

«ETYMOLOGIES, OR BEGINNINGS» AS THE MAIN WORK OF ISIDORE OF SEVILLE**Lobkova Anna**

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Abstract. This article presents a general description of the main ancient work of Isidore of Seville - «Etymologies, or Beginnings», which contains information about all branches of ancient knowledge: from grammar to cooking. The author analyzes the ancient source and concludes that Isidore of Seville was the first guide of the ancient tradition to the new barbarian kingdoms that were formed on the ruins of the Western Roman Empire.

Keywords: antiquity, ancient tradition, The Isidore Encyclopedia, source.

Isidore of Seville (560-636) was the Bishop of Seville and a representative of the generation of the «last Romans». The works of Isidore of Seville set the vector of development of the entire culture of the Toledo kingdom of the Visigoths of the VII century.

«The light of Isidore's teaching supported the fire of Spanish minds, despite the dark ages of barbarism in Spain», Lie Goff wrote about Isidore of Seville [4, p. 59]. Isidore was the last great Latin father of the Church and a contemporary of St. Maximus the Confessor. Braulio of Saragossa saw in him a man raised up by God to save the peoples of Iberia from the invading barbarians [5, p. 186]. The Eighth Toledo Council recognized him as the most educated man of the last centuries.

Due to his high level of education and broad outlook, Bishop Isidore of Seville became one of those who sought to integrate ancient and Christian cultural traditions, correlating Christian values and concepts with already existing and familiar Roman ones.

Almost all the works of Isidore of Seville serve one purpose – the systematization of knowledge. In this sense, his most significant work is «Etymologies, or Beginnings», which contains information about all branches of ancient knowledge: from grammar to cooking.

The Encyclopedia of Isidore became quite popular in medieval Europe, it was studied at universities as one of the main textbooks, while it became a model for compiling many other textbooks. Pagan antiquity, the Christian tradition, interpreted and retold by Isidore of Seville, became available to the Goths, Franks, Suevi and other tribes from his extensive heritage [1, p. 63].

«Etymologies» is a Latin work by Isidore of Seville, compiled at the beginning of the VII century AD and published in its final form after his death. The book is a kind of medieval encyclopedia and is an overview of important knowledge and lessons of the ancient world. Its content is largely borrowed from ancient Roman and early Christian texts, some of which are still compilations of older materials [8, p. 202].

«Etymologies» were extremely important for the transfer of knowledge from the ancient world to medieval Europe. Otherwise, part of the material contained in the work could have been lost if Isidore had not taken up the grandiose task of writing his encyclopedia. This work got its name from the theme of one of its constituent books. It was written shortly before his death, during the full maturity of his remarkable scholarship, at the request of his friend, the Bishop of Saragossa.

«Etymologies» is a huge repository in which all the knowledge that his time possessed is collected, systematized and compressed. For most of the Middle Ages, it was the textbook most commonly used in educational institutions. It was so highly regarded as a repository of classical knowledge that it largely supplanted the use of individual works by the classics themselves, it was printed ten times between 1470 and 1529.

In addition to these numerous reprints, the popularity of "Etymology" has given rise to many inferior imitations. This gives a lot of evidence that the writer had the deepest knowledge of Greek and Latin poets. In total, Isidore of Seville quotes one hundred and fifty-four Christian and pagan authors in his work [7, p. 177]. The encyclopedic work in style is concise, clear and beautiful.

The «Etymologies» consist of 448 chapters collected in 20 books, in which Isidore used thousands of manuscripts collected and written in clear and concise language. In the first three books, as in other books on various sciences and arts, Isidore demonstrated that only in an open and pluralistic culture can nations be created that preserve their political and religious identity, and those nations that reject this law doom themselves to chaos and barbarism [3, p. 211]. The fourth book is devoted to medicine and libraries. In the fifth book, the author characterizes the law and chronology. In the sixth book, the author assigns the main role to church books, and in the seventh and eighth books – to God, the heavenly and earthly hierarchies, the church and sects. The ninth book contains information about languages, cities, kingdoms and official names. The tenth book discusses the etymology or meaning of words.

In the second book, devoted to dialectics and rhetoric, Isidore owes much to the translations of Boethius from Greek. Caelius Aurelianus made a great contribution to that part of the fourth book, which is devoted to medicine. The twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth books are largely based on the works of Pliny and Solinus [8, p. 224].

Isidore's main authoritative source was the Bible, which he quotes about 200 times. Virgil's etymology is also quoted more than 190 times throughout the work. Virgil was considered the greatest poet of Roman literature and one of the most authoritative experts of the Latin language. Other Roman pagan figures, such as Cicero and Lucian, are widely quoted throughout the encyclopedia, as are Christian authors Jerome and Augustine.

The bulk of the material for etymology is taken from other encyclopedists and compilers: Pliny the Elder, Solinus, Servius and Cassiodorus [2, p. 63]. Isidore for the most part does not cite these sources. Solinus, Servius and Cassiodorus are not mentioned once in the Etymology, and Pliny is mentioned only a few times.

On the other hand, Isidore calls Aristotle (384-322) a source more than ten times, although he never read Aristotle, but borrowed references from other works. Isidore even mentions Pythagoras as a source, despite the fact that Pythagoras himself did not leave any writings [6, p. 114]. It can be concluded that «Etymologies» is a «collection» of sources that often overlap each other, sometimes quoted, and sometimes not, often it was a reference from the second person, sometimes from his own memory.

Thus, Isidore of Seville is a very significant ecclesiastical figure of the period of the Ecumenical Councils, who had a strong influence on the development of the entire European culture. In many ways, it was he who became the first guide of the ancient tradition to the new barbarian kingdoms formed on the ruins of the Western Roman Empire. Isidore was the last of the ancient Christian philosophers, as well as the last of the great Latin fathers. The «Etymologies» of Isidore of Seville are known as a unique source of generalized knowledge, what was taught in ancient schools was placed in the «Etymologies», which were considered the heritage of ancient culture.

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