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**WORSHIPED WATER SPRINGS OF TYUMEN REGION:
TYPOLOGICAL AND FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS**

SUMMARY. In the current article we consider the worshiped water springs of Tyumen region located in Vikulov, Golyshmanovsky, Iset, Ishim, Tyumen and Yurginsky areas.

A classification of water springs is presented. Firstly, there are springs, founded in recent times and "from the top" (a well in Khamenkha settlement in Tyumen region). Secondly, there are springs formed "from below" by the will of a person or a group of people (a spring in Maryino Valley in Isetsky district). The third group is the largest group of water bodies comprising springs founded by means of interaction between the Church and people (Khprivankhovskhy well in Yurginskhy area). The present research reveals that the way a spring was formed influences the characteristics of its worship, and its functions in the past or at present.

We single out and analyze the functions of the springs in diachrony and synchrony: they are mediating, medical, protective, consolidating, communicative, informative, aesthetic, emotive, ecological. It is concluded that all functions are manifested in the worship of the third group of springs. In general, all the "holy" springs show different facets of the religious attitude of people in the historical context of the country and the region.

KEY WORDS. Sacred water springs, typology, functions, healing.

A part of spiritual culture, meaningful in the past and relevant in the present, is represented by sacred places and objects that together form the cultural landscape, "a natural and cultural complex, created and / or assimilated by the community of people" [1; 11]. In this article we look at the sacred water springs that used to exist and still exist in the Tyumen region.

The list of operating springs includes: a well by Khprivankhovo settlement (Yurginskhy district), Ivanovo well in Cheremshanka settlement (Ishim district), the spring in the name of St. Nicholas in Khamenkha settlement (Tyumen Region), the spring in honor of the Icon of the Mother of God — a "Life-giving Spring" (Isetsky district), a spring in Maryino Valley (Isetsky district). The springs that do not function at present are the following: a spring by Ryabovo settlement (Vikulov district), a well at the cemetery in Prokhutkhino settlement (Ishim district), a spring in the village of Bolshiye Chirkhy (Golyshmanovsky district) [2].

All of these water bodies can be subdivided into three groups. Firstly, there are springs founded in recent times and "from the top". An example of this is the well in Khamenkha settlement. The construction and renovation of water springs on the

initiative of the Church in our area continues. In 2011, “with the blessing of His Eminence Dimitry, the Archbishop of Tobolsk and Tyumen, the works the on arrangement of the holy spring in honor of the Icon of the Mother of God ‘Life-giving Spring’” were conducted in Rafaylovo settlement in Isetsy district [3; 8].

Therefore, we can talk about a tendency and the official recognition of the role of the sacred water springs by the Church in contemporary religious life.

Secondly, there are the springs formed “from below” by the will of a person or a group of people, like the spring in Maryino Valley. It is not affiliated with any religious confession, and therefore it is a most vivid example of folk ritual culture and religion.

The third group is the largest group of water bodies and springs that were founded and maintained by the interaction of the Church and people. This group includes Khrivankhovskhy well, the wells in the Ishim district, the springs in Ryabovo settlement and the village of Bolshiye Chirkhy. All of these springs are likely to be of prerevolutionary origin.

According to our research, the way a spring was formed effects worship characteristics and the functions it performs. The functions of certain sacred places and objects (not just water bodies) have been observed in the works of a number of researchers: T.B. Shchepanskaya, A.A. Panchenko, V.V. Vinogradov, Zh.B. Kormina and others. They focused on some of the main roles. V.L. Ogudyn generally distinguishes the following functions: consolidating, mediating, communicative, protective, medical, and environmental [4]. Basing on these studies, as well as on our unique research data we shall represent the functional aspect of sacred water springs of Tyumen region. It should be noted that all the enumerated functions are most fully manifested in the worship of the third group of springs.

According to V.V. Vinogradov, a holy place mediates “a special kind of a dialogue between the human world and the Highest power”; it is “a place to turn to God” [5; 233]. This mediating function is clear, demanded, and supported by both the custodians of sacred places and pilgrims. An informant M.N. Maltseva said as much about the purpose of a visit to Khrivankhovo well: “to open the soul, to pray to God, ask to live a little longer for the loved ones and for people”.

The peculiarities of water spring worship in this connection provide us with the answer “to the question of how faith is manifested in the mass consciousness and traditional religious practice” [6; 5]. “The scale” of beliefs “fixed” behind this or that sacred spring, will be polar, from paganism, or rather some free forms of religion based on the East Slavic traditions and modern (Maryino valley) or Orthodox (the spring in Khamenkha settlement) culture. In the middle of it is the union of “the canon” and various forms of popular orthodoxy with a fairly conventional sense of the term (Khrivankhovskhy well). The process of establishing the rules of conduct and interpretation of the various symbols (codes) for this “scale” involves many categories of people: locals, pilgrims (from inside or outside the Church), keepers, priests, monks and nuns, tour guides, researchers, journalists, museum workers, etc.

In the long period of atheist propaganda, sacred springs in general used to be the only place of initiation to the Orthodox world, to the faith, that could be transmitted from the older generation to their offspring. Here, people obtained a new model of the Church, inscribed in the natural landscape, instead of the one of which they were bereft. This model of the Church bound spiritual practices and then carried out their transmission (to the second and third generations from those who witnessed temple worship). Due to this, to some extent the integrity of attitude after the destruction of churches and the clergy was preserved.

Currently, one of the features of worshipping most water sources in Tyumen region, most severely affecting the functioning of the religious ritual, is their “inchurching”. However, this phenomenon is also typical of other regions [5; 232-244], [7; 130-151], [8; 33]. On the one hand, the springs, newly discovered or recovered, as well as those to which pilgrimages never ceased, under the direction and supervision of the priests — the leaders of local congregations, are the places where new religious aspirations of the faithful — to be part of the parish and the entire Orthodox world — are implemented. On the other hand, this option changes the established canon and therefore the norm for the pilgrims’ order of things, causes rejection and exclusion.

Sacred water springs have always had a therapeutic function. In the spring a person receives healing, recovers from illnesses, and becomes fit. Following the opinion of T.B. Szczepanskaya, it can be mentioned that such sites are designed to help bridge “various violations, crises, and disasters” [9; 110], of course, with the understanding of health as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not merely the absence of diseases or physical defects” [10].

T.P. Prokhusheva uttered these words in Khrivankhovo: “Bless the Lord, Jesus Christ, [...] give, Lord, health to our children! Mother of God, you are our Savior, Jesus Christ, merciful God, merciful, save and protect our children, our daughters and sons-in-law! Give, Lord, good health to all! Save their souls, Most Holy Mother of God!” In the holy place the pilgrims air all sorts of mundane requests: so that their sons may return safely from the army; that finally the rain would drench the parched earth; that the cattle be safe and sound, etc. A.T. Mesentseva says about the purpose of the pilgrimage to Khrivankhovo: “Yes, they prayed. They ask for health, to live well, for there was no war”.

However, healing requests now remain, according to our observations, the most frequent (except at the spring in Maryino Valley). A pilgrim from Ishim region, N.F. Emelyanova, is going to the spring in Cheremshanka “for health reasons”. The position of the Church in relation to the function of pilgrimage draws our attention. E.F. Fursova quotes the comment of archbishop Yegoryevsky, the chief editor of the *Orthodox pilgrim* of Mark island, on the perception of sacred places by most pilgrims only as a means of treating diseases: “This perception of pilgrims is fundamentally wrong and is a dangerous phenomenon that can cause a person serious spiritual damage” [6; 23].

This fact, of course, evidences the crisis of physical, mental and social well-being in modern Russian society. In addition, it is associated with an event in the recent redistribution of roles of sacred springs and places of worship. During the Soviet era, sacred springs almost entirely replaced churches [11; 77], whereas now, with the advent of temples used for their intended purpose, water has become a means of healing.

The normalization of their condition (achieving balance, stability, orderliness) is quite clearly understood as a goal by the pilgrims visiting a holy place. We can say that this is the “idea” with which they visit a particular spring. According to V.V. Vinogradov’s observation, the relationship between a man and a holy place cannot be reduced only to a “critical” or “extreme” model. As a part of the calendar ceremonies, annual visits to a sacred point on holidays help rather not “eliminate” the crisis “but preserve the balance of power in the cultivated area” [5; 237]. N.Y. Fugaeva drank the water from Khrivankhovsky spring, “so that [her] body was normal, [...] lively, and everything was fine”. N.I. Kholycheva, a pilgrim to Khrivankhovo, stated: “Khrivankhovo has always been a holy place. People have always come here with their sorrows and diseases, with everything. And the place helped people. And people believed, and we all now believe in it. All of us believe, because when you go here now — I have bad feet — I think I have a pure soul now and I will be able to get home safe and sound”. It can be stated that in this case a sacred place also performs a protective function. Here a person feels secure.

Worshiped water springs draw collective memories, the community beginning of peasant life, performing a consolidating function which could be supplemented by informative and communicative functions.

A.T. Mesentseva answered the question why she comes to Khrivankhovo, (note the placed priorities): “For water. To pray. Here you go. To ask for health. To see people — there are so many people again”. Most of all, this function is relevant for the springs that emerged in the interaction of the Church and people around the turn of the 19th-20th centuries (although the exact date of foundation for any such spring is not known and cannot be calculated).

In some cases, visiting holy water bodies was associated with a particular holy day, which was usually a feast. N.A. Minenko writes about the functional aspect of the patronal feasts in the following manner: “A holiday was a way for peasants to be in the community, not only within their own world, but also within a social class in general. Festive meetings created an opportunity for the residents of different territories to exchange information and thus helped to realize common interests of the peasantry, contributed to the development of the spirit of solidarity” [12; 76]. Of course, this function of patronal feasts was displayed when visiting water springs. No wonder in conversations with us the pilgrims noted the places from which people come to this or that sacred place, where, and how far away people are aware of it. This way they differentiate their community, emphasizing: these are “our” people, and those, although spiritually close, are “newcomers”.

Currently, patronal feasts are only preserved in the memories of the older generation. However, the function of “community stabilization, community collectivism and corporate elements in the social consciousness of the peasantry” [13; 5] has recently moved to the background due to certain social changes. Yet, the consolidating function is manifested not only within the community but, what is more important now, in the context of family or kin. Here pilgrims can feel the connection of generations, remember their ancestors, “the elderly”, “grandparents”, “old men”, and “old women”. In general, sacred places stand for a symbol of “small” native land, accumulate a collective historical memory and form the local identity of the population [7].

Communication on the holy springs was associated with the sphere of the sacred. A worshipped water spring, as well as any other holy place, according to A.A. Panchenko, is a zone “of organization and direct contact with the sacred world” [11; 265]. Here, the communicative function is closely intertwined with the mediating function.

According to our observations, the sacred springs fulfill an aesthetic function. N.I. Kolycheva reports the words of her mother about Khrivankhovo: “This holy place is, she says, so beautiful, I’ve never seen such a miracle”. N.V. Dragunova recalls the past, when people at Khrivankhovo “made a lawn, a beautifully arranged lawn”. S.M. Kovylyatskih noted the peculiarities of pilgrimage to Khamenkha settlement: “More and more people arrive. Here they come to the spring, to the cross. People come really often, they like the place very much, it’s beautiful”. The five acres near Khamenkha are occupied by a complex monument of regional significance “Khamenskhoye” [14]. Marino Valley with the spring visited by pilgrims has the same status [15].

Sacred springs have always served like a buffer between this world, with its cares, burdens and misery, and the world where there is harmony, order and cleanliness in the relations between people. N.M. Butakova recalls how she went to Khrivankhovo with her sister: “After we harvested potatoes in September on a sunny day we would take some food and go there — just we two. We would come there, undress, wash ourselves and that’s it. Then we would sit down, eat, talk, then have a cup of some water again, wash ourselves and go home”. Thus, here it is possible to talk about the emotive function of springs contributing to the psychological wellbeing.

Is it possible to talk about the environmental function of the sacred water springs? On the one hand, the area around the springs is tended, as around the spring in Khamenkha settlement. On the other hand, a spring could cause an environmental disaster, as happened in the Maryin gorge. Lack of environmental culture among the pilgrims leads to the destruction and depletion of herbs and plants, as in the town of Khrivankhovo.

Springs and wells are special places where at any given time the people, the state and the Church manifested themselves in their full energy, each achieving their goal. This goal united them as well as parted them, making them either allies or opponents. Yet, all sacred springs, despite the antagonism and lack of understanding of the parties that exist even today, have always carried out their social and spiritual functions,

displaying different facets of popular religious attitude in the context of the history of the country and the region.

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