

# ТЕОРЕТИЧЕСКИЕ АСПЕКТЫ ЭКОНОМИКИ И ТУРИСТСКОГО СЕРВИСА THEORETICAL ASPECTS OF ECONOMICS AND TOURIST SERVICE

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## RELIGIOUS SCIENTIFIC TOURISM AS A NEW FORM OF RELIGIOUS TOURISM

**Abstract.** *For the first time in domestic and foreign scientific circulation, theoretical aspects related to the previously briefly mentioned scientific tourism of a religious orientation are revealed. It is proposed to consider this type of tourism as one of the directions of religious and educational tourism. The article offers the definition of scientific religious tourism, and also, depending on the purpose of the trip, two of its subspecies are distinguished - scientific and educational eventful and scientific expeditionary tourism. It is noted that due to the extremely low level of coverage of the problem, the sources of empirical materials are specific. One of the opportunities for the implementation of travel, caused by scientific religious tourism, are theological scientific conferences organized by monasteries and spiritual educational organizations, and some data were obtained by the method of participatory observation during the visits undertaken by the authors of those events in 2015-2020. The article shows that scientific and educational events of religious content, as well as accompanying books and other products, contribute to stimulate interest in visiting unique sacred places. The existing experience in organizing tours will diversify the offers on the market of tourist services and religious tourism of excursion and educational orientation.*

**Keywords:** *scientific religious tourism, scientific and educational event religious tourism, scientific expeditionary religious tourism, pilgrimage, scientific and theological conference, tourist of religious heritage.*

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## **НАУЧНЫЙ ФОРМАТ ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ РЕЛИГИОЗНОГО ТУРИЗМА КАК НОВОЕ НАПРАВЛЕНИЕ ОТРАСЛЕВОЙ ДЕЯТЕЛЬНОСТИ**

*Впервые в отечественном и зарубежном научном обороте раскрываются теоретические аспекты, связанные с кратко упоминавшемся до этого научным туризмом религиозной направленности. Предлагается рассматривать данный вид туризма в качестве одного из направлений религиозно-познавательного туризма. В статье рассматривается дефиниция научного религиозного туризма, а также в зависимости от цели путешествия выделяются два его подвида - научно-просветительский событийный и научно-экспедиционный. Отмечается, что в связи с крайне низкой степенью освещения проблематики источники эмпирических материалов имеют свою специфику. Одной из возможностей для реализации путешествий, обусловленных научным религиозным туризмом, служат богословские научные конференции, организованные монастырями и духовными образовательными организациями, и некоторые данные были получены методом включенного наблюдения в ходе посещения авторами обозначенного рода мероприятий в 2015-2020 гг. В статье результировано, что научно-познавательные мероприятия религиозного содержания, а также сопутствующая книгопечатная и иная продукция способствуют стимулированию интереса к посещению уникальных сакральных мест. Имеющийся опыт реализации организованных туров позволит разнообразить предложения на рынке туристских услуг и религиозного туризма экскурсионно-познавательной направленности.*

**Ключевые слова:** *научный религиозный туризм, научно-просветительский событийный религиозный туризм, научно-экспедиционный религиозный туризм, паломничество, научно-богословская конференция, турист религиозного наследия.*

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### Introduction

Religious tourism, both pilgrimage and sightseeing and educational orientation, became popular [9, 16] in post-Soviet Russia and has remained in many foreign countries for many centuries. The research results also look impressive, according to which objects of religious infrastructure, as well as sacred places that are somehow connected with religious worship, cause 90% of tourist interest [15: 194]. It should be considered that such a high demand for cult and religious objects of display and visit is presented not only by recreants following pilgrimage routes, but also by those whose main purpose is sightseeing and educational tourism.

The role of religious tourism in the socio-economic development of regions and countries is significant [1], although some experts, for example, S. A. Lebedeva [11: 2110], determining the degree of popularity of certain types of tourism in Russian society, designate it as "niche" and "extremely specific", giving a small share of the probability of its independent development in the foreseeable future of Russian reality. They claim that there is a small probability of its independent development in the foreseeable future within the Russian reality. A number of circumstances contradicts this view. Therefore, at the beginning of the third millennium, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) declared religious tourism being the most promising branch of the recreational service sector in the future development. Although, of course, we must admit that among those who demand religious tourist routes, the proportion of those for whom spiritually-oriented goals are a priority is negligible. It correlates with the proportion of practicing adherents of religions (in relation to Orthodoxy, such a contingent is usually defined as "ecclesiastical believers", and to Catholicism and Protestantism – "practicing believers"). Such a narrow orientation on a certain contingent of service demand bearers, depending on the degree of involvement of their representatives in religious life and its practices, is one of the factors that make religious tourism and its individual areas a vulnerable sub-sector of the

recreational economy.

In general, tourism is one of the most subordinate spheres of economic activity to external circumstances and is closely dependent on political, natural, economic, and social factors, and religious tourism, as its component, is subject to their influence to an even greater extent (confirmation of the latter is the almost complete destruction of this type of tourism in the Soviet period). The coronavirus pandemic has seriously affected the functioning and development of the tourist complex. However, even here, with a competent organization of the process, not only the old prospects are partially preserved, but new ones are also opened. In particular, this may also apply to domestic religious tourism in the conditions of almost complete absence of international rivalry.

The high degree of popularity and dynamic development of religious tourism in Russian and foreign regions required a serious scientific understanding of the issues related to its functioning. The answer to this issue was numerous studies undertaken by domestic and foreign authors [6, 17]. Moreover, A. V. Babkin, S. Yu. Zhitenev, N. N. Laguseva, T. T. Hristov, V. N. Yakunin [4, 10, 19, 20] should be mentioned first in the context of the research subject of this article, because these authors made significant attempts to differentiate religious tourism into separate types, although they paid close attention to scientific religious tourism. Meanwhile, objective facts (for example, the increasing number of scientific conferences organized and conducted by religious organizations – convents, theological seminaries, etc.) indicate that this area of religious tourism is developing quite dynamically in Russia, which makes it necessary to try to understand its scientific features.

### Theory

The largest division within religious tourism is associated with the designation of pilgrimage as such and religious tourism of a sightseeing and educational orientation. These religious tourism's subspecies and their semantic characteristics are quite firmly fixed in the domestic scientific

circulation [10,14]. Foreign scientists [16] also paid attention to these definitions, concluding the expediency of their differentiation.

The gradual development of religious tourism in practice and the close scientists' attention to the transformational shift's characteristic of recreational economy's activity, led to the fact that within its well-established use as separate definitions of pilgrimage and excursion-cognitive directions, over time, various subspecies were formed in even more detail in terms of the specifics of the organization, content and theme. The selection of some of them, for example, the "prayer" tourism proposed by P. I. Ananchekova [3], is considered as an independent sub-branch of tourist activity of a religious orientation, because in meaning and essence it coincides with the pilgrimage tourism. However, there are other subspecies of pilgrimage and sightseeing and educational religious tourism, which have become separate within them, due to their specific characteristics. So, for example, within the first of the named subspecies of religious tourism, depending on the interested motivation for participation, it is possible to designate religious-calendar and event-based pilgrimages [5: 11]. If we take this criterion as a basis, as an opportunity to implement religious and ascetic practices, then there is no doubt the independent significance of such a type of monastic pilgrimage as "trudnichestvo", which assumes that the pilgrim is required, in addition to intensive participation in divine services, to contribute to the form of gratuitous feasible work for the benefit of the monastery [5: 11].

In religious and educational tourism or religious tourism of excursion and educational orientation, there are also separate directions. A tourist product of this nature, due to unique approach to the presentation of excursion material, the opportunity to explore rarely involved as objects of display on "secular" excursion and educational routes, sacred places, often difficult to be accessed logistically or requiring special approval from religious organizations to visit, have gained high popularity among consumers. Such high popularity among "civil" consumers of services (not

being adherents of religion) [13] caused the proposal of the Romanian researcher V. Pushkashu to introduce the phrase "tourist of religious heritage" into scientific circulation. This category includes those participants of religious routes who have a purely cognitive interest [16] in religious objects.

Steadily, religious tourism of an excursion and educational orientation, in general, most often focused on a diverse contingent in terms of involvement in the traditions and practice of the faith, began to include specific types in terms of purpose and content, involving a fairly narrow circle of specially trained people. Thus, a fairly dynamically developing scientific tourism of a religious and educational orientation was significantly identified in Russia just a few years ago.

There are no separate research works devoted to this type of tourism available on domestic and foreign sources. This circumstance determined the purpose of this study-to identify the main characteristics and specific features of the development of scientific religious tourism as an independent subspecies of religious tourism of excursion and educational orientation.

#### **Data and methods**

Due to the extremely low degree of coverage of the problems chosen as the object of research of the presented article, the main types of sources of empirical materials that serve as the basis for its representativeness also have their own specifics. Since theological and other thematic scientific conferences organized by monasteries and spiritual educational organizations are one of the opportunities for the realization of trips due to scientific religious tourism, some data were collected by the method of participant observation during the direct active visits of the authors of events of 2015-2020. First of all, this is due to full-time participation in the traditional annual international scientific and practical conference "Pykhtitsky Readings" held in 2020 in the remote format; the international educational conference IX "Sretensky Readings" (2015), which is held on the basis of the Russian Center for Science and Culture in Helsinki, as well as in a number of

similar events held on the basis of the St. Petersburg Theological Academy of the Russian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (SPBTA).

The legislative framework of the study was compiled by such documentary sources as the Tourism Development Strategy of the Russian Federation for the Period up to 2035 and the Federal Target Program "Development of Domestic and Inbound Tourism in the Russian Federation (2019-2025)". As a theoretical framework, the materials of conferences, as well as articles in domestic and foreign periodicals were used. This type of sources reflects general theoretical issues related to religious tourism and its directions, and directly scientific religious tourism is mentioned in them in fragments.

Up-to-date information related to the events that determine the very possibility of the existence of scientific religious tourism as a destination in recent retrospect and in the foreseeable future, allows you to get access to the official Internet portals of spiritual educational institutions of the Russian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (ROC MP), Russian and foreign monasteries (not only Orthodox), the Educational Committee of the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church.

The main research methods, in addition to the included observation, were the analysis and synthesis of primary data posted on the official Internet portals of organizations that implement scientific and religious events, sources of scientific literature, and the method of summarizing information.

The practical significance and scientific novelty of the study are due to the fact that there are no generalizing materials in the scientific circulation that are related to the design, functioning and development of religious scientific tourism. This sub-sector has prospects for further expansion and development and continues to be implemented even in the context of a pandemic, although it is focused on a rather narrow circle of participants.

### Research results

Scientific religious tourism was formed as

part of religious excursion and educational tourism. It was firstly mentioned in the special literature owing to A. V. Babkin [4: 13]. Later V. N. Yakunin suggested to use the combination "scientific tourism for religious purposes" [20: 72]. Both sources contain similar, but extremely fragmentary characteristics of this direction of religious tourism. They record only a very small degree of travel coverage. They indicate the expansion of the tourist trips' area due to scientific tourism.

The idea of scientific religious tourism as a destination is too narrow and does not correspond to reality. It is aimed at an extremely small group of mainly European researchers; whose object of study is rare or extinct religious cults that have been spread in remote regions of the world in historical retrospect or have survived to this day. If we understand scientific religious tourism as an organized or individual trip, the purpose of which is to collect empirical materials for theological and religious studies, to test the results of these studies as a part of scientific conferences or other scientific and practical events organized by religious organizations and / or implemented on the basis of places associated with religious worship (monasteries, temples, theological seminaries, religious educational centres), etc., then it becomes obvious that this trend is quite dynamic in Russia (especially in the last few years preceding the COVID-19 pandemic) and its noticeable existence in some foreign countries.

Depending on the main purpose of the trip, scientific religious tourism can be divided into two directions: scientific and educational event tourism and scientific and expedition tourism. At the same time, the first of these subspecies involves active (as a speaker or lecturer) or passive (as a listener or visitor) participation in scientific and theological events – conferences, training seminars, forums on religious topics, etc.

Some events organized within this subspecies of scientific religious tourism have already acquired the features of a component of the branding of a sacred religious and cult object. As an example, the international scientific and practical conference "Pykhtitsky Readings" is organized



*Table 1 – International Scientific and Practical Conference "Pykhtitsky readings"  
(Estonia, Kuremäe, 2012-2020)*

<i>Date of the event</i>	<i>Name/subject</i>	<i>Number of published reports</i>	<i>Countries / Russian cities that delegated participants</i>	<i>Notes</i>
The first Pykhtitsky readings 11-12.12.2012	Interaction of secular and spiritual cultures	25	Latvia, Russia, Sweden, Estonia / Vologda, Izhevsk, Krasnoyarsk, Magnitogorsk, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Tver	
The second Puchitsky readings 11-12.12.2013	Dialogue of pedagogical traditions of Orthodoxy and modern education: the problem of personality formation	39	Latvia, Russia, Ukraine, Sweden, Estonia/ Vologda, Izhevsk, Kostroma, Krasnoyarsk, Magnitogorsk, Moscow, Nizhny Novgorod, St. Petersburg, Tver, Yaroslavl	
The third Puchitsky readings 11-12.12.2014	Cultural and historical traditions of Orthodoxy	48	Belarus, Latvia, Russia, Ukraine, Sweden, Estonia / Vologda, Yelets, Izhevsk, Kirov, Krasnoyarsk, Magnitogorsk, Moscow, N. Novgorod, Petrozavodsk, St. Petersburg, Tver, Yaroslavl	
The forth Puchitsky readings 11-13.12.2015	Historical, cultural and spiritual heritage: traditions and modernity	63	Belarus, Latvia, Russia, Ukraine, Sweden, Estonia / Vologda, Yelets, Izhevsk, Kaliningrad, Krasnoyarsk, Moscow, Nizhnevartovsk, N. Novgorod, Petrozavodsk, St. Petersburg, Stavropol, Tver, Khabarovsk, Yaroslavl	
The fifth Puchitsky readings 11-12.12.2016	Orthodox culture and the practice of personal education: traditions and modern experience	58	Belarus, Latvia, Russia, Ukraine, Sweden, Estonia / Vologda, Izhevsk, Kaliningrad, Krasnodar, Kirov, Moscow, Nizhnevartovsk, N. Novgorod, Petrozavodsk, St. Petersburg, Saratov, Stavropol, Tver, Khabarovsk, Yaroslavl	All the speakers came to the conference for full-time participation
The sixth Puchitsky readings 11-12.12.2017	Secular and spiritual cultural heritage as a value basis for the formation of a contemporary personality	70	Belarus, Latvia, Russia, Ukraine, Sweden, Estonia / Vologda, Yelets, Izhevsk, Kaliningrad, Krasnodar, Krasnoyarsk, Moscow, Nizhnevartovsk, N. Novgorod, Petrozavodsk, St. Petersburg, Saratov, Tver, Tikhoretsk, Tomsk, Khabarovsk, Yaroslavl	
The seventh Puchitsky readings 11-12.12.2018	Spiritual and moral education of a person: traditions and modernity	89	Belarus, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Russia, Ukraine, Sweden / Vologda, Yelets, Izhevsk, Kaliningrad, Krasnoyarsk, Moscow, N. Novgorod, Petrozavodsk, Ryazan, St. Petersburg, Saratov, Samara, Yaroslavl	
The eighth Puchitsky readings 11-12 December 2019	Orthodoxy and the spiritual and moral development of the contemporary personality	74	Belarus, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Russia, Ukraine, Sweden / Vologda, Yelets, Izhevsk, Kaliningrad, Krasnoyarsk, Kirov, Moscow, N. Novgorod, Petrozavodsk, Ryazan, St. Petersburg, Saratov, Staraya Russa	The conference was attended by a group of delegates-students and postgraduates of SPBTA (1 speaker and 9 listeners), headed by the prorector for educational work <sup>1</sup>
The ninth Puchitsky readings (was held in a distance format) 11-12 December 2020	Axiological approach to personal development based on the complementarity of Orthodox and secular culture	53	Belarus, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Russia, Ukraine, Sweden / Vologda, Yekaterinburg, Izhevsk, Kaliningrad, Krasnoyarsk, Krasnodar, Moscow, Ryazan, St. Petersburg, Staraya Russa	

<sup>1</sup>Students and teachers of the Academy took part in the international conference in the Pykhtitsky monastery // Official website of the St. Petersburg Theological Academy of the ROC MP. URL: <https://spbda.ru/news/studenty-i-prepodavateli-akademii-prinyali-uchastie-v-mejdunarodnoy-konferencii-v-pykhtitskom-monastyre/> (Accessed on 06.01.2021)

annually and based on the Pykhtitsky Assumption Stavropol Convent (Estonia). According to the tradition which has been established since 2012, it takes place in mid-December. The table below shows the main scientific and religious thematic focus of this event and the scope of its participants. It should be noted that the beginning of such an event in the Pyukhtitsky monastery was laid back in 2002, when a conference on spiritual and moral education was held for the first time within its walls.

The table was compiled on the basis of the collections of materials of the Pyukhtitsky Readings conferences, the authors' own observations during their direct participation in the Pyukhtitsky Readings in the period from 2015 to 2020, as well as on the works of Komissarova T. S., Gladkiy Yu. N., Sukhorukov V. D. and Kalacheva F. [7, 8]

Referring to the data shown in table 1, we can conclude that during almost the entire period when the designated annual conference was held in person, the number of reports presented at it increased or remained consistently high. Among the countries represented by the participating delegates, Belarus, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Russia, Ukraine and Sweden are constantly featured. The coverage of Russian cities is also constantly expanding, from which speakers come to the Pyukhtitsky Monastery. It is logical that representatives of Moscow and St. Petersburg are numerically leading, but strong ties have also been established with the scientific and pedagogical community of Yelets, Izhevsk, Kaliningrad, Krasnoyarsk, Nizhny Novgorod, Petrozavodsk, Khabarovsk, etc. It should also be noted that despite the additional costs associated with processing visa documents for crossing the border with Estonia, the share of Russian speakers who take part in the conference in person is very high and is at least 80-90% of those who applied, and in 2016 it reached 100%. In recent years, the Pyukhtitsky Readings have attracted about 100-150 people, which is about 10% of the population of Estonia itself. In addition to representatives of the clergy, the pedagogical

and scientific community, the designated event arouses a steady interest for the purpose of passive participation as listeners among those who arrived not only from Russia, but also from foreign countries, for example, from Finland.

Gradually, significant prerequisites were created for attracting Russian and possibly foreign theological seminaries to cooperate within the framework of the conference. For the first time, SPBDA students made presentations at the Pyukhtitsky Readings in 2018, and in 2019, a delegation of 11 students from there already arrived at the monastery. That is, the international scientific and practical conference Pykhtitsky Readings is an example of a dynamically developing event within the framework of scientific religious tourism. The number, professional affiliation, and the list of countries and cities represented by its participating delegates were constantly expanding until 2020, when, for objective reasons, the event was held in absentia.

"Pykhtitsky readings" are also used in commercial activities as a factor in attracting a certain contingent of recreants. For example, the St. Petersburg-based travel company "Akro-Travel", in consultation with the monastery's management, has repeatedly (though not annually) organized special tours for those who want to participate in the conference as listeners<sup>2</sup>. Tourists were offered services in the organization of transport, guided tours on the highway and a tour of the monastery, and accommodation and meals were provided to all participants at the expense of the Pyukhtitsky monastery.

Talking about the multiplicative economic effect of scientific religious tourism, which is created due to the development of the recreational sector of the economy, it is worth mentioning that in general it is low due to the narrow contingent of participants. But the example of Pyukhtitsky readings in this key can be considered separately. In Estonia, where the population does not reach one and a half million, a scientific event with the participation of more than 100-150 people can be

<sup>2</sup> Fifth Pyukhtitsky readings 2016 // Official website of the travel company "Akro-Travel". URL: <http://www.akro-travel.ru/?p=982> (Accessed on 06.01.2021)

considered as a large event. In the city Yyhvi, which is closest to the monastery, the demand for local transport services increases during the conference period. In the village of Kuremae, the only hotel-hostel is involved, and the attendance of cafes, souvenir shops, and grocery stores is increasing. Taking into account the fact that the middle of December, when the conference is traditionally held, is the season when the flow of tourists and pilgrims in the Pykhtitsky monastery is low, the holding of this event and the resulting large flow of tourists can provide significant support to the market for some goods and services at the micro-regional level.

Another foreign monastery (though not Orthodox, but Catholic with an ecumenical orientation), on the basis of which, since 1993, annual scientific conferences devoted to the study of various aspects of Orthodox culture are usually held in September, is Bose, located in the Italian region of Piedmont. In 2017, 250 participants from 20 countries of the world – Albania, Belgium, Greece, Egypt, Russia, the United States, Turkey, etc.<sup>3</sup>. In 2019, the list of States that represented their delegates at this conference expanded to 30, including not only European and American countries, but also several African countries<sup>4</sup>. Like the Pykhtitsky Readings, this event within the framework of scientific religious tourism aroused a steady interest and attracted an increasing number of participants until the period of restrictions on tourist activities due to the pandemic.

There are only few examples of monasteries that have developed a strong tradition of holding annual scientific conferences. As a positive trend in the development of this direction, we can

consider the organization of such events in monasteries, where this tradition is only planned or they are held on an irregular basis. So, Danilov Stavropol monastery in Moscow twice hosted about 70 delegates from different countries (Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Romania, Spain, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Greece and Cyprus) twice – in the fall of 2018 and 2019 – in the framework of the international conference with the thematic title "Care of the Church for the mental patient"<sup>5</sup>. Another example – in February 2020, a conference with a very narrow focus on the topic "St. George's Cathedral of the Yuriev Monastery: a historical and cultural panorama", gathered in the Yuriev Monastery of Veliky Novgorod more than 20 specialists from this city, as well as from Moscow and St. Petersburg<sup>6</sup>. In general, in recent years, more and more monasteries of the ROC MP have been involved in scientific events, serving the development of scientific religious tourism. The number of participants is increasing and the coverage of the countries and cities that represent their delegates is expanding.

Orthodox monasteries, due to the historical, architectural, and artistic value of the temple buildings and elements of their interior decoration, as well as the Orthodox shrines stored in them, are the most significant objects of pilgrimage and religious and educational tourism. At the same time, scientific conferences held at their bases, especially those thematically related to the history of Orthodoxy in the region or with the biography of famous church figures who lived or stayed there, including those who were canonized, can give an impetus to the development of scientific religious tourism, if a single initiative

<sup>3</sup> The XXV Theological Symposium on Orthodox Spirituality opened in Bose // Official website of the St. Philaret Orthodox Christian Institute. URL: <https://sfi.ru/sfi-today/news/v-boze-otkrytsia-xxv-bogoslovskii-simpozium-po-pravoslavnoi-dukhovnosti.html> (Accessed on 06.01.2021)

<sup>4</sup> The delegation of the UOC took part in the international theological conference // Union of Orthodox Journalists. URL: <https://spzh.news/ru/news/64820-delegacija-upc-prinyala-uchastije-v-mezhdunarodnoj-bogoslovskoj-konferencii> (Accessed on 06.01.2021)

<sup>5</sup> International Conference "Care of the Church for the Mentally ill" // Official Website of the Moscow Patriarchate. URL: <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5302572.html> (Accessed on 08.01.2021)

<sup>6</sup> Scientific Conference "St. George's Cathedral of the Yuriev Monastery: historical and cultural panorama" // Official website of the Novgorod State United Museum-Reserve. URL: <https://novgorodmuseum.ru/konferentsii-i-seminary/64-nauchnaya-konferentsiya-georgievskij-sobor-yureva-monastyrya-istoriko-kulturnaya-panorama.html> (Accessed on 08.01.2021)



that currently exists with the offer of organized tours as listeners for a contingent of tourists and pilgrims becomes widespread. The potential for the development of this direction in modern Russia is high. There are some examples of scientific conferences related to the history of Orthodoxy in the region, which are held or were held on the basis of monasteries and, if properly organized, could serve as a leading factor in attracting pilgrims and tourists (organized and individual) to the development of scientific religious tourism:

- Arseniev readings in memory of Metropolitan Arseny (Stadnitsky) (Veliky Novgorod, Khutyn Monastery);

- Zlatoust readings (dedicated to the results of studying the history and heritage of the Moscow Zlatoust Monastery (Zlatoustvosky Monastery, Moscow);

- Zosimov readings (Trinity-Odigitrievsky Stavropol Convent of Zosimov Deserts) (Moscow region, Narofominsky district).

Among the regular events that can also be considered as part of the development of scientific religious tourism, it is worth noting the annual Sretensky readings held by the Russian Center for Science and Culture in Helsinki (Finland), in which representatives of Denmark, Russia, Finland, and Sweden took part in different years. In February 2020, this international educational conference was held for the 14th time. Like the "Pukhtitsky readings" in Estonia, the Sretensky Readings are a factor for organizing a thematic excursion tour among others offered by the travel company "Akro-Travel"<sup>7</sup>.

In addition to monasteries, educational institutions of the ROC MP contribute to the development of scientifically educational tourism. First of all, we are talking about theological academies and seminaries, the number of which is slightly less than 40 in the Russian Federation, and 55 in

the entire canonical space of the Russian Church, whose borders are wider than the Russian ones. Educational institutions of the Russian Orthodox Church, where the scientific activities of teachers and students, and, accordingly, their mobility for this purpose, are provided for by the statutory documents, are located on the territory of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Moldova, the United States, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, and France.

Many theological seminaries in Russia have developed a strong long-standing tradition of holding scientific and practical conferences on a wide variety of religious and theological topics, which are carried out at the regional, Russian and international levels. In addition to the undisputed leaders in the number of annually organized events of this type, which are the Moscow and St. Petersburg theological Academies, a large number of participants are attracted by conferences of theological seminaries in Belgorod, Yekaterinburg, Kazan<sup>8</sup>, etc. The experience of cooperation between theological seminaries and monasteries in the framework of joint scientific events is also presented. Thus, in 2016, the anniversary dates associated with the history of the Dalmatian Theological School and its famous graduates in theological circles served to organize the anniversary conference of the Yekaterinburg Orthodox Seminary together with the Holy Dormition Dalmatian Monastery (Dalmatovo, Korgan region). The event, which took place on the basis of the monastery, gathered about 300 participants as speakers and listeners. The opening of a museum dedicated to the pre-revolutionary history of Russia and a thematic photo exhibition were also timed to coincide with it. That is, scientific and educational tourism can act as one of the incentives for the development of the infrastructure of religious tourism.

Kazan Theological Seminary has experience

<sup>7</sup> VII International Sretensky Readings. To the 400th anniversary of the House of Romanov. // Official website of the travel company "Akro-Travel". URL: [http://www.akro-travel.ru/?page\\_id=222](http://www.akro-travel.ru/?page_id=222) (Accessed on 08.01.2021)

<sup>8</sup> Conferences. Plan of scientific work of the Belgorod Orthodox Theological Seminary for the 2020-2021 academic year // Official Website of the Belgorod Orthodox Theological Seminary. URL: <http://bel-seminaria.ru/konferencii/> (Accessed on 19.01.2021); Scientific conferences // Official website of the Yekaterinburg Theological Seminary. URL: <https://epds.ru/oseminarii/nauka/konf/> (Accessed on 21.01.2021); Scientific activity // Official website of the Kazan Orthodox Theological Seminary. URL: <https://kazpds.ru/deyatelnost/nauka/> (Accessed on 22.01.2021)

in cooperation with the Bogoroditse-Uspensky Sviyazhsk Monastery and the museum-reserve "Island-city of Sviyazhsk" for the purpose of joint conferences.

During the period when a scientific and theological event is held in a monastery or other sacred place, not only does its attendance increase due to speakers and listeners. The distribution of scientific printed, documentary film and photo products produced as a result of the conference contributes to the popularization of the religious tourist religious destination among the population.

Scientific-expedition religious tourism covers an even smaller number of participants. Its purpose is to collect primary information about religious teachings and / or religious objects. The realization of this goal can be objectified in various activities of organized groups of researchers or in the form of individual travellers – participation in archaeological excavations, measurements of religious buildings, observations of the behaviour of adherents of religions, etc.

Mentioning scientific religious tourism, A. V. Babkin focuses on the interest of Russian and European scientists in the atavistic religions of Egypt, Mesopotamia, the Mediterranean, and Central America in order to study them [4: 13-14]. In terms of meaning, we are talking about a scientific-expedition subspecies of scientific religious tourism. This interpretation of this concept seems unnecessarily narrow.

### Summary

Scientific religious tourism, as a subtype of religious and educational tourism, can be called "niche". It does not have a significant spread due to the specifics of the contingent of participants and the requirements for their level of qualification. However, this phenomenon has a more complex structure and greater significance than it was usually mentioned in the scientific literature that deals with the issues of religious tourism. Its dynamic development in the last decade is promising, judging by the fact that even during the COVID – 19 pandemic, scientific and theological conferences continued to be held, even if they

were forced to fully or partially take place in online format.

Scientific religious tourism, depending on the main purpose of the participants, is divided into scientific and educational and expedition tourism, while the first one has become more widespread. In general, scientific and educational religious tourism, the beginnings of which in Russia date back to 1993, when for the first time a conference related to religious and pedagogical issues was organized in Moscow, which later gave rise to the most large – scale scientific event in which the ROC MP participates - "Christmas Readings", which have regional and all-Russian international stages, gradually developed, attracting more and more participants from different cities and countries. Most intensively, new and new activities that determine travel for the purpose of this type of tourism began to appear from the beginning of the second decade of the XXI century. They are conducted primarily by monasteries, religious educational institutions, or jointly by organizations of these types. The multiplicative economic effect of this subspecies of religious tourism cannot be called high, because the contingent of participants is narrow, requiring special training, and for the organization of accommodation and food for speakers and listeners, religious organizations, as a rule, mostly use their own resources (refectories of monasteries, guest houses for pilgrims, etc.). Nevertheless, for the development of religious tourism, the significance of this subspecies of it is essential. First, scientific and educational events of religious content, as well as book printing and other products that are produced as a result of them, help to stimulate interest in visiting unique sacred places. In addition, over time, the already existing small experience in the implementation of organized tours dedicated to the events of scientific and educational tourism for those who want to participate in them as listeners can be taken into account. This can significantly diversify the range of offers on the market of sightseeing and educational tourism, and in particular, religious tourism of an excursion and educational orientation.

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