during Soviet times etc.; knowledge of Latgalian ABC. (5)

This is a reflection of the connection between regional identity, language and current language politics in Latvia. Most Latgalian experts are also Latgalian language activists, or the Latgalian language and cultural history plays an important part in their regional history research.

### **Re-Regionalising the Storage Memory**

In response to what some Latgalian experts perceive as the marginalisation of Latgalia within the storage memory of Latvian history there has emerged a second trend in the storage memory, namely a flourishing of Latgalian studies since 1991 and increasing interest in researching the history of Latgalia from the "inside". As Ivanovs explains, today 'the region as such is being investigated mostly by researchers who live here in Latgale' (2015), and contributes to the construction and maintenance of a regional storage memory of Latgalia. Research into local history, language and culture is coordinated by the Latgale Research Institute at DU, the Institute of Regional Studies at RA, the "Latgola" association of researchers, and the publishing house of the Latgalian Cultural Centre, leading Ivanovs to claim that 'an independent school – Latgalian studies – has come into existence' (2009: 19). This can be seen as a form of 'counter-memory' which emerges from what Adriana Bergero calls the 'otherlands' of remembrance, starting at locally and presenting alternatives to state historical

narratives (2014). It can be also be understood in terms of Nadia Lie's distinction between 'centripetal' memories that confirm the nation's identity and 'centrifugal' forms (from the borderlands) that unsettle it (2014).

My respondents were engaged in a wide range of different research projects in areas not represented in the national storage memory of Latgalia, from historical linguistics, Medieval history, Latgalian historiography, the agrarian reforms of the 1920s and 1930s, to gender during the Soviet period and the Roman Catholic church in the nineteenth century. This leads Ivanovs to conclude, in contrast to the views expressed by many of my survey respondents, that there exists a rather extensive storage memory of Latgalian history, but on a regional rather than national level. Perhaps this can be explained by the fact that Ivanovs, who self-identified as an ethnic Russian, separates himself from those scholars who study the history of Latgalia alongside promoting a Latgalian regional identity:

Some think that the history of [the] Latgale region is not studied enough within the context of Latvian historiography. But it is very interesting that no other regions have [a] regional historiography of their own, for example, in Vidzeme and Kurzeme there are no research institutions. [...] On the contrary [...] the problems of these [Latgalian] regions on the whole are being studied, rather intensively. *You see, I suppose it is a phenomena. On the one hand, the history of Latgale has not assumed an important place in the history of Latvia, but it is being studied intensively as a specific region.*<sup>50</sup> (2015)

This regional approach to researching the history of Latgalia can be seen as a revival and continuation of the work begun in the early twentieth century during the so-called First Latgalian Awakening (1904-1907) by Latgalian politicians and public figures such as Francis Trasuns, Francis Kemps<sup>51</sup>, and Margers Skujenieks (1886-1941), and continued by Boleslavs Brežgo during the 1930s-1950s, and émigrés Miķelis Bukšs and Tadeušs Puisāns (Ivanovs 2015). Apart from Brežgo, these were all amateur historians. This is another characteristic of Latgalian studies: 'most of the research work on the history of Latgalia is conducted not by professional historians' and is largely 'culturological' (Ivanovs 2015).

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<sup>50</sup> My emphasis.

<sup>51</sup> Authored the first cultural history of Latgalia (Kemps 1910).

### **Storage Memory Outside Latvia**

In the past decade there has been increasing evidence of storage memories of Latgalia outside Latvia. As one respondent commented, the region is important outside Latvia too, for 'Latgalia is not only the eastern border of Latvia but also the eastern border of the European Union. Latgalia is an important cultural and religious border (Catholicism, Protestantism, Orthodoxy)' (6). Ivanovs concurs that 'Latgale should be studied as a complex multi-ethnic region taking into consideration the impacts from Lithuania, Poland, Belarus, Russia, and other Baltic regions' (2015). James Clifford terms this phenomenon the 'more-than-local narrative', whereby regional history is situated in a wider transnational context (2013: 41).

One example of this trend in the storage memory of the history of Latgalia is the annual international conference of Latgalistics, jointly organised by Rēzekne Higher Education Institution and the University of Latvia, in partnership with Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań (Poland) and St Petersburg State University (Russia). The conferences have been held in Saint Petersburg (2008), Rēzekne (2009), Greifswald (2010), Poznań (2011), Riga (2012), Siberia (2013), and Rēzekne (2014), and play an important role in connecting Latgalian experts from different countries. Moreover, the theme of the 2014 conference, 'Points of Intersection in Cross-Border Culture, Language, History', also involved researchers from the Kėdainiai Regional Museum (Lithuania) and Hrodna State Historical and Archaeological Museum (Belarus) as part of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument 2007-2013 Cross Border Cooperation Programme Latvia-Lithuania-Belarus. The 2014 keynote speech was delivered by a scholar from the Belarusian State University and National History Museum on 'Relations between the Grand Duchy of Lithuania<sup>52</sup> and Inflanty at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century till the first third of the 17<sup>th</sup> century'.

There has also been increasing attention paid to Latgalia's minorities, with publications on Poles (Jėkabsons 1996), Belarusians (Apine 1995), and Lithuanians (Jėkabsons 2006), as well as a Russian-language history of Latgalia published in Riga (Atlants and Gaponenko 2012). A landmark publication in the transnational cultural memory of the history of Latgalia was the compilation of a two-volume, quadrilingual (Latvian-Russian; Latgalian-English) linguoterritorial dictionary of Latgalia (Šuplinska et al. 2012). Moreover, in the last decade there have been several publications about

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<sup>52</sup> Viewed in Belarusian historiography as early modern Belarus (Bazan 2014).

different aspects of the history of Latgalia by scholars outside Latvia, mostly in Poland (Dybaś 2001; Zajas 2013) and especially historical-linguistic studies (Gierowska-Kałużur 2011; Jankowiak 2012; Nau 2011; Ostrówka 2005; Rembiszewska 2009), but also in the UK (Swain 2003) and Germany (Angermann 2004; Benz 1998; Plath 2012). This suggests that in addition to the memory of Latgalia's past preserved in Latvian national and Latgalian regional storage memory, there is another transnational sub-current of a more diversified storage memory of Latgalian history. This can be seen as a continuation of earlier Baltic German, Polish-Lithuanian and Russian imperial historiographical trends in the storage memory of Latvia (Ivanovs 2009) as well as a result of the dispersed archival material about Latgalia. As Ivanovs explains:

Up to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the bulk of the material can be found in the Latvian historical archives [...] as for Polish times of Latgale [...] I suppose that some arbitrary records can be found in Poland [...]. 19th century history [...] primary records are mostly in Belarus in [the] Minsk National Archives since the centre of the province was Vitebsk [...] There are also many historical records in the archives of St Petersburg in Russia [...] In Moscow there are the Archives of Old Charters [...] Here, [there] are many records related to Latgale region in the times of Ivan the Terrible and in the 17th century [...] As for independent Latvia, these archival documents are available in Latvia. (2015)

That said, we must be careful not to exaggerate the impact of this new trend which is still very much in its infancy: the number of scholars is very small, the majority of the archival material has not been studied, and 'such studies are actually fragmented' (Ivanovs 2015). Ivanovs gave an example to illustrate this:

In Poland, Polish historians tried to make a lexicon related to Polish Latgalian, *Inflanty Polskie* [...] But they do this research work separately from Latvian historians. We have been informed, we know that they have such research projects, but we haven't seen the results and we haven't been invited to cooperate in this work [...] In Belarus, they have studied the history of Latgale also separately from the researchers in Lithuania, Poland and Latvia. (2015)

This acknowledges the tensions and contradictions inherent in transnational approaches to memory, the blockages – ideological or material – that prevent the circulation and movement of ideas, and the limitations to reproducing 'too perfectly the neoliberal utopia of a borderless world' (Rothberg 2014: 653). For, as Susannah Radstone reminds us, 'memory research, like memory itself [...] is always located – it is [...] specific to its site of production and practise' (2011: 114).

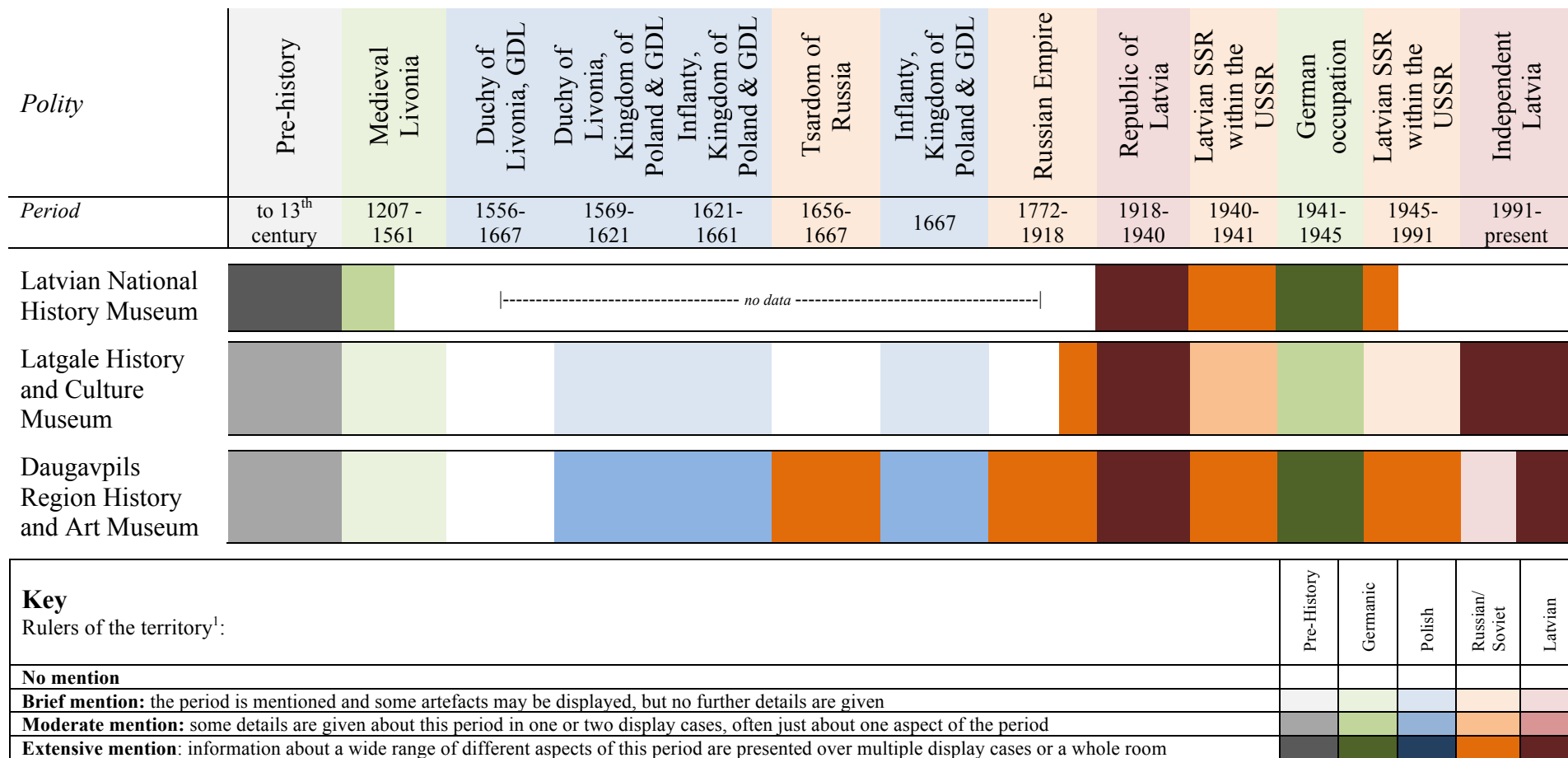
Thus, despite the presence of a transnational storage memory of Latgalia, these separate storage memories do not often come together, except at the annual conference in which only some scholars participate. Moreover, the dispersal of archival materials so characteristic of borderlands which have been occupied by different powers and which have often been the front lines in wars leading to archival material being moved or destroyed, also somewhat complicates A. Assmann's analogy between storage memory and archive or storehouse. In the case of borderlands, it is more appropriate to speak about *archives* and *storehouses* in the plural. Moreover, these memories are not always easily accessible (they are often written in different languages, in the case of Latgalian historiography, predominantly in Latvian, Latgalian, Russian, Polish, Belarusian, German, and English) and there is limited contact between different research projects.

### **3.3 Discussion**

#### **Memory or Memories?**

Vita Fortunati and Elena Lamberti remind us that 'it is no longer possible to passively accept a monolithic idea of collective memory' (2008: 128). Instead, as the case of Latgalia demonstrates, we need to think in terms of functional and storage *memories*. For 'groups emerge in the very articulation of memory; they come into being in a dialogic space, in the contact (and sometimes conflict) between different narratives, images and affective modes' (Rothberg 2014: 654). In the case of functional memory, the representation of different periods of Latgalian history in the three museums was categorised according to the framework outlined in Chapter 2.2 and the results are displayed in Figure 4. The different periods were also colour coded according to the rulers of the territory, which is how the museums themselves frame the different periods of Latgalian history.

This comparative framework yields interesting results. On the one hand, it suggests that there are several reoccurring elements which link the functional memories of all three museums: all three present relatively detailed archaeological material from the period prior to the thirteenth century and the ancient Latgalians, and the glorious period of the Republic of Latvia, framed either side by the processes leading up to independence and the loss of independence through the events of the 1940s. Based on



**Figure 4.** Overview of Functional Memory of the History of Latgalia in Museums

<sup>1</sup> These categories are based on the terminology used to characterise the periods in the museums themselves, for example, ‘Polish’ rather than the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and ‘Russian’, which is used to refer to both the imperial and Soviet periods. Unlike in the functional memory of Latvian national history, there is no ‘Swedish’ period in Latgalian history because this territory was never ruled by Sweden: the Duchy of Livonia was ceded to Sweden in 1621 (known in Latvian historiography as Swedish *Viezeme*), but part of the Duchy which included Latgalia remained under Polish-Lithuanian control (Polish *Vidzeme*).

this, it can be concluded that the predominant trend in the functional memory of Latgale's history is its nationalisation/Latvianisation of the borderland's history within the framework of the Latvian nation-state. This is supported by the fact that the three museums devote at least half their space to the twentieth century. As A. Assman argues, the national canon 'is built on a small number of normative and formative texts, places, persons, artefacts and myths' (2008a: 100). This is the cultural capital of society that is continually recycled, reconfirmed and eventually becomes canonized.

On the other hand, the three museums illustrate how the history of Latgale is used in different ways in the present. In the case of the LNVM, these are the only periods covered by the museum. It does not offer anything beyond the Latvian national master narrative. Despite not all the exhibitions being open, it is still perhaps indicative of the priorities of the museum in setting up the new exhibits that they chose to focus first on these two periods. The LCHM follows broadly the same narrative as the LNVM, but with a more localised focus linked to the Latgalian regional identity. Accordingly, there is less emphasis on the Germanic influences of the Medieval Livonian period, which had a less long-lasting impact on Latgale, and some attention, albeit rather limited, is paid instead to the 'Polish' influences during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, especially the cultural influence of Catholicism which continues to be an important component of Latgalian regional identity. The role of Rēzekne within the Russian Empire is also addressed when the town flourished. Generally speaking, the narrative of this museum is 'Latgalianised'. The DRAM presents yet another functional memory of Latgale's past incorporating more Soviet and Russian perspectives. This is a reflection of the fact that unlike the other two museums, this museum has not changed significantly since the Soviet period. It might also be a reflection of the city's inhabitants and the ethno-linguistic Russian majority. This is the museum which deals most extensively with the Polish-Lithuanian period, although it still remains the least represented era in all the museums. Particular emphasis is placed on the periods of Russian rule, including the short period from 1561-1569 when the city was incorporated into the Tsardom of Russia, the whole of the nineteenth century, and not just the latter half, and everyday life under the Soviet regimes rather than just the repressions which are the focus in the other two museum. These conclusions support Ivanov's assessment:

The history of Latgale has been fragmented within the history of Latgale region as well. The notion of the history of this region is quite different for the local



Russians [...] The Polish inhabitants [also] have quite a different image of the history of Latgale [...] *I think that we can't speak about any common collective memory. It is fragmented since the inhabitants of Latgale are influenced [...] and live in actually quite different informational spaces.*<sup>54</sup> (2015)

This is characteristic of borderlands generally; to attempt to define a singular collective functional memory oversimplifies the picture.

Equally, the data from the survey responses and interview suggest that we cannot speak about a single storage memory of Latgalia either. This is even more so than in the case of functional memories, where the Latvian, Latgalian and Soviet/Russian functional memories have common elements and present their memories of the past as coherent narrative canons. In storage memory, the picture is even more fragmented. Three trends in the storage memory of the history of Latgalia were identified, yet the research projects of individual scholars are rarely tied into a broader narrative.

### **Comparing Functional and Storage Memories**

The storage memories of the history of Latgalia have several commonalities with the functional memories. The main trend in the storage memory of the history of Latgalia is Latvian national historiography. The national canon is also the dominant trend in the functional memory, as portrayed in the LNVN. In both cases, there is an emphasis on the pre-thirteenth and twentieth century periods. Although the storage memory is broader and goes into more detail, the same events and periods continue to constitute the focus of the storage memory of Latgalia's history. In addition, a regionalised cultural memory of Latgalia is also present in both the functional and storage memories, in the LCHM in Rēzekne, the centre of Latgalian regional identity activism, as well as in the Latgalian 'school' of historical research.

Yet there are two areas in which the functional and storage memories do not overlap to such a degree. Firstly, whereas the functional memories of the history of Latgalia are contained within the boundaries of the nation-state (whether on a national or regional level), within the realm of storage memory there is a trend towards a transnational understanding the historical connections between Latgalia and its neighbouring regions. This can be seen as a continuation of earlier historiographical

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<sup>54</sup> My emphasis.

trends in the storage memory of the region linked to the various political and cultural rulers of the territory throughout its history. Whereas there are numerous historiographical traditions that are concerned with the history of Latgalia, there are no museums covering Latgalia outside Latvia. Today, Latgalia does not form a significant part of the functional mnemohistory of any of the neighbouring states with which it shares a historical storage memory (Zajas 2013). This highlights one of the main differences between storage memory – increasingly subject to transnational considerations - and functional memory, which remains within the framework of Latvian or Latgalian cultural memory.

Secondly, while there continues to be a Soviet/Russian functional memory of the history of Latgalia, this is much less present in the realm of storage memory. Although there were many volumes published on the history of Latgalia during the Soviet period by scholars such as Boleslavs Brežgo (1954) and A. A. Zavarina (1969; 1977; 1986), these are no longer reprinted and there are no scholars working in this historiographical School today.<sup>55</sup> Only one of the researchers who responded to my survey was conducting research into the Soviet period and none of the papers presented at the conference dealt with the Soviet period. Nevertheless, the Soviet/Russian functional memory remains rather strong, especially in Daugavpils where there are still many people who continue to live in the Russian-language information space.

<b>Functional Memories</b>	<b>Storage Memories</b>
National	National
Regional	Regional
Soviet/Russian	X
X	Transnational

**Table 3.** Summary of the Functional and Storage Memories of Latgalian History

Table 3 presents a summary of the cultural memory of the history of Latgalia. It is the third and fourth areas (shaded) that are most interesting from a theoretical point of view: these differences between functional and storage memories demonstrate the value of using A. Assmann's concepts for analysing the cultural memory of borderlands.

<sup>55</sup> The exception perhaps is the recently published Russian-language history of Latgalia (Atlants and Gaponenko 2012) which was funded by the pro-Russian Institute of European Studies in Riga.

### **Intersections between Functional and Storage Memories**

While the functional and storage memories of the history of Latgalia have been examined separately and shown to be important categories for framing our analysis of cultural memory in borderlands, there are also many connections between them.

Responding to A. Assmann, Adrian Velicu argues that,

these are hardly water-tight compartments. The dynamics of canon elements receding into the archive and of archive elements being revived as part of a revised canon illustrate the interaction both between these forms of storage and between the two kinds of cultural memory proposed here. (2008: 2)

Studies which focus solely on either functional or storage memory miss out on these dynamics. To this end, no study on the cultural memory of Latgalia would be complete without two brief references to instances of mutual interactions between the storage and functional memories of Latgalia's past.

As my analysis of Latgalian storage memory reveals, storage memory is not simply 'passive', but actively shaped by actors. All but one of my respondents were actively engaged in promoting and raising awareness of the history of Latgalia outside of academia, such as presenting at public conferences (3), teaching Latgalian history and language in local schools (6), promoting Latgalia in the Latvian Society in Riga, working with museums (4), participating in the activities of the Latgalian Student Centre (Latgolys Students Centrs), and writing articles for publications such as Latgalian Cultural Gazette *LaKuGa* and the bimonthly magazine *A12*. One researcher is also involved in organising the annual "Atzolys" summer school for students about Latgalia and lecturers at the "Vosoruošona" summer course for teachers in Latgalia, which promotes the teaching of Latgalian language, literature and history. Another researcher organizes winter schools on Latgalian language and cultural history in the Krasnoiarskaia oblast for the Latgalian-speaking community there. Ivanovs feels that these links between storage and functional memory are particularly strong in this case:

Professional academic research [in Latvia] has lost ties with society [...] Latvian historians produce their research papers for themselves. And most of these papers are read only by other specialists [...] by 10-20 people, not more. Research of the history of Latgale is an exception, since due to amateurs who do their independent research [...] *the history of Latgale has become rather popular, for local Latvians [...] So, it is an exception when there can be traced*

[a connection] *between professional historiography and popular history*.<sup>56</sup> (2015)

However, we must be careful not to overstate the impact of these activities. When asked to assess the effect of these activities on ‘influencing the knowledge about the Latgale region among the inhabitants of Latvia’, most researchers felt that their impact was rather low.<sup>57</sup> Explanations given for this included that the impact was largely on other academics, or that ‘people connected to Latgalian activities know each other by face, it is a very narrow circle, which doesn’t expand’ (9). As one of my respondents noted, there are still only a small number of scholars working on Latgalia (2) and while ‘information about Latgale is available in both national and local publications, there is room for improvement - the information could be more consequential and extensive’ (4). These are examples of bottom-up initiatives that are dependent on the motivation of local individuals and that often struggle to get funding from the state.

The online museum project, ‘The Virtual Past is a Keystone for the Future of Museums’ is an example of interactions between functional and storage memory driven from the top-down. Funded by the European Union as part of the Latvia Lithuania Belarus Cross Border Cooperation Programme (2007-2013), the project was completed in November 2014 and launched at the Latgalistics conference. The project brought together four institutions, the Rēzekne Higher Education Institution, the Latgale Culture and History Museum, the M. Bohdanovich Museum (Hrodna, Belarus), and Kėdainiai Museum (Lithuania) to study the regions of Latgalia, Grodno and Kėdainiai and their linked history and culture. The aim of the project was to ‘provide access to tangible and intangible cultural heritage values for [a] wide circle of society, creating a virtual museum and expanding exchange of cross-border experience in the field of cultural education’ (*Virtual* 2015). The project site contains virtual galleries displaying collections from the participating organizations as well as four interactive games to teach schoolchildren about different aspects of the three regional histories. All the information is translated into five languages (English, Latvian, Latgalian, Lithuanian, and Belarusian) to reach the widest possible audience. The project description explains that thus far, the History of these regions has been ‘comparatively static’ and that the

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<sup>56</sup> My emphasis.

<sup>57</sup> Question 2g. Breakdown of the responses: 5=no respondents, 4=1, 3=3, 2=5, 1=1.

project aims to challenge existing ‘[sic. national] stereotypical interpretations’ (*Ibid*). This is an example of an initiative to raise awareness of the ‘shared memories’ between these transnational neighbouring regions on the level of functional memory (Assmann 2014).

## CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this study was to investigate how A. Assmann's concepts of functional and storage memory might be useful theoretical tools to frame an analysis of the cultural memory of the history of borderlands, thus contributing a theoretical dimension to a field which has thus far been largely empirically-based (Baud and Schendel 1997). Moreover, whereas previous literature has examined these concepts in isolation, this study took a multi-scalar approach in order to examine the complex, palimpsestuous layering of memories that converge around borderlands.

Using the case study of Latgale, this study investigated the functional memory landscape by analysing the historical narratives presented in three museums and the storage memory landscape using an expert survey of professional historians of Latgale and an interview. The analysis revealed that there are several key differences between the functional memory and storage memory in the case of Latgale: whereas the mnemohistory of Latgale is largely incorporated within the framework of the Latvian national canon, professional History research represents a more diversified and transnational memory. This illustrates the value of applying A. Assmann's concepts to borderlands in order to gain a more nuanced understanding of the workings of cultural memory. In particular, this study draws attention to how the mnemohistory of borderlands are subjected to the contradictory dynamics of nationalisation and marginalisation, the ways that the past can be mobilised in both the functional and storage memory realms as part of regional identity movements, and how borderland minorities can construct and maintain narratives about the past which diverge from the national canon.

This study also made several modifications to A. Assmann's concepts as applied specifically to borderlands. Notably, the analysis revealed that both functional and storage memory landscapes are characterised by fragmentation. The three museums portray different uses of the past in the present: 1) the LNVM presented a nationalised narrative of Latgale where the territory played a prominent role in the pre-thirteenth century period as one of the proto-Latvian ethno-cultural groups, but a peripheral role in history of the Latvian nation-state in the twentieth century; 2) LCHM tells a regional narrative which focuses more on the diversity of the region's inhabitants prior to the

twentieth century but also the distinct regional identity of the Latgalian; 3) DRAM presents Russian imperial, Marxist Soviet narratives of the history of the Daugavpils region which radically differ from the Latvian narrative, especially the portrayal of the 1944/45 reoccupation of Latvia as a 'liberation'. Fragmentation also characterised the work of professional historians of Latgalia, for while a considerable amount of research is being done into the region's history it does not come together, even in Latvia or Latgalia, into a coherent narrative. Thus, it is more appropriate to speak of functional and storage *memories*, not just of a singular collective memory. Moreover, this study demonstrates that the concepts of functional and storage memory should not be considered in isolation and there are many interactions between them. In the case of Latgalia, this can be seen in the initiatives of Latgalian experts engaged in activities to raise awareness of Latgalian cultural history as well as the virtual museum project.

The theoretical framework of functional and storage *memories* developed in this study could be applied to further research in the fields of cultural memory, border studies, and mnemohistory as a means of studying the interplay between national, regional, local, and transnational functional and storage memories in borderlands and border regions. In particular, this study proposes that the border region of Transcarpathia, with its similar locus of 'migrating borders' and diverse inhabitants, would be an interesting comparison with Latgalia for future research.

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2. Tatiana Bogdanovica, MA Student, University of Latvia, 14/11/2014
3. anonymous
4. Dr Angelika Juško-Štekele, Senior Researcher in the Research Institute for Regional Studies and Associate Professor at Rēzekne Higher Education Institute, 24/11/2014
5. anonymous
6. Dr Vladislavs Malahovskis, Associate Professor, Rēzekne Higher Education Institute, 19/11/2014
7. Dr Sandra Meškova, Associate Professor, Daugavpils University, 14/11/2014
8. anonymous
9. Sandra Ūdre, Research Assistant at the Research Institute for Regional Studies at Rēzekne Higher Education Institute and PhD student at Daugavpils University, 18/11/2014
10. Vineta Vilcane, PhD Student, University of Latvia, 01/03/2015

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## Appendix I: Maps



**Map A.** Baltic Tribes, c. 1200. MapMaster. Wikimedia Commons. Based on a map by Marija Gimbutas, published in *The Balts* (1963).

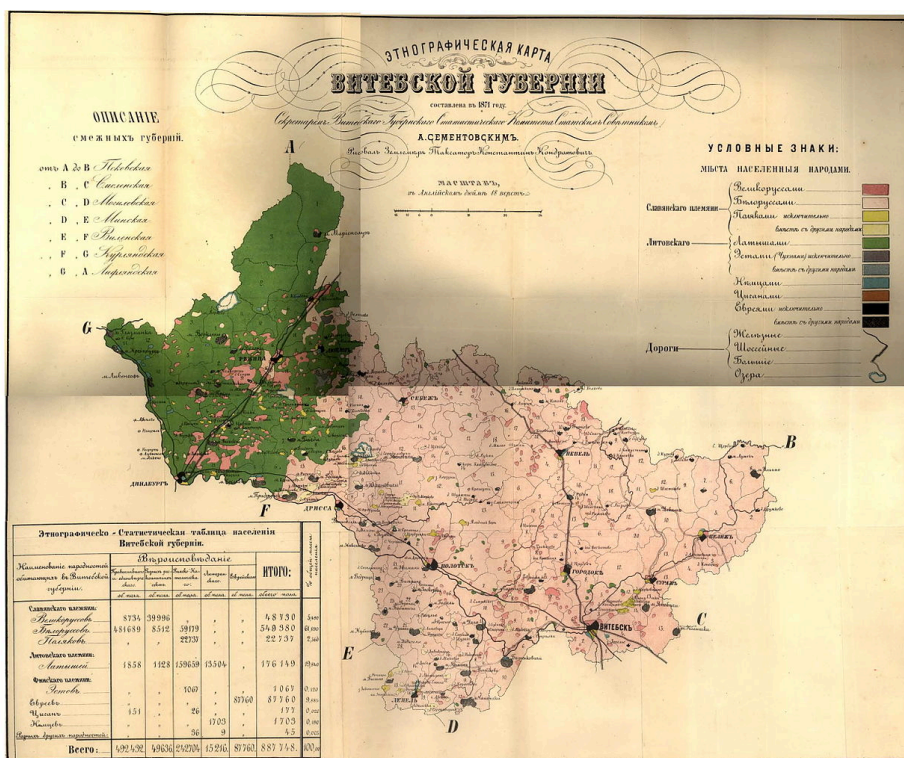


**Map B.** Medieval Livonia, c. 1260. MapMaster. Wikimedia Commons.

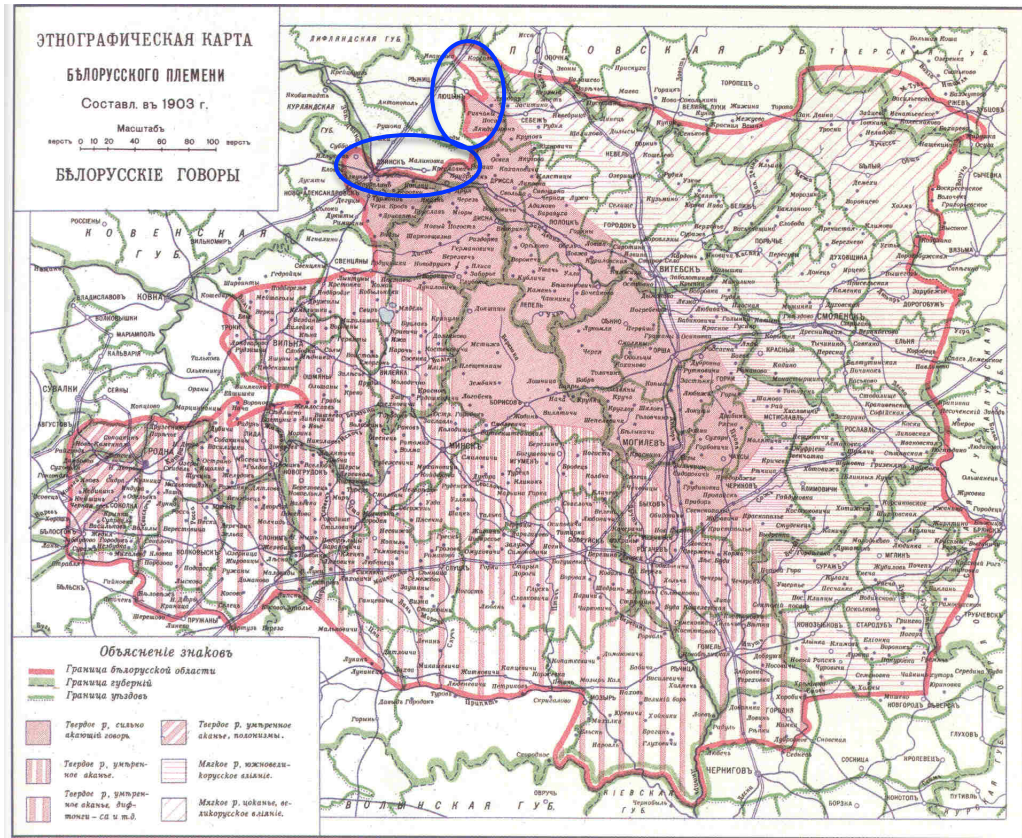




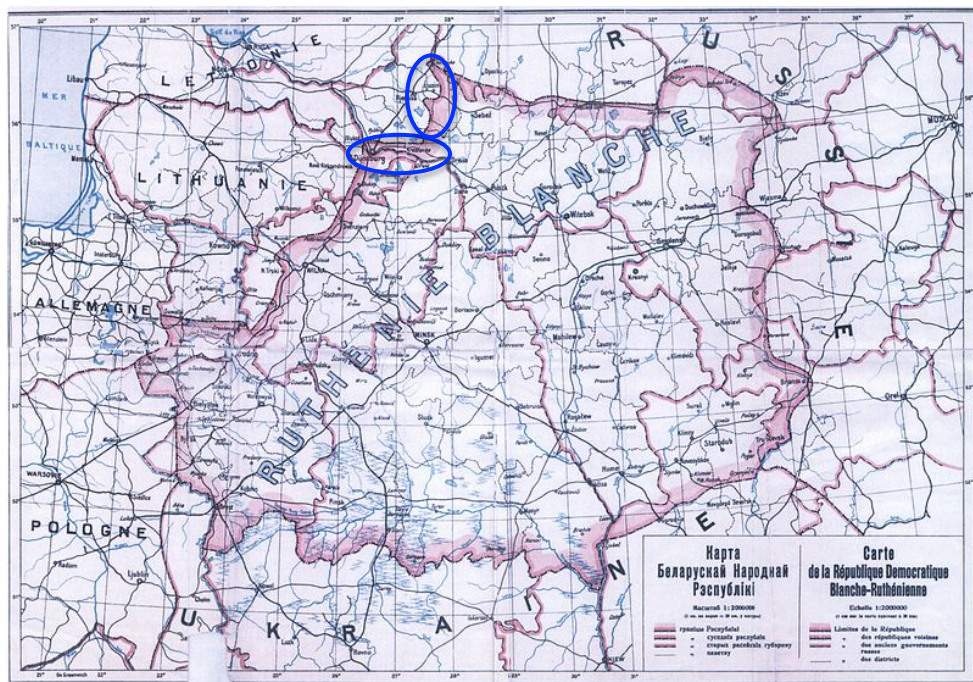
= Map C. Inflanty (Polish Livonia) in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Halibutt. Wikimedia Commons.



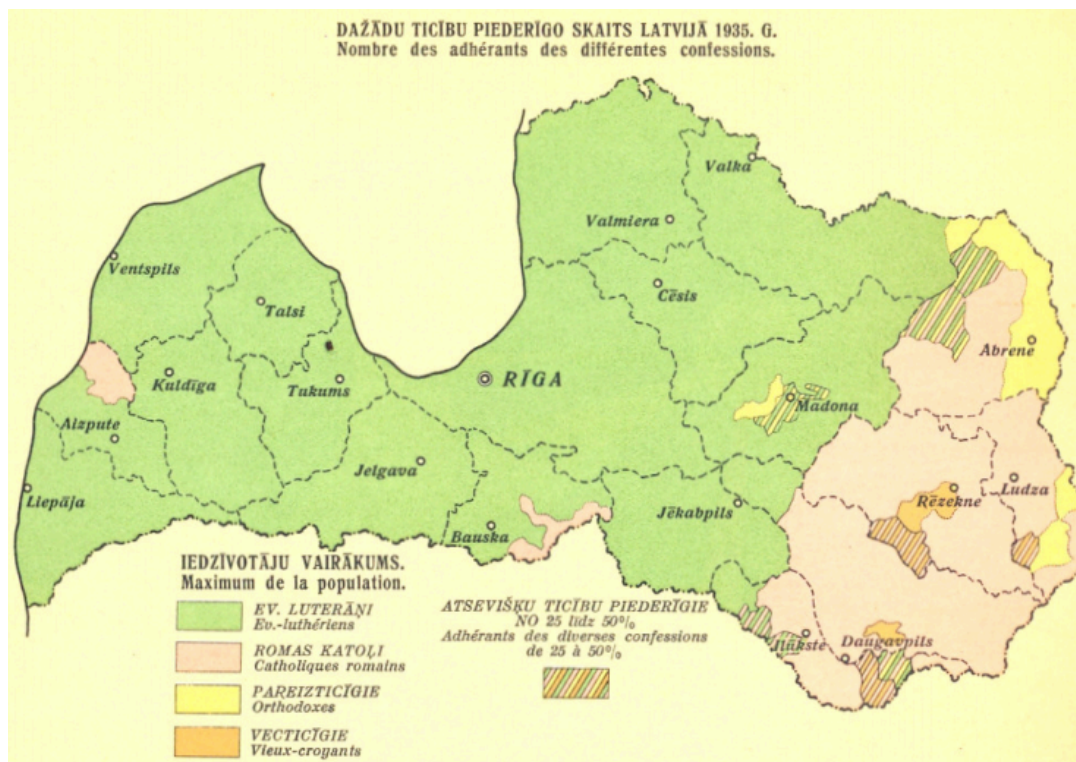
Map D. "Ethnographic Map of the Vitebsk gubernia" (Sementovski 1872). 'Latvians' (green), 'Great Russians' (dark pink), 'Belorussians' (light pink), 'Poles' (yellow), 'Poles together with other peoples [narod]' (pale yellow) are indicated on the map, as are 'Germans' (light blue), 'Roma' (brown) and Jews (black).



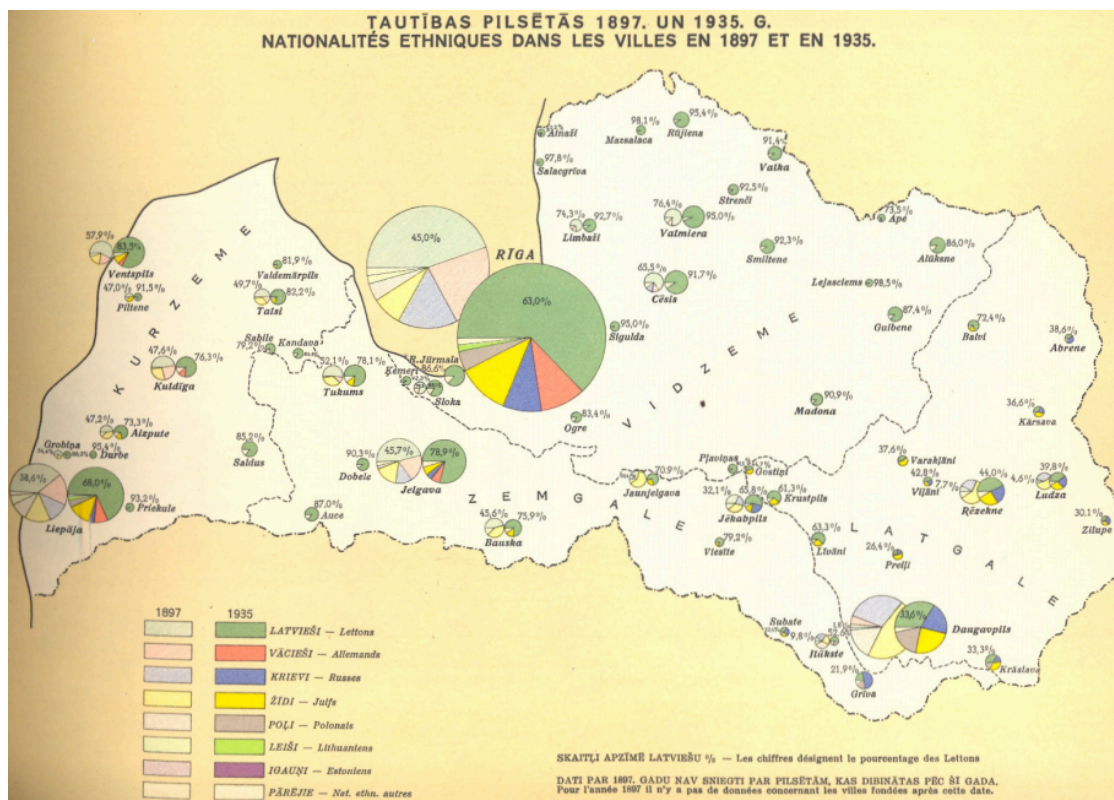
Map E. Evfimii Karskii. 1903. *Ethnographic Map of the Belarusian Tribe*. Wikimedia Commons. The territories (circled) south of Dvinsk/Двинскъ (Daugavpils), east of Kreslava/Креслава (Krāslava) and east of Lutsyn/Людцынъ (Ludza) are included in the Belarusian-speaking lands and written with their rare Belarusian-language names.



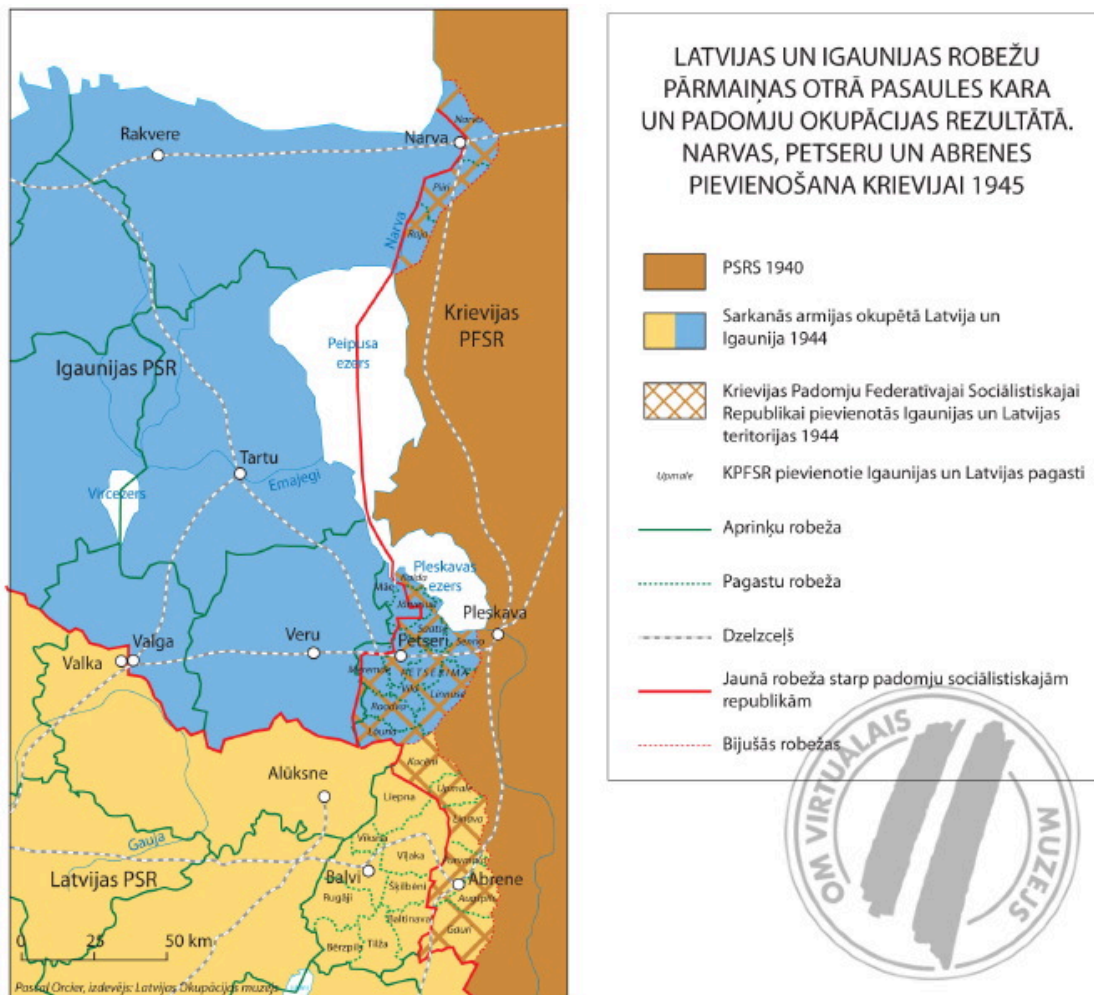
Map F. "Map of the Belarusian People's Republic" (Downar-Zapolski 1919). Wikimedia Commons. The territories (circled) south of Daugavpils and east of Krāslava and Ludza are included within the proposed Belarusian state.



**Map G.** “Map showing number of adherents to different confessions, 1935.” (Skujenieks 1938).



**Map H.** “Map showing ethno-linguistic groups in main cities of Latvia, in 1897 and 1935.” (Skujenieks 1938).



**Map I.** A map indicating the changes in Estonian and Latvian territorial borders following the incorporation of Narva, Petseri and Abrene regions to the Russian SFSR. (Museum of the Occupation of Latvia, n.d.).

## Appendix II: Questionnaire<sup>58</sup>



Catherine Gibson, MA Student

[catherine.gibson.13@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:catherine.gibson.13@ucl.ac.uk)

Supervisor: Dr Eva-Clarita Pettai, University of Tartu

### THE HISTORY OF LATGALE IN LATVIAN CULTURAL MEMORY

*I am a Masters student at University College London (UK) and Tartu University (Estonia) and I am writing my thesis on the history of Latgale in cultural memory. I am interested in how the history of Latgale has been incorporated into the broader narrative of Latvian national history and the role that individual scholars and practitioners play in this process. As part of my research, I am conducting a survey of scholars and practitioners working on the Latgale region. If you have 15-20 minutes, I would be very grateful if you could complete this short questionnaire. Please feel free to respond to the questions in English or Russian. Your answers will solely be used by the author for this project and you have the option for your responses to be kept anonymous. Please return your questionnaire to me either by email or by paper copy at the conference from 21-23 November 2014.*

*Many thanks in advance for your help and please contact me if you have any questions.*

#### **1. General information**

a) Name, surname:

b) Academic qualification and area of speciality (for students, please specify your course of study):

c) Professional role or job:

d) Workplace:

I would like my responses to remain anonymous

#### **2. Your research and professional activities**

a) What is the area of your research?

b) What research projects are you currently engaged in?

c) Are you involved in research projects on Latgale that are part of international networks? (e.g. involving scholars from outside Latvia or which receive external funding) If yes, please give details.

<sup>58</sup> The questionnaire was provided in English and in Russian and all the boxes were expandable so that respondents could give developed answers.

d) Aside from research, are you involved in any professional activities which promote and raise awareness of the history of Latgale? (e.g. cultural institutions and organisations) If yes, please give details.

e) What aspects of Latgalian history and culture do these activities focus on? (e.g. Latgalian language, cultural traditions)

f) What methods are used in your research and/or professional activities to promote the history and culture of Latgale? (e.g. museums, teaching, public events, festivals, summer schools, online resources)

g) On a scale of 1-5, how do you evaluate the overall impact of your research and/or professional activities on influencing the knowledge about the Latgale region among the inhabitants of Latvia? Please tick.

1 – no impact	2	3	4	5 – high impact

h) Please explain your answer.

i) What would be necessary in order to improve the awareness of the history of Latgale? (e.g. more funding, greater cooperation with institutions in Riga) Please give details.

### **3. Latgale in Latvian history and cultural memory**

a) In your opinion, should the history of multi-ethnic and multicultural border regions such as Latgale play an important part in national history? Please explain your answer.

b) In your opinion, in the historical memory of the inhabitants of Latvia, Latgale is... (please tick one)

- under-represented
- well-represented
- over-represented

c) Please explain your answer. What factors, in your opinion, account for this representation of Latgale in Latvian history?

d) What aspects of local Latgale history are currently included in Latvian history? (e.g. periods, events, famous figures)

e) What elements of the history of Latgale would you like to see included in national history?

Can I contact you for follow-up questions? Yes/No

If yes, please provide your email address:

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*Many thanks for taking the time to fill out this questionnaire!*