

Popular science abstract

The project focuses on the forms and means, which were used by the authors of the oldest Danish chronicles to define Danes as a community. *Chronikon Lethrense*, *Chronikon Roskildense*, and *Brevis Historia Regum Dacie* by Sven Aggesen are short narrations originating from the 12th century, and they immediately precede the monumental Danish chronicle written by Saxo Grammaticus. Only for this reason these works deserve to be of our especial interest, but the most salient seems to be the fact that the beginning of Danish historical writing takes place in the centre of Latin Europe during the specific period named the Twelfth-Century Renaissance. This indicates a special importance of this period for the monarchy formation in Denmark and the development of collective identity which occurred around it.

The aim of the project is to define how Danes functioned as an imagined “textual community” among the 12th century intellectuals, and how the perspective presented by the authors of this texts is related to the imaginations of Saxo Grammaticus and other European intellectuals of that time. In other words, the key question is: What it meant to be a Dane in the 12th century, and how this related to other identity concepts from that period? The research on the chronicles has been developed to a relatively small extent so far, as evidenced by the fact of the key problem (i.e. the identity) being completely omitted by the researchers. The project aims at filling this gap, and for this purpose it adopts the theories of “imagined community” formulated by Benedict Anderson, and “textual community” by Brian Stock, which have already appeared in the contemporary research on intellectual history of Middle Ages. The Danish chronicles from the 12th century will be analysed in juxtaposition with the work of Saxo Grammaticus as well as their analogue chronicles from the 12th century Norway, and also in comparison with some selected works from other parts of Europe. This method makes it possible to come to a number of general conclusions and research postulates. The project is part of a broader discussion on the problem regarding the process of building collective identities on the periphery of medieval Europe. Consequently, it touches the problem of how the Western culture was received in these areas. Due to the methodical and methodological choices adopted, the conclusions may significantly contribute to the research conducted on this problem, not only in the context of Scandinavia and the Baltic Rim, but also other areas that were included in the circle of Latin culture in the 10th-11th centuries.