

Editorial Foreword

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The second issue of volume 11 of *The Romanian Journal for Baltic and Nordic Studies* includes on the one hand topics of interest for scholars focusing on Medieval Studies, and on the other hand, further approaches aspects related to dissent and conformism, which were tackled during the tenth annual international conference on Nordic and Baltic studies in Romania. The conference entitled *Dissent versus Conformism in the Nordic, Baltic and Black Sea Areas* was held in Constanța between June 6-8, 2019.

Mihai Dragnea is a researcher interested in political, social and cultural relations between Germans, Scandinavians and Wends during the Middle Ages. In his article on *The Saxon expeditions against the Wends and the foundation of Magdeburg during Otto I's reign*, he states that "by building monasteries, setting up bishoprics, and converting the Wends, the Ottonians strengthened the legitimacy of their rule through the Christian faith". The conversion of the Wends was also supported by the Archdiocese of Magdeburg, the most important Ottonian political and ecclesiastical center.

Another specialist in Medieval Studies is Costel Coroban, who reveals in his paper aspects related to the ideology of power, back in the 12th and 13th centuries Norway. The Icelandic work *Egils saga* is a fruitful literary source from this point of view, and it is believed that its author is the well-known Icelandic historian and poet Snorri Sturluson.

Referring to more recent times, Adrian Vițalaru renders important information about the activity of the Romanian diplomat Mihail Pâclianu in the Nordic countries, at the end of his career, in the period 1919-1928. This was a long diplomatic mission in the Nordic countries, as Pâclianu was first accredited to Sweden and Denmark, and since 1922 to Norway and Finland as well.

In her article on teaching Finnish as a foreign language, Anja Keränen suggests taking into account improvisation as a teaching method. The Finnish educational system is widely appreciated, and that is why, the author compares its values with the values of improvisation theatre. This

method proves pragmatic practice in language learning, and its potential is worth a closer analysis.

As far as the Baltic states are concerned, Tomas Čelkis discusses the public mobility in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the 16th and 17th centuries. The author examines the road conditions, the everyday life of the travellers, the climate and geographic conditions, the safety of such journeys etc. in an attempt to find the reasons behind the rather intense mobility at that time.

Last but not least, the relationship between dissent and conformism is also examined by Gintaras Druckus with a focus on Lithuanian investigations and archival documents. In Lithuania the two terms have often been defined in the context of occupation, but it seems that they have remained up-to-date also after Lithuania's independence.