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## **Siberian Folk Tradition of the Orthodox Veneration of Sacred Places in the Context of People's Historical Memory**

### **ABSTRACT**

As shown by field data of recent years, the distinctive feature of modern religious consciousness of rural Siberia population is a widespread revival of folk tradition of the Orthodox veneration of sacred places (sacred springs, trees, stones, wooden crosses and other landscape objects of natural or artificial origin). Despite many years of prohibition and control of local cults the places of pilgrimage continue to be the actual phenomenon of everyday life.

The current state of the Siberian tradition is characterized by regular holding of processions with the cross and constructing of religious buildings in the immediate vicinity of some natural features, endowed with a sacred status. Most often, it is a water source - a spring with healing and fertile properties, which are described in the legends about icons ("faces of the divine») that sometimes appear in the holy Water.

The tragic events of national history of the XX<sup>th</sup> century affected the character of the local shrines veneration and the content of the associated narrations. Comparison of various sources (including the data stated in the Old Believers' writings, publications in local periodicals of the 1920-s and modern field materials) has allowed the author to trace in detail the history of one of the most holy places of the Altai territory (the water source close to the village of Sorochy Log) and to restore the circumstances under which it became a sacred one. The report shows that contamination of people's historical memory and cult of local shrines resulted the place of execution of the participants of Civil War in obtaining a sacred status and becoming the place of pilgrimage. Thus, the events of local history, that haven't fit into official historical discourse, got a reflection in the religious and ritual practices of veneration of holy places.

The author concludes that local shrines have always occupied a special place in people's view of the world. Being the symbols of the homeland the sacred places not only shape the specifics of local landscape and determine peculiarities of folk calendar, but also accumulate a collective historical memory of local population.