

Foreword

The first issue of our journal, published in 2005, was entitled *Industrializations and societies in Northern Europe*. Since then, of course, topics around this theme have often been explored in depth in our pages, but without ever having dedicating an entire special issue to it. The current issue brings this subject back into the spotlight and we are very pleased to have been able to count on the collaboration of several young researchers who have recently defended theses on subjects of economic, business and/or social history. We would like to thank professors Pierre Pourchasse, Leos Müller and Éric Schnakenbourg for bringing together this talented troupe of authors and for translating a number of their articles for publication.

The period studied here ranges from the early 18th century to the 1920s, which allows for a certain analytical perspective that is conducive to wider reflection. Indeed, on reading the various contributions, one can see that the countries of the North have been open to the open sea for centuries, and are by no means inward-looking due to their peripheral position in Europe. They have welcomed foreigners, such as the Calvinist businessmen of French and Dutch origin who settled in Copenhagen (Benjamin Asmussen), or the example of Marcellin Robert, an adventurer who came to try his luck and met with great success in the Swedish capital (Charlotte Bellamy and Anna Knutsson). Quite early on, they made attempts to participate in major colonial trade, applying clever techniques to avoid being totally marginalized by the major powers (Victor Wilson). They also took risks, sometimes excessively so, in order to gain a foothold in other economically promising areas of the world (Knut Ola Naastad Ström).

This dynamism and openness would not prevent them from being repeatedly confronted with various challenges, naturally starting with climatic and agricultural problems (Fredrik Charpentier Ljungqvist and Heli Huhtamaa), but also trade balance issues (Dimitrios Theoridis) and social tensions that they tried to resolve very early on through mediation (Hedvig Widmalm).

Reading these contributions therefore leads us to identify long-term persistent features that contribute to the relative originality of this part of Europe, which is still palpable today.

The two articles published in the *Varia* section also offer studies of real interest. Professor Finn Erhard Johanssen introduces us to the details and consequences of an environmental debate lasting over two and a half centuries on the practice of seaweed burning in the Norwegian part of the Kingdom of Denmark. This widespread industry, which served to supply the glass industry with soda ash, was accused of causing problems for fishing and agriculture, two major activities at that time in the region. In order to avoid ruling on the matter without reliable information, the authorities carried out scientific investigations which, however, did not lead to definitive results. This state of affairs explains the sometimes contradictory decisions issued on whether to continue or prohibit this activity, which was definitively abandoned when other methods of producing soda were developed.

The article by Romain von Deyen presents the rise and partial disgrace of a general who had followed Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte to Sweden and was close to him under his regency and at the beginning of his reign. A notable upward phase was followed by a period of gradual distancing which left him very bitter, coming as a consequence of his somewhat lively temperament, his refusal to renounce a loving marriage, and difficulties in his business affairs. The author also takes us into this character and his family's personal world, which gives the reader a view into the ups and downs in this exiled dignitary's life in Sweden.

The *Sources* section presents the second and final part of the annotated translation by Dominique Gaurier, legal historian, of the manuscript *Navigatio libera* by Johann Gröning, a German subject of the Kingdom of Sweden and resident of Wismar. This document is all the more interesting because it was written by a legal practitioner with the purpose of refuting the right of British and Dutch authorities to seize neutral Danish and Swedish ships on the pretext that they were trading with France, the adversary of the two aforementioned states during the War of the League of Augsburg.

The issue concludes with a presentation of the political science dissertation defended by Mr. Florian Vidal at Paris Descartes University under the direction of Professor Thierry Garcin. Entitled *Les relations entre la Norvège et la Russie en Arctique. Regard et analyse sur une dynamique régionale à l'ère de l'anthropocène (Norway's relations with Russia in the Arctic: A look and analysis of regional dynamics in the anthropocene era)*, it covers a broad period from the end of the 18th century to the present day, which contributes to a welcome originality against many other works that deal with narrower periods. His decidedly multidisciplinary approach opens the work to reflection on the

changes brought about by the physical transformations of the natural environment, among other consequences.

We hope the topics covered in this twenty-seventh issue will hold the public's attention and convince our regular readers to continue the adventure with us.

The Editors