

Description for the general public

Already in the Middle Ages historians from the nations living north of the Roman *limes* wanted to demonstrate the ancient nature of their homelands by connecting the remote history with the biblical, Greek and Roman tradition. To do this, they introduced legendary and mythical motifs into the national history. This way of thinking was soon adopted by historians in the early modern era - a good example of it being Polish Sarmatism. But this was very typical of other nations as well, including the Scandinavian ones. The main objective of this project is to reconstruct the mythological past in the Scandinavian historiography in the 16th and 17th centuries. The question of its origins and function is equally important, especially that the dominating interpretation of this phenomenon, presenting it mainly as a part of a political and nationalistic programme, trying to legitimize the nation's position and aspirations, seems to be limited. Another elements must be taken into consideration, such as the social and cultural context and the place it had in the developing modern science. The reception and diffusion of those ideas must be analysed as well.

The study will be based on historical works of Danish, Icelandic, Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish writers. This includes national histories in general, but also on genealogic matters, concerning mainly the ruling dynasties. By confronting the vision of the mythical past with the iconography and literature of the epoch, the picture of how such concepts were spreading and were present in the minds of the people will be provided.

The analysis will also include an attempt to compare and contrast the Scandinavian visions with the Polish Sarmatism and the Lithuanian myth of Roman descent, also in terms of their origins and function, aiming to show what elements of the Polish and Lithuanian concepts were of universal nature, and what can be seen as unique and original.