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Mass Church Sources of the Barnaul Spiritual Government of the Second Half of the 18th –  
Early 19th Century: Specificity of Materials Preservation in the Archives of Siberia

Abstract

This article examines issues of mass sources preservation of the Barnaul Spiritual Commissioned Government (BSG) of the second half of the 18th – early 19th century. The object of the study is confession sheets and parish books of 24 BSG parishes, deposited in the archives of Siberia: the State Archive of the Tomsk Region (GATO), the State Archive of the Altai Krai (GAAK), and the State Archive of the Novosibirsk Region (GANO). The BSG within its present borders covers the territory of the Altai Krai, the Republic of Altai, and some districts of the Tomsk, Kemerovo, Novosibirsk regions and the Republic of Kazakhstan. Despite extensive historiography on the institution of the Orthodox Church in Siberia, there are almost no works on the development of parish system of the West Siberian region, on characteristics of demographic processes, and peculiarities of mass sources preservation of the second half of the 18th – early 19th century. It is concluded that during the initial period of the BSG work (1750–54), mass documentation was poorly preserved (there exist occasional registers for individual parishes). The majority of confession sheets were deposited in the GATO after 1755. The level of source preservation can be assessed as high (although uneven in different parishes): in the general approximation, losses of documents amount to 9.3% of the chronological duration. There are more frequent temporary gaps in preservation of documents for parishes that were transferred from one spiritual government to another. Dispersion of the documentary complex over various fonds of the GATO is low. The GATO demonstrates good preservation of confessional sheets, in the GAAK their representation is poor, and they are absent in the GANO. The BSG parish books are dispersed in various archives of Siberia and in various fonds of these archives. The main collection of the BSG sources has been preserved in three fonds of the GATO (56 archival files). The loss of documents in this archive amount to 26.7% of the chronological duration. For some parishes, the proportion of source losses is even greater. The materials of the GANO (43 archival files) and GAAK partially fill in data gaps. However, even in these archives, files differ in their completeness. Thus, in the GAAK, the array of BSG sources has been preserved with small gaps only for 5–8 parishes, mostly after 1802. In all three Siberian archives there are sources for a later period (19th – early 20th century), but these are outside the scope of our research.

## Keywords

Mass sources, confession sheets, parish books, preservation of documents, archives of Siberia.

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