

Relations of the Institute of Roman Studies with the Baltic States (1936–1940)

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Summary. This article explores the cultural diplomacy and ideological outreach of the Institute of Roman Studies (*Istituto di Studi Romani*) toward the Baltic States, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, during the late 1930s. Founded in 1925 in Fascist Italy, the Institute promoted *Romanità*, or the ideal of Roman cultural continuity, and aimed to make Latin a revived international scholarly language. Using archival documents, the study details how the Institute pursued connections in the Baltics through diplomatic channels, university partnerships, and direct correspondence with local scholars. While geopolitical upheaval and the onset of World War II curtailed these efforts, the article situates them within the broader strategies of Italian soft power and the transnational intellectual history of classical studies. It also suggests that, absent war and occupation, classical philology in the Baltic region might have developed along very different trajectories.

Keywords: Institute of Roman Studies, Baltic States, cultural diplomacy, classical philology, Latin revival, Italy–Baltic relations.

Romos studijų instituto ryšiai su Baltijos šalimis (1936–1940)

Santrauka. Šiame straipsnyje nagrinėjama Romos studijų instituto (*Istituto di Studi Romani*) vykdyta kultūrinė diplomatija ir ideologinė sklaida Lietuvoje, Latvijoje ir Estijoje XX a. ketvirtą dešimtmečio pabaigoje. 1925 m. fašistinėje Italijoje įkurtas institutas propagavo *romanità*, t. y. romėniškos kultūros tęstinumo idealą, ir siekė atgavintą lotynų kalbą paversti tarptautine mokslo bendruomenės kalba. Remiantis archyviniais dokumentais, tyrime atskleidžiama, kaip institutas siekė užmegzti ryšius Baltijos regione pasitelkdamas tiek diplomatinius kanalus, tiek universitetų partnerystę, galiausiai – tiesioginį susirašinėjimą su vietos mokslininkais. Nors geopolitiniai sukrėtimai ir Antrojo pasaulinio karo pradžia sutrikdė šias pastangas, straipsnyje jos analizuojamos kaip platesnių Italijos „švelniosios galios“ strategijos ir tarptautinės klasikinų studijų intelektualinės istorijos dalis. Straipsnyje taip pat svarstoma, kad jei nebūtų buvę karo ir paskui Baltijos šalių okupacijos, klasikinė filologija šiame regione galėjo vystytis visai kita linkme.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: Romos studijų institutas, Baltijos valstybės, kultūrinė diplomatija, klasikinė filologija, lotynų kalbos atgavimas, Italijos ir Baltijos šalių santykiai.

An interesting and, for the time being, hardly explainable appearance of the Institute of Roman Studies (*Istituto di Studi Romani*) in Lithuania took place on 14 June 1963. During one of the meetings of the Department of Classical Philology at Vilnius University, the lecturer M. Svirskas informed the members of the Department about the *Certamen*

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Capitolinum, an international competition of original compositions in Latin that was being organized in Rome.¹ This competition had been conceived by Carlo Galassi Paluzzi (1893–1972) as one of the means to promote the use of Latin and has been running ever since.

This curious fact became the point of departure for the present inquiry and led to a visit to the historical archives of the National Institute of Roman Studies (*L'Archivio Storico dell'Istituto Nazionale di Studi Romani*, henceforth abbreviated as ASINSR) in Rome, in the hope of uncovering further details of this unexpected occurrence.

Interestingly, the documents in the Institute's archives for the 15th (1964) and the 16th (1965) competitions do not show any attempts to establish contacts with any of the Soviet republics, let alone to invite them to take part in the competition, so this reference to an offer for Lithuanians to take part in the *Certamen Capitolinum* competition remains a mystery for now.² Nevertheless, the other material found in the archive revealed previously unknown efforts by the Institute to establish scholarly ties with the Baltic States during the final years of the interwar period, prior to their Soviet occupation. Accordingly, this article seeks to bring to light and analyze this little-known archival material, which has remained unpublished until now.

The Institute of Roman Studies

Founded in Rome in 1925, the Institute of Roman Studies aimed to take a closer look at Rome's cultural heritage throughout history and to promote the idea of *Romanità* – Roman-ness – throughout the world. This concept, which united classical, Christian and modern Rome into a single entity, later became one of the symbolic foundations of the new Fascist Italian culture.³ At the same time, the Institute was to become a global center connecting classicists from all over the world who admired the ancient Roman culture, and to coordinate and register scholarship in this field, whether ongoing or completed.

The Institute's founder, Carlo Galassi Paluzzi, studied literature and philosophy at the University of Rome for several years without graduating, but he nevertheless continued dedicating himself to the study of Roman art and history. Paluzzi began publishing his research in 1920, and soon after, in 1923, he founded the journal *Roma* (1923–1944). This journal published articles on the history and everyday life of Rome through the ages, and promoted the idea that ancient monuments should become a new inspiration

¹ Vilnius University, Directorate of General Affairs Archive (Vilniaus universiteto bendrųjų reikalų direktijos archyvas – VUBRDA), f. R–856, ap. 16, b. 304.

² It is highly probable that the proposal reached through informal, non-institutional channels, and, given the minimal and uncertain chance of participating in such an international competition, it was regarded with little attention.

³ The concept of *Romanità* (Roman-ness) is an important part of the ideology Mussolini was developing, so it is now a focus of a great number of scholarly studies. For an introduction to this subject, see J. Nelis, 2007, p. 391–415; R. Visser, 1992, p. 5–22.

for the modern Roman and Italian.⁴ In 1925, Paluzzi together with his journal colleagues founded the Institute of Roman Studies, which took over the publication of the *Roma* journal, expanded quickly and embarked on more and more new projects.⁵

Soon after, in 1926, the bibliographical periodical *Bibliografia romana* appeared, chronicling research in this field. In the same year, the Institute began to offer courses to the general public (*Corsi superiori di Studi Romani*), with the aim of acquainting it with the various aspects of *Romanità*. The Institute also began to organise conferences and exhibitions concerning Rome through the ages. The Institute's activities and the cultivation of the idea of *Romanità* were ideologically suited to the myth of Fascist Italy created by Mussolini, and thus it naturally became one of the instruments of Italian soft power.⁶ It should be stressed that the Institute was not just a mere executor of the state's ideological plans, although there were some cases of this. Often, Paluzzi himself put forward personal initiatives and sought state support for their implementation. At the same time, there is no doubt that the Institute's activities also served as a tool of Italian soft power. The spread of Italian soft power in the Baltics particularly intensified in the 1930s, when Italy sought to present itself as a friendly and reliable partner to the Baltic States, geographically caught between the two expansionist powers of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia.⁷

In 1932, Paluzzi announced that the Institute was assuming leadership in initiating the revival of study and use of Latin, at the same time adapting the language to modern times, so that it could be reborn as an auxiliary world language for communication (especially in its written form) between well educated scientists and scholars of all nations.⁸ This idea (as a tool of soft power) was to be developed and disseminated throughout the world in close cooperation with the Italian government. At the same time, Rome and the Institute of Roman Studies were to become the global center of all the neo-Latin movements and initiatives with similar objectives, namely, the revival of the communicative function of Latin.⁹

Some of Paluzzi's main objectives were to ensure that the scientific articles published in Italy would always be provided with a Latin abstract; that the same would be done for the proceedings of international conferences; that the various neo-Latin movements in the world would be coordinated by an International Committee in Rome; that special dictionaries of Latin terminology would be created for many different fields of science

⁴ A. Joshua, 2012, p. 29.

⁵ K. Lyvens, 2023, p. 132.

⁶ For more on this see K. Lyvens, 2023, p. 133–134.

⁷ R. Napolitano, 2024, p. 18. On Italy's soft power in the Baltic States, see R. Napolitano, A. Vitale, 2022, 171–196.

⁸ K. Lyvens, 2023, p. 131, 134–139.

⁹ It should be emphasized that, according to Paluzzi, the Institute of Roman Studies was not intended to become a centralizing institution. Rather, the objective was to coordinate the activities of other centers and to disseminate knowledge among neo-Latin movements worldwide. On the other hand, such an ambition cannot be understood completely separately from political agenda, especially since such initiatives had the approval of Mussolini himself. For more on this see K. Lyvens, 2023, p. 137–138.

and scholarship.¹⁰

Paluzzi's desire to bring together Latinists of the whole world naturally extended to the Baltic States as well.¹¹ This paper will examine the correspondence and other documents kept in the historical archives of the National Institute of Roman Studies which relate to the effort of building relations with the three Baltic States and promoting the ideas of *Romanità* in these countries. Unfortunately, no comparable studies on the Institute's correspondence with other foreign countries have been identified, making comparisons with the Baltic case unfeasible. As this article introduces archival material for the first time, the scarcity of prior research leaves more questions than answers. The primary aim, however, is to present this material and shed light on a previously unexamined dimension of cultural cooperation between Fascist Italy and the Baltic States. The three ways in which the Institute sought to establish these links will be discussed: through diplomats, through university rectors and through direct letters to scholars.

Diplomatic Routes: Lithuania

Since the activities of the Institute aligned well with the interests of the Italian Fascist government and with its ambitions of expanding Italian influence in the world, including the Baltic States, through soft-power means, for their implementation Paluzzi could also enlist the support of the Italian diplomatic corps. In the case of Lithuania this was Baron Giovanni di Giura (1893–1989), Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary residing in Kaunas, as Vilnius, the Lithuanian capital, was then occupied by Poland. In the years 1938 and 1939, he regularly briefed Galeazzo Ciano (1903–1944), the Foreign Minister of Italy, about the international political situation of Lithuania, about the prevailing sentiments in manoeuvring the complex geopolitical situation between the Soviet Union, Germany, Poland and other European nations.¹²

Despite the tense political situation, Di Giura found time to fulfil the requests Paluzzi sent him. The communication between Paluzzi and Di Giura began while the diplomat was still in Rome: it seems that Di Giura himself approached the Institute considering the possibility of spreading the ideas of *Romanità* during the time of his diplomatic service in Lithuania. This is evident from a letter written by Paluzzi to Di Giura on 1 August

¹⁰ C. Paluzzi, 1932, p. 277–278. See K. Lyvens, 2023, p. 134–139.

¹¹ The archive preserves the Institute's correspondence with universities in many European countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Malta, Ireland, Norway, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, Sweden, and Hungary; ASINSR, Partizione 9 *Latino*, busta 102–103). There is also correspondence with universities from other continents (South Africa, India, Japan, Australia, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Canada, and the USA; busta 104). The archive also contains correspondence with Italian diplomats who worked in these countries (busta 101–102).

¹² Giovanni di Giura's diplomatic service in Kaunas, Lithuania, can be traced through his letters and reports to the Italian Foreign Minister (*Documenti Diplomatici Italiani*, Ottava Serie 1935–1939, vol. IX–XIII, Roma: Libreria dello Stato, 1953; *Documenti Diplomatici Italiani*, Nona Serie 1939–1943, vol. I–II, Roma: Libreria dello Stato, 1954). Di Giura assumed office on 31 August 1938 (*op. cit.* (1953), vol. IX, 747), and on 4 November 1939 he was succeeded by Angelo Cassini as the next Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary (*op. cit.* (1954), vol. II, lettera 109, 76). According to the mentioned diplomatic dossiers, Di Giura sent 19 letters and telegrams to the Italian Foreign Ministry about the situation in Lithuania over a period of 15 months.

1938. Here Paluzzi not only congratulates Di Giura on his appointment, but also on the fact that his official agenda of “exalting Italy and *Romanità*” takes the Institute into consideration.¹³

In the same letter Paluzzi also mentions Juozas Macevičius (1898–?), then Secretary of the Lithuanian Honorary Consulate in Rome,¹⁴ who had also been Chargé d’Affaires a.i. of Lithuania to the Holy See in 1924–1926. Paluzzi indicates that he was pleased to get to know Mr Macevičius and that he eagerly looks forward to his suggestions about what could be done in Lithuania.¹⁵ The archive also contains a letter addressed by Macevičius to Paluzzi (15 September 1938), where he mentions the interruption of his conversation with Paluzzi the day before due to the limited time of the meeting and regrets that because of this he could not present the memorandum he had prepared on the dissemination of *Romanità* in Lithuania.¹⁶ Macevičius sends the memorandum (*Pro-memoria*) with the letter in question, in which he writes that Lithuania is a favourable country for the dissemination of the Institute’s activities, but corresponding action is not yet being initiated by Rome – if Roman culture were to be more actively promoted, this would be followed by a greater interest. Macevičius therefore calls for the first phase to focus on publicising Roman studies in Lithuania, and on publishing what has already been done in Italy itself. In this way, local scholars could also gradually become more involved in the activities of Roman studies.

As one of the ways of this publicity, Macevičius urges the publication in the Lithuanian press of articles related to the studies of Rome, thus raising interest of Lithuanians in the latest scientific discoveries and introducing them to the work carried out

¹³ ASINSR, partizione 10 *Sezioni*, busta 141, cartella 14 (Sezione della Lituania/Di Giura), Paluzzi a di Giura, 1938 08 01. It is worth noting that Di Giura also sought to foster relations between Italy and Lithuania in other ways. In 1938 he mediated the reopening of the Lithuanian section of Action Committees for the University of Rome (CAUR). Although the committee’s original aim (to disseminate and promote Fascist ideology) ultimately failed, it nevertheless operated as a platform of soft power. In Kaunas, for instance, an “Italian Week” was organized, along with several exhibitions related to Italy. See more: R. Napolitano, A. Vitale, 2022, p. 189–190. Comparable processes occurred in Latvia as well. See more: R. Napolitano, 2022, p. 254–256. For a more detailed discussion of this and of CAUR’s activities in the Baltic States, see: J. W. Borejsza, 1974, p. 279–316, and in Lithuania, see: V. Petronis, 2024, p. 909–926.

¹⁴ This biographical data (the birth date and the 1938 employment information) can be gleaned from the application kept in the Aarolsen Archives that Juozas Macevičius had made to the International Refugee Organisation in 1949, desiring to emigrate to the USA (<https://collections.aarolsen-archives.org/en/search/person/80420362>).

¹⁵ ASINSR, partizione 10 *Sezioni*, busta 141, cartella 14 (Sezione della Lituania/Di Giura), Paluzzi a di Giura, 1938 08 01.

¹⁶ ASINSR, Partizione 10 *Sezioni*, busta 141, cartella 14 (Sezione della Lituania/Macevičius), 1938 09 15. This letter and the circumstances of its subject matter would require a comprehensive new investigation. It could be noted that the letter mentions a meeting between Macevičius and Di Giura, who seems to have referred Macevičius to Paluzzi and the Institute due to the questions related to Roman studies. According to the letter, one of the earlier conversations between Macevičius and Paluzzi (another letter from Macevičius refers to 22 August 1938) focused on the possibility of expanding the Institute’s activities to Lithuania, proposing to collect papers authored by the Lithuanian classicists and to publish summaries of them in one of the major European languages. The Institute pledged to pay for this work by remunerating the person who could do it. It was also discussed that the Institute would like to receive a list of Latinists working in Lithuania. It seems that in the conversation of 14 September Paluzzi did not recall the plans being discussed earlier, which led to various misunderstandings when Macevičius was presenting the memorandum. Therefore, in this letter of 15 September Macevičius explains the situation and attaches the memorandum discussed the day before.

by foreign scholars.¹⁷ The idea of opening a section of the Institute in Lithuania seems to have been considered as quite real and feasible. In one of his letters, Paluzzi even mentions to Di Giura that if it were decided to open such a center, he could fly in himself and help with the task.¹⁸ According to Joshua Arthurs, nine such regional centers had been established by 1941. Unfortunately, with the exception of the one at Sweden's Gothenburg University, he does not offer a detailed list of their locations. For context it should be noted that by 1941, nine such regional chapters were opened and they were located both in Italy and abroad (e.g. at Sweden's Gothenburg University).¹⁹ However, these sections were not proper institutes of their own right, but rather networks of individuals (primarily at local universities) actively maintaining a relationship with the central office in Rome.

Di Giura responds to Paluzzi's inquiry when already in Lithuania, which he optimistically calls "truly a remote sentinel of *Romanità* in the north-east of Central Europe". Di Giura reports that he has been acquainting himself with the leading local personalities from his very first day in Kaunas, and brings happy news assuring Paluzzi that the environment is indeed very suitable for creating a local Section of the Institute of Roman Studies. He cites a conversation he had with Juozas Tūbelis (1882–1939), then Minister of Agriculture, formerly Prime Minister, also a brother-in-law of the President Antanas Smetona (1874–1944), who assured him of the strength, steadfastness and tenacity of the study of Latin in Lithuania and that he "enthusiastically favoured the development of cultural, spiritual and economic ties with the great Fascist Italy, where the cult of Rome and its incomparable glories thrives like never before in the deepest sense of the word".²⁰ Di Giura concludes the letter by indicating his eager readiness of carrying out any concrete plans Paluzzi may give for setting up a branch of the Institute here.

In his reply letter, Paluzzi assures him that the department will be created, promising to send concrete proposals for its establishment in the near future.²¹ On 22 March 1939, Paluzzi sent to Di Giura another letter, together with the first issue of his newly published journal "For the Study and Use of Latin. International Bulletin of Studies, Research and Information" (*Per lo studio e l'uso del latino. Bollettino internazionale di studi, ricerche, informazioni*), also indicating its purpose: to become the main center for the diffusion of the "language of Rome". According to Paluzzi, the initiative had

¹⁷ ASINSR, Partizione 10 *Sezioni*, busta 141, cartella 14 (Sezione della Lituania/Macevičius, *Pro Memoria*), Macevičius a Paluzzi, 1938 08 14.

¹⁸ ASINSR, Partizione 10 *Sezioni*, busta 141, cartella 14 (Sezione della Lituania/Di Giura), Paluzzi a di Giura, 1938 08 01.

¹⁹ J. Arthurs, 2012, p. 30. Unfortunately Arthurs does not specify where other such units were established.

²⁰ ASINSR, Partizione 10 *Sezioni*, busta 141, cartella 14 (Sezione della Lituania/Di Giura), Di Giura a Paluzzi, 1938 09 26. It is noteworthy that in 1938, Jadvyga Tūbelienė, the wife of Tūbelis, became the president of the Italian–Lithuanian Association (Associazione italo–lituana / Italu–lietuvių draugija). Both Tūbelienė and her husband were ardent admirers of Fascist Italy and demonstrated active interest in the projects implemented under Mussolini, which likely contributed to their enthusiastic reception of Di Giura's initiatives. See: R. Napolitano, A. Vitale, 2022, p. 189.

²¹ ASINSR, Partizione 10 *Sezioni*, busta 141, cartella 14 (Sezione della Lituania/Di Giura). Paluzzi a di Giura, 1938 10 17.

already been endorsed by Duce himself and by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and National Education, and he had first informed Di Giura of it through the Minister for Foreign Affairs. In this letter, Paluzzi asks the diplomat to contribute to the valuable collection of information on Lithuanian Latinists²² with whom the Institute could establish relations as soon as possible.²³

Di Giura sends the requested information. Although this letter does not appear in the archives, it can be deduced from Paluzzi's reply letter of 9 June 1939. It contained the names of Lithuanian Latinists and other "interesting information about the situation of Latin in Lithuania". Paluzzi indicates that this information will be published, anonymously unless expressed otherwise, in the second issue of the journal.²⁴

Indeed, the next issue devotes several paragraphs to the state of Latin in Lithuania, idealising this distant and mysterious land in a certain way:

"It is truly admirable how this country reveres and upholds the language of Rome. The Lithuanian people, in order to clearly differentiate their very old language from the idioms that are now identified with other origins, such as Slavic, are fond of connecting it with Latin.

There is more: as Lithuania is geographically the outermost Catholic country in north-eastern Europe, it has a lively and deep sensitivity to what has come and may still come to it from Rome.

Therefore, Latin is the basis of teaching in all Lithuanian schools and is compulsory even for those pupils who intend to prepare themselves to study science.²⁵

In the University of Kaunas there are distinguished Latin scholars, among whom we will mention Professors Vladimiras Šilkarskis and Antanas Rukša."²⁶

On 1 August 1939, Di Giura sends another letter to Paluzzi, providing updated information on Lithuanian scholars (which he had previously, upon request, gathered and sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs). According to him, the Embassy recommended to the Ministry to first try and establish contacts with Antanas Rukša, a lecturer at the Vytautas Magnus University, as well as with the Greek scholar Prof. Račkauskas (in

²² The letters sent by Paluzzi are often standardised, with little variation in content regardless of the addressee. This is another example of these impersonal letters. In this case it was apparently a standard letter accompanying journals *Per lo studio e l'uso del latino* being sent to Italian diplomats, so it contains such formulas as "[please] provide us with information about Latin teachers in the Nation where you so honourably represent our country", etc.

²³ ASINSR, Partizione 9 *Latino*, busta 101, cartella 68 (Lithuania), Paluzzi a di Giura, 1939 03 22.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, Paluzzi a di Giura, 1939 06 09.

²⁵ Following the 1936 educational reform, it was decided that the Romance languages were culturally closer to Lithuanians. As a result, French replaced German as the primary foreign language taught in schools, while Latin also became virtually mandatory in all higher-level schools. See: R. Brunevičiūtė, 1999, p. 95–99.

²⁶ *Per lo studio e l'uso del Latino*, 1939, ann. I, nr. 2, 190. The list of lecturers (Šilkarskis, Račkauskas, Dumčius, Rukša) was published in *Per lo studio e l'uso del Latino*, 1939, Nr. 3, 262–263. The Italian text spells the names incorrectly as "*Silvarkis e Ruksa*". Prof. Vladimiras Šilkarskis (1884–1960) is better known as a Grecist than a Latinist. He was Professor of Greek Language and Literature, and from September 1924 to the summer of 1940 he was Head of the Department of Classical Philology at the Vytautas Magnus University (VMU). Before that, Šilkarskis had taught at the Moscow, Tartu and Vilnius Stephen Báthory universities. During his time at VMU he wrote numerous papers on Greek philosophy (especially about Plato and his Socrates) and literature (with a special focus on Homer). Antanas Rukša (1900–1980) became the main lecturer of Latin at VMU in 1939. Later, in exile, he translated the entire corpus of Virgil, as well as several works of Lithuanian poets writing in Latin.

the letter *Rakauskas*), and with the Latin scholar, Jonas Dumčius.²⁷ In his letter of 10 August, Paluzzi thanks him for the information provided and expresses his confidence that this Lithuanian branch of the Institute could be established soon.²⁸ It appears that Paluzzi's initial efforts, prior to the actual establishment of an Institute branch, focused on supplying target countries with materials already prepared by the Institute. Accordingly, in his last preserved letter to Di Giura (dated 13 October 1939), he sent the second issue of the journal "For the Study and Use of Latin".²⁹ The last document relating to Di Giura is an instruction to the Institute's despatch office regarding the delivery to him via a diplomatic courier of a letter together with a packet of (presumably Institute's) publications.³⁰

Diplomatic Routes: Latvia

From the Baltic States it was Latvia that the Institute of Roman Studies first focused on and sought to cooperate with. As early as 1936, Paluzzi attempted to establish contact and cooperation with the Riga State Library. At that time, the Institute was starting a bibliographical project "Central Index of Roman Bibliography" (*Schedario Centrale di Bibliografia Romana*), and was addressing enquiries to the major libraries of Italy, Europe and the world³¹ in order to compile a catalogue of books and other works related to Ancient Rome. The request was for copies of the library catalogue cards pertaining to the material of Roman interest, this work being paid for by the Institute.³² Two further letters were sent with the request repeated.³³

Not sure if the letters were being ignored or if they were not reaching their recipients, the Institute decided to seek assistance from the Italian Consul General in Riga at the time. In a letter to him, Paluzzi outlines the importance of the research project, pointing out that many European and American libraries are already involved in this collaboration and that it would be a pity if the Riga library were to be left out.³⁴ However, there was no response either. Subsequently, five more letters³⁵ were sent to the Consul, reminding him of the request, until finally, after a year of persistent attempts to get in touch, a reply

²⁷ ASINSR, Partizione 10 *Sezioni*, busta 141, cartella 14 (Sezione della Lituania/Di Giura), Di Giura a Paluzzi, 1939 08 01. Prof. Merkėlis Račkauskas (1885–1968) was a lecturer and a translator, who also developed numerous Latin and Greek teaching materials. In 1929, he published the manual "Roman Antiquities" (*Romėny senybės*), dedicated to Roman culture and history. Jonas Dumčius (1905–1986) – lecturer and translator who translated mainly from Ancient Greek.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, Paluzzi a di Giura, 1939 08 10.

²⁹ ASINSR, Partizione 9 *Latino*, busta 101, cartella 68 (Lituania), Paluzzi a Di Giura, 1939 10 13.

³⁰ ASINSR, Partizione 10 *Sezioni*, busta 141, cartella 14 (Sezione della Lituania/Di Giura), 1940 01 10.

³¹ Outside Europe, many of the most important libraries in Latin America and the USA have been contacted; in Asia, the libraries of Beijing, Tokyo, Jerusalem, Istanbul, Bombay, Calcutta; and in Africa, the libraries of Egypt (Alexandria and Cairo).

³² ASINSR, Partizione 8 *Schedario centrale di Bibliografia romana*, busta 20, cartella A58.III.3 (Lettonia). Paluzzi al Direttore della biblioteca di Riga, 1936 01 14.

³³ *Ibid.*, 1936 03 12 and 1936 04 18.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, Paluzzi al Console Generale D'Italia in Riga, 1936 05 14.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 1936 07 04, 1936 07 29, 1936 10 21, 1937 01 21, 1937 04 20.

letter was received signed by the head of the Italian Legation, informing that the Riga State Library had been contacted and Paluzzi was assured that the requested material would be forwarded to the Institute as soon as it is ready.³⁶ Of course, Paluzzi sent a letter of appreciation³⁷ for the help he had received, but no further information on whether the request was granted seems to be available in the archive.

Subsequent letters to Latvia are found only in 1939. On 22 May Paluzzi sent the first issue of the “For the Study and Use of Latin” to Delfino Rogeri di Villanova (1889–1979), Italian Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary residing in Riga.³⁸ This is the same day when Paluzzi sent the same journal with a nearly identical letter to Giovanni Di Giura in Kaunas. Two days earlier (20 May) he had sent the same journal and the same letter (identical to the one sent to Lithuania) to Vincenzo Cicconardi, Italian diplomat of the same rank in Tallinn.³⁹ It is therefore safe to say that contacts with all three Baltic countries were initiated at the same time.

Looking into further correspondence with Di Vilanova in Riga, the archive contains three more letters. The first is a letter of gratitude from Di Vilanova for the receipt of the first issue of the journal, where he politely pledges his full support to the Institute’s efforts (28 March 1939); the second is a letter of gratitude from Paluzzi, thanking him for his promise of his full and authoritative support to the furtherance of the Institute’s aims as expressed by its journal (03 April 1939); and the third is another standard letter accompanying the despatched second issue of the journal (13 October 1939).⁴⁰

It is interesting to note that not only the Italian diplomats stationed abroad supported the Institute’s activities; there is an interesting case of a foreign diplomat residing in Italy who involved himself directly in the activities of the Institute, namely the case of Arnolds Spekke (1887–1972), who served as Latvia’s envoy to Italy, Greece, Bulgaria, and Albania between 1933 and 1939. His permanent place of residence was Rome, so it was not difficult for him to get involved in the local affairs. Spekke was not only a diplomat, but also a historian and, most importantly, a Romance philologist by training.⁴¹ At the time, the lecture series “Traces of Rome in the World” (*Orme di Roma nel mondo*) was being organized by the Institute for the general public and it had proven to be a success, so Paluzzi desired to involve more scholars, not only from Italy, who could contribute to the list of topics covered. Therefore, on 11 July 1939 the Institute sent Spekke a letter inviting him to give a lecture on this broad theme or, if he could not accept this invitation,

³⁶ *Ibid.*, Console Generale D’Italia in Riga a Paluzzi, 1937 04 28.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, Paluzzi al Console Generale D’Italia in Riga, 1937 05 07.

³⁸ ASINSR, Partizione 9 *Latino*, busta 101, cartella 68 (Lettonia), Paluzzi a Di Villanova, 1939 05 22.

³⁹ ASINSR, Partizione 9 *Latino*, busta 101, cartella 68 (Estonia), Paluzzi a Cicconardi, 1939 05 20.

⁴⁰ ASINSR, Partizione 9 *Latino*, busta 101, cartella 68 (Lettonia). Di Villanova a Paluzzi, 1939 03 28, Paluzzi a di Villanova, 1939 04 03, 1939 10 13.

⁴¹ Before starting his diplomatic career, Spekke held the positions of associate professor (from 1920), professor (from 1922), dean (1925–1927) and vice-rector (1927–1929) at the University of Latvia. He has published papers in numerous European languages; regarding the same topic on which he gave his lecture in Italian at the Institute of Roman Studies (on the Amber Road and the links between the Baltic lands and Rome), he followed up on it with publications in Latvian and English. More on this: <https://www.vestnesis.lv/ta/id/27495>, <https://www.literatura.lv/personas/arnolds-spekke>.

to recommend the names of some other Latvian scholars who would be able to contribute to the course.⁴²

In his response of 27 July, Spekke doubts if the Latvian Institute of History would be able to react to the query quickly enough due to the ongoing summer holidays and the brief intervening time before the course starting in December, but he nevertheless promises to send Paluzzi's invitation to Latvia. At the same time, he informs that he has recently written a paper in Latvian on King Theodoric's relations with the ancient Prussians and, if the Institute finds it interesting, he would be happy to present it in Italian.⁴³ Paluzzi gladly agreed with the proposed lecture "Relations of the Court of Ravenna with the Baltic Tribes in the Time of King Theodoric"⁴⁴ (*Le relazioni della Corte di Ravenna ai tempi di Re Teodorico con le genti Baltiche*) and so it was scheduled for 18 January 1940.⁴⁵ The archive contains four different short summaries of the paper, as well as a slightly longer summary, which gives an indication of its exact content – Spekke introduces the epoch of King Theodoric and then discusses the letter his secretary Cassiodorus addressed to the amber-bringing embassy of Aestii.⁴⁶

It may be concluded that Spekke's relationship with the Institute was strong and persistent. As the archival data shows, he established contacts with the Institute already in 1934,⁴⁷ soon after his stationing in Rome as the Envoy of Latvia in 1933; and we have information that he delivered two lectures at the Institute as a foreign dignitary and a scholar: in 1938⁴⁸ and, as we have seen, in 1940. Therefore, Spekke cooperated with the

⁴² ASINSR, Partizione 5 *Corsi superiori*, busta 109, cartella 7 (Paesi Baltici), Paluzzi a Spekke, 1939 07 11. The letter provides further details about the course: the presentation must be given in Italian, may be illustrated with slides, the Institute offers an honorarium of 200 lire and if necessary an Italian translation of the presentation. In addition, the presentations would then be printed in separate booklets, which would then be brought together in separate volumes. A further follow-up letter was sent to Spekke on 24 July 1939.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, Spekke a Paluzzi, 1939 07 27.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, Paluzzi a Spekke, 1939 09 05.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, Paluzzi a Spekke, 1939 10 20. The archive also contains more correspondence between Spekke and Paluzzi, dealing with the various technical details of the preparations for the presentation (slide selection, biographical details of the speaker, etc.).

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, The lecture was first announced in the *Corsi superiori di Studi Romani* brochure published in November 1939 (pp. 7 and 22) where the whole programme of the December 1939 – April 1940 lecture course was given. Later it was announced in the Institute's informational bulletin *Rassegna d'informazioni dell'Istituto di Studi Romani*, 15 Gennaio 1940, Anno VIII, N. 3, p. 5.

⁴⁷ In the Institute's archives there is also a memo addressed to Paluzzi by one of his Institute colleagues, describing the conversation he had with the Envoy of Latvia Spekke, who inquired about the possibility for Latvian scholars to give a lecture (*una conferenza*) at the Institute. The author of the memo instructed him to contact Paluzzi directly. He also informed Paluzzi that, since Spekke was already personally acquainted with the parliamentarian Guido Rispoli (1893–1982), who also was involved in the Institute, he might use this channel instead of contacting Paluzzi directly. ASINSR, Partizione 5 *Corsi superiori*, busta 34, cartella 18 (Lettonia), a Paluzzi, 1934 11 23.

⁴⁸ The 1939 summer correspondence between Paluzzi and Spekke implies that this is not the first time he is giving a lecture in the Institute. This is confirmed by the text of Spekke's lecture in the Institute found in the Latvian State Historical archive: "The Baltic peoples in the first millennium of the Christian Era" (*I popoli baltici nel primo millennio dell'era cristiana*: LVVA, 2575 f., 9 ap., 148 l., 2 lp.). This information is given by R. Napolitano, 2024, p. 19. Consulting the Institute's informational bulletin *Rassegna d'informazioni dell'Istituto di Studi Romani*, 28 Febbraio 1938 Anno VI, N. 9, p. 5, we learn that this lecture happened on 3 March 1938. This is confirmed by the published version of the lecture: A. Spekke, 1938, p. 1–24.

Institute almost from his arrival in Rome up to the moment when Independent Latvia, occupied by the Soviets, ceased to exist in June 1940.

Diplomatic Routes: Estonia

In the case of Estonia, the Institute also engaged the resident Italian diplomat. In addition to the unnotable circular letters by Paluzzi that have accompanied the delivery of the Institute's journal, there are two interesting reply letters by Vincenzo Cicconardi. In the first, dated 28 April 1939, Cicconardi sets out in broad terms his efforts to help the Institute of Roman Studies. In particular, he contacted Prof. Roberto Weiss (1908–1987),⁴⁹ Director of the Institute of Italian Culture in Estonia and Lecturer of Italian language and literature at the University of Tartu, and asked him for information about the teaching of Latin in the University of Tartu and about the professors there. He in turn reported that the chair of Latin literature in the University (the only one in Estonia) was vacant, at the moment not assigned to anyone. Instead, the teaching of this subject was entrusted on an interim basis to Konstantin Wilhelmson (1893–1944). Weiss also gives a brief biography of Wilhelmson: he graduated from the University of St Petersburg, then taught for several years in the secondary schools of Tartu, before being appointed lecturer in ancient languages at the University of Tartu, and in 1938 he was assigned to teach the courses of literature there for three years. It is mentioned that he is a specialist in papyrology, with papers published on this topic, also the book on Lactantius he was preparing is mentioned.⁵⁰ In addition to Wilhelmson, the letter also mentions his assistant Ervin Roos (1908–1962), a lecturer who completed his Master's degree in 1934 and worked on questions relating to Greek metrics.⁵¹

Weiss also outlines the Latin curriculum at the University of Tartu: the Preliminary Latin course of two years was compulsory to all students of the Faculty of Philosophy, while the Classical Philology students later continued to the Advanced Latin course taught by Prof. Wilhelmson. His courses were divided into three successive levels of increasing sophistication⁵² and the last semester was devoted to the writing of a scholarly

⁴⁹ Roberto Weiss moved from Tallinn to Helsinki in October 1940, where he founded the Institute of Italian Culture in Finland and headed this institute for 27 years, until 1967. It should be noted that in Finland he changed his surname to *Wis*. It is interesting that from 13 March 1941 until 23 January 1943 the same Vincenzo Cicconardi was Italian Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in Finland.

⁵⁰ The book in question is "Studies on Lactantius' doctrine of creation" (*Untersuchungen zur Schöpfungslehre des Laktanz*). Konstantin Harald Wilhelmson later defended his doctoral dissertation "Lactantius and the cosmogony of the late antique syncretism" (*Laktanz und Kosmogonie des spätantiken Synkretismus*) on 5 July 1942 and in December was created Extraordinary Professor in Classical Philology (Latin). He died on 4 February 1944 due to an illness. More biographical details can be found in: <https://www.geni.com/people/Konstantin-Harald-Wilhelmson/6000000189114373894>.

⁵¹ Other sources indicate that he obtained his Master's degree in Greek Philology in 1935. In 1944 he went into exile with his family to Sweden, where he continued his studies at the Universities of Uppsala and Lund. In Lund he defended his doctoral thesis "The tragic orchestration according to its distorted image of the Old Comedy of Athens" (*Die tragische Orchestik im Zerrbild der altattischen Komödie*) in 1951, and taught Classical subjects there.

⁵² All three stages are outlined in detail in the letter.

thesis.⁵³ All this information is later repeated, essentially verbatim, in the second issue of the journal, in the paragraph on Estonia. At the end of the review, it is added that it takes three or four years to complete the entire advanced course.⁵⁴

The second letter from Cicconardi thanks Paluzzi for the publications sent by the Institute, which he already forwarded to Weiss, who in turn will forward them to Professor Wilhelmson in Tartu. Cicconardi narrates that the first issue of the journal reached Wilhelmson in April and that Wilhelmson was very pleased with the publication, noted its importance, and expressed his readiness to collaborate with the Institute if approached. For his part, Cicconardi also expressed his personal gratitude to Paluzzi for his efforts “to interest this three-centuries-old Nordic university in the works of the Institute” and offered to facilitate the relationship between the Institute and Prof. Wilhelmson. Cicconardi also invites Paluzzi to continue to send to the Institute of Italian Culture the publications produced by the Institute and information on the work carried out, so that it can be communicated in the cultural circles of the Estonian capital.⁵⁵

Census of Latinists Through Universities

It has already been mentioned that one of the tasks of the Institute was to collect and compile a list of Latinists active in foreign countries, with whom it would be possible to establish closer contacts. In order to achieve this goal, Paluzzi not only employed the services of diplomats, but also attempted to establish direct contacts with the universities. In the case of the Baltic countries, he took the 1938 *Minerva Jahrbuch*, a German-published overview of international research and the academic community, as his starting point of reference,⁵⁶ and sent enquiries to the rectors of the universities in these countries, asking them to confirm and expand the information he had on the Latinists working at those universities.

The letter to Lithuania, dated 9 January 1939, was addressed to the rector of Kaunas Vytautas Magnus University, Prof. Mykolas Römeris. It specified that the information collected would be published in a special publication⁵⁷ devoted to a review of the state of Latin in the world. After receiving no answer, a second letter was sent from Rome (19 April 1939), once again asking for a confirmation of the list of the Latin language lecturers. This time the letter did receive a reply: in his letter of 28 April, Prof. Römeris, first of all apologizing for the delay, explaining that only now he could finally confirm this information due to all sorts of ongoing changes in the Faculty of Letters, sent the following list of those who taught Latin in the university: Prof. Vladimiras Šilkarskis, Assoc. Prof. Merkelis Račkauskas, and the lecturers Jonas Dumčius and Antanas Rukša.⁵⁸

⁵³ ASINSR, Partizione 9 *Latino*, busta 101, cartella 68 (Estonia), Cicconardi a Paluzzi, 1939 04 28.

⁵⁴ *Per lo studio e l'uso del Latino*, 1939, ann. I, n. 2, 1939, p. 190.

⁵⁵ ASINSR, Partizione 9 *Latino*, busta 101, cartella 68 (Estonia), Cicconardi a Paluzzi, 1939 12 12.

⁵⁶ Paluzzi alludes to this in the letters he sent to the rectors of the Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas and the University of Latvia in Riga.

⁵⁷ Paluzzi named it the “*Bollettino Internazionale di Informazioni sul Latino*”, meaning the journal *Per lo studio e l'uso del Latino* the first issue of which was published in several months.

⁵⁸ All of the letters discussed are found in: ASINSR, Partizione 9 *Latino*, busta 103, cartella 12 (Lituania).

A similar exchange of letters took place with the University of Latvia. Paluzzi sent out an identical request on 23 December 1938, addressed to the rector of the university Mārtiņš Prīmanis (1878–1950), who replied on 15 February 1939,⁵⁹ listing the three professors of classical languages who worked in Riga: Pēteris Ķīķauka (1886–1967), Kārlis Straubergs (1890–1962) and Erich Diehl (1890–1952).⁶⁰

Direct Contacts: Lithuania

Finally, after receiving lists of Latinists through rectors and diplomats, the Institute tried to establish direct contacts with these scholars. In the case of Lithuania, attempts were made to contact the three classical philologists mentioned earlier in the list of Latinists sent by Römeris, Rector of Vytautas Magnus University.⁶¹ The first letters to Rukša and Šilkarskis were sent on 19 June 1939, together with the first issue of the journal “For the Study and Use of Latin”. The letters are identical and impersonal: in these circulars Paluzzi introduces both the Institute of Roman Studies itself and its future plans. In order to understand them, it is necessary to look a little bit more closely at the letters in question.

First, the Institute announced its intention to launch an “International Bulletin of Information on Latin”, to be co-authored by all the leading Latinists and scholars, not only from Europe but also from all around the world. In addition to Italian and Latin, the articles could be written in the other main European languages: English, French, German or Spanish. However, the short summaries of all of them had to be written in Latin.⁶² Paluzzi’s aim was to bring Latin back into use, to make it once again an international language of communication and cooperation, “a living language taught and learned as such and no longer burdened and rendered sterile by the mere tradition of philology and grammar”. Correspondents were therefore asked to provide as much information

⁵⁹ ASINSR, Partizione 9 *Latino*, busta 103, cartella 11 (Lettonia). It is interesting to note that all the letters by the Institute of Roman Studies used to be written in Italian, while the replies were in various languages: Italian, the native languages of the respondents (usually English, Spanish, German), sometimes Latin. In the case of the rectors of Vytautas Magnus University and the University of Latvia, they replied in French, which is also well represented in Institute’s archives.

⁶⁰ Pēteris Ķīķauka studied Classical Philology at the University of Tartu, and later taught Latin in Russia and Ukraine. Upon his return, he taught the course on Greek literature at the University of Latvia. In 1931 he became a professor there and was considered the best Greek language specialist in Latvia. Kārlis Straubergs studied classical philology in Moscow and later taught at the University of Latvia, becoming a professor in 1929 and dean in 1937–1939. In 1924 he was briefly Minister of Education of Latvia. From 1934 onwards, he held the office of President of C.A.U.R. in Latvia. Erich Wilhelm Diehl (*Erichs Dīls* in Latvian), a Baltic German born in Daugavpils, graduated in Classical philology at the University of St. Petersburg, and taught for a time at the universities of St. Petersburg and Tomsk. Returning to Latvia, he taught at the University of Latvia from 1922 and wrote many papers, especially on the Greek heritage of the Black Sea region. More comprehensive biographies of these scholars can be found in the 2013 PhD thesis by Māris Vecvagars “The Reception of Ancient Philosophy in Latvia” (*Antīkās filozofijas recepcija Latvijā*).

⁶¹ There is no separate file in the Institute’s archives for Prof. Merkelijs Račkauskas, who was the fourth member of the list.

⁶² Although Paluzzi himself was not a great expert in Latin, this did not prevent him from ideologically promoting the revival and use of the language. The Latin summaries had to be written in a simple Latin that was as understandable as possible, so that the content of the articles could be accessible to an audience as wide as possible.

as possible on the teaching and instruction of Latin in their countries, both in secondary and higher education, and on the possibilities of reforming the teaching of this language by giving it the status of a living language. The Institute was also interested in the use of Latin in the academic sphere outside school and in the scholars working with it.

This Bulletin was also going to commit itself to producing various statistical and bibliographical features related to Latin. In the first issues, the aim was to give an overview of the situation of Latin in the various countries, based on the replies received from correspondents. Those who agreed to cooperate with the Institute were even promised a remuneration of 100 Italian lire per printed page. Along with these letters, Paluzzi also sent a printed copy of the paper he had presented in 1938 at the 5th National Congress of Roman Studies (organized by the Institute itself to promote the revival of Latin), entitled “For the Use of Latin”.⁶³

The letters sent to Lithuania therefore invite cooperation and express hope to receive more information on the situation of Latin in the country. Repeat letters to Rukša and Šilkarskis were sent out two months later, on 28 September, with the second issue of the Bulletin. Here again, the call for involvement in the Institute’s activities was made. As it seems that there were no replies, another standard letter with information about the Institute’s activities was sent to Jonas Dumčius a month later, on 20 October,⁶⁴ but apparently this channel was also unsuccessful.

Direct Contacts: Estonia and Latvia

Our preliminary survey of the archive revealed no direct letters sent by the Institute to Estonia.⁶⁵ However, some indirect evidence can be seen in other letter exchanges. Cicconardi had personally undertaken to mediate between the Institute and the University of Tartu, so Paluzzi, in a letter to him, mentions that he has personally sent an issue of the “For the Study and Use of Latin” journal to prof. Wilhelmson together with a letter asking for cooperation, but never received a reply from him. Therefore, Paluzzi once again asks Cicconardi to contact Tartu through the Institute of Italian Culture (i.e. through Weiss) at the first opportunity and to ask Wilhelmson if he could write an article about Estonia.⁶⁶

More can be said about the direct correspondence with the Latvian scholars. Attempts to initiate it were made already on 27 October 1938, even before the Rector of the University of Latvia was approached. It is likely that the data available in the 1938 *Minerva*

⁶³ ASINSR, Partizione 9 *Latino*, busta 108, cartella 13 (Lettonia), C. G. Paluzzi a K. Straubergs; a P. Kikauka; a E. Diehl, 1938 10 27. The mentioned paper: Carlo Galassi Paluzzi, 1938: “Per l’uso del latino”, *Roma*, Vol. XVI, No. 9, p. 367–379.

⁶⁴ ASINSR, Partizione 9 *Latino*, busta 108, cartella 14 (Lituania), Paluzzi a Rukša; a Šilkarskis 1939 06 14 and 09.28; Paluzzi a Dumčius 1939 10 20.

⁶⁵ When revising this paper for publication, it became clear that a case of an accidental oversight happened during the initial examination of the archive’s inventory, so the correspondence with the Estonian scholars (ASINSR, Partizione 9 *Latino*, busta 106, cartella 83.5 (Estonia)) went unexamined when visiting the archive personally.

⁶⁶ ASINSR, Partizione 9 *Latino*, busta 101, cartella 68 (Estonia), Paluzzi a Cicconardi, 1939 12 21.

Jahrbuch was employed, maybe some additional information was provided by Spekke residing in Rome. Three impersonal circular letters (identical to the ones sent to Lithuania and discussed above) were sent out to Kikauka, Straubergs and Diehl, professors of the University of Latvia.⁶⁷

Still, there was no reply from the Latvians, so Paluzzi sent another letter to these professors about three weeks later. Informing them that the first issue of the Bulletin would be published in the course of the next few days, he also names some of the most prominent scholars from other countries who have already agreed to collaborate.⁶⁸ At the same time, he regrets the absence of the Latvian professors and reiterates his call for cooperation.⁶⁹ In the first issue of the Bulletin, which contains articles by scholars from Belgium, France, Germany, Great Britain, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, USA and Hungary on the state of the Latin language in their respective countries, Latvia gets a mention in the short news section: “Latin in Riga. President Ulmanis delivered a speech in Latin at the opening of the International Congress of Historians in Riga”.⁷⁰ Brief reports found in the archival dossiers indicate that the first issue of the Bulletin was sent on 22 March 1939 to all three Latvian professors mentioned above.⁷¹

Further correspondence between the Institute and the University of Latvia involved the two professors Straubergs and Diehl. The latter sent a postcard to the Institute on 29 June 1939, composed in Latin. In it, he first of all thanks Paluzzi for his letter and for the enclosed book (the March issue of the journal) that is both beautiful and very valuable. He also mentions that his colleague Straubergs has already provided information on the teaching of Latin in Latvian schools, so it remains to briefly introduce himself in the letter. He hopes to publish two books on Latin the following winter: one would be on the relationship between the Latvian and Latin languages, and another one would be a Latin-Latvian dictionary. He promises to send the books to the Institute as soon as they are finished, so that the Institute could inform other Latinists about the work being done in Latvia.⁷² In his reply in Italian, Paluzzi thanks for the appreciation of the Bulletin, states that the article by Prof. Straubergs is going to appear in the third issue of the journal.⁷³

⁶⁷ ASINSR, Partizione 9 *Latino*, busta 108, cartella 13 (Lettonia). Paluzzi a Straubergs, a Kikauka, a Diehl, 1938 10 27.

⁶⁸ Only surnames are mentioned, so the full names have been deduced from the journal itself: Juliette Ernst (1900–2001; editor of *L'Année philologique* in Losanne); Paul Faider (1886–1940; University of Gand, Belgium); Édouard Galletier (1885–1965; University of Besançon, France); Nicolae I. Herescu (1906–1961; University of Bucharest, Romania); Hugh Macilwain Last (1894–1957; Brasenose College, Oxford, England); Jules Marouzeau (1878–1964, University of Paris, France); Richard Newald (1894–1954; University of Fribourg, Switzerland); Albert Willem van Groot (1892–1963, University of Amsterdam, Netherlands); Tadeusz Stefan Zieliński (1859–1944, University of Warsaw, Poland).

⁶⁹ ASINSR, Partizione 9 *Latino*, busta 108, cartella 13 (Lettonia), Paluzzi a Straubergs; Kikauka; Diehl, 1938 11 21.

⁷⁰ *Per lo studio e l'uso del Latino*, 1939, ann. I, n. 1, 103.

⁷¹ ASINSR, Partizione 9 *Latino*, busta 108, cartella 13 (Lettonia), Straubergs; P. Kikauka; E. Diehl, 1939 03 22.

⁷² *Ibid.*, Diehl a Paluzzi, 1939 06 29. In the letter Diehl also adds that he is grateful to the famous Polish classicist Tadeusz Zieliński for him having been and still being his Mentor.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, Paluzzi a Diehl, 1939 07 14.

The article by Prof. Kārlis Straubergs did indeed appear as expected in the third issue of “For the Study and Use of Latin”, taking up several pages.⁷⁴ This Italian text is Straubergs’ answer to the Institute’s questionnaire about the teaching of Latin, describing the case of Latvia. The next piece of correspondence with Straubergs found in the archives deals with this article. On 23 February 1940, Paluzzi informs Straubergs of a cheque in his name for 300 lire (equivalent to 15.11 dollars) for the article he has sent and expresses his hope to receive further contributions to the journal.⁷⁵ Straubergs, in his reply, gratefully acknowledges the receipt of the honorarium, voicing the belief that Paluzzi’s excellent initiative will contribute to a revival of Latin language and culture, and adds that he is ready to offer another article to the journal: “The Influence of Latin Poetry on Latvian Poetry”.⁷⁶ In his last letter to Straubergs, Paluzzi politely agrees that the topic is indeed interesting, but notes that the article should not exceed several pages in length due to the limited space available. No further correspondence with Latvia can be found in the archive after this letter.

However, even if no separate file of correspondence could be found in the archives, there is evidence that yet another Latvian classical philologist collaborated with the Institute, so the archive might be incomplete. Jānis Lezdiņš (1898–1966), a lecturer at the University of Latvia,⁷⁷ is mentioned as one of the collaborators in the first issue of 1940, printed in May that year, while his article on the “The Preparation of the Teachers of Latin in Latvia” was printed in December 1941. Considering the peaceful and mildly bureaucratic nature of the paper discussing various organisational matters of education, it must have been composed before the Soviets destroyed the statehood of Latvia in summer of 1940, and the timing of its eventual publication might hint to the fact that by the end of 1941 the Soviet occupation had by this time been replaced with the German one. Alternatively, this might be connected with the simple question of the availability of space in the journal and the publications queuing up for it.⁷⁸

Afterword: Legacy and Loss

The collapse of Fascist Italy for the most part meant an end and a failure of Carlo Galassi Paluzzi’s and his Institute’s project of reviving the use of Latin as the world’s language of science. However, the work that the Institute has done later had a major influence on the general global revitalization and popularization movement of Latin that was official-

⁷⁴ *Per lo studio e l’uso del latino*, 1939, ann. I, n. 3, 343–347. This issue was printed on 18 December 1939.

⁷⁵ ASINSR, Partizione 9 *Latino*, busta 108, cartella 13 (Lettonia), Paluzzi a Straubergs, 1940 02 23.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, Straubergs a Paluzzi, 1940 03 14.

⁷⁷ Lezdiņš graduated in Classical Philology from the University of Latvia in 1929 and from 1934 was a lecturer in Greek and Latin there. After the war, in 1944–1964, he headed the department of Classical Philology (even if Classical Philology was abolished by Soviets as a field of study available to students, a small department was preserved for teaching Latin and Greek to students of other specialities).

⁷⁸ He is mentioned as one of the collaborators in the first issue of 1940 (1940 ann. II / n. I), which was printed on 9 May 1940; his article on the preparation of the teachers of Latvia appeared in 1941 (1941 ann. III / n. II 60–62: „La preparazione degli insegnanti di latino in Lettonia“), which was printed on 10 December 1941. The journal lived for another year and two issues appeared, the last of them on 31 December 1942.

ly inaugurated after the end of the Second World War, in the 1950s, as the Movement of Living Latin (*Latin vivant*). There was also a notable institutional continuity even after the end of Paluzzi's leadership, with the Institute continuing to participate and to be influential in this movement.⁷⁹

Meanwhile, attempts to spread the idea of *Romanità* through the study of Latin, Roman history and culture in the Baltic States failed even earlier, with the first Soviet occupation in 1940. Although the Institute's efforts to establish a direct contact and correspondence with the Baltic Latinists were rather slow to give fruit (especially with Lithuania), it is likely that with the help of diplomats, the relations could have been established. The Latvians were more active: Spekke gave two (!) lectures in Rome, Lezdīņš and Straubergs published articles in the Institute's journal, Diehl and Straubergs gladly kept in touch with Paluzzi through letters.

Reports from diplomats in the Baltic States, and especially from Lithuania (because of its predominantly Roman Catholic faith and its Latin cultural heritage), indicated that the cultural conditions and the interest in the language and culture of ancient Rome made the establishment of local sections of the Institute of Roman Studies a real possibility. It should be stressed, though, that such initiatives ultimately relied on the agency of particular individuals and their personal networks. However, the outbreak of war, which led to the redeployment of Italian diplomats to other countries, the abolition of Institutes of Italian Culture and the general isolation of the Baltic States from Western Europe, put an end to any possible links with the Institute of Roman Studies and with Italy itself.

And yet, Classical scholars in the Baltic States during the Soviet era had to be concerned not so much about cooperation as about survival. In Lithuania, the center of Classical studies was moved from Kaunas to Vilnius, and of all the Institute's respondents with whom it tried to establish contacts, only one – Dumčius – remained in Lithuania after the end of the war, while Šilkarskis and Rukša went into exile and settled in Germany. The Classical Philology departments of the Universities of Latvia and Tartu were soon abolished. Prof. Diehl was repatriated to Germany at the beginning of the war because of his German origin, while the others fled towards the end of the war: Prof. Straubergs to Sweden in 1944, Prof. Kikauka to Germany in the same year, later (1948) to Canada. The Estonian Prof. Wilhelmson died in 1944, and Roos emigrated to Sweden with his family the same year. Thus, most of the Baltic scholars with whom the Institute had tried to establish contacts were soon, by the end of the war, dispersed all over the world.

Nevertheless, this brief period of time examined (only several years!) and the significant cultural links developed between Italy and the Baltic States suggest that the study of classical philology in these countries might have taken on a very different momentum and scope had it not been for the disruption caused by the war and the occupation that followed.

⁷⁹ See K. Lyvens, 2023, especially p. 145–147.

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