

Foreword

The primary concern of any individual and any society is to meet its basic needs, namely, to be fed and dressed as well as possible. The way in which these basic needs are met in any given place and time also provides us with much more information including valuable insights into not only the state of the economy and of social differences, but also the cultural norms of the society in question. Our 29th issue, with a chosen focus on medieval Northern Europe, has therefore sought to provide some keys for revealing and understanding the complex relationships that existed at the time, between food and clothing on one hand, and between habitus and representations on the other, within Scandinavian, Finnish, Estonian and English societies. The inclusion of an article on England may come as a surprise to some readers given our journal's orientation, but we must not lose sight of the fact that the Viking invasions had significant cultural consequences on Great Britain, which was geographically very close to the ports of departure for these merchant warriors. We also wished to give prominence to certain excavation techniques which today allow us to collect precious information on the daily life of the Nordic populations, most notably archaeozoology. Our readers will undoubtedly appreciate this methodologically oriented approach, which highlights the significant progress made in recent decades in our knowledge of premodern societies.

In the *Varia* section, the article by Pierre-Ange Salvadori on the cartographic mutations of the 16th century and their effects on popular mental representations of the North (taken in the broad sense) is also connected to this theme of representations, strongly present throughout this issue. By placing the North at the top of the maps, in what had previously been the place of the East, the scholars of the time gave it a much more important position and also transferred "sacred or providential places and stories from the East to the Septentrion". With this change in representation, the Scandinavian peninsula was no longer as *terra incognita*; some people wondered about the possibility of a shorter route from Europe to China through the Arctic, a space that was still shrouded in mystery. As for Finn Olstad's contribution on the formation of the Norwegian labor movement in the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, the article has the considerable merit of

reminding us that the country experienced very early large-scale social struggles, which helps to explain the growth of relatively strong collective organizations compared to the rest of Europe. Moreover, since the publication of David Philip's book in 1958, there has been no specific work on the subject in French, which makes our Scandinavian colleague's overview all the more useful. Another of this article's points of interest is to make us aware of the complexity of this movement's genesis, where various ideological currents were intertwined.

The "Sources" section presents a very interesting text that highlights the rivalries between Estonian anti-communist exiles during the Cold War and USSR period. We read about how the Estonian diplomatic representation in the United States, which dated from the pre-Soviet era and remained the only one recognized by Washington, was in open conflict with two more or less self-proclaimed and rival governments in exile. These quarrels, as Laura Veri-De Metz explains, were sometimes the result of ideological differences, but above all a reflection of different strategies aiming to regain full independence and bring about the end of the Soviet regime. This contribution also discusses the relationship with Baltic organizations in exile.

It also contains of course the usual book reviews and news; we hope this issue will get the attention it deserves.

The Editors