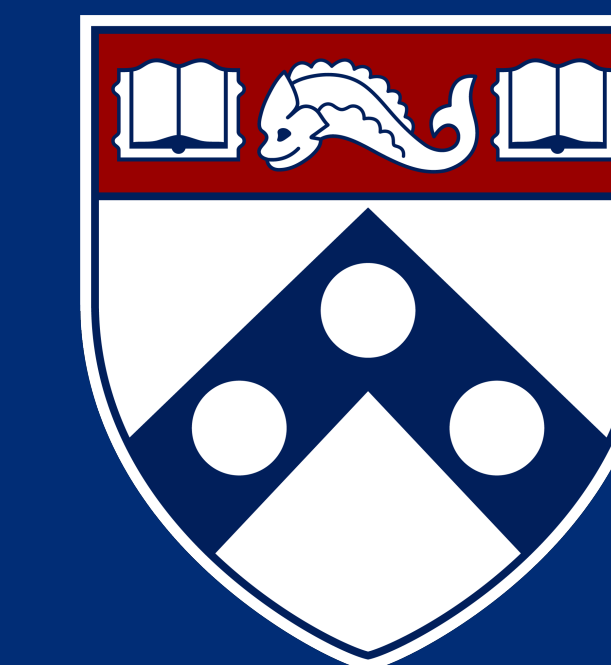


# Digital Database: Myths of Origin in Medieval Chronicles of Europe



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## Goals

- Create the foundations for a database cataloguing medieval chronicles that include myths of origin
- Recognize commonly used genealogies (e.g. Trojan origins or Noah’s sons) among different ethnic groups and authors
- Understand how medieval historians used their sources

## Introduction

This project aims to emphasize the importance of analyzing medieval historian’s use of etymology and legendary narratives.

The modern understanding of history as only documenting “what actually happened” clashes with the medieval historian’s understanding of history.

Instead of trying to pick apart only the “true” historical events in medieval chronicles, Dr. Verkholanstev encourages looking at how the medieval use of etymology in historical chronicles drove narratives within the text.

## Working with Original Texts

One of the original texts I read was the *Scottis Originale* in Scots, which included the oft-used genealogical myth of origin of the Scots in which they’re descended from the Egyptian princess *Scota* and the Greek prince *Gaythelos*.

The chronicle finds the origin of the Latin “*Scotia*” and English “*Scotland*” to be derived from the name of *Scota*:

*“and callit eftir his modir Scota, Scotia; ye quhilk it in ald cronyclis and stories is callit Scotia Major to y tymme yat sum part of ws comme out of it in oure Scotland, yat now is inhybyt, and it was callyt Scotia Minor.”*

In the Middle English text *Mannyng’s Chronicle* by Robert Mannyng of Brunne, reading the original text also allows for the reader to better understand the personality of the author.

Here, he expresses how he writes in simple speech, not for the sake of performers:

*“I mad noght for no disours, ne for no seggers, no harpours, bot for þe luf of simple men þat strange Inglis can not ken.”*

## Methodology & Analysis

- Creating a spreadsheet of over 1000 medieval chronicles
- Reading medieval chronicles in original text and modern translations
- Collecting secondary sources that give biographical data on chronicle authors
- Inputting raw data concerning etymology and legendary origins into the chronicle database

## Conclusions

- Working with original texts not only is useful for understanding the lingual framing of etymologies but also understanding the style of medieval historians.
- Understanding etymologies is critical to understanding the way that medieval historians understood history and used their sources.