

INTRODUCTION TO THE JOURNAL'S INAUGURAL ISSUE

This is the first issue of *V(eliko) T(arnovo) U(niversity) Review: Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences*. *VTU Review* is a double-blind, peer-reviewed academic journal, published once a year by “St. Cyril and St. Methodius” University of Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria. The journal is designed as an outlet for innovative cross- and interdisciplinary research in the humanities and social sciences: two very broad areas of study that are currently rethinking their respective places in academia and the world. It aims at being a venue for both young and established scholars and is addressed to an international audience.

In an era glutted with information of all kinds, the appearance of a new academic journal, published by an eastern European university, requires some explanation. As editors we are aware of the strengths and prestige of well-established refereed journals elsewhere but are also convinced that there is an urgent need for the democratization of knowledge and the overcoming of certain historically conditioned asymmetries in its production within academia. Our way of achieving this is by providing a meeting ground for scholars and social scientists from different cultural and disciplinary contexts and enabling them to engage in dialogue – directly or indirectly. To that end, the journal is published in print but is also made available in electronic form on the website of the University of Veliko Tarnovo.

The journal’s subsequent issues will focus on specific topics while also including seminal articles of more general interest within a section titled “*Varia*.” The topic of the second issue is “Representations of Travel and Mobility from the Middle Ages to the Present” and we are happy to say that we have already received a number of very exciting proposals.

The present issue comprises five articles on rather different topics, authored by people with different academic backgrounds, and five reviews of internationally and locally published books on subjects ranging from translation to latter-day literary and cinematic adaptations of themes and motifs from Ancient Greek and Roman mythology. The principal aim behind what may look like a random collection of texts is to make readers aware of the wide range of topics and research methods that we are prepared to engage with in our role as editors.

This issue’s first article is by a historian who discusses mass millenarian and apocalyptic attitudes and expectations in western Europe around *Anno Domini* 1000 and argues that the outburst of millenarian moods at the time had long been preceded by feelings of insecurity and fear resulting from decidedly earthly causes such as the danger of foreign invasions, rising anarchy and the lack of strong central authority.

A historicist approach is employed in the next article which is concerned with representations of religious conversion in three seventeenth-century English plays. The author, whose main field of expertise is English literature, explores some of the anxieties aroused by the early modern European perception of Islam as an alien religion that nevertheless attracted Christians and incited them to convert.

The third article engages with some of the more recent work of the American political theorist Fredric Jameson on modernity and modernism, and an attempt is made to link his theorization of these concepts to his concern with an emancipatory project contesting “the seemingly irresistible triumph of global capital.”

The fourth article addresses the issue of travel writing in the present. Special attention is paid to the writing modes employed in certain contemporary travelogues as a means to build self-reflexive and unstable narratorial identities, which the article’s author defines as “post-travellers.”

The last article strikes a local note insofar as it presents the results of the excavations of Roman kilns, conducted by the author himself in Pavlikeni, a town situated in close proximity to Veliko Tarnovo. The excavated kilns were in use in the second half of the second century CE and probably in the early third century CE. The ceramic centre of Pavlikeni was among the most important ones in the Roman provinces of Thrace and Lower Moesia.

We hope that this overview has provided a general impression of the journal's scope and openness to methodological and ideological difference. We welcome new ideas and invite submissions. Detailed instructions for authors are to be found on the journal's homepage at <http://journals.uni-vt.bg/vtureview/bul/>. The homepage also provides information about thematic issues to be published in the future.

The Editors