

KIEVAN SYNOPSIS 1674: THREE CENTURIES OF PUBLICATION¹

Abstract:

The article is devoted to the history of publication and wide readership in many countries of the Kievan Synopsis, the famous collection of historical information. It was first published in 1674 and continues to be published to this day. The image of Great Prince Vladimir Svatoslavich, the Baptizer of Rus', takes a central place in the narrative.

Keywords:

Kievan «Synopsis», Innokenty Gizel, Kievo-Pechersk Lavra, Ukraine, Russia.

Аннотация: Л.Л. ЩАВИНСКАЯ. «Киевский Синописис 1674 г.: три века изданий».

Статья посвящена истории публикаций и бытования в самой широкой читательской среде многих стран знаменитого свода различных исторических сведений — киевского «Синописиса», впервые напечатанного в 1674 г. и продолжающегося издаваться по сей день. Одно из центральных мест всего повествования занимает образ крестителя Руси великого князя Владимира Святославича.

Ключевые слова:

Киевский «Синописис», Иннокентий Гизель, Киево-Печерская лавра, Украина, Россия.

The Kievan Synopsis is one of the most remarkable editions of the Kievo-Pechersk Lavra Publishing House, a famous collection of a variety of historical information, first published in 1674 and continuing to be published to this day. “Synopsis or a brief collection from different Chroniclers ...” was published “with the blessing of ... Innokenty Gisel ... archimandrite ... Lavra.” The idea of all-Russian unity was expressed in it for the first time. The narrative in the book, beginning from the time of the Old Testament, ended with the events of the middle of the 17th century. A central place in the narrative is occupied by the image of the baptizer of Russia, Grand Prince Vladimir Svyatoslavich. The Synopsis of 1674 contained a total of 124 pages in Church Slavonic typeface, and the word “synopsis” was printed in large Greek letters. As an illustration, it contains a woodcut made by the famous master Elijah, depicting the sacrifice of the biblical Noah after the flood. Synopsis became the most widespread historical work in Russia of the 18th century.

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*The title page of the first edition
of the Kievan "Synopsis,"
1674*

A second, somewhat supplemented edition of Synopsis was published by the Kievo-Pechersk Lavra Publishing House in 1678, containing information regarding recent events related to the “Orthodox victory near Chigirin over Turkish forces” in 1677. The next three editions of Synopsis issued by Lavra are dated 1680, but in fact they were published later than the specified year: apparently, even towards the end of the century. The design of all of these publications remained the same, but their volume almost doubled, exceeding two hundred pages. A number of very large sections appeared in them, for example, about the Mamay’s Massacre. A new article, “On Freedom or Slavic Liberty,” became a true manifesto of East Slavic sovereignty and world significance despite the obviously fantastic nature of the facts presented in it. A section “About

the Russian people ...” appeared, representing an entire, albeit very fabulous, excursus into the naming of “Russian or more Russian.” The compilers of Synopsis added a special section, “On the dialect of the Moscow People and the Royal City.” The Synopsis gives a very in-depth and almost unchanged assessment of the activities of Holy Prince Vladimir. “The great autocrat of Russia ...” is how Grand Prince Vladimir Svyatoslavich is referred to in the pages of the Kievan Synopsis.

The first edition of Synopsis was published using “civil type” (Russian type) in 1714 in Moscow, and the second in 1718 in St. Petersburg. Somewhat later, Synopsis began to be printed by the printing house of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences, which continued this task until the beginning of the 19th century. Very unusual and noteworthy was the inclusion of the text of Synopsis in the collected works of St Dimitry Metropolitan of Rostov, which were published up to the 20th century. In 1805–07 the Moscow Synodal Printing House printed its extensive four-volume edition, the last volume of which contained “the annals of this Saint relating the Acts from the beginning of the world to the Nativity of Christ, with the addition of Synopsis or a short description of the beginning of the Slavonic people.” In the future, this collection of works of the saint would be repeatedly reprinted in both Church Slavonic and civil fonts. It was reprinted for the first time in Kiev in Church Slavonic type in 1824–25 under Metropolitan Eugeny (Bolkhovitinov). At the current time, we know of approximately thirty printed editions of the Kievan Synopsis published during the 17th – 21th centuries in Church Slavonic and civil fonts. One of the most

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ILLUSTRATIONS

1. The title page of the first edition of the Kievan “Synopsis,” 1674.
2. The title page of the second edition of “Synopsis.” Kiev, 1678.
3. The title page of the “Synopsis.” Kiev, 1680.
4. The first page of the chapter “On the Beginning of the Ancient Slavic People” in “Synopsis.” Kiev, 1680.
5. St Vladimir Svyatoslavich. Engraving from the “Synopsis.” Edition of 1680.
6. The title page of the “Synopsis.” St. Petersburg, 1762.
7. The first page of the chapter “On the Beginning of the Ancient Slavic People” in the “Synopsis.” St. Petersburg, 1762.
8. The table of contents of the additions to the “Synopsis.” Kiev, 1823.
9. The title page of the “Synopsis.” Kiev, 1836.
10. The title page of the 4th part of the “Works” of St Dimitry of Rostov, printed in the Kievo-Pechersk Lavra “with the addition of Synopsis.” 1901.