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Funds of the State Archive of the Republic of Tatarstan as a Source for Church-Historical Beviance of the Second Half of the 19th – Early 20th Centuries

Abstract

The article purposes to review materials from the State Archive of the Republic of Tatarstan (GART) in order to identify sources on church-historical deviance – a field of contemporary historical research that addresses moral and legal deviations within the social sphere of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC), including clergy, clergy members, and parishioners. In this case, the author focuses on documents from the post-reform period. The article notes that interest in the problem of clerical morals has always been characteristic of Russian historiography; however, only in recent decades, due to a significant expansion of the scope of scholarly research and a softening of ideological attitudes it has become possible to access freely, analyze, and interpret relevant archival materials. The author's study of the GART collections in recent years has uncovered a significant body of documents of considerable interest in terms of deviance within a religious context. This opens up new heuristic perspectives in the field of church historiography. First and foremost, this concerns Fund No. 4 of the Kazan Spiritual Consistory (KSC GART), which houses a wealth of unique and at the same time ethically controversial information. The selected period alone is represented by three hundred investigative cases initiated by ecclesiastical authorities against the parish clergy of the Kazan Diocese. It is clear that an objective interpretation of this information is only possible with due regard for the historical context in which the documents were created. Therefore, the analysis conducted in this article appropriately takes this historical context into account. The collection of cases is given a general overview, the author's typology is presented, their informational capacity is outlined, and their internal structure, semantic, stylistic, and other features are defined. The KSC GART funds have not previously been a specific object of study for historians. Therefore, the overwhelming majority of the documents stored within possess heuristic novelty and originality. This allows us to significantly expand our understanding of the socio-normative culture of the Orthodox Church at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries including its microhistorical and everyday aspects. Thus, the introduction of this layer of identified sources into scholarly circulation is from a scientific perspective an important result and the comprehensive analysis of the documents positively complements the relevant areas of source studies raising the issue of similar archival research outside the Republic of Tatarstan.

Keywords

Church, history of the Russian Church, clerics, clergy, parish, spiritual consistory, church-historical deviance, social deviations, Orthodox parish clergy, archive, fund, source.

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