УДК 271+94(47)+27-36+049.32

DOI 10.28995/2073-0101-2019-4-1239-1245

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Magazine Vestnik arhivista / Herald of an Archivist, Moscow, Russian Federation

A Monograph on the Saints of the 20th Century and Their Role in Russian History Has Been Published

Abstract

The reviewed monograph of Doctor of Historical Sciences Archimandrite Damaskin (Orlovsky) "Glory and tragedy of Russian hagiography: Canonization of saints in the Russian Orthodox Church: History and modernity" is dedicated to the history of the canonization of saints; it is devoted to an aspect of national history unknown to the national scholarship, which yet clarifies the consistent patterns in the history of the Soviet state breaking traditional foundations of the national life. Tracing the history of the revival of canonization of saints in the Russian Orthodox Church after the October Revolution of 1917, the author, using the examples of lives of dozens of repressed clergymen, comprehends the spiritual power of a personality that combines civil and Christian virtues, its role and influence on the historical process, and commitment of the Russian people to spiritual and moral values. Not bypassing the "hot" issues of modernity, the author explores the issue in historical perspective and contends the danger of politicization of the canonization process of the 20th century saints as a basis for revision of Christian morality and rejection of Church criteria of canonization. The article argues that the canonization of the 20th century saints, which was based on a comprehensive study of archival documents, preserves the canonical understanding of holiness, while its specificity, which determines its difference from the practice of canonization in the Ancient Church, is due to differences in the state structure of the Roman Empire and Soviet Russia, as well as their social, political, ideological components. Having analyzed archival sources on the fate of repressed clergy and laity by fond and type, the author substantiates an important historical and archival conclusion about sufficiency of the preserved complex of archival documents from the Archive Fund of the Russian Federation for studying the problem of canonization of new martyrs in the context of state policy and for reconstructing the historical context of the era and the changes occurred in the attitude towards clergy and believers.

Keywords

Archival documents, historical sources, Russian Orthodox Church, canonization of saints, repressions, clergy, spiritual feat.

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Submitted 10.02.2019, published (for citation):

INOZEMTSEVA, Z. P. Izdana monografiya o svyatykh KhKh veka i ikh roli v istorii Rossii [A Monograph on the Saints of the 20th Century and Their Role in Russian History Has Been Published. In Russ.]. IN: Vestnik arhivista / Herald of an Archivist, 2019, no. 4, pp. 1239-1245. doi 10.28995/2073-0101-2019-4-1239-1245

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Полностью материал публикуется в российском историко-архивоведческом журнале ВЕСТНИК АРХИВИСТА. Ознакомьтесь с условиями подписки [здесь](#) .