

INTRO

Every academic article makes a contribution to the human knowledge. For science over the world to develop articles should be widely read, not piled on the library shelves. We, the editors of «Vox medii aevi», support the idea of universal access to the scientific knowledge. In our periodical this aim is reached the following way: it is issued only electronically and spread in open access for free.

We took these measures deliberately due to a number of reasons. Firstly, the digital age had produced new reading practices which have changed the working principles in the academic society. Electronic texts offer more opportunities than the printed ones: they can be opened with various gadgets, full-text search is possible, footnotes can be easily copied and whole quotes can be adduced. As an example let's take a look at the URLs, that we got used to. In any scientific book, printed in the past several years, there are undoubtedly a couple of links to websites, but typing them every time by hand in a browser's address bar is a real heroic deed, that rare people are ready for. In case of an electronic issue moving to the adduced website is a question of one click.

Secondly, electronic issues are more accessible. The statistics shows that the users of electronic books read on average more than those who read paper books*. It seems perfectly logical: while reading a paper book requires getting it somewhere, you don't

* Харитонов В. Конец тиражей. Книгоиздание в эпоху перемен [Электронный ресурс] / Ridero. URL: ru.bookmate.com/books/mAdcQLzS (дата обращения: 1.08.2017).

even have to leave your chair to read an electronic one. As for the whole Russia, electronic editions are a solution for readers and scholars. The most of the publishing houses are placed in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Novosibirsk and some other big cities. Naturally, they work not only with the residents of these cities but the latter definitely prevail among the authors. Besides, it usually takes a long time for a book published in the capital to make its way to the distant regions.

Thirdly, the web of academic connections spreads, its limits get vague. Discussions between scholars, authors and readers reached *Facebook*, *Livejournal* and other websites. *Academia.edu* (which, unfortunately, has recently chosen commercial way), a social network for scholars that allows to upload and promulgate their researches, is a convincing evidence of this tendency. «Vox medii aevi» aims at creating a ground for such academic cooperation between scholars.

The periodical is out two times a year. Every issue consists of several sections. The first one – *Disciplina* – is organized in relation with a certain question or deals with a definite subject. Depending on the issue there may be two or three such subjects. The second section – *Critica* – contains reviews on the recently published researches and sources. The section *Amicis* is dedicated to the modern state of medieval studies. *Seminarium* is meant for publication of translations of sources, working papers, preprints that require to be discussed with colleagues. In the *Editio* there are critical editions of texts and documents. This is the very section where the advantages of the electronic form are the most evident: there are no restrictions in size and genre of the publications.

This issue has two heading themes: Merovingian elites and Umberto Eco. The Merovingian age is a symbolic baseline for

the Middle Ages, and its interpretation and perception more than any other depend on the questions with which the scholars approach the well-known sources. The articles written by the best modern experts in the Early Middle Ages – Steffen Patzold and Bruno Dumézil – are based exactly on the new look on the text and documents of that age. The results of such analysis question some established view. Patzold shows the inconsistency of the opinion commonly accepted in the historiography that the imperial aristocracy used to prevail among the Gallic episcopate. His conclusions speak in favour of local elites. Dumézil makes the reader look at the political culture of Merovingian kings from the other angle, arguing that they were familiar with the concept of commonwealth.

Another theme is a tribute to Umberto Eco, a man who demonstrated through his articles and books true love to the European history and particularly to the Middle Ages. His talent to speak from inside the subject, not just look on it from the distance, but to enter into a dialog with it continues to inspire scholars and other readers. We have prepared a translation of two articles that reflect different sides of him as a researcher. «Metaphor, Dictionary, and Encyclopedia» reveals the key components of the Eco's semiotic theory. The article deals with the typical semiotic opposition between a dictionary and an encyclopedia. The author examines these two forms using the Aristotle's metaphors and concludes that only a representation given in the form of an encyclopedia can explain a true metaphorical effect. «Latratus canis» is an illustration of the weight that the Italian historian put on details. Having payed attention to the ambiguous place of dog's barking in the grammarians' treatises, Eco opens before

us a world of medieval semiotics with its problems, origins and solutions offered by the philosophers. The editors are grateful to Elena Kostyukovitch and her literary agency for the trust and the assistance in preparing the translations.

The critical section contains only reviews on books. Grigorii Borisov has written about the Anthony Grafton's book «The Culture of Correction in Renaissance Europe», which reveals the seamy side of literary process in the 16th century. Vlad Andersen has severely criticized the Alexandr Shishkov's voluminous work «On the Shoulders of Giants. Essays on the Intellectual Culture of the European Middle Ages (5th–15th centuries)». Alexandr Lobanov has prepared some notes on the Elena Braun's «Wars of the Roses. History. Mythology. Historiography». And Roman Shmarakov has made a short inset «errata» to the first volume of «The Golden Legend», translated into Russian for the first time by Irina Kuvshinskaya and Ilya Anikiev.

This section is followed by the overviews of the medieval studies in Belarus and Yaroslavl; the first part of publication of the Baldric's «Historia Ierosolimitana» translated by Evgeny Khvalkov and the participants of his seminar in the High School of Economics (St. Petersburg); a translation of the tale about St. Dorothy by Irina Kuvshinskaya, which isn't included in her edition of «The Golden Legend» and «A Raid of Three Collas» – a short text from the Irish kings' genealogies, translated by Ksenia Borisova.

In the *Editio* section Ekaterina Nosova begins a massive publication of the invoices of the Charles the Bold's royal court. This project is going to be continued in the periodical during the next year.

This issue – *Vox medii aevi. Vol. 1 (1/2017)* – had to be made from the very beginning, which is why we release it now after long silence. Within this one and a half year the periodical has changed: an Editorial Board and an Editorial Staff have appeared, we have introduced a practice of «blind reviewing» and launched a website. At the same time we have preserved the principles, on which *Vox* has been based since 2011: free access and independent spread.

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