Editorial Foreword

Silviu Miloiu

President of the Romanian Association for Baltic and Nordic Studies, E-mail: silviu.miloiu@valahia.ro

After several decades wherein the Viking studies seemed to allow little ground for new discoveries the past decades have shown the tremendous research potential they still offer to scholars. Gradually, the classical image of Viking warlords which permeated the historical writing starting already with – and often based on – the medieval chronicles has been nuanced and other hypostases of the Norseman have been discussed: the Viking as a trader, explorer, state crafter, etc. New study programmes of Viking studies have been established at universities in Scandinavia, but also in Britain, United States and Western Europe. Fresh historical sources have been discovered and old sources have been reinterpreted. In correlation with ethnographical studies, recent archaeological excavations and new insights into mythology, they greatly expanded our knowledge of the Viking Age and its continental and global role.

The Romanian Association of Baltic and Nordic Studies has a vested interest in the promotion of Viking and Medieval Studies, which has manifested itself both in educational and research terms. The Summer School of Nordic and Baltic Studies hosted in 2014 and 2015 by Valahia University of Târgoviște and entitled “A piece of culture, a culture of peace” (CoolPeace) has included lectures devoted to Viking Studies. In the 2014 programme a course called *The Vikings* was taught by Costel Coroban, soon to become a successful Ph.D. student in Viking and Medieval Studies at Valahia University. His eventual research would lead him to a *summa cum laude* and much acclaimed doctoral title on *Ideology and Power in Norway and Iceland, 1150-1250*. (His book was published in 2018 by Cambridge Scholars Publishing). The course taught in 2014 aimed at explaining and deriving information on the Vikings from historical sources, transferring and correctly applying “historical and linguistic information from the age of the Viking expansion (c. VII-XI A.D.)”, “ascertaining, understanding and employing the critical viewpoints and theories regarding the mythological and religious aspect of the Viking Age”, “manifesting a positive and responsible attitude towards the complexity of the phenomenon that is called ‘the Viking invasions’”. In 2015 a course of Icelandic language and a seminar on Runes have been taught to our Summer School students by Carmen Vioreanu, an associate professor at

University of Bucharest. Valahia University has cooperated with the Association in delivering lectures and seminars on the Viking Age. Besides, *The Romanian Journal for Baltic and Nordic Studies* has included in its pages several articles on the Viking Age and has decided to devote this issue to the same topic.

Volume 9, issue no. 2 (2017) of *Revista Română pentru Studii Baltice și Nordice* / *The Romanian Journal for Baltic and Nordic Studies* (RRSBN) comprises three articles dedicated to Viking studies authored by Romanian scholars at Babeș-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca and Ovidius University of Constanța. Costel Coroban tackles in his article the famous *Sverris saga* (the Saga of King Sverris) accomplished at the end of the 12th century and the period of the Civil War (the long period from around 1130 to the middle of the 13th century) with the aim of comparing the classical book *The Culture of the Teutons* by Vilhelm Peter Grønbech to the Norwegian political ideology as resulting from the study of *Sverris saga*. Diana Lățug frames her article around the area of Northern Norway during the Viking Age based on the recollections of Ottar (Ohthere), who made an impressive journey around year 890 from northernmost areas of current Norway to the court of King Alfred in England. Ottar's testimonies to the king allow the author to achieve an insightful portrayal of the region at the end of the ninth century. The last article very innovatively deals with the reflection of Old Norse mythology in current Norwegian literature. The article compares the mythological characters of *The Poetic Edda* and *The Prose Edda* with their features in Norwegian novels to find out that a sense of nostalgia pervades the narrative of the contemporary authors.

This issue of the journal brings to the scholarly literature novel methodological and empirical findings and contributes to an expanding research field and societal interest. The aim of the journal is to continue to promote Viking studies in its pages and prepare in the following years a new special issue devoted to the study of the Viking Age.