

Abstract

Submitted thesis deals with selected points from the development of the tribal society of the Polabian Slavs in the area called Slavic Polabia, i.e. the area between the Ore Mountains and the Lusatian Mountains in the south, rivers Elbe and Saale in the west, Baltic Sea in the north and river Oder in the east. The thesis is divided into the introduction and four longer chapters; together, they introduce the forms and manners of the medieval tribal society. The introduction defines the aims and methodology of the thesis, while also emphasizing the necessity to observe the diversity of each tribal societies, even in the context of the Slavic Polabia, which was supposed to be a home of the three big tribal societies or tribal confederations. Because of the differences in the socio-political development of these three tribal confederations, the first chapter introduced its own proposition of periodization of the Polabian Slavs' history. This proposition is not based on the traditional criteria used by the older and contemporary medieval studies relying on the external factors, level of social differentiation or structural changes in the political system. The proposed periodization set a few development phases, which each of the tribal societies either passed or never reached. In its three parts (head, body, metabolism), the second chapter attempted to offer a deeper insight into the anatomy of a tribal society. First selected point deals with the identity of the Slavic population and the role of the traditional cults and elites in the process of their forming. The second part deals with the structure of the tribal society itself and the third describes the oscillation between various forms of government in the three groups of Polabian Slavs. The third chapter illustrate the proposed concept on an example of Slavic elites from 9th century until the eastern colonization era and their subsequent Germanization or assimilation. The final chapter deals with the search for the concept and the purpose of history of the Polabian Slavs, which have been becoming a part of the national story of Germans and Poles since 19th century.