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Studies of historical hagiographies through prism of structuralism

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Abstract

Article tells about peculiarities of historical hagiographies via structuralist approach, based not only on works of Claud Levi-Strauss, but also on more recent researchers-structuralists. This method was initially used for studying of preliterate cultures which stipulates its selection for hagiographies studying. Chronological frames of our research cover historical hagiographies from the Conversion of Rus to XV-XVI centuries, because the phenomenon of the New Martyrdom should be started from the very beginning. Detection of characteristic features, "structures" of initial hagiographic canon that was bound to impact the formation of the New Martyrdom in XX century, is the main goal of our research. In course of analyzing of saint's hagiography, the author comes to the conclusion that modern hagiographies are not based on something new but are directed into the first period of historical hagiographies. By distinguishing of four binary position (cleanness - uncleanness, spiritual gifts - food gifts, moral beauty - ugliness), the author comes to the conclusion about archetypical nature of hagiographies structure's elements that are just taking another form without changing of their initial symbolic content. Analysis of hagiographies trough prism of binary oppositions of structuralism detects a range of general sense idea positions that are characteristic for perception of holiness.

Keywords

Canonization, Eastern Orthodoxy, Historical hagiographies, Martyrdom, New Martyrdom, Saints, Structuralism