

In popular consciousness, the Middle Ages function as a period of inactivity. Dubbed "the Dark Ages", they are viewed merely as the time connecting the great Antiquity and Modernity. Obviously, those studying this period disagree with such an interpretation and provide a number of arguments – showing to the contrary that the Middle Ages were a time of great development in sciences, not of stagnation and superstition. It was a time when the foundations of Western culture were erected. Since religious notions greatly influenced all that was happening during the Middle Ages, symbolism played then a very important role. The focus was on an internal, spiritual world, on all that was related to God. Christianity formed the basic and the most important ideological paradigm. It was a time, when many dogmas are formulated or confirmed thus influencing the patterns of behaviour. The Middle Ages was also a time, when new states emerged, including Kievan Rus', the subject of my research. The proper history of Rus' begins in 988, when it was symbolically baptised. This event might be understood as an invitation to the company of civilised nations, however the choice of religion determined the type and quality of this relation. Vladimir I the Great, the prince of Kiev, chose Byzantine religious tradition, the Orthodox Church, rejecting the Catholic Church and Islam alike, taking into account the beauty of the Byzantine liturgy – as it is recorded in the first Russian chronicle *The Tale of Bygone Years*. This historic decision influenced the direction in which the budding Old Russian culture would go.

The consequences of this decision are obviously many-dimensional and relate to many areas, some of which have already been analysed both in Poland and abroad. Their literary aspect was analysed by Ryszard Łużny, Franciszek Sielicki; their historic aspect by Andrzej Poppe, Dimitri Obolensky; their linguistic aspect by Tadeusz Lehr-Spławiński, Roman Jakobson; and their cultural aspect by Adam Bezwiński, Lucjan Suchanek, Hanna Kowalska-Stus. The proposed project looks into their philosophical aspect: the process of shaping Old Russian philosophical tradition. This cannot be analysed in isolation, hence the results of more general studies on the culture of that period will be immensely helpful.

The proposed topic is original and important. The existence of philosophical or even proto-philosophical reflection in a culture speaks for its maturity, potential and possible range of interactions. Philosophy, understood as a consideration of abstract notions related to the nature of reality and to questions about existence, is important from a developmental perspective. Analysing the formation processes related to the philosophical perception of reality allows one to capture the civilisational attitudes of a given culture, in this particular case – the culture of medieval Rus' (XI-XIII centuries). This general research perspective will be accompanied by additional, more detailed analysis. The first part is devoted to the analysis of the cultural situation in Old Russia between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries. This, in turn, can be divided into three research areas: language, literature and works of art in Old Russia. These will be analysed from a philosophical point of view. Second part involves a discussion of philosophical issues. There are six distinguished problem areas, most of these branches of philosophy: social (political) philosophy, ethics, philosophical anthropology, mystical theology, aesthetics, metaphysics and epistemology. The specific problem areas will contain the discussion of the philosophical ideas of the chosen thinkers and ascetics. However, the analysis will also be performed on the anonymous or semi-anonymous works. The third part will be devoted to the views of Slavophiles and Westernisers on the Old Russian tradition in terms of continuation or breaking with it in their own work. All this will be preceded with a meta-analysis of the nature of philosophy as such and religious (theological) philosophy in particular as present in the Eastern-Christian (Byzantine) cultural area that no doubt included Old Russia. The conclusions will contain a summary of the results and answers to the problem of the extent, to which the Old Russian intellectual life had a philosophical dimension.

Therefore, the aim of the project is to perform a detailed analysis of the intellectual history of the emergence of philosophy in Kievan Rus' and its characteristics - the main problem areas, issues, questions tackled, its representatives and main written sources.