Abstract

The article examines an episode recorded in various narratives and well-known to historians of medieval Moscow, although never studied specifically — rescue of Metropolitan Macarius from the famous fire of 1547, when he was suffocating in the Kremlin Assumption Cathedral engulfed
in smoke. The historiography cites three Moscow monasteries as possible place of his evacuation: Novospassky, Novodevichy, and Novinsky. This issue never caused controversy, as it was considered peripheral and secondary and because traditional 20th century historiography stepped away from church and local history issues. However, the problem may be of interest in order to clarify the mechanisms of historiographical legends formation (i.e. unintentional distortion of information from older historical sources in later narratives) and to determine the proximity of metropolitan monastery to the court of Moscow metropolitans. Presently, since the discovery of the Postnik Chronicler compiled in the 16th century, most historians stand by its information that the Moscow Novinsky Monastery was the place of Metropolitan Makarius’s evacuation. A.A. Zimin, however, considered it to be the Novodevichy convent. Authors of historical descriptions of the Moscow Novospassky Monastery, classics of the 19th century historiography (N.M. Karamzin, S.M. Solovyov), and some researchers of the late 20th century (V.B. Kobrin, A.I. Pliguzov) believe that this monastery was the place of metropolitan’s salvation. The article demonstrates that the 19th century historiographers could have drawn on late chronicle monuments of the 17th century. In any case, the Mazurinsky chronicle (1680s) clearly states that Metropolitan Makarius was taken “to the Savior on the New.” The article argues that the author of the Mazurinsky chronicler showed great interest in the Novospassky Monastery (New Monastery of the Savior), stimulated by the prominent role of this monastery in the church hierarchy, especially in the era of the first Romanovs. The inference of the Postnik chronicler that the Novinsky Monastery was the place of Makarius’s salvation have been long disregarded by historians due to unofficial nature of the source and its rarity. The article also forays in the history of the Novodevichy, Novinsky, and Novospassky monasteries, commenting on their status and role in the history of medieval Moscow and the Russian Church as a whole.

Keywords

Historical sources, Mazurinsky chronicler, Postnik chronicler, historiographical legends, Metropolitan Macarius, medieval Moscow, monasteries, chronicle sources.

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