Although Gustav Nieritz has not been granted a place in Germany’s cultural memory, he was one of the most important and popular authors of books for children and young adults in the 19th century. His books were read by virtually everyone. Many of the 117 books for children and young adults of which his authorship is certain, are historical fiction for young readers. Unfortunately, they have hardly ever been the topic of research to this date. This paper analyses Nieritz’s specific construction of history, which has long remained unexplored. The main research interest is the question in what way historical fiction for children and young adults in the early 19th century was affected by the parallel development of the new science of history or in what way these texts follow their own specific traditions. In the context of the investigation of selected historical fiction, the paper demonstrates how the construction of history in the work of Gustav Nieritz is governed by ancient traditions, which consider history as a teacher of life (historia magistra vitae) and the teaching of history as a school of virtue. In this context, the work of Gustav Nieritz is clearly influenced by the doctrine of Protestantism. However, Gustav Nieritz’s work shows— in contrast to Christoph von Schmid, who was his ideal and role model— a comparatively advanced realistic approach and treatment of the topic. Despite that, the historical fiction of Nieritz reflects the 19th century idea of an education for the people. Stabilisation of the existing social order and religious instruction are its principal purposes. The beginning of a scholarly construction of history for a wide spectrum of readers cannot be found in children’s books and young adult fiction before the second half of the 19th century.

**Keywords:** construction of history in books for children and young adults, Gustav Nieritz, 19th century, religion, Germany