

## When and How was the “Initial Compilation” created?

Initial Kyiv Compilation of 1090-s. (hereafter – IC) – is a historical reality. However, it was not a work of the late eleventh century, but an intellectual construct the late nineteenth century. The author of this most controversial hypothesis about Old Rus’ chronicling was a Russian linguist O.O.Shakhmatov. For a hundred years, IC has been treated as a reality of the end of XI century. Unfortunately, it remains in the sphere of hypotheses and conjectures. Instead, IC as a concept, as an intellectual product, is a solid fact which is worth precise investigation. In this article, my task is to examine the origin of the hypothesis of the IC: how and when it originated and how it developed in O.O.Shakhmatov’s works. The idea about the IC is based on two fundamental premises: 1) there were chronicles-precursors of the "Tale of Bygone Years" or the Primary Chronicle (hereafter – PC); 2) the younger version of the First Novgorod Chronicle (hereafter - FNCy) preserved the text of such an elder chronicle.

1. The term "initial compilation" along with others was used in the nineteenth century as a synonym for PC, because it was regarded as the oldest historical work in Rus’. Surprisingly, in Shakhmatov’s scheme it became the last of the early Kyivan chronicles. The idea that PC was not the first chronicle, and not even the first compilation was not an invention of O.O.Shakhmatov, rather what he inherited in finished form.

In the mid-nineteenth century the status of PC has changed dramatically. Scholars started to consider it not the first historical work ever, but the first compilation of early texts. This view downplayed the PC itself, while making its hypothetical sources the focus of researches. That is – the basic framework, in which O.O. Shakhmatov and his predecessors worked. Meanwhile, some researchers have repeatedly tried to show that among the "ready-made materials" of the PC was a main text that became its core.

It was assumed that this main source could be a compilation too. For the first time, this idea was tentatively expressed by K.M. Bestuzhev-Ryumin ("if there was a compilation that preceded the PC?"). The same idea was later expressed by M.P. Lambin. O.I. Markevych in 1880 expressed this idea even more openly:

"All these evidences (internal contradictions in the text of PC – V.A.), according to Bestuzhev-Rumin, allow to assume the existence of preceding compilation. It is very likely, and may even be suggested that a preceding compilation was not the first one, and each of these compilations was devoured by the following".

In general, it was actually the Shakhmatov's view, without details and with less confidence though. For O.O.Shakhmatov's contemporary – I.P.Filevych – the idea about a compilation-predecessor of the PC was already quite apparent. In 1896, before the release of key O.O.Shakhmatov's articles on the topic, he actually imagined the history the early chronicling like Shakhmatov – as a sequence of compilations. Thus, asserting the compilation-predecessor of the PC O.O.Shakhmatov did no invention. It was quite usual in his time.

2. The first students of early chronicling, who grew under the influence of A.L.Schlezer and M.M.Karamzin, regarded the FNCy as a work dependent on the PC, though quite peculiar. The middle and second half of the nineteenth century witnessed the gradual overcoming of the "heritage" of these authors. There was a radical reassessment of the chronicle sources with tendency to "devaluation" the main copies of the PC. One reason for this reassessment was the "theory of compilations": if stories or notes existed in a separate form, they could independently get into late collections. The thesis about incompleteness of the old copies and fullness of the younger ones became common place. The value of FNCy was elevated by Sreznevsky and Bestuzhev-Ryumin. "The Primary Chronicle which is preserved in the oldest copies is reduced in comparison to that chronicle which is reflected in the younger ones," - wrote at the same time S.M.Solovyov. FNCy and PC were leveled as reflections of original chronicles.

Simultaneously, scholars developed the idea that FNCy and other "northern" compilations preserved the remnants of "southern" sources of the PC. For many researchers, some fragments of it (for example, the story about Svenel'd and about events of 1015-1016) seemed more believable and original than parallel fragments of the PC. Arguably, till the end of the nineteenth century, the revaluation of the FNCy was completed. The tradition of searching for the remnants of the oldest chronicling in the FNCy had already started. The Shakhmatov's hypothesis about Kyivan Initial Compilation was a move in the same direction. But it was not a unique "discovery" of Shakhmatov. It was done simultaneously by several researchers who were influenced by the trend of "revaluation of the FNCy", in particular, I.P.Filevych, O.Ye.Presnyakov, and much earlier – I.Ya.Berednykov. Shakhmatov just became the most successful of them. He defended this hypothesis

confidently and actively and used it in his subsequent constructions. The originality of the FNCy in comparison to the PC was not a "natural impression" of Shakhmatov from his reading of the sources. This "natural impression" was a consequence of unconscious acceptance of the already established expectations from the text.

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Now, it's time to look closer how the idea of IC was formed in Shakhmatov's works. In his first studies of chronicling in 1890, he turned to late chronicles of Novgorodian origin, which allegedly contained the first redaction (1074) of the PC: Sophia First Chronicle (Sof1), Novgorod Fourth Chronicle (N4), Tver Chronicle (Tv), Voskresenskaya (Voskr) Chronicle, and FNCy. But it was not yet the idea about IC. The first redaction of the PC Shakhmatov sought primarily in Sof1, H4, Tv, Voskr. Shakhmatov separated purely Novgorodian additions (including introduction to FNCy) in the text Sof1, H4 or Voskr, comparing them with the FNCy, from other texts which were very close to the PC.

The scholar believed that the main difference between the first and the second (final) redaction of the PC was the absence of the story about the beginning of Cave monastery (1051) in the first one. For the hypothesis of IC, by contrast, sections prior to 1017 and especially 945 played the key role. The PC and the NFCy demonstrated significant differences in those parts of their texts. Shakhmatov's attention was by the first time drawn to the FNCy. But the study of two redactions of the FNCy, during which the idea of IC took shape, took place later. It is also confirmed by these sentence from the article of 1897: "Unfortunately, while working on the 1st Novgorod Chronicle, I was not familiar with Filevych's work "The History of Old Rus". It means that Shakhmatov that this book already existed, but the scholar was not familiar with it. I.P. Filevych published his book was published in 1896, so Shakhmatov worked not earlier.

To understand the direct meaning of the hypothesis of IC, we should firstly analyze its initial argumentation. It is presented in an article of 1897 which implied that the idea arose in the context of the study of the two redactions of the FNCy: the older (Synod) and the younger (Commision, Academic and Tolstoy's copies).

Shakhmatov's thoughts were so. Two redactions of the FNC are similar but not identical. Their initial parts also had to be similar but not identical. Shakhmatov shared the traditional idea that the Synod copy of the FNY was based on the PC (the approximate amount of text on its lost first 16 sheets coincided with the volume of the PC to the point where the actual Synod cope begins, 1016). So

the initial part the FNCy had to rely on the text, similar but not identical to the PC, because its volume is much smaller. Then Shakhmatov was under the influence of the idea of the primacy of the FNCy narrative compared with the PC. In such a situation his conclusion was unavoidable: in the initial part, the FNCy reflected a compilation, older than the PC. It brought about a symmetric scheme: the first two Novgorodian compilations corresponded the first two Kyivan compilations. The older Kyivan compilation reflected the younger Novgorodian one.

The idea about the IC thus appeared before 1897. But when exactly? We know that Shakhmatov delivered a paper on the January 31, 1897 at the meeting of the 'Imperial Society of lovers of ancient literature'. We have the text which was delivered. However, the idea of the IC was absent. Presumably, if it was already in the mind of the scholar, he didn't express it.

Fortunately, the unpublished article "Study on the Cave Monastery chronicle" remained in the archive of Shakhmatov. It dates to the second half of 1896, Shakhmatov returned to studies of chronicles six years after the break. The main (first) part of this article was published in 1897. But we are interested in the second part of the article. It included conclusions that, by Shakhmatov's own admission, were superfluous in the article. The scholar analyzed the problem of sources that might be used by the redactor of the PC in 1118 in addition to the Chronicle of Nestor.

In search of these sources, Shakhmatov turned to the FNCy. The older redaction interested him less because, as was thought, it reflected the PC in its non-Novgorodian entries. The FNCy (actually the second Novgorodian Chronicle) used the older redaction and another source that ended in 1074 and which was not available to the author of the first Novgorodian Chronicle. It could not be the PC, so the FNCy used the chronicle of Kyivan origin, but not identical to the PC and older than it.

In his unpublished article, Shakhmatov proposed a detailed description of the ancient Kyivan chronicle, which was reflected in FNCy. He thought that the first Kyivan chronicle was written by a monk Jacob from Cave Monastery referred to in the PC in 1074. While the above-mentioned paper of 31 January 1897 didn't include the idea of the IC, the draft of the speech did.

The idea of the IC emerged as a by-product of "saving Nestor the Chronicler" and defending (not Shakhmatov's by origin) hypothesis about "Cave Chronicle of Nestor." The first by-product was the idea of the first redaction of the PC of 1074, which allowed avoiding a contradiction between the hagiographic

works of Nestor and the chronicle. An auxiliary "witness" of this redaction of 1074 was the FNCy. But deeper analysis of its text gave the product of "second level" – the IC. This hypothesis was not only more successful than that of the redaction of 1074, but also of the "Cave Chronicle of Nestor". We can accurately determine the "birth date" of the idea of the IC: autumn - early winter of 1896 (at least until the end of January 1897).

Newly discovered text immediately replaced the 'redaction of 1074' and unlike it became an independent object of study. But Shakhmatov had to define its status and name. It should be noted that the term "initial compilation" in pre-Shakhmatov literature was actively used as a synonym for the PC along with other terms: the oldest compilation, Nestor Chronicle, Primary Chronicle.

There is a reason to believe that the choice of the name of the reconstructed text was affected by the work of Filevych. He called the compilation which preceded the PC "initial". Presumably, not only terms, but also concepts of Filevych influenced on Shakhmatov's vision of IC and its place in the history of early chronicling. Already in the first published articles, which dealt with the IC, the term "initial compilation" is used in combination with the concept of the "Tale of the beginnings of Rus'" (based on oral sources). The latter was a presumable written source for the IC (which combined the "Tale" with the first primitive chronicle records). We find almost the same scheme in Filevych's book.

Eventually the IC acquired more definite shape – not only the name but also the exact time and place of creation, and even the author. Also, it was inscribed in the "historical context" of 1090's. The IC became a very realistic work of the late 11<sup>th</sup> century. The hypothesis of the IC acquired its "classic" look in the famous Shakhmatov's work of 1908. But before that, it passed a series of stunning changes. Around 1900 the author came to the idea of two redactions of the IC. Presumably, the first redaction replaced the "Tale of the beginnings of Rus'." In the same year, according to another article of the scholar, the number of redactions increased to three. The second (written by Joachim, the bishop of Novgorod, about 1030) and third (late 11<sup>th</sup> century) were of Novgorodian origin. The second redaction was reflected in FNCy, and the third - in the PC.

The unique archival sources – Shakhmatov's drafts of 1903 – enable to discern creative process of the scholar as close as possible. Details of his schemes of early chronicling changed almost every day. On November 4, 1903 Shakhmatov wrote about the mentioned three redactions of the IC. The first one was not divided into years and ended with the account of the baptism of Rus'. The second redaction

was written by Joachim around 1030. The third redaction was composed by Nikita, the bishop of Novgorod, between 1096 and 1108.

Next day Shakhmatov altered this scheme and outline more comprehensive plan of the future study. According to him, the number of redactions of the IC was again reduced to two, the first of which was that of Joachim. From 1904 on, Shakhmatov's first redaction of the IC became a separate text – the “Oldest Compilation.”

During 1897-1908 the IC changed its location. In articles and materials of 1900-1903, the two of its redactions were declared to be of Novgorodian origin. In the first article and then after 1908, the IC (in a single redaction) was localized in the Cave Monastery. However, in articles of 1904-1906, the researcher pointed to Vydubychi Monastery as the “address” of the IC.

Yet, in Shakhmatov's articles of 1897-1907, we can hardly imagine the structure of the IC. It lacked clear beginning and end. Instead, the PC had the title and introductory part that appealed to the conclusion – the time after 1113 (“the death of Svyatopolk”). Only in 1908, the IC acquired its title and introduction – the so-called “Introduction to the Annals of St. Sophia”, i.e. to the FNCy.

More than three years before the article of Shakhmatov's, O.I.Sobolevskiy issued a study about the Introduction to the FNCy. There is a reason to believe that his attention to the Introduction Shakhmatov owed to his old opponent - Sobolevskiy. The old idea of Novgorodian origin of the Introduction was entirely organic. But Shakhmatov changed his views and made two major steps: localized it in Kyiv and dated to the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

The first and, in our opinion, decisive step was made by Sobolevskiy. He carefully analyzed the content of the Introduction, reaching the conclusion that it was written in Kyiv. But he left the traditional dating – the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Interestingly, Shakhmatov almost exactly copied Sobolevskiy's arguments, adapting them to his own hypotheses. Another important thesis Sobolevskiy was that the Introduction was directly connected to the first historical accounts in the FNCy. The focus of these texts was on the fate of Kyiv and Kyivan princes. The scholar thought, that they were parts of the “Chronicle of Kyivan princes.” Finally, Sobolevskiy also noted that the author of the protograph of the FNCy took just the beginning of the “Chronicle of Kyivan princes.”

In the second part of his article, Sobolevskiy showed that this “Chronicle” should be secondary and dependent on the PC. However, his idea was used by Shakhmatov who rethought the arguments and adapted it to his own scheme. First,

he argued that the Introduction could have multiple layers: its basis was the beginning of the IC, but it was redacted in the 13<sup>th</sup> century in Novgorod.

It should be added that about the same time (or rather, in 1890-s) the traditional dating of the preface was questioned by O.Ye. Presnyakov. He also considered the possibility of several layers of the Introduction. In fact, the first scholar to supposed two-layer structure of the Introduction was S.M. Solovyov, cited neither by Presnyakov nor by Sobolevskiy and Shakhmatov. Although there is no evidence of direct influence of Solovyov on Presnyakov and Shakhmatov, Sobolevskiy's article clearly inspired the latter.

Along with defining the "residence" and the format of the IC, the "time of birth" was also established. About ten years, the IC existed without precise dating. In his articles of 1897-1907, Shakhmatov dated it vaguely: after 1074, or the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> – the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The exact dating of the IC for the first time appears in the draft of the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter of "Investigations..." written about 1905. Shakhmatov wrote: "Did not the compilation reached the first year of the reign of Svyatopolk-Mikhail, i.e. 1093? That the Initial compilation ended in 1093 has long been proposed by Tatishchev." As in the entry of 852 of the PC years were calculated to Svyatopolk's death, so the IC could end its story before its reign. Shakhmatov could borrow the date 1093 directly from the work of Tatyshev. But this date made "historiographical career" long before Shakhmatov. In particular, O.Razsudov in 1868 wrote that the first layer of the text of the PC could be composed in 1093.

In his article about the Introduction in 1908, Shakhmatov rejected traditional dating of the text without any explanation. Instead, he found correspondences between it and the chronicle text in the entry of 1093 (laments about the Polovtsian raids). It is noteworthy that this argument was put forward when Shakhmatov did already decide the date of the IC.

Characteristically, direct textual parallels between the Introduction and the entry of 1097 of the PC Shakhmatov considered borrowings from the former to the latter. The dating of the IC (without any textological basis) defined the limits of the textual observations.

As Sobolevskiy, Shakhmatov thought that the Introduction depended on the chronicle. But if the former proved its dependence on the PC, the latter considered this fact an evidence of existence of older compilations. It is possible, that this confidence influenced on the rapid formation of Shakhmatov's ideas about the earliest Kyivan chronicles of the first and second halves of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. In

"Investigations...", the IC's date was defined more precisely - "about 1095". Finally, in the article of 1913, Shakhmatov indicated the author of the IC – Caves' Abbot John.

At the same time, the scholar gradually removed all the unreliable elements in the IC hypothesis that did not fit into the general scheme of the history of early chronicles. Even in "Investigations..." Shakhmatov acknowledged that the name "Initial set" was not "fully successful" (though he had never revised it). Later, in 1916, he questioned the dating of the Introduction. He assumed again that the end of the text finally took shape in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century. Meanwhile, the main idea successfully remained in use, despite its main argument was neglected. And this is very typical for Shakhmatov's methodology.

The final stage in the evolution of the hypothesis of the IC was "cutting the cord" that connects this hypothesis to the context of its occurrence. In the second half of the 1910-s, Shakhmatov attempted to change the structure of his argumentation. He presented the hypothesis about the IC primarily as a result not of comparing the PC and the FNCy, but of analyzing internal contradictions in the PC itself. He sought to demonstrate that all the features of the hypothesized IC could be, and actually were, deduced from the PC. Then, having complete image of an ancient chronicle, one should only find a real chronicle which conformed to this image. Shakhmatov wrote about the FHCy: "The chronicle, which we define as similar but not identical to the PC, on closer examination, appears identical to that initial chronicle, which, as we have seen, lay beyond the survived text of the PC. " In fact, the logic was reversed: Shakhmatov reached the conclusion about the existence of the IC by comparing the PC with the FNCy.

The scholar didn't question the very idea of the IC, though he became probably more cautious in building up his argument. Over the entire period from 1896 to 1920 the base of the idea had not changed. Equally persistent was the name of the chronicle - "Initial Compilation." Despite the doubts about its adequacy, the tradition, created by Shakhmatov himself and presented at that time not only his own studies, began to influence hi: "According to my previous works, I call this chronicle the "Initial Compilation."

*The article is dedicated to the history of A.A.Shakhmatov's idea of so-called Initial Kyivan Chronicle Compilation – a text that the Primary Chronicle was allegedly based on. The author analyses the intellectual context and the very process of how this hypothesis established and developed in A.A.Shakhmatov's works.*

**Keywords:** *Initial Chronicle Compilation, chronicling, "Primary Chronicle", Novgorodian First Chronicle, historiography.*