

Scientific article

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Theodosius of Vyatka – the Confessor of Ivan the Terrible: Portrait against the Backdrop of the Era

Abstract

On the base of the different historical sources (chronicles, acts and household books of the Russian monasteries) the author examines the biography of the confessor of Ivan IV Theodosius of Vyatka. In the works of predecessors (A.A. Zimin, R.G. Skrynnikov, B.N. Florya)

only some facts of his biography were mentioned. The study shows that Theodosius had no connections with influential groups in the Russian Church of the period. The historical sources have nothing to say on his close contacts with the Joseph Volokolamsk Monastery, the Kirillo-Belozerskii Monastery, Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius (until he became the abbot of the last one). Before his acquaintance with the tsar, Theodosius worked his way from monk to elder monk to abbot. In the second half of 1566 – first half of 1567 he became the head of a significant Moscow monastery — the Andronikov Monastery of the Saviour. No later than in autumn 1567, Theodosius became acquainted with the tsar. During the tsar's conflict with metropolitan Phillip (Kolychev), Theodosius was included in the commission that investigated Phillip's activities at the Solovetsky Monastery (along with prince V.I. Temkin-Rostovsky and bishop of Suzdal Paphnutius). The materials gathered by the commission were used at the Church Council in the autumn of 1568. As a result, Phillip was condemned and displaced. Soon afterwards, Theodosius became archimandrite of the Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius (about 1569/70-1572). Quite close relationship was established between him and the tsar. Because of that Theodosius – a representative of the black clergy – became the confessor of Ivan IV in about 1572. (At the time it was the lot of the white clergy representatives, usually protopopes of the Kremlin Annunciation Cathedral.) Wishing to see Theodosius as his confessor, the tsar had broken from this tradition and reestablished the practice of an earlier time (the confessors of Vasily II and Ivan III were the abbots of the monasteries of Moscow and the Moscow region). Being the closest person to the tsar, Theodosius knew the desires of his penitent and followed the eye of the tsar. When at the turn of the 1570s the tsar showed an interest in Vologda, fitting out a reserve residence there, Theodosius made donations for requiems for the soul of Josef, the bishop of Vologda, and to the Spaso-Kamenny and the Spaso-Prilutsky Monasteries. Till tsar's death, Theodosius remained very close to Ivan IV. The tsar didn't want to be parted from him. Thereby Theodosius headed no diocese in that period, as it meant leaving the capital. After the death of Ivan IV, he was consecrated as bishop of Ryazan, probably, in October of 1585.

### Keywords

16th century, Russian church, Ivan the Terrible, confessor of the Russian tsar, Church hierarchy, Ryazan diocese, Vologda, episcopate, Church Council.

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