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The history pages of orthodox pilgrimage: from worship to pilgrim tourism

Las páginas de historia de la peregrinación ortodoxa: de la adoración al turismo peregrino

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ABSTRACT

The article deals with the history of the pilgrimage development in pre-revolutionary and post-Soviet Russia. The content of the concepts "pilgrimage" and "religious tourism" in modern literature is under definition. The article considers specifically the motivation of religious tourists and the possibility of their church going through pilgrimage. The article also analyzes travels made by pilgrims, both with the support of religious organizations and travel companies, taking into account modern legal and economic requirements, for which this type of tourism is regarded as a type of business activity with the possible participation of religious associations.

Keywords: Church, Pilgrimage, History, Religious Tourism.

RESUMEN

El artículo aborda la historia del desarrollo de la peregrinación en la Rusia pre-revolucionaria y post soviética. El contenido de los conceptos "peregrinación" y "turismo religioso" en la literatura moderna está bajo definición. El artículo considera específicamente la motivación de los turistas religiosos y la posibilidad de que su iglesia pase por la peregrinación. Analiza también, los viajes realizados por los peregrinos tanto con el apoyo de organizaciones religiosas como con el de las compañías de viajes, teniendo en cuenta los requisitos legales y económicos modernos, por lo que este tipo de turismo se considera como un tipo de actividad empresarial.

Palabras clave: Iglesia, Historia, Peregrinación, Turismo Religioso.

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INTRODUCTION

Pilgrimage - walking or traveling to holy places with clearly defined spiritual goals. The essence of the pilgrimage involves the voluntary rejection of the usual way of life, which symbolizes a person's willingness to sacrifice in the name of spiritual values. Pilgrimage is a spiritual feat, where the main goal is to visit church services and relics, to pray and communicate, to work and collect donations for the restoration and development of a monastery or a temple.

In ancient Rus, "walking" to the Holy Land was carried out already in the first centuries after the adoption of Christianity. Princess Olga, who was baptized in Constantinople and worshiped the holy relics of Tsar Grad, became the first famous Russian pilgrim. Literary works in the form of travel notes, reports, or memoirs that described the journeys of the Russian people to the countries of the Orthodox East appeared later. Abbot Daniel, who described his pilgrimage to the relics of Ecumenical Orthodoxy, became the ancestor of the genre of walking in ancient Russian literature (Raj, & Griffin: 2015). With the course of time, pilgrimages also began to be carried out to the holy places of Russia, to the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra, the Solovetsky Monastery, Optina Pustyn, and others. Pilgrimages expanded the horizons of the Russian people, visibly accustomed them to the treasures of history and spiritual culture, contributed to the spiritual unity and strengthening the moral potential of the people (Yakunin: 2016).

1. MATERIAL AND METHODS

This investigation is based on the study of a significant body of sources and literature. The literature and sources highlighting this problem can be divided into three groups. The first group unites the work studying the history of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) as a whole and in its separate periods, especially periods of repression and persecution of the church. (Golubinskiy: 2002; Ángel, & Escobar: 2009; Roslof: 2002; Papkova: 2011; Husband: 2000) The second group includes the studies devoted to various aspects of pilgrimage and pilgrim tourism that has arisen alongside with it during the last decade. (Torbakov: 2014; Ellis: 1988; Gabdrakhmanov: 2016) The third group is Internet resources, first of all, advertising publications, inviting to make a pilgrimage organization by travel agencies, which made it possible to analyze tourist offers. The article uses the narrative, comparative and systemic methods, as well as the problem-chronological approach.

2. RESULTS

Traditions of pilgrimage in Russia finally develop in the XVII-XVIII centuries. Many of them are still mandatory. This is a compulsory blessing received by a pilgrim before traveling. It implies specific dates for a pilgrim trip, observance of special rules for visiting holy monasteries, participation in worship services, including the procession, etc. The term "pilgrims" was used in Russia to designate people who went to worship Eastern Christian relics. Those who went to the relics of the Russian land were called "wanderers", "worshippers". In everyday popular speech, the word "worshippers" was the most common. In Russia in the XIX - early XX century, the word "worshiper" was widely used. It clearly shows the meaning of pilgrimage, which lies precisely in the religious worship of holy places. (Bideci & Albayrak: 2016)

The following indicates the degree of pilgrimage development. From the 17th century, Kazan Virgin Monastery, founded in 1579 at the place of invention of the Mother of God icon, miraculously saved during a fire, which significantly burnt out part of Kazan becomes the center of the Volga Orthodox pilgrimage. Numerous religious processions on the feasts of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God gathered thousands of believers from different parts of Russia. Before the revolution, more than 80% of those who came to Kazan were pilgrims of the Virgin Mother monastery (Gabdrakhmanov: 2016, pp. 88-90). Even after the loss of the

icon in 1904, the number of pilgrims decreased slightly. Believers still walked to worship the place of the Apparition of the Most Holy Mother of God.

After the Bolsheviks came to power, the mass pilgrimage was out of the question. The anti-religious policy meant the targeted destruction of Orthodox holy sites, including Kazan Virgin Monastery. Pilgrimage organizations were destroyed. The restoration of the pilgrimage institution begins only in the 1990s. Since the ROC's pilgrim organizations did not exist at that time, travel companies, which introduced an element of commercialization, began to deal with travel arrangements. Therefore, Russia began to develop religious tourism, a popular trend by that time in many regions of the world.

As a rule, representatives of the tourist industry did not have a clear understanding of the nature of the pilgrimage, as well as the experience of organizing pilgrim trips. As a result, conflicts often arose between the organizers and the pilgrims. The Department of External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchy had to settle them repeatedly. As a result, the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church decided to begin work on the revival of pilgrimage to foreign and Russian holy sites (Yakunin: 2016). Then, a number of dioceses and monasteries established pilgrimage services, hospice houses and hotels of pilgrimage class began to emerge. Along with church organizations, Orthodox public organizations, including the Orthodox Society "Radonezh", the International Foundation for the Unity of Orthodox Peoples, etc., became involved in the organization of pilgrimages. Nevertheless, travel companies did not stop to organize travel arrangements, shifting the emphasis on the development of religious tourism - the creation of cultural and educational tours with a clearly defined religious component.

There are two directions in which the organization of religious tours is carried out: travels that are religiously motivated with a peripheral cognitive dominant and travels that are motivated cognitively with a peripheral religious dominant (Hughes: 2016). Both types of travel have obvious religious content, i.e. they can be considered equally as categories of religious tourism, although they are considerably distinguished from each other. In the second case, tourists are mainly interested in excursions with visits to monasteries, temples, museums, and exhibitions with Orthodox themes. Moreover, these tourists may not be adherents of the religion, the sites of which they visit, or they may be atheists.

Pilgrim is a deeply religious person with an already established system of values. However, the traveler in the field of religious tourism does not yet possess these virtues. His motivation is much wider, it is based on cognitive rationale, and questions of faith do not always dominate here. The socio-psychological base of pilgrim tourism is narrower than that of religion. Tours, visits to museums, the level of comfort during a trip for pilgrims are secondary or generally of little interest. The main thing for pilgrims is the worship of an Orthodox relic, but not a tour of the historical sights of a religious building. They take a meaningful part in worship and ceremonies and worship the holy relics. Commercial travel agencies cannot or do not consider it necessary to observe these conditions when organizing a tourist trip. The purpose of religious tourism is the production and sale in the market of tourist services and goods of a specific nature. The participants of this process are accommodation facilities, catering enterprises, transport companies, excursion bureaus, etc.

Researchers of religious tourism note similar changes in the portrait of a modern pilgrim. This is a middle-aged man, more demanding of the conditions in which the pilgrimage takes place (Santos: 2019). Hieromonk Nicodemus (Kolesnikov) notes that in the early 1990s the main thing was to leave for pilgrimage. Today many have become more demanding of the conditions of stay in the pilgrimage. As a result, the pilgrimage hotels of different levels of comfort are used and constructed. There appear various "pilgrim" tour packages. Thus, the "Universitetskaya" Hotel, with icons in the rooms, a church on one of the floors and a Lenten menu, has become the base for the formation of the Pilgrimage Center of the Moscow Patriarchate. A 4-star hotel for pilgrims is open in the St. Daniel Monastery (Griffin & Raj: 2017).

Studying pilgrimage programs organized with the blessing of the Russian Orthodox Church suggests that certain changes are taking place in them. According to the traditional Orthodox canons, a trip of more than 10 days was considered a pilgrimage. Proposals for the commission of a modern pilgrimage, including those

made with the blessing of the hierarchy, as a rule, provide a period of two to five days. This is explained, first of all, by the accelerated pace of people's lives.

In addition, in the part of the programs, there is a certain "worldly" component. This concerns the organization of tours for pilgrims. Tours are conducted by representatives of the church or people who have received a blessing for that. However, they tell about the history and the architecture of a religious site, its historical and natural features. Even the pilgrimage to Mount Athos in Greece offers an organized program with a guide. In addition to tours, a number of monasteries (for example, Nikolo-Solbinsky), provide a playground for pilgrims with children and hold workshops on traditional monastic activities (El-Gohary: 2017). These and other phenomena allow us to speak about certain changes in the pilgrim tourism.

At present, there is a clear tendency in Russia to misunderstand the difference between a pilgrimage and regular tourist trips. This misunderstanding is typical of many travelers as well as travel organizers.

The analysis of Internet sites offering tours, called "pilgrimage" tours, suggests that it is often not a pilgrimage, as such, but trips within the framework of religious tourism with a predominance of the cognitive component. Among the organizers of such trips are many travel companies that do not have the blessing of the ROC. Often travel agencies offer "pilgrimage" trips, during which tourists visit holy sites belonging to different faiths (visits to temples, monasteries, mosques, pagan places of worship). There are also proposals for conducting "Orthodox tours" and pilgrimage-tours. The organizers of such tours quite often call themselves "pilgrim services," but often there is no mentioning that they received blessings from the ROC for organizing pilgrim tours (DeAscaniis & Cantoni: 2016).

CONCLUSION

Some pilgrimage services, along with a traditional pilgrimage, organize tours for non-church or church-going people who wants to learn the spiritual culture and history of their country. The details of such tours mainly focuses on the excursion, educational part of the program and in the accommodation of travelers, wich are in hotels and hostels not in monasteries. Often these trips play a missionary role, contributing to the conversion of their members into true faith. Hence the question, if they are pilgrimages in the traditional meaning of the word.

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