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Encyclopaedia of Isidore of Seville as polyphony (based on *Etymologiae*, I–III)

Abstract

The life of Isidore hid under the shadow of his writing. Generations of Europeans learned about the world from its most famous work – *Etymologiae*. The author of this impressive compilation was a bishop dedicated to God's people, advisor to Visigoth rulers, propagator of monastic life, ardent preacher, benefactor of the poor, leader of synod sessions. He was neither a scholar, nor a traveller, not a lawyer, a farmer or a doctor. His knowledge of the world was literary. *Etymologiae* was a kind of a cento, whose building blocks were *breves tabellae* (passages from works of other writers). In effect, *Etymologiae* may be considered a polyphonic work, from which the voice of the author himself reaches the reader from afar.

Keywords: Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, Latin literature, reception

Heidegger notices that the fate of a philosopher is overshadowed by his philosophy: "Aristotle was born, thought, died. And all the rest is pure anecdote."¹ "The only biography is of an unproductive life" – claims Barthes in the novel *Roland Barthes*.²

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- 1 K. Hofmann, *Argonauta Roland Barthes*, <https://czaskultura.pl/czytanki/argonauta-roland-barthes/> (access: 01.07.2023).
 - 2 R. Barthes, *Roland Barthes*, transl. T. Swoboda, Gdańsk 2011, p. 10.

The biography of Isidore of Seville (ca. 560–636) was effectively pushed out by writing: it is astounding that none of the scholars published by the Visigoth Spain left a life of Isidore for us despite the admiration he received from his contemporaries.³ After the master's death, Braulio of Zaragoza⁴ composed neither his biography, nor a praising speech, but a *List of books of bishop Isidore*, somehow convinced that a man's works⁵ will be the best monument for that man whom Divine Providence called to restore in the tormented homeland the splendour of lost knowledge and appointed to be a kind of a barrier against vulgarity.⁶ It seems that the author of the epitaph put in place of the original Seville burial place of Isidore and his siblings, Leander and Florentina, thinks the same. The anonymous poet encourages us to believe that:

“Look thoroughly for the truth about who they were in books,
You will see eloquent men, steadfast in their hope,
Full of righteous faith, free from any taint.
Know that thanks to their teaching the number of believers increased
and many of those bound by the ungodly laws returned to the Lord.”⁷

The first life of the Sevillian was only written in the 13th century,⁸ when he was already resting in León, revered not only as a scholar referred to in the litany included in the Psalter of Charles the Great along with Hilary, Ambrose, Gregory, Benedict, Leon, Caesarius of Arles and Augustine, but also as a mighty guardian,

³ M.C. Díaz y Díaz, *Introducción general a San Isidoro de Sevilla*, in: San Isidoro de Sevilla, *Etimologías*, J. Oroz Reta, M.-A. Marcos Casquero, 1–2, Madrid 1982 1, p. 95.

⁴ Isidore's student, admirer of his talent, writer. Cf. A. Bober, *Braulio, biskup Saragossy* († 651), “Roczniki Teologiczno-Kanoniczne” 1982, No. 29(4), pp. 129–148; J.C. Martín Iglesias, *Braulio de Zaragoza*, in: C. Codoñer (ed.), *La Hispania visigótica e mozárabe. Dos épocas en la literatura*, Salamanca 2010, pp. 95–100. Translation of Isidore's and Braulio's letters (Braulio, *Epistularium* 1–8); cf. T. Krynicka, “*Dulce mihi fuit diu ad te loqui*” (Braulio, *ep.* 5.107): *korespondencja Izydora z Sewilli i Brauliona z Saragossy*, “Scripta Classica” 2010, No. 17, pp. 63–76.

⁵ A discussion of the life of Isidore and sources of learning about it. cf. M.C. Díaz y Díaz, *Introducción general*, pp. 95–111; T. Krynicka, *Izydor z Sewilli*, Kraków 2007, pp. 5–16.

⁶ Cf. Braulio, *Renotatio librorum domini Isidori*, in: *Scripta de vita Isidori Hispalensis episcopi*, J.C. Martín Iglesias, CCL 113B, Turnhout 1998, pp. 51–54.

⁷ Cf. *Epitaphion beati Leandri, Isidori et Florentine* 6–10. Polish translation: T. Krynicka, “Vox Patrum” 2020, No. 75, p. 603. On epitaph: T. Krynicka, *Wstęp*, *Ibidem*, pp. 593–597.

⁸ J.C. Martín Iglesias, *Isidoro de Sevilla* († 636): *obra y memoria*, “Sub vocibus”, pp. 10–11, https://fil.ug.edu.pl/sites/default/files/_nodes/strona-filologiczny/73250/files/martin-iglesias_isidoro_de_sevilla.pdf (access: 03.07.2023).

miracle worker and even – next to Santiago Matamoros – patron of the Reconquista.⁹ Therefore, the life of Isidore hid under the shadow of his writing which was reduced – wrongly, though for completely valid reasons – to *Etymologiae*. Generations of Europeans learned about the world from this work. Today we have more than 1,000 manuscripts with the text of the encyclopaedia, thus there were presumably about 10 thousand of them in the Middle Ages.¹⁰ *Etymologiae* became, according to Curtius's famous quote¹¹ – a basic work of the Latin Middle Ages, the most read book, after the Bible, copied and read in Western Europe.¹²

Who was the historic Isidore and who was he not? He was a bishop dedicated to God's people, advisor to Visigoth rulers, propagator of monastic life, ardent preacher, benefactor of the poor, leader of synod sessions and editor of the West's first canonical collection, so called *Hispana*.¹³ However, he was neither a scholar, nor a traveller, nor a lawyer, nor a farmer or a doctor. His knowledge of the world is literary. *Etymologiae* was a kind of a cento, whose building blocks were *breves tabellae* – passages copied by the Sevillian from works of his predecessors while he was reading them.¹⁴ They resemble a massive library in which, pursuant to the Latin maxim of *hic mortui vivunt, hic muti loquuntur*¹⁵ – classical and Christian authors speak the same voice despite representing different epochs, traditions or even worlds; they were scholars representing individual fields of knowledge and encyclopaedia writers, speakers and poets. If, following ancient erudites, Isidore had made a bibliography to his encyclopaedia, it would have certainly dazzled no

9 B. de Gaiffier, *Le culte de Saint Isidore de Séville. Esquisse d'un travail*, in: M.C. Díaz y Díaz (ed.), *Isidoriana*, León 1961, pp. 271–283; A. Viñayo González, *San Isidoro y León*, in: J. González (ed.), *San Isidoro Doctor Hispaniae. Catálogo*, Sevilla 2002, pp. 129–139.

10 J.N. Hillgarth, *Isidore of Seville*, in: J.R. Strayer (ed.), *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, Vol. 6, New York 1985, p. 564.

11 E.R. Curtius, *Literatura europejska i łacińskie średniowiecze*, transl. A. Borowski, Kraków 1997, p. 28.

12 J. Fontaine, *Introduction*, in: J. Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville, Traité de la Nature*, Bordeaux 1960, p. 19.

13 A. Ledzińska, *Gramatyka wobec sztuk wyzwolonych w pismach Izidora z Sewilli. "Origo et fundamentum liberalium litterarum"*, Kraków 2014, pp. 25–48.

14 Cf. *Isid. nat. praef. 2: Quae omnia, secundum quod a veteribus viris ac maxime sicut in litteris catholicorum virorum scripta sunt, proferentes, brevi tabella notamus.*

15 Inscription placed above the entry to the Library of the Royal Society of Physicians in Budapest (cf. C. Michalunio (ed.), *"Dicta". Zbiór łacińskich sentencji, przysłów, zwrotów i powiedzeń*, Kraków 2005, p. 209, No. 3050) or at the front of the Library of the Lviv Polytechnic National University (cf. *Історія науково-технічної бібліотеки*, <https://lpnu.ua/ntb/istoriia-ntb> (access: 04.07.2023)).

less that the list of literature that Varro¹⁶ and Plinius¹⁷ attached to their works. To appreciate the abundance of the works of the Sevillian, let us have a look at writings he turned to for information creating the first three books of his encyclopaedia: *Grammar* (I), *Rhetoric* (II) and *Mathematics* (III).¹⁸ As we can see, they include information from the field of liberal sciences (arts),¹⁹ that is three philosophical disciplines (grammar, rhetoric and dialectic) and four mathematics disciplines (arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy), which made up a canon of education that the Antiquity passed on to the Middle Ages.²⁰ Therefore, works by scholars that practised these sciences took a prominent place among source materials collected by the Sevillian.

Cassiodorus was Isidore's prime teacher of *trivium* and *quadrivium*. The Sevillian quotes extensive paragraphs from his encyclopaedia *Institutions of Divine and Secular Learning* (*Institutiones rerum divinarum et humanarum*)²¹ – a work that for the needs of the monks of the Vivarium combined for the first time information from secular and theological sciences.²² Thanks to Cassiodorus, the Sevillian learns the mathematic thought of Nicomachus, given to the Latin world by Apuleius and Boethius.²³ Following Cassiodorus, he quotes a passage from the Bible on the importance of numbers in the world created by God,²⁴ the study of the harmony of spheres examined by Pythagoreans and also the tale of the saving grace of the melody played by David to King Soul.²⁵ He uses Cassiodorus, whom he treats as the canvas for his discussion, he supplements information coming from various writers, such as the description of geometric figures by Martianus Capella and anonymous

¹⁶ Varr. *rust.* 1.1.

¹⁷ Plin. *nat.* 1 (*ex auctoribus*).

¹⁸ The text is analysed on the basis of the following editions: Isidore de Seville, *Étymologies. Livre I: La grammaire*, O. Spevak (ed.), Paris 2020; Isidore de Seville, *Étymologies. Book II: Rhetoric*, P.K. Marshall (ed.), Paris 1983; Isidore de Seville, *Étymologies. Livre III: De mathematica*, G. Gasparotto, J.-Y. Guillaumin (ed.), Paris 2009.

¹⁹ These terms were used interchangeably, e.g. Isid. *etym.* 1.1 *tit.* Cf. W. Tatarkiewicz, *Dzieje szczęśliu pojęć. Sztuka, piękno, forma, twórczość, odtwórczość, przeżycie estetyczne*, Warsaw 1982, p. 24.

²⁰ E.R. Curtius, *Literatura europejska...*, pp. 42–43.

²¹ Cf. Isid. *etym.* 1.1 (Cas. *inst.* 2.2, 2.17; 2.3, 2.20); 1.27.1 (2.1.2–4); 2.8.2 (2.2.8); 2.9.1 (2.2.11); 2.9.17 (2.2.15–16); 3.2 (2.4.7); 3.4.1 (2.4.7); 3.6 (2.4.5); 3.7 (2.4.6); 3.16 (2.5.2).

²² Title as quoted in L. Dyka (Kasjodor, *Zasady muzyki*, transl. L. Dyka, Rzeszów 2015).

²³ J.-Y. Guillaumin, *Introduction*, in: *Étymologies III*, pp. XVIII–XIX.

²⁴ *Lib. Sap.* 11.20.

²⁵ 1Sam. 16, 14–23; 18, 9–12. See: J.-Y. Guillaumin, *Introduction...*, p. XXIV.

authors of writings about measurements.²⁶ He takes an interesting angle to organize the material in chapters devoted to astronomy when he combines information taken from Cassiodorus with the information that he included in his own work, composed earlier, in 612–613, *On the nature of things* (*De natura rerum*).²⁷ Chapter 27 of the first book of *Etymologiae*, devoted to the rules of correct spelling, is based most of all on the foundation of Cassiodorus's treaty *On orthography* (*De orthographia*).²⁸ He flavours the information taken from there as if with honey – as Strzelecki says – by including explanations from writings of other grammarians.²⁹ He also uses Cassiodorus's other, not technical writings, that is *Expositions of the Psalms* (*Expositio Psalmorum*) – three times³⁰ and *Various official documents* (*Variarum libri duodecim*).³¹

The reading of *Etymologiae* leads to the conclusion that the library of Sevillian bishops, where the young Sevillian spent many happy hours,³² had a great selection of writings of the outstanding grammarian Servius. Introducing the reader to the realm of liberal arts, Isidore uses the treaty *On a hundred metric measures to Albinus* (*De centum metris ad Albinum*)³³ and commentaries, famous for their abundance, offered to Donatus's *Grammar* (*Commentarius in Artem Donati*)³⁴ and to Virgil's *Bucolics* (*Servii grammatici qui feruntur in Vergilii Bucolica Commentarii*),³⁵ Geor-

26 Cf. Isid. *etym.* 3.12 (Mart. *nupt.* 5.721–722). Identification of sources as quoted in: J. Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville et la culture classique dans l'Espagne wisigothique*, Vol. 1, Paris 1959, p. 398, footnote 2; 404.

27 Cf. Isid. *etym.* 3.23–70. Cf. J.–Y. Guillaumin, *Introduction...*, pp. XXV–XXVI; T. Krynicka, A. Wilczyński, *Siedem sztuk wyzwolonych w "Etymologiach" Izydora z Sewilli*, "Vox Patrum", in print. On self-quotations in Isidore's writings: A. Ferraces Rodríguez, *Isidoro de Sevilla y los textos de medicina*, in: Idem (ed.), *Isidorus medicus. Isidoro de Sevilla y los textos de medicina*, A Coruña 2005, pp. 25–26.

28 Cf. also Isid. *etym.* 1.4.8 (Cas. *Orth.* 148.5–8); 1.20.2 (146.3–19). Cf. Carracedo Fraga, *Isidore of Seville as a Grammarian*, in: A. Fear, J. Wood (eds.), *A Companion to Isidore of Seville*, Leiden 2020, p. 225.

29 L. Strzelecki, *Studia Isidorea*, "Eos" 1939, No. 40, pp. 28–40.

30 Cf. Isid. *etym.* 1.3.4 (Cas. *Ps.* 22.6.215–217); 1.36.3 (14.5.163–164); 3.21.7 (*praef.* 4.1–2).

31 Cf. Isid. *etym.* 3.21.9 (Cas. *var.* 2.40.41).

32 Isidore's youth is beautifully described by J. Fontaine in *Isidore de Séville. Genèse et originalité de la culture hispanique au temps de Wisigoths*, Turnhout 2001, p. 101.

33 Cf. Isid. *etym.* 1.39.5 (Serv. *metr.* 457.18–20).

34 Cf. Isid. *etym.* 1.3.3 (Serv. *AD* 421.2–3); 1.6.1 (428.11–14); 1.8.1 (409.35–36).

35 Cf. Isid. *etym.* 1.37.28 (Serv. *Buc.* 9.54); 1.39.16 (*praef.* 1.3–7); 3.10.1 (3.41).

gics (*Servii grammatici qui feruntur in Vergilii Georgica Commentarii*)³⁶ and *Aeneid* (*Servii grammatici qui feruntur in Vergilii Aeneis Commentarii*).³⁷

The analysed books of *Etymologiae* echo a few writings by Boethius: *Commentary on Porphyry's "Isagoga"* (*In Isagogen Porphyrii commenta*),³⁸ commentary on Cicero's *Topics* (*Commentarii in Topica Ciceronis*)³⁹ and *Institutions of Arithmetic* (*De institutione arithmetica libri duo*).⁴⁰ Isidore reads and eagerly quotes Marius Victorinus, philologist, theologian and philosopher, author of *Grammar in four books* (*Artis grammaticae libri IV*)⁴¹ and *On definitions* (*De definitionibus*).⁴² Moreover, he relies on other authors for information on those sciences. Here are some of them in an alphabetical order:

1. Agroecius, *Treatise on Orthography* (*Ars de orthographia*),⁴³
2. Audax, *Excerpt from the Books of Scaurus and Palladius* (*Excerpta de Scauri et Palladii libris*),⁴⁴
3. Flavius Caper, *On Orthography* (*De orthographia*),⁴⁵
4. Diomedes, *Grammar* (*Ars grammatica*),⁴⁶
5. Hyginus, *Concerning Astronomy* (*Astronomia*),⁴⁷
6. Martianus Capella, *On the Nuptials of Mercury and Philology* (*De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*),⁴⁸
7. Pompeius Maurus, *Commentary to Donatus's Grammar* (*Commentum Artis Donati*),⁴⁹

36 Cf. Isid. *etym.* 1.34.6 (Serv. *Georg.* 2.1.11–12); 1.40.5 (3.115); 3.21.8 (4.463).

37 Cf. Isid. *etym.* 1.3.7 (Serv. *Aen.* 6.136); 1.7.21 (10.394); 1.35.7 (5.120); 2.21.18 (4.381); 3.37 (1.449).

38 Cf. Isid. *etym.* 2.26.11 (Boeth. *Is. Porph.* 1.4.15–16).

39 Cf. Isid. *etym.* 2.31.1 (Boeth. *top. Cic.* 4; PL 64.1119).

40 Cf. Isid. *etym.* 3.1 (Boethius, *inst. ar.* 1.1); 3.3.1 (1.3).

41 Cf. Isid. *etym.* 1.27.4 (Mar. Victorin. *gram.* 12.24–25); 1.27.27 (7.31–33); 3.19.4 (184.1–6).

42 Cf. Isid. *etym.* 1.30; 1.3 (Mar. Victorin. *def.* 20.22–23; 21.3–6); 1.31.1 (21.12–15); 2.25.1–5 (24–26).

43 Cf. Isid. *etym.* 1.27.18 (Agr. *Orth.* 118.15); 1.27.26 (114.21).

44 Cf. Isid. *etym.* 1.9.4 (Aud. *Exc.* 344.14–26); 1.18.3 (357.15–26 – 358.1–4); 1.32.4 (362.16–18).

45 Cf. Isid. *etym.* 1.27.9 (Cap. *Orth.* 95.18).

46 Cf. Isid. *etym.* 1.17.1 (Diom. *gram.* 468.3–4); 2.18–19 (465.23–26; 466.3–5, 466.15–18; 466.26–467; 467.12–16); 2.21.40 (463.10–18), and also in other places where the interrelation is less obvious, e.g. 1.33.2 (453.24–28); 1.39.7 (501.25–28; 508.22–23; 510.33); 1.39.23 (485.18–29).

47 Cf. Isid. *etym.* 3.70.15 (Hyg., *Astr.* 2.35. 2.35–2. 24); 3.70; (2,13. 3.70).

48 Cf. Isid. *etym.* 1.17.2 (Mart. *Nupt.* 9.984); 1.17.4 (9.988); 2.25.7 (4.398); 2.26.7 (4.376); 2.31.5 (4.385); 3.3.1 (7.731; 7.745); 3.20.8 (9.906); 3.53.2 (7.738).

49 Cf. Isid. *etym.* 1.17.1 (Pomp. *com.* 20.22–25; 123.3–5).

8. Sacerdos, *Grammatical Writings (Artes grammaticae)*,⁵⁰
9. Scaurus, *On Orthography (De orthographia)*,⁵¹
10. Sulpicius Victor, *Institutions of oratory (Institutiones oratoriae)*,⁵²
11. Quintus Fabius Laurentius Victorinus, *Explanations to Cicero's rhetoric*, two books (*Explanationum in rhetoricam Ciceronis libri duo*).⁵³

The professional writings that the Sevillian studies thoroughly also include anonymous treaties *Twenty-one markings that should be placed on poems (Notae XXI quae versibus apponi consuerunt)* and *On the virtues and faults [of pronunciation] (De vitiis et virtutibus)*. The author of the first treaty provides information on diacritics;⁵⁴ the latter is a basic source for his lecture on linguistic errors and stylistic measures. According to Spevak's findings and our own calculations, the Sevillian refers to the said work, quotes it, summarizes it and paraphrases it and cites extracts from great Latin poets and prose writers as many as 77 times.⁵⁵ He undoubtedly uses various other grammar extracts and text books. Fontaine compares them to contemporary university scripts that allow students to get, in a relatively short period of time, extensive, though not in-depth, knowledge in a given discipline, illustrated by quotes from works by various authors, not always available in the era, when manuscripts wore down quickly and the costs of copying them were quite substantial.⁵⁶ Isidore calls them "writers on the liberal arts" (*scriptores artium*).⁵⁷ He also knows anonymous mathematics and measurements studies that were in use in education in his times. It is evident, for example, in the fact that he uses the term *punctus circuli*, which is used in descriptions of the centre of the circle that feature on the corpus of measurements-related texts, while authors such as Vitruvius and Boethius wrote about *centrum*.⁵⁸

Learning the secrets of grammar, rhetoric and dialectic with Isidore, we hear echoes of various works by early Christian writers who practice exegesis of the

50 Cf. Isid. *etym.* 1.17–8; 1.17. 10–11 (*Art.* 498.2–3; 498.22–24; 499.2–3; 499.6–7); 1.17.13–17.1.17.18–19 (498.15–17; 499.11–22).

51 Cf. Isid. *etym.* 1.27.4 (*Scaur. Orth.* 14.9–10).

52 Cf. Isid. *etym.* 2.8.7 (*Sulp. inst.* 322.4–5; 322.18–19; 322.36; 324.18–20).

53 Cf. Isid. *etym.* 2.9.1 (*Vict. expl.* 242.44–243, 4).

54 Cf. Isid. *etym.* 1.21.6–8; 1.21.11–12; 11.21.14–26 (*Not.* 535.1–2; 535.7–9; 535.16–21; 536.1–24).

55 Beginning with Isid. *etym.* 1.32–1(4–5) and ending on 1.37.35 (726–732).

56 J. Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville et la culture...*, pp. 750–753, 812–813. On late antiquity extracts in general: B. Bravo, E. Wipszycka-Bravo, *Losy antycznej literatury*, in: A. Świderkówna (ed.), *Słownik pisarzy antycznych*, Warsaw 2001, pp. 25–26.

57 Isid. *etym.* 1.31.1.

58 Isid. *etym.* 3.12.1. Cf. J.-Y. Guillaumin, *Introduction...*, pp. VII–XXX, XX, XXII–XXIII.

Scriptures (1), explain related studies of Greek scholars (2), discuss the moral and ascetic (3), philosophical (4) and dogmatic and polemic (5) matter, correspond with (6) and trace the history of mankind and the lives and achievements of distinguished writers in the history of the Church (7):

1. a) Ambrose, *Hexaemeron* (*Exaëmeron*);⁵⁹ Augustine, *Homilies on the Gospel of John* (*In Iohannis Evangelium tractatus*);⁶⁰ *Literal commentary on Genesis* (*De Genesi ad litteram*);⁶¹ *Expositions of the Psalms* (*Enarrationes in Psalmos*);⁶² *Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount* (*De sermone Domini in Monte secundum Matthaeum*);⁶³ *Questions on the Heptateuch* (*Quaestionum in Heptateuchum libri VII*);⁶⁴ b) Jerome, *Homilies on the Psalms* (*Tractatus sive homiliae in Psalmos*);⁶⁵ commentaries on the books of prophets (*Commentariorum in Hiezechielem libri XIV*; *Commentariorum in Ionam prophetam libri IV*; *Commentariorum in Isaiam libri XVIII*; *Commentariorum in Sophoniam prophetam liber I*; *Commentariorum in Zachariam prophetam libri III*);⁶⁶ commentary on the Letter to Ephesians (*Commentariorum in Epistolam ad Ephesios libri III*);⁶⁷ and also *Commentary on the Book of Job*, attributed to him (*Praefatio in Librum Iob*);⁶⁸
2. Jerome, *The Interpretation of Hebrew Names* (*Liber interpretationis hebraicorum nominum*);⁶⁹ *Origen's Commentary on the Song of Songs* (*Interpretatio homiliarum duarum Origenis in Canticum canticorum*);⁷⁰
3. Tertullian, *On Monogamy* (*De monogamia*);⁷¹ *On the Garland* (*De corona*);⁷²

59 Isid. *etym.* 3.30–2 (*Hex.* 2.4.15).

60 Isid. *etym.* 1.3.10 (*Aug. Ioh.* 10.12).

61 Isid. *etym.* 3.32.2 (*Aug. gen. ad lit.* 2.10.23); 3.64.1 (2.16.33); 3.70.5 (2.14.29).

62 Isid. *etym.* 1.27.5 (*Aug. enar.* 32.2.2; 4); 1.39.17 (72.1); 1.39.18 (44.3); 3.18.2 (150.7); 3.20.2 (150.7); 3.52.1 (10.3); 3.70.21 (93.3).

63 Isid. *etym.* 1.14.1 (*Aug. de serm. Dom.* 1.9.23).

64 Isid. *etym.* 3.70.22 (*Aug. quaest. Hept. Gen.* 63 (24.12–14)).

65 Isid. *etym.* 1.42.1 (*Hier. tract. psalm.* 89.1.16–17).

66 Isid. *etym.* 1.3.9 (*Hier. Hiez.* 3.9.4–6a); 1.3.4 (*Soph.* 3.14–18); 1.29.3 (*Jer. Ion.* 2.5).

67 Isid. *etym.* 1.12.1 (*Jer. Eph.* 2.4.6; 23–24).

68 Isid. *etym.* 1.39.11 (*Ps–Jer. Praef. Job*, PL 28, col. 1081).

69 Isid. *etym.* 1.3.4 (*Jer. Nom. Hebr.* 2.4–6); 1.3.9 (49.6); 1.4.11 (22.27); 1.4.12 (62.10); 1.4.13 (59.23); 1.27.10 (4.10).

70 Isid. *etym.* 1.39.18 (*Jer. hom. orig. cant.* 1.1).

71 Isid. *etym.* 1.3.9 (*Tert. monog.* 5.3).

72 Isid. *etym.* 2.10.2 (*Tert. coron.* 4.5).

4. Augustine, *The Soliloquies* (*Soliloquiorum libri*),⁷³ *On the Lie* (*De mendacio*),⁷⁴ *On Order* (*De ordine libri II*),⁷⁵ *On the Greatness of Soul* (*De quantitate animae*)⁷⁶ and *On Categories* (*Categoriae decem ex Aristotele decerpatae*), attributed to him;⁷⁷
5. a) Augustine, *Christian Doctrine* (*De doctrina Christiana*);⁷⁸ *On the Holy Trinity* (*De Trinitate*);⁷⁹ *The City of God* (*De civitate Dei*);⁸⁰ *Handbook* (*Enchiridion ad Laurentium, sive de fide, spe et caritate*);⁸¹ *Against Fausus* (*Contra Faustum*);⁸² b) Jerome, *Against Rufinus* (*Contra Rufinum*);⁸³ c) Lactantius, *The Divine Institutes* (*Divinarum institutionum libri VII*);⁸⁴ *On the Wrath of God* (*De ira Dei*);⁸⁵ d) Rufinus, *Apology against Jerome* (*Apologiae in sanctum Hieronymum libri II*);⁸⁶ e) Tertullian, *To the Nations* (*Ad nationes libri II*);⁸⁷ *Against Marcion* (*Adversus Marcionem*);⁸⁸ *Against Heretics* (*De praescriptione haereticorum*);⁸⁹
6. a) Augustine, *Letters* (*Epistulae*);⁹⁰ b) Jerome, *Letters* (*Epistulae*);⁹¹

⁷³ Isid. *etym.* 2.21.47 (Aug. *sol.* 2.7. 14).

⁷⁴ Isid. *etym.* 2.37.2 (Aug. *mend.* 10.24); 1.40.6 (13.28).

⁷⁵ Isid. *etym.* 1.3.1; (Aug. *ord.* 2.12.35); 1.4.3 (2.2.36); 1.4.17 (2.12.35); 1.16.2 (2.12.36); 1.39.2 (2.14.40); 3.10.3 (2.15.42); 3.12.1 (1.2.3); 3.14.1 (2.14.41); 3.18.2 (2.14.39); 3.19.1 (2.14.39).

⁷⁶ Isid. *etym.* 2.24.2 (Aug. *quant. anim.* 26.51).

⁷⁷ Isid. *etym.* 2.26.13 (Ps. Aug. *Categ.* 8.1); 2.31.3.

⁷⁸ Isid. *etym.* 1.3.1 (Aug. *doctr.* 2.3.4); 1.5.1 (3.29.40); 1.9.1 (2.3.4); 1.14.1 (2.11.16); 1.22.2 (2.26.40); 1.26.1 (2.3.4); 1.29.3 (3.29.41); 1.32.1 (2.13.20); 1.33.1 (2.13.19); 1.34.3 (2.13.19); 1.37.3 (3.7.11); 1.43.1 (2.28.42); 2.1.2 (1.1.1); 4.17.34; 2.4.3 (2.36.54); 2.17.3 (4.17.34–18, 4.17.35; 4.19.38; 4.28.61); 2.28.1 (2.31.48; 2.37.55); 3.18.2 (2.17.27); 3.70.37 (2.21.32).

⁷⁹ Isid. *etym.* 1.1.1 (Aug. *Trin.* 14.1.1); 1.3.1 (15.10.19); 1.37.1 (15.9.15).

⁸⁰ Isid. *etym.* 1.3.5 (Aug. *civ.* 18.3.39); 1.36.21 (11.18); 1.37.8 (11.8); 2.3.2 (11.25); 2.21.5 (11.18); 2.24.4–5 (8.2–3); 2.24.6 (19.4); 2.24.7 (8.4); 3.4.2 (11.30); 3.9.2 (12.18); 3.70.21 (2.14.2).

⁸¹ Isid. *etym.* 1.34.4 (Aug. *enchir.* 2.18).

⁸² Isid. *etym.* 1.40.4 (Faust. 20.9).

⁸³ Isid. *etym.* 1.21.3 (Jer. *Ruf.* 2.27).

⁸⁴ Isid. *etym.* 2.24.2 (Lact. *inst.* 3.3; 1.4.8); 3.41.2 (2.9.5); 3.70.1 (2.9.12).

⁸⁵ Isid. *etym.* 1.29.3 (Lact. *ira* 10.43); 3.55.1 (13.5).

⁸⁶ Isid. *etym.* 1.24.1 (Rufin. *Apol. Hier.* 2.40.30–35).

⁸⁷ Isid. *etym.* 3.70.32 (Tert. *nat.* 2.15).

⁸⁸ Isid. *etym.* 1.3.9 (Tert. *Marc.* 3.22.5–6).

⁸⁹ Isid. *etym.* 1.39.26 (Tert. *Praescr.* 39).

⁹⁰ Isid. *etym.* 2.11.1 (Aug. *epist.* 82,4,31).

⁹¹ Isid. *etym.* 1.3.7 (Hier. *epist.* 107.6); 1.5.3 (140.4); 1.21.3 (106.7); 1.39.20 (112.3); 1.39.26 (53.7); 2.21.24 (125.13); 2.24.8 (30.1); 2.9.3 (30.1).

7. Jerome, *Chronicle (Chronicon)*.⁹²

As we can see, Augustine, Isidore's beloved author, prevails among Christian writers cited by him.⁹³ Isidore is entranced by the abundance and excellence of Augustine's works so much that he ensures the reader that reading the bishop of Hippo may take the place of reading all other scholarly writers.⁹⁴ Let us also notice that such numerous cases of reminiscing on non-technical works only reinforces our belief that Isidore was a thorough reader who could skilfully pick information of interest to him, also from works devoted to completely different subject matter than the one discussed by him. In chapter ten of book II *On Rhetoric*, he surprises the reader transposing him onto the field of legal knowledge and talking about a statute. He defines it, discusses the interrelation between written law and common law, presents many statutes and formulates requirements they should meet. When describing a statute, he refers to Tertullian's treaty *On the Garland (De corona)*, but, as Jońca notes, he completely changes the connotation of an extract from the source material which he places in his encyclopaedia.⁹⁵ It is worth noting on the side that this entire chapter will be repeated practically word for word in book V dedicated to law,⁹⁶ which shows that Isidore's encyclopaedia is not without flaws.

Works by great Latin prose writers and poets, who provide the Sevillian with material to embellish his discourse, are a separate group of texts quoted by Isidore. In book I and II they also provide examples that illustrate models of shaping of literary expression discussed by him. Without any doubt, the podium among all cited poets is held by Virgil, who is also omnipresent in commentaries of grammarians.⁹⁷ Moreover, in a few passages Isidore quotes the following authors:

⁹² Isid. *etym.* 1.22.1 (Jer. *chron.* 168.17–21); 1.39.11 (4.4.–7); 3.15.3 (48b.13–14).

⁹³ An interesting angle on this is presented in: J.C. Martín Iglesias, *Isidoro...*, cf. *Isidore of Seville*, in: K. Pollmann (ed.), *The Oxford Guide to the Historical Reception of Saint Augustin*, Vol. 2, Oxford 2013, p. 1194.

⁹⁴ Cf. Isid. *vers.* 7.

⁹⁵ Cf. Isid. *etym.* 2.10.2; 5.3.4 (Tert. *coron.* 4.5).

⁹⁶ Cf. Isid. *etym.* 5.3.1; 5.5.10; 5.5.13; 5.5.19–21.

⁹⁷ 103 citations, of which: 65 in book I, 28 in book II and 10 in book III.

Lucan,⁹⁸ Perseus,⁹⁹ Ennius,¹⁰⁰ Ovid,¹⁰¹ Lucretius,¹⁰² Juvenal,¹⁰³ Statius,¹⁰⁴ Horace¹⁰⁵ and Juvencus.¹⁰⁶ Cicero leads the way among prose writers.¹⁰⁷ The encyclopaedia's author also quotes speeches from Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus, Gaius Sempronius Gracchus and Gaius Licinius Macer Calvus.¹⁰⁸ Let us note that – as has already been noticed multiple times – Isidore knows the cited masters of the word indirectly and quotes after other authors. At times he does so with errors, which completely distort the sense of the extracts: “fields” mentioned in *Georgics* become “trees” (*arborum* – *arvorum*),¹⁰⁹ Lucan's “squalid Libyan plains” (*squalentibus arvis*) become “some lion [that beset] the enemy” (*qualis in armis [...] leo*),¹¹⁰ “inception” (*inceptio*) of Terence's lovers changes to “interception” (*interceptio*) – we do not know of what and from whom,¹¹¹ while Statius's Evening Star changes from one “seen” (*deprenditur*) twice, that is in the evening and in the morning, to a “derived” (*dependitur*) one.¹¹²

The Sevillian is not able to verify the message of the writings of those known to him, which is why where the authors do not give the name of the cited poets and prose writers, he is not able to name them either.¹¹³ This is the case, for example, where, when discussing metaphor, he quotes an unknown poet, whom today's researchers are trying to identify with Varro Atacinus. He writes:

98 9 citations, of which: 4 in book I and 5 in book III.

99 5 citations in book I.

100 6 citations, of which: 5 in book I and 1 in book II. Moreover, Isidore attributes Ennius the authorship of the quoted extract from Naevius's comedy *Girl from Taranto* (cf. *etym.* 1.26. 2). Cf. N. Messina, *Le citazioni classiche nelle “Etymologiae” di Isidoro di Siviglia*, “Archivos Leonenses” 1980, No. 68, p. 210.

101 4 citations, 2 in book I and book II each.

102 3 citations, of which: 2 in book I and 1 in book III.

103 1 citation in books I and II each.

104 1 citation in book III.

105 1 citation in book I.

106 1 citation in books I and III each.

107 31 citations, of which: 1 in book I and 30 in book II.

108 Respectively: 2, 1 and 1 citations in book II.

109 Cf. *Isid. etym.* 1.34.6 (*Verg. georg.* 2.1).

110 Cf. *Isid. etym.* 1.37.33 (*Lucan.* 2.205–207).

111 Cf. *Isid. etym.* 2.30.5 (*Ter. Andr.* 218, as quoted in: *Cas. Inst.* 2.3. 15).

112 Cf. *Isid. etym.* 3.70, 19 (*Stat. Theb.* 6.241).

113 On authors quoted by name see: M. Starowieyski, *Obraz literatury klasycznej pogańskiej w dziełach Izidora z Sewilli. Literatura grecka*, “Meander” 1974, No. 29, pp. 357–367; idem, *Literatura rzymska*, “Meander” 1975, No. 30, pp. 19–35.

And metaphors occur in four ways: from animate to animate, as: ‘He mounted winged horses;’¹¹⁴ speaking metaphorically, it associates the wings of a bird with a quadruped [...]. From the inanimate to the inanimate, as: ‘The pine-wood plows the sea, the lofty keel cuts a furrow.’¹¹⁵ This associates the use of land with water, since plowing and cutting a furrow have to do with the land, not the sea;¹¹⁶

and then, following Augustine, he adds a fragment coming from perhaps Solinus:

From inanimate to animate, as:

«You, father Neptune, whose white temples, wreathed with crashing brine, resound; to whom the great Ocean flows forth as your eternal beard, and in whose hair rivers wander.» For ‘beard,’ ‘temples,’ and ‘hair’ pertain not to the Ocean but to men.¹¹⁷

Let us note that the choice of the quoted fragments, especially where he chooses among many citations placed in sources, may evidence, as it seems, Isidore’s literary tastes or even his love for Belles-lettres. Out of many examples used by the author of *On the Virtues and Faults [of Pronunciation]* to illustrate his presentation of paraphrase, Isidore chooses those coming from *Aeneid* that show Aurora leaving Tithonus’s bed and the love embrace in which the spouses come together and he omits the fragment about “younglings of the flock” from *Bucolics* and the fragment from the *Letter to the Romans*.¹¹⁸ When discussing the shapes of the Moon, he eagerly quotes after Horace’s commentators the poetic term “two-horned” (*bicornis*);¹¹⁹ for the sheer pleasure of reading, he reaches to the excerpt from Juvenecus’s epic, which has no relation to the description of the vault of heaven:

The vaults (convexum) of the heavens are its edges, so called from their ‘curvature’ (curvitas), as in this line (source unidentified): “As often as the humid night enclosed the curved (convexus) heavens”.¹²⁰

We thus see that *Etymologiae* is a polyphonically outstanding work. Do we hear the voice of the Sevillian himself in it? When opening the book, Isidore and his

¹¹⁴ Cf. Inc. *frg.* 68 (Blansdorf, *Fragmenta...*, p. 442).

¹¹⁵ Cf. Inc. *frg.* 63 (Blansdorf, *Fragmenta...*, p. 441).

¹¹⁶ Cf. Isid. *etym.* 1.37.3 (*de vit.* 361–367).

¹¹⁷ Cf. Isid. *etym.* 1.37.4 (*Aug. doct.* 3.7. 11). Cf. E. Courtney, *The Fragmentary Latin Poets*, Oxford–New York 2003, p. 456.

¹¹⁸ Cf. Isid. *etym.* 1.37.15 (*Verg. Aen.* 4.584–585; *Aen.* 8.405–406; *de vit.* 492–502). Omitted: *Verg. buc.* 1.21.

¹¹⁹ Poetic term (cf. *Hor. carm.* 35). Fontaine believes that Isidore could have relied on scholias of grammarians that comment on Horace’s works (cf. J. Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville et la culture...*, p. 380, footnote 3).

¹²⁰ Cf. Isid. *etym.* 3.38.1 (*Iuvenc. Evang.* 3.224).

contemporaries wanted to hear the voice of the author (*auctor*), who deserves trust as he speaks within a respected (*auctoritas*) tradition,¹²¹ and writing was seen as continuation of reading.¹²² Therefore, the “fear of influence”¹²³ or searching for novelty¹²⁴ are completely alien to them. Despite Isidore’s dependence on antique scholars – reader’s dependence on authors, creator’s of texts beginning in proto-texts – the autonomy of his writing is obvious. From the beginning of his struggles with the stylus,¹²⁵ he was not, as Seneca said, under the shadow of his predecessors (*sub umbra aliena*).¹²⁶ *Etymologiae* is the world’s first universal encyclopaedia, a reflection of a starry *universum* made up of passages chosen by someone who is convinced that one can achieve the understanding of the Maker and creation by going in-depth into words that name everything. He utters them by “ripping them at the core”, that is reading subsequent semantic growth rings, as if uncovering layers of the palimpsest¹²⁷ – and we hear the voice of Isidore, bishop of Sevilla, magically inscribed in scholarly writing, which in essence overshadowed his biography.

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¹²¹ An interesting angle on this is presented by S. Voroncov, *A Remark on the Problem of Originality of Isidore of Seville*, “Sub vocibus”, https://fil.ug.edu.pl/sites/default/files/_nodes/strona-filologiczny/73697/files/vorontsovo.pdf, pp. 2–3 (access: 04.07.2021).

¹²² A. Pelttari, *The Space That Remains. Reading Poetry in Late Antiquity*, Ithaca 2014, pp. 43–44.

¹²³ Bloom, creator of the concept of *anxiety of influence*, formulated an opinion that due to the said anxiety, poets in various ways distance themselves from the achievements of their predecessors, from which they take inspiration. See H. Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence*, New York 1973, transl. A. Bielik-Robson, M. Szuster, Kraków 2002.

¹²⁴ A. Guriewicz, *Kategorie kultury średniowiecznej*, transl. J. Dancygier, Warsaw 1976, pp. 10–11.

¹²⁵ Cf. Isid. *vers.* 25.1.

¹²⁶ Cf. Sen. *epist.* 33.8.

¹²⁷ I refer here to Barthes’s description of *etymologiae*, cf. *Ibidem*, p. 96.

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Encyklopedia Izydora z Sewilli jako polifonia (na podstawie *Etymologii*, I–III)

Streszczenie

Losy Izydora ukryły się w cieniu jego pisarstwa. Pokolenia Europejczyków pełnymi garściami czerpały wiadomości o świecie z jego najbardziej znanego dzieła – *Etymologii*. Autor tej imponującej kompilacji był oddanym ludowi Bożemu biskupem, doradcą wizygockich władców, krzewicielem życia monastycznego, żarliwym kaznodzieją, dobrodziejem ubogich, przewodniczącym obrad synodów. Nie był natomiast ani uczonym, ani podróżnikiem, ani prawnikiem, ani rolnikiem czy lekarzem. Jego wiedza o świecie miała charakter literacki. *Etymologie* to swego rodzaju centon, którego budulec stanowią *breves tabellae* (fiszki z pism

poprzedników). W efekcie *Etymologie* uznać należy za dzieło polifoniczne, z którego głos samego autora dociera do czytelnika z bardzo daleka.

Słowa kluczowe: Izydor z Sewilli, *Etymologie*, literatura łacińska, recepcja

CYTOWANIE

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