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# ORTHODOX RELIGIOUS CULTURE IN THE ARTISTIC AND AESTHETIC EDUCATION OF YOUTH IN ALTAI AT THE BEGINNING OF THE XXI<sup>st</sup> CENTURY

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## **Abstract**

Christian culture possesses spiritual and moral content and great artistic experience of mastering the world, which are the source of aesthetic enrichment of modern youth. The main means of artistic and aesthetic education of the personality is considered to be art, the origins of which are stored in cultural, artistic, religious traditions and evolve simultaneously with the development of civilization. Crisis phenomena in the spiritual life of society at the turn of XX<sup>th</sup>–XXI<sup>st</sup> centuries led to a general decrease in the level of culture in both learners and educators who did not always have time to fill the gap in the spiritual component of the education and upbringing. The purpose of the article consists in systematization of regional experience in the formation of Orthodox religious culture as the basis of artistic and aesthetic education of the young generation in the early XXI<sup>st</sup> century. The authors draw the conclusion that the main regional components, which contribute to the understanding of the religious culture fundamentals, are inherited in the thematic scientific research on Orthodox religious culture in Altai at the turn of XX<sup>th</sup>–XXI<sup>st</sup> centuries, in the study of collections of religious cultural heritage and art in the funds and exhibitions of the museums in the Altai, as well as in the analysis of exhibition practice as the concept of historical memory.

*Keywords:* science, Orthodoxy, collection, exhibition, gallery

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## **1. Introduction**

The founder of Russian science of ecclesiastical art is the researcher F.I. Buslaev. It is him, who is the author of the comparative historical method of studying Russian ecclesiastical art objects. Treatise of Buslaev ‘General concepts of the Russian icon painting’ [1], ‘Russian facial apocalypse: Collection of images of the facial apocalypses of Russian manuscripts from the XVI<sup>th</sup> to the XIX<sup>th</sup> century’ [2], ‘Historical essays of Russian philology and art’ [3], ‘Image of the Last Judgment based on Russian exemplum’ [4] and numerous

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articles laid the foundation of science about Byzantine and Old Russian art. Kondakov left after him a major scientific school, the significance of which was particularly evident in the science of the XX<sup>th</sup> century [5]. The study of the Russian ecclesiastical art of XX<sup>th</sup> century is associated with names of I.E. Grabar [6], M.V. Alpatov [7], V.N. Lazarev [8], et al. The articles of the staff of Siberian museums dedicated to the ecclesiastical art emerged in the 1970s. Research conducted by N.G. Velizhanina (Novosibirsk) [9], T.A. Bychkova [10] (Tomsk) helped recreating the description of the ecclesiastical art heritage of the West Siberia. A special set of publications includes works of the ecclesiastical art heritage conducted by T.M. Stepankaya [11], L.G. Krasnotsvetova [12], V.K. Vistingauzen [13].

The authors, studying the problems of regional Orthodox art, culture of Altai, and their role in the artistic-aesthetic and educational process integrate their experiences in foreign publications, such as for example the articles: 'Traditions of the Saint Petersburg architecture school in the regional town-planning practice of Russia in the XVIII<sup>th</sup> - first half of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century: Historical and theoretical aspect' [14], 'Experience and perspectives of art history development in educational space of Siberia at the turn of XX<sup>th</sup> – XXI<sup>st</sup> centuries' [15], 'Spiritual and ethnical culture in the system of secular and ecclesiastical higher education' [16], and 'Regional cultural centres and artistic schools of Siberia at the turn of the XXI<sup>st</sup> century as a part of the information system in the educational process' [17].

## **2. Thematic scientific studies of Orthodox religious culture in Altai at the turn of XX<sup>th</sup>–XXI<sup>st</sup> centuries**

In Russian science, in the period of XIX<sup>th</sup>-XX<sup>th</sup> centuries, study of religious culture and art became an important research of the Russian culture heritage. Collections of Russian museums funds allow claiming that the liturgical space of the temple has moved to the space of the Museum exposition. This peculiarity resulted from historical and social processes in Russian society and has changed the attitude towards the Orthodox spiritual heritage.

Many Russian scientists, including those from Siberian region, dedicated their research to cultural and historical heritage of Orthodox culture. Among them we can note Y.A. Kreydun, T.M. Stepankaya, N.V. Grechneva, R.Y. Volosnova, N.P. Zheleznikova, G.D. Bulgaeva and many others. Study of Y.A. Kreydun 'Missionary temple-building in the Altai: Reconstruction of the lost temples of XIX<sup>th</sup> - beginning of XX<sup>th</sup> centuries' [18] is devoted to the reconstruction of a complete panorama of temple-building in Altai in the context of missionary activity of the Russian Orthodox Church in XIX<sup>th</sup> - beginning of XX<sup>th</sup> century. The monograph considers the most characteristic constructions of the Altai spiritual mission: monastic complexes, missionary churches, camps, graveyards, schools and charitable institutions. The author gives the stylistic analysis and own authorial typology of divine service buildings, as well as describes technique of theoretical reconstruction of the missionary buildings'

image based on the use of modern information technologies. The full list (since 1835) of liturgical buildings of the Altai spiritual mission (temples, houses of worship, and chapels) is presented in the Appendix. Works of Professor T.M. Stepankaya 'Monuments of urban planning and architecture of Altai' [19] and 'Architecture of Altai in XVIII<sup>th</sup>-XX<sup>th</sup> centuries' [20] have become the first special studies on the history of architecture, including the cult architecture of the Altai cities.

Monograph of the candidates of Art Criticism R.Y. Voronova, N.V. Grechneva, and Doctor of Art Criticism T.M. Stepankaya 'The image of the temple in the cultural landscape of the Altai' [21] is a study of the history of architecture of the Altai cities, covering the period of XVIII<sup>th</sup> - beginning of the XXI<sup>st</sup> century. The edition provides connection between local architectural schools with the All-Russian cult art of building, introduces into scientific circulation new names of architects; as well as presents an analysis of the temples built in the Altai at the turn of XX<sup>th</sup>-XXI<sup>st</sup> centuries.

During the period under review, scientific conferences of various levels were held in Altai, in which students of secondary schools, lyceums, colleges, and higher educational institutions took an active part. In 2017, the Barnaul diocesan administration hosted a research-to-practice conference entitled 'Orthodox culture in the regional artistic and historical heritage' dedicated to Orthodox history, art, architecture, and Museum affairs. The event was held within the framework of the regional stage of International Christmas educational readings 'Moral values and the future of mankind'. The conference was organized by the Barnaul diocese and the Museum of the 'Orthodoxy History of Altai'. The main objectives of the conference consisted in uniting representatives of the Museum community in solving the problems of preserving the heritage of Orthodox Church art and culture.

Several research papers were dedicated to scientific research on Orthodox religious art and culture. These papers formed the basis of dissertations for scientific degrees of candidate of art criticism, which were defended at the Altai State University. These are: 'Rural wooden cult architecture of Altai in the end of XIX<sup>th</sup> - first third of the XX<sup>th</sup> centuries' authored by R.Y. Volosnov [22], 'Siberian icon of the XVI<sup>th</sup>-XIX<sup>th</sup> centuries: Formation and development of the iconographic tradition' – by T.V. Prokhorova [23], 'Cult art of building of the Altai at the turn of XX<sup>th</sup>-XXI<sup>st</sup> centuries' – by N.V. Grechneva [24], 'Orthodox traditions in the regional artistic heritage' – by N.P. Zheleznikova [25], and 'The reconstruction of iconostasis of temples in the cities of Western Siberia in the last third of XVIII<sup>th</sup> - middle of XIX<sup>th</sup> centuries' – by G.D. Bulgaeva [26].

Case studies of this kind help recreating the picture of religious Orthodox culture, which has spiritual and moral content and is a source of artistic and aesthetic enrichment of modern youth.

### **3. Collections of religious cultural and art heritage in funds and expositions of Altai museums**

Forming collections of the ecclesiastical art objects in Altai started in 20-30s of the XX<sup>th</sup> century. Before the beginning of the XX<sup>th</sup> century religious objects were treated as attributes of temples and churches. With the change in the political system and the strengthening of atheistic propaganda, some measures were taken to preserve the heritage of Orthodox art at the state level: an attempt was made to organize museums in monasteries and temples. The creation of an Art Museum in the Church of Saint Dmitry Rostovsky was an example of this phenomenon in Altai.

The Church of Saint Dmitry in Barnaul is a piece of architectural art. The initiative of its construction was expressed by the headman of Kolyvano-Voskresensky plants P.K. Frolov in 1822 and was approved by the Cabinet of His Imperial Majesty. The temple was laid on August 6, 1829, and built in 1831 at the expense of Kolyvano-Voskresensky plants: "... made of stone, instead of a bell tower has stone columns on which bells hang" [27]. Pillars with bells on the crossbeams were called in Russia 'bell-towers'. Another feature of the church of Saint Dmitry Rostovsky is that in the plan this church resembles a rotunda (the round building topped with a dome). A.I. Molchanov, L.I. Ivanov and Y.N. Popov, architects of the Barnaul silver-smelting plant, who were classicists, participated in the creation of the church project.

The church of Saint Dmitry Rostovsky erected as a chapel of the almshouse of the Barnaul plant, is a part of the ensemble of the historic centre of the capital of the Altai Territory. The church of Saint Dmitry Rostovsky was closed on June 4, 1920 [27]. In 1921, at the initiative of the Barnaul civil society and Russian painter M.I. Kurzin, an art exhibition of works by Russian painters was opened in the building of the Cathedral. At that, the iconography of Academician of painting M.I. Myagkov was not exhibited. His icons were 'stored' in the side chamber of the temple. The improvised art Museum did not exist long – just until 1926: the art collection (more than a hundred paintings) dissipated. The fate of the museum valuables is still unknown. Presumably, some of the paintings and icons of the temple were given to the Altai Local History Museum. Throughout the Soviet period, the formation and study of the collection of the ecclesiastical art was carried out only in the context of promoting atheistic worldview.

At the beginning of the XXI<sup>st</sup> century, collections of Orthodox history in Altai were represented by small sets of icons and devotional items. The funds of the Altai State Art Museum (opened in 1958) present a collection of ecclesiastical art collected during expeditions across the Altai territory. The first exhibit items were collected in the 1960's, though their examination and restoration began only in the 1990's. The collection of items includes icon-paintings, cast icons, applied and decorative arts, manuscripts and early printed books. The formation of such collections allows presenting most completely Siberian icon-painting of XVIII<sup>th</sup>-XX<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Thematic focus of the State Museum of the History of Literature, Art, and Culture of Altai (opened in 1989) assumed formation of collection on the history of Orthodoxy in the Altai Territory. Active development of this collection started in the 1990s. The collection includes various devotional items. A significant part of the collection is the old-believer copper plastic arts, namely icons, folding icons, and crosses. The next group of items includes crosses of various shapes and sizes: cross worn next to the skin, pectoral crosses, crucifix and altar crosses. The icons are represented by various images of the Virgin Mother, saints and the Twelve Great Feasts. The collection contains home and temple icons, revetments and revetment boards, and next-to-skin icons [28].

Collections of icons and devotional items are stored not only in large regional museums, but also in small district museums. Talmensky District Local History Museum was founded in 1991 by the Council of People's Deputies of the Talmensky District of the Altai Territory (Decree No. 154 of 21 June 1991 'On establishment of the regional Museum in the urban settlement of Talmenka') as an independent institution on the basis of the school museum of regional education. The collection of icons included in the main fund of the Museum reveals the formation of spiritual Orthodox culture. Though, the origin of the icons and their authors are not known. The themes represented by the icons are quite traditional: the image of Christ, Holy Mother of God, the image of Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker, the Holy and Blessed Martyr Paraskevi, and Saint George the Victorious. The exposition of the Museum contains also ecclesiastical writings, such as the Apostle of Old Believers (the edition of the beginning of XX<sup>th</sup> century), the Christian volume (1912), the Legend of the miraculous Kazan icon of the Mother of God and the miracles she has created (the edition of 1902, printing house of I.D. Sytin in Moscow) [13].

The beginning of the XXI<sup>st</sup> century has made changes to the organizational forms of museums. Private museums began to appear, museums were actively established at enterprises, universities and schools. In 2004, the Museum of the History of Orthodoxy in Altai was opened in the building of the Orthodox diocese. The basis of the Museum exposition consisted of holy items and items having museum importance, passed from the Pokrovsky Cathedral of Barnaul with the blessing of Bishop Maxim [28]. These include books that are a cultural heritage of the history of Orthodoxy in Altai, icons, vestments of clergy, and church utensils. A large amount of research is conducted by teachers of Barnaul Ecclesiastical Seminary – priests G. Kreydun and K. Metelnitsky. Scientific writings of these authors formed the basis of the museum exposition. The opening of the Museum was timed with the International Science-to-Practice Conference held at the Altai Institute of Art and Culture, as well as in the Seminary. The conference was devoted to the study of the issues of preservation and reproduction of the intangible spiritual heritage of Orthodox culture, improvement of education and upbringing of the younger generation by museum means.

The Museum serves a basis for practical activities of Ecclesiastical Seminary students. Seminary graduates guide Museum tours and deliver lectures, when teaching the history of the spiritual life of the Altai Territory, and thus the students solidify theoretical knowledge in practice.

Church museums in Altai retain the main function peculiar to all museums – preserving and translating Orthodox cultural traditions, since they ensure the continuity of the culture development in its universal, national, and social components.

#### **4. Formation of religious culture and culture of historical memory through exhibition activities**

In 2016, with the blessing of His Eminence Metropolitan Sergius, Hierarch of Barnaul and Altai, an interregional exhibition ‘Orthodox Altai’ was held in Barnaul. The aim of the exhibition was uniting the efforts of the Russian Orthodox Church, secular authorities and the society to preserve, protect and promote national culture, art, and traditional spiritual and moral values. The participants of the exhibition were dioceses, churches and monasteries, educational institutions, publishing houses, pilgrimage services, public organizations, art and production workshops, restorers, icon-painters, folk craftsmen, Orthodox producers, beekeepers, shelters and charitable foundations. The exhibition was built in accordance with the thematic sections: ‘Ministration to the Russian Orthodox Church’, ‘Reconstruction and restoration of churches and monasteries’, ‘Decoration of temples’, ‘Iconography’, ‘Spiritual education and enlightenment’, ‘Church printing and publishing’, ‘Pilgrimage’, ‘Bell casting’, ‘Orthodox traditions in jewellery art’, ‘Arts and crafts’ and ‘Orthodox lifestyle’.

The VIII<sup>th</sup> International Orthodox Exhibition and Fair ‘From repentance to resurrection of Russia’ was held in Barnaul in 2017. It was dedicated to the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of historical events, namely the conspiracy and removal of Tsar Nicholas II from power. The exhibition represented collections of the largest temples, monasteries and metochions of the Russian Orthodox Church from Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova and Greece. The expositions presented icons and incense from the Holy Mount Athos, Orthodox souvenirs from Jerusalem, as well as holy water and myrrh from the Saint Nicholas Basilica of the Italian city of Bari.

As part of the action ‘Changing superstition for faith’, organized by the Information Department of the Barnaul diocese, it was possible to exchange books on esotericism, magic and occultism for Orthodox religious literature. This action was especially in demand among the younger generation.

The ‘Universum’ gallery of the Altai State University is the organizer of the annual traditional exhibitions: ‘We celebrate Christmas’, and ‘Artisan Altai’ (exhibition and competition for awarding honorary title ‘Honorary Altai craftsman’). The Christmas exhibition presents works of children’s creativity from the centres of aesthetic education, art schools, and Sunday schools from

thirty five regions of the Altai Territory. The works include watercolours, drawings, models, embroidery, beading, compositions made of various materials dedicated to Christmas. Usually, more than 800 exhibits from 25 educational institutions and centres are exhibited. Christmas exhibition attracts viewers – teachers, students, pupils, and their parents. It is here that viewers are reminded that Russian art is closely associated with the folk art such as Palekh, Khokhloma, Gzhel, weaving, ceramics, and dolls. Thus, the gallery promotes the religious culture of students and schoolchildren, and the culture of historical memory. Traditional exhibition ‘Artisan Altai’ being held in the ‘Universum’ gallery is of training and education nature. Craftsmen from different parts of the Altai Territory send their craft works to this exhibition. The work pieces are made by craftsmen in a variety of techniques and traditions, such as patchwork, wood carving, metal painting, weaving of willow twig, as well as making folk musical instruments. Folk masters of the Altai Territory are the creators of studios and public organizations, which carry out educational and creative activities for the revival and development of Russian folk crafts.

## **5. Conclusion**

The Orthodox traditions are people’s soul. They express the people’s ideas about beauty, harmony, the unity of nature and human, i.e. all that constitutes the spirituality of the personality and the whole society. The Christian culture in Altai at the beginning of the XXI<sup>st</sup> century becomes a source of artistic and aesthetic upbringing of the younger generation. The positive regional experience in formation of the Orthodox religious culture is supported by the thematic scientific research on Orthodox religious culture, by gathering and subsequent study of the cultural heritage of religious and art in the foundations and museum exhibitions in Altai, as well as the analysis of exhibition practice at the beginning of the XXI<sup>st</sup> century. The main results of the conducted work consist in inspiring the interest in the Orthodox heritage of Altai, activating university lecturers, students, and pupils towards studying culture, art, and history of the Russian Orthodox Church.

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