

ГБПОУ МО «Серпуховский колледж»

Командный конкурс эссе

“Unity in Diversity: Russia and the English-Speaking World. Time for Equal Opportunities”

Исследовательская работа (эссе)

«Беда Достопочтенный и Нестор Летописец – святые летописцы древней Англии и древней Руси»

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Serpukhov College

Group essay contest

“Unity in Diversity: Russia and the English-Speaking World. Time for Equal Opportunities”

Research work (essay)

«Bede the Venerable and Nestor the Chronicler – holy chroniclers of ancient England and ancient Russia»

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План

1. Вступление. Историк рассказывает о событиях, основываясь на научных и реальных фактах. Знаменитые историки прошлого.
2. Беда Достопочтенный, историк, теолог, летописец. Его детство и зрелые годы.
3. Нестор Летописец. Принятие монашества. Послушание в написании истории России. Главное достижение в житии монаха Нестора.
4. Заключение. Основные особенности летописей как исторических хроник.

Theses

1. Introduction. A historian is a narrator telling us a story based on scientific or real facts. Famous historians of the past.
2. The Venerable Bede. His childhood, adult life, activity as a historian, a theologian, a chronologist. Referred to as Venerable.
3. Nestor the Chronicler. Becoming a monk. Obedience to write the history of Russia. The main feat of the Monk Nestor's life.
4. Conclusion. The main feature of chronicles.

The world's history is a record full of the significant incidents that has made a change, contributed in progress. So, these events have to be recorded in a certain manner, by which the most important details are proved by a way or another. The most suitable people to take over this role are the historians. They are liable for accredited tracking of the incidents because a historian is also a narrator, someone who tells us a story based on scientific or real facts. We know famous historians who have stood out above the others for their knowledge and their important contributions to history. Its importance is greater than we usually give it. They play a key role in reporting past events. We want to speak about the famous historians of the past Bede the Venerable and Nestor the Chronicler – holy chroniclers of ancient England and ancient Russia.

Who was the Venerable Bede? Why is he often referred to as 'The Father of English History'? The Venerable Bede was a British monk whose works in theology, history, chronology, poetry, and biography have led him to be accepted as the greatest scholar of the early medieval era. Bede is best known for producing *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, a source essential for our understanding of the Anglo-Saxons and the Christianisation of Britain in the era before William the Conqueror and the Norman Conquest, that earned him the title of 'the Father of English history.'

People know little of Bede's childhood, only that he was born in March of 672 to the poor parents. They lived on land belonging to the newly founded Monastery of St. Peter, based in Wearmouth. So Bede was given by relatives for a monastic education to this monastery when he was seven. Initially, in the care of Abbot Benedict, Bede's teaching was taken over by Ceolfrith, they were lucky to survive a plague which devastated the settlement.

We learnt from books that Bede spent the rest of his life as a monk at Jarrow. First he was taught and then taught himself to the daily rhythms of monastic rule: for Bede, a mixture of prayer and study. He was ordained as a Deacon aged 19 when Deacons were supposed to be 25 or over. And he became

a priest aged 30. Indeed, historians believe Bede left Jarrow only twice in his relatively long life, to visit Lindisfarne and York. While his letters contain hints of other visits, there isn't any real evidence, and he certainly never traveled far. Although Bede was a polymath and religious figure who described himself as having “*devoted [his] energies to the study of the scriptures, observing monastic discipline, and singing the daily services in church*” and for whom “*study, teaching, and writing had always been [his] delight*”, he is remembered today as the earliest English historian, whose work has shed light on a period of English history that would have otherwise been unknown.

Monasteries were centers of scholarship in early medieval Europe, and there is nothing surprising in the fact that Bede, an intelligent, pious and educated man, used his learning, life of study and house library to produce a large body of writing. What was unusual was the sheer breadth, depth, and quality of the fifty plus works he produced, covering scientific and chronological matters, history and biography and, perhaps as expected, scriptural commentary. As befitted the greatest scholar of his era, Bede had the chance to become Prior of Jarrow, and perhaps more, but turned the jobs down as they would interfere with his study.

Bede's wrote two chronological works *On Times* and *On the Reckoning of Time*. They were concerned with establishing the dates of Easter. Along with his histories, these still affect our style of dating. In stark contrast to 'dark age' cliches, Bede also knew the world was round, the moon affected tides and appreciated observational science.

Bede died in 735 and was buried at Jarrow before being re-interred inside Durham Cathedral. He was already renowned among his peers, being described by a Bishop Boniface as having “shone forth as a lantern in the world by his scriptural commentary”, but is now regarded as the greatest and most multi-talented scholar of the early medieval era, perhaps of the entire medieval era. Bede was sainted in 1899, thus giving him the posthumous title of Saint Bede

the Venerable. Bede was declared 'venerable' by the church in 836, and the word is given on his tomb in Durham Cathedral: *Hic sunt in fossa bedae venerabilis ossa* (Here are buried the bones of the Venerable Bede.) His feast day is May 27 – the day that he died.

The title of historian is great and responsible. We know Herodotus, Plutarch, Tacitus, and N.M. Karamzin. But for the Russian history there is no higher authority, no higher name than the Monk Nestor the Chronicler, a monk of the Kiev Pechersk Lavra, the father of Russian history.

He lived in times about which little is known today. We find out tiny bits of information about Nestor's personality and his life. The date of the monk's birth, details from childhood and youth are a secret hidden forever. According to the hagiographic narrative, Nestor was born around 1056 in Kiev. The historical summaries list key information from the biography of the saint, but since a true monk avoids human glory, the authenticity of this information is ambiguous.

The life of the Monk Nestor the Chronicler from the collection "Kiev-Pechersk Paterik" tells that he, being a 17-year-old boy, approached the walls of the monastery when they were just being erected by the Monk Theodosius of Pechersk. According to the canons of the church, before becoming a monk, it was necessary to pass a probation as a novice, which sometimes lasted for decades. And the days of Monk Nestor were indistinguishable from the days of other Chernorizians. Only his obedience was different: he wrote the history of Russia with the blessing of the abbot Theodosius of the Caves.

There is no doubt that Nestor came to the monastery already quite literate and even, according to the level of that time, an educated young man. By that time there were many teachers in Kiev, from whom Nestor could study. In late 11th- and early 12th-century Kievan Rus, apparently Nestor was one of the most educated men, his knowledge extending to theology, history, literature, and Greek. He lived during the reign of Prince Svyatopolk II, who tried to steer Rus away from Greek influence towards Scandinavia.

The main feat of the Monk Nestor's life was the compilation by 1112-1113 of the "Tale of Bygone Years. This work is a kind of records by years of remarkable events from the life of Russia up to 1111: "This is the tale of bygone years, where the Russian land came from, who in Kiev began the first principality and from where the Russian land began to exist."

Other of Nestor's works include the account of Boris and Gleb, the children of Prince Vladimir, who were killed by their brother in a rivalry for the throne, and Saint Theodosius of the Caves, the co-founder of one of the first Monasteries in Rus – the Kiev Pechersk Lavra.

In some ways Nestor has been compared to Moses, who recorded the early days of his nation. Without him the memory passed down the generations would have died long ago. His chronicles not only preserved the history, of which there would be very little known otherwise but also have entered the ranks of the significant creations of world literature.

Of course, writing his chronicles, Nestor used the chronicle sources of his predecessors, which are partially known. Unfortunately, the most part of them are now considered lost. However, for Nestor the spiritual understanding of the described events was very important. He is the first Russian historian who laid the moral foundation of our Orthodox historiography and literature, with their fundamental difference from all others: not to exalt his people, silencing or embellishing the sins, but to measure their being by the attitude to the truth of God, with the denunciation of all deviations from it, which become the cause of our defeats and troubles.

The main feature of chronicles as a phenomenon should be recognized as their predominantly moral and didactic orientation. The events themselves are not so important to the chronicler, as their moral assessment and connection with some actions in the past. Natural disasters, epidemics and attacks by nomads are traditionally seen as payback for sins. Accordingly, the accuracy in describing the facts is not too great, even if the author, presumably, was a

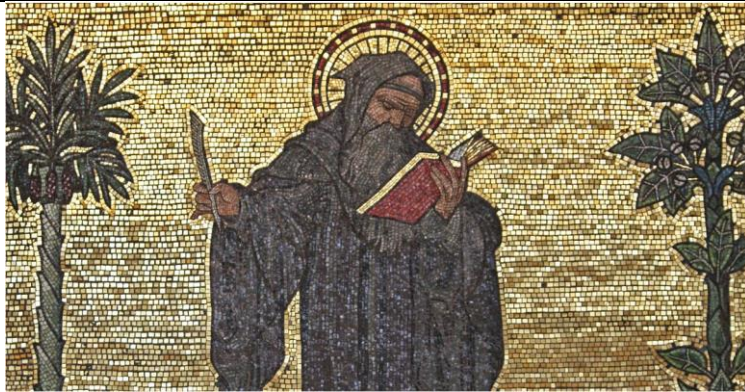
witness to certain events. Despite of its unreliability as a historical source, “The Tales of Bygone Years” is on its basis that a stable myth about the creation of the Old Russian state and the baptism of Russia has been formed. That is why it is deservedly considered the first historical work, and its author is the first Russian historian. The Monk Nestor died around 1114, having left to the Pechersk monk-chroniclers the continuation of his great work.

The Venerable Bede is one of the most striking figures in the history of the English Church. A voluminous and learned Christian writer on many subjects, theological, historical, grammatical, and physical, he sprang from an immediate ancestry of unlettered pagans. And we can say the same about Nestor the Chronicler. His works were important for further generations. The influence of their writings reached far beyond their own land. We are grateful to them for this.

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Appendix



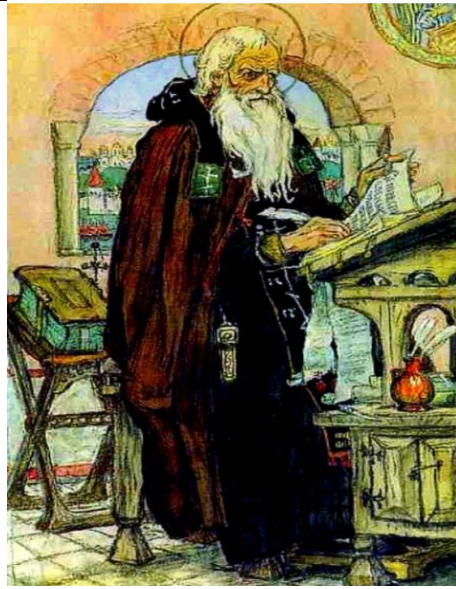
The Venerable Bede



Bede the Venerable is dictating the chronicles



Nestor the Chronicler



**Nestor the Chronicler
writing**