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Gábor Almási and Lav Šubarić, eds., *Latin at the Crossroads of Identity: The Evolution of Linguistic Nationalism in the Kingdom of Hungary* [Ser: Central and Eastern Europe, Volume 5] (Leiden: Brill, 2015), xiv+312 pp.

In the usual textbook view of Latin, this language saw its last heyday in Western Christian Europe during the Renaissance. Administrators, poets and scribes employed Latin for running states, writing books and letters, conducting research and diplomacy from the Iberian Peninsula in the west to Kyiv in the east, from Iceland in the north to Sicily in the south. Briefly, the reach of this language was extended to South America and across the world in Spain's and Portugal's maritime empires, before Latin lost the competition to vernaculars in the wake of the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation during the 16th century. In the subsequent two centuries the French of Paris replaced Latin in the function of Europe's language of international communication and research. But this standard story overlooks the long twilight of Latin as a language of modernity that lasted well into the 19th century. Latin was the official language of the historic Kingdom of Hungary (corresponding to today's Hungary, Slovakia, most of Croatia, westernmost Ukraine, easternmost Austria and northwestern Romania) until 1844, and until 1852 it was *a* language of instruction and *the* language of doctoral dissertations at the University of Helsingfors (Helsinki) in Russia's Grand Duchy of Finland. Secondary school students learned Latin and how to write poems and essays in this language well until the turn of the 20th century. In Finland scholars of various specialties continued to write PhD theses in Latin until 1948. And only as late as 1991 Latin was decommissioned as a medium of education at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. However, the Holy See tends to use Latin in official correspondence with bishops in Hungary or Croatia.

Latin was an important (at times even leading) medium of modernity, especially in central Europe and Scandinavia. The two editors of the volume under review work in the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Neo-Latin Studies in the Austrian city of Innsbruck. This institute was established in 2008 for the sake of uncovering the story of Latin as a forgotten language of European modernity. *Latin at the Crossroads of Identity* is one of the many fruits of the institute's labors. The contributions gathered in the book are divided in three sections, namely, "The Politics of Language," "Dilemmas of Latin in Education and Media," and "The Other Hungarians." In the first section, István Margócsy and Henrik Hőnich commence the discussion on the gradual politicization of language in the late 18th century that opened the space for vernaculars to usurp Latin's elevated position in the Kingdom of Hungary. Ambrus Miskolczy probes into the now largely forgotten *Hungarus* patriotism, thanks to which the Kingdom's nobility and clergy were construed as a single *natio*, additionally "glued" by the shared and emphatically non-ethnic medium of Latin. The last success of this *natio Hungarica* was the 1790 reversal of emperor Jospeh's 1784 decision to replace Latin with German as the administrative language in the Habsburg hereditary lands. In the Kingdom of Hungary Latin was reinstated in this role. However, the 1773 suppression of the Society of Jesus had already either liquidated or drastically reduced the Jesuit Latin-medium educational system, opening an ever-broadening way for vernaculars into public space and limiting the number of people with the working knowledge of Latin. Per Pippin Aspaas and László Kontler probe into the exigencies of life and work of two Jesuit scholars, showing how they dealt with this existential and scholarly problem.

In the subsequent section, Teodora Shek Brnardić observes, on the example of the *Ratio educationis* (Act on Education) of 1777, how the Habsburg administration retained Latin as the main medium of instruction in the Kingdom, though with acceptance for some use of vernaculars in initial school grades, but with a growing emphasis on the importance of German as *the* vernacular lingua franca in the Habsburg hereditary lands. Quite enlighteningly, Andrea Seidler and Piroska Balough, in their respective articles, introduce the reader to the unduly forgotten world of Latin-language journalism, newspapers and publishing that dominated in the Kingdom of Hungary until 1790, when Hungarian began to emerge as the main language for these purposes, alongside German as the second contender. The two authors convincingly propose that members of the *natio Hungarica* gained the practices of journalism and newspaper reading first in Latin before they began applying these novel skills in their ethnic languages.

The volume's last section is devoted to the 19th century unravelling of the Kingdom's central European *Latinitas*, meaning a gradual break-up of the *natio Hungarica* into ethnolinguistically construed "vernacular" nations. In their contributions Lav Šubarić and Zvjezdana Sikirić Assouline focus on the persisting attachment to Latin among Croatian nobles in face of the growing movement in the Kingdom for replacing *lingua patria* (fatherland's language), or Latin, with Hungarian as its official language which finally took place in 1844. Quite unwillingly, ethnically Croatian members of the *natio Hungarica* accepted the political logic of this *fait accompli* in 1847, when they proclaimed the "national language" as official in the Diet of Croatia, that is, the province's Slavic vernacular, now known as Croatian. Alexander Maxwell turns to the Kingdom's "northern Slavs," or today's Slovaks and Rusyns. Philologists wrote on their speech in Latin, and those among them who turned into activists and politicians adopted this language for formulating and furthering goals of Slavic reciprocity. Latin facilitated scholarly and political communication among speakers of various Slavic vernaculars in the kingdom and in the Austrian provinces of Bohemia and Moravia. It was only in 1848 that the "Panslavonic language" of Latin lost this role to German in the wake of the Slavic Congress in Prague. Nenad Ristović proposes that following the Habsburgs' successful wars against the Ottomans at the turn of the 18th century, Orthodox Serbs in the monarchy's southernmost reaches were actually the last ethnic group ever to enter the orbit of Latin literacy. Despite their confessional attachment to (Church) Slavonic and Cyrillic, they had been introduced to the modern world through Latin-medium schools and Latin-language literature since the 1720s, while the flowering of Latin-language poetry written by Serbs took place in the first half of the 19th century. The volume is closed by Levente Nagy's retelling of the political history of the Romanian movement in Transylvania as seen through the lens of the use of and attitudes toward Latin. The region was the sole center of studies on Romanian language and history between 1780 and 1825, and most works on the subject were written in Latin. Unlike in the case of Croatia, it was Hungarian that replaced Latin as Transylvania's official language in 1847, to the exclusion of Romanian- and German-speakers. The coalescing intuition on the Romance character of Romanian led to the gradual resignation from Cyrillic for writing this language and to the replacement of Slavic words in Romanian with linguistic loans from Italian and French, *not* Latin.

The highly commendable volume lacks a proper subject index, which at times makes perusal onerous. But it is a minor criticism. Otherwise the book will act as a use-

ful corrective to the traditional view on the importance of Latin as contained to early modernity only, while on the other hand, it constitutes a much needed introduction to central European *Latinitas*. Hopefully, other scholars not only will incorporate the presented information in their own publications and research, but will also probe into some issues and problems signaled on the volume's pages.

Tomasz Kamusella