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**TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE SYSTEM OF SECONDARY RELIGIOUS  
EDUCATION OF THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE IN THE XIX - EARLY XX  
CENTURIES ON THE EXAMPLE OF KURSK PROVINCE**

Abstract to the dissertation for the degree of candidate of historical  
sciences

Specialty 5.6.1. Domestic history

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**Relevance of the topic of the dissertation research.** Throughout its history, theological education in the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) underwent several reforms, particularly intensive during the period of the 19th century to the early 20th century, when it was often correlated with reforms in secular education. The reforms of 1808-1814 laid the foundation for theological education, the structure of which underwent reconstruction during the reforms of 1839, 1869, 1884, and underwent some changes at the beginning of the 20th century. This research is devoted to identifying the mechanisms for the practical implementation of theological education reforms during the 19th to early 20th centuries using the example of the Kursk Theological Seminary. The main task of the seminaries is not only to train future pastors but also to provide children of the clergy with basic education. The imperial state took an active part in this process. The complexity of the reforms of this period includes, on the one hand, the heterogeneity of views on the role of pastoral ministry among the initiators of the reforms. On the other hand, theological education had to combine general and theological education, which within the clergy class led to a conflict of interests, most clearly outlined by the end of the period under consideration. The introduction of new charters and transformations in the Kursk Theological Seminary, the analysis of their effectiveness, and the difficulties associated with their implementation allow us to identify, through specific examples, not only local features of the church-historical plan but also clarify the general principles of church reforms in the Russian Empire.

**The degree of development of the scientific problem.** Historiography is traditionally divided into three periods: pre-revolutionary, Soviet, and post-Soviet. Pre-revolutionary historiography regarding the research topic can be divided into:

- Fundamental works on the history of theological education in Russia as a whole, including the history of the Kursk Theological Seminary;
- Works directly studying the history of the Kursk Theological Seminary;
- Works studying the lives of Kursk bishops and rectors of the Kursk Seminary who were at the origins of theological education in the Kursk diocese or headed the theological seminary.

The dissertation research reflects the works of such authors as: Rostislavov D.I. «On the Organization of Theological Schools in Russia»<sup>1</sup>, in which he

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<sup>1</sup> Rostislavov D. I. On the establishment of theological schools in Russia. Vol.1 and 2. Leipzig: Franz Wagner, 1866-1094. p.

critically evaluates the state of the educational and upbringing system of theological educational institutions in the mid-19th century; Znamensky P.V.<sup>2</sup> examines the activities of seminaries in an educational and upbringing context, addresses issues of material support for seminaries, and provides statistical data, including on the Kursk Seminary of the 18th century; Titlinov B.V.<sup>3</sup> addresses the 19th century, supporting the reforms of theological education conducted in 1814 and 1869 but strictly criticizing the Protasov reforms of 1839, providing statistical data on the Kursk Theological Seminary; Matvey Arkhangel'sky, whose extensive article about the Kursk Seminary was included in the «Proceedings of the Kursk Provincial Statistical Committee»<sup>4</sup> in 1863; Chistyakov A.A., Senatorovsky N.P., Lashchenkov I., Tankov A., whose scientific notes about the Kursk Seminary were published in various parts of the Kursk Diocesan Gazette; Titov F.I.<sup>5</sup> in his work «Theological Schools of the Kursk-Belgorod Diocese» considers educational and upbringing issues, material and economic support of the theological seminary and schools of the Kursk province from the beginning of the 18th to the mid-19th century; Lebedev A.S.<sup>6</sup> and Titov A.A.<sup>7</sup> described the activities of Belgorod bishops of the 18th century, focusing on their attitudes towards theological education; Bogdanov A.S.<sup>8</sup>, within the framework of describing the biography of Archimandrite Nikodim Kazantsev, provides information about the state of the Kursk Theological Seminary during his rectorship. Periodicals of the pre-revolutionary period contain numerous articles attempting a critical understanding of what was happening, including in the system of theological education and youth upbringing<sup>9</sup>.

Research conducted during the Soviet period in our country only addressed the revolutionary activities of Kursk seminarians, reflected in the works of Titlinov B.V.<sup>10</sup>, Volk S.S.<sup>11</sup>, Sedov M.G.<sup>12</sup> The emigration scholars N.M. Zernov<sup>13</sup> and I.K.

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<sup>2</sup> Znamensky P. Theological schools in Russia before the reform of 1808. Kazan: Printing House Of The Imperial University, 1881. 807 P.

<sup>3</sup> Titlinov B.V. The theological school in Russia in the 19th century. Issues 1 and 2. Vilna: Artel of Printing, 1908-1909. 421 P.

<sup>4</sup> Proceedings of the Kursk Provincial Statistical Committee. The first issue. Kursk: Printing House Of The Provincial Government, 1863. 389 P.

<sup>5</sup> Titov Fyodor. Theological schools of the Kursk-Belgorod diocese. Vol. 1-2, 3. Kursk: Printing and lithography by Br.N. and I. Vanin, 1895-1896. 1183 P.

<sup>6</sup> Lebedev A. S. Belgorod bishops and the environment of their archpastoral activity. Kharkov: Printing house Printing house, 1902. 230 p.

<sup>7</sup> Titov A. Belgorod bishops in the XVIII century. Moscow: University Printing House, Strastnoy Boulevard, 1906. 29 p.

<sup>8</sup> Bogdanov A.S. The Life of Archimandrite Nikodim Kazantsev. // Theological Bulletin. 1910. No. 1. pp. 59-77.

<sup>9</sup> Kursk Diocesan Gazette, 1871-1912.

<sup>10</sup> Titlinov B.V. Youth and revolution. 1860-1905 – Leningrad: State Publishing House, 1924. 167 p.

<sup>11</sup> Revolutionary populism of the 70s of the XIX century (1876-1882). Vol. 2. Ed. Volka S.S. M.: Nauka Publ., 1965. 472 P.

<sup>12</sup> Sedov M.G. The heroic period of revolutionary populism. Moscow: Mysl, 1966. 365 p.

Smolich<sup>14</sup> provide general data on the reforms of theological education during the Synodal period. American Rusists Gregory Freeze<sup>15</sup> and Laurie Manchester<sup>16</sup> offer a perspective different from that of pre-revolutionary researchers on church state relations during the imperial period, helping to understand the nature of reforms, including those in the sphere of theological education.

In the postsoviet period, the educational manual «The Orthodox Church in the History of Rus', Russia, and the USSR» by Canadian historian of Russian origin D.V. Pospelovsky<sup>17</sup> and the fundamental work on church history by Archpriest Vladislav Tsy-pin<sup>18</sup> were published. These works also address issues of reforming theological education. The dissertation research also examines a number of dissertations, monographs, and articles devoted to the history of theological education both in general and using the example of specific theological schools by such authors as: Sushko A.V.<sup>19</sup>, Adamov M.A.<sup>20</sup>, Evdokimova A.G.<sup>21</sup>, Kivelev M.N.<sup>22</sup>, Kurenkov A.S.<sup>23</sup>, Tarasov E.V.<sup>24</sup>, Bugrov Yu.A.<sup>25</sup>, Stepanov V.B.<sup>26</sup>, Krupenkov A.N. and O. Kobets<sup>27</sup>, Anikin A., Belosludtseva V.V., Bogemskaya N.N., Goncharov M.A., Plokhova M.G., Ovsyannikova A.A., Osmyachko S.G., Pyatereva M.B., Sanakina T.A., Tarasov V.E., Fedoruk V.N., Bishop Theodosius (Vasnev), Bezhanidze G.V., Matkhanova N.P., Agarkov A.V.,

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<sup>13</sup> Nikolai Zernov. *The Universal Church and Russian Orthodoxy*. YMCA- PRESS, 1952. 319 P.

<sup>14</sup> Smolich I. *On the History of the Russian Church (1700-1917)*. Moscow: Publishing House of the Transfiguration of the Savior. Balaam. Monastery, 1996. 798 P.

<sup>15</sup> Frieze of G. "Ruinous piety": *The Russian Church and the Fall of the Empire: a collection of Articles / Gregory Frieze*; translated from English by A. Glebovskaya, M. Dolbilov; edited by P. Rogozny. St. Petersburg : Publishing House of the European University in St. Petersburg, 2019. 352 P.

<sup>16</sup> Manchester L. *Popovichi in the World: Clergy, Intelligentsia and the Formation of Modern Self-awareness in Russia*. Translated from English by A.Y. Polunov, Moscow : New Literary Review, 2015. 448 p.

<sup>17</sup> Pospelovsky D.V. *The Orthodox Church in the History of Russia, Russia and the USSR*. Textbook. Moscow: BBI St. Andrew, 1996. 357 P.

<sup>18</sup> Vladislav Tsy-pin, Archpriest. *The History of the Russian Church (1917 – 1997)*. Moscow: Publishing House of the Transfiguration of the Savior. Balaam. Monastery, 1997. 830 p.

<sup>19</sup> Sushko A.V. *Theological seminaries in Post-Reform Russia (1861-1884)*. St. Petersburg: I.I. Mechnikov St. Petersburg State University, 2010. 256 p.

<sup>20</sup> Adamov M. A. *The daily life of students of theological seminaries of the Russian Orthodox Church in the XVIII – early XX centuries : dis. ...Candidate of Historical Sciences/ M. A. Adamov*. Kursk, 2011. 355 P.

<sup>21</sup> Evdokimova A. G. *General features and local specifics of the 1905 revolution In the Russian province on a typical example of Kursk province / A. G. Evdokimova // Scientific notes*. Electronic scientific journal of Kursk State University. 2015. No. 4(36). [Electronic resource: <http://scientific-notes.ru/magazine/archive/number/41> ].

<sup>22</sup> Kivelev M.N. *Seminary in Belgorod during the reign of Archbishop Theoktist (Mochulsky) // Proceedings of the Belgorod Theological Seminary (with a missionary orientation)*. Issue IV (anniversary). Belgorod, 2016. pp. 53-62.

<sup>23</sup> Kurenkov A.S. *The spiritual mission of the Belgorod Theological Seminary: history and Modernity. // Science. Art. Culture*. 2017. No. 2 (14). pp. 90-98.

<sup>24</sup> Tarasov E.V. *The history of the educational process in the theological school in the 19th century. // Proceedings of the Belgorod Orthodox Theological Seminary (with a missionary orientation)*. Issue IX. Belbrod, 2019. pp.33-46.

<sup>25</sup> Bugrov Yu.A. *History of the Kursk Diocese*. Kursk: YUMEX, 2003. 104 P.

<sup>26</sup> Stepanov V.B. *Walking around the city. Guides to the historical center of Kursk*. Kursk: IPP "Kursk", 2006. 368 P.

<sup>27</sup> Oleg Kobets, Archpriest, A.N. Krupenkov, N.F. Krupenkov, *History of the Belgorod Diocese*. Belgorod: Belgorod Regional Printing House, 2006. 399 p.

Greznnev A.A., Popova O.D., Popova A.D., Prakht D.V., Lavitskaya M.I., Nikolsky P.V., Feofanov A.M.

It is particularly important to mention the works of N.Yu. Sukhova<sup>28</sup> and A. V. Druzhinin<sup>29</sup>, which cover a wide range of issues related to theological education during the Synodal period.

### **Research objectives.**

The goal of the research is to reveal the practical implementation of reforms from the 19th to the early 20th century in the system of secondary theological education at the Kursk Theological Seminary and to assess their transformative significance.

**The research objectives** to be achieved for the dissertation:

1. To describe the history of the formation and development of the Kursk Theological Seminary in the 18th century as a foundation for subsequent reforms in secondary theological education in the Kursk province.
2. To analyze the implementation of the 1814 reform at the Kursk Theological Seminary and to assess the state of secondary theological education at the seminary on the eve of the 1839 reform.
3. To reveal the essence of the Protasov reforms and study their implementation at the Kursk Theological Seminary.
4. To describe the implementation of the 1869 reforms at the Kursk Seminary; to study the policy of “counter-reforms” and its impact on secondary theological education in the Kursk province; to evaluate transformations at the Kursk Seminary in the context of the revolutionary events of 1905 and 1917, and World War I.

### **Research frameworks**

The object of the research is the system of secondary theological education in the Russian Empire.

The subject of the research is changes in the educational system of the Kursk Theological Seminary from the beginning of the 19th century until its closure in 1918.

**The chronological framework** of the research covers the period from 1808 to 1918. The reform of theological education initiated under Emperor Alexander I

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<sup>28</sup> Sukhova N.Y. Higher Theological school: problems and reforms (the second half of the 19th century). Moscow: 2006. 658 p.

<sup>29</sup> Druzhinin A.V. Training of a pastor in a Russian Theological School: reflection, discussion and practice (1808-1869) : dis. ...Candidate of theology/ A.V.Druzhini. Moscow: 2022. 518 P.

in 1808-1814 was taken as the starting point of the research period, with 1918 (the year of the closure of the Kursk Theological Seminary) chosen as the end date.

**The territorial framework** of the research is defined by the space of the Kursk province within the boundaries of the Russian Empire in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

### **Theoretical and methodological basis of the research**

The theoretical foundations of the research are based on the premise that the system of theological education at the Kursk Theological Seminary is considered not as a “static” institution, but as a process of development under specific historical conditions of the 19th-early 20th centuries. The Kursk Seminary is not an isolated institution but a subsystem within the ROC, state apparatus, and regional communities. The research methods are based on general scientific methods such as synthesis, analysis, induction, deduction, as well as the classical principle of historicism, objectivity in selecting facts, phenomena, and events under consideration, their historical continuity. The dynamics of their development and changes in a specific historical period are taken into account. A comprehensive examination and generalization of data in the theological education system at the locally examined Kursk Theological Seminary during the period under study are applied.

The research employs special historical methods, such as the historical-genetic method, which allows tracing changes in secondary theological education in the Kursk province during the 19th-20th centuries as a single process, with stages deriving from one another. The comparative-historical and problem-historical methods enable the interpretation of historical sources’ content and analysis of cause-and-effect relationships between individual events and phenomena.

### **Information base of the research**

The information base of the research is determined by the objectives and tasks of the dissertation work. It includes unpublished and published documents of various types, such as:

1. Regulatory documents, legislative and legal acts concerning the formation of the theological education system in the Russian Empire.
2. Unpublished and published business documents of the Russian Church and state bodies.
3. Memoirs and recollections.
4. Periodical press materials.

## 5. Fiction literature.

**The validity and reliability of the research results** are determined by a comprehensive study of various documentary sources, including archival documents and previously unpublished materials collected in GARF (State Archive of the Russian Federation), RGIA (Russian State Historical Archive), GAKO (State Archive of the Kursk Region), GABO (State Archive of the Belgorod Region), as well as the application of basic principles and methods of their research.

### **Provisions submitted for defense and having scientific novelty.**

1. It has been revealed that by the beginning of the reforms of 1808–1812, the Kursk province had a seminary requiring some adjustments in its activities to comply with the upcoming reforms in the field of theological education. Specifically, it предполагала seven-year education instead of six-year, had a different list of subjects, and their distribution across classes was different (п.12 «History of the Development of Culture, Science, and Education in Russia, its Regions, and Peoples» of the passport of scientific specialty 5.6.1. «National History»).

2. It has been shown that the reforms of 1808–1812 were not fully implemented at the Kursk Seminary. The level of teacher training and material support was improved, but the educational process was not structured to the required degree, hindered by the seminary's leadership, represented by Rector Archpriest Ioann Savchenko, who, for example, ignored the statutory teaching of Holy Scripture. Additionally, the Kursk Seminary admitted more students than its material resources could support, negatively affecting the level of education and behavior control (п.12 «History of the Development of Culture, Science, and Education in Russia, its Regions, and Peoples» of the passport of scientific specialty 5.6.1. «National History»).

3. It has been established that the Protasov reforms, aimed at educating a pastor close and understandable to the common believer, were implemented at the Kursk Theological Seminary. Conducted inspections showed that the seminary's leadership acted according to the charter. Only teachers practicing memorization of subjects without understanding were criticized. The introduction of staffing positively affected students' material support, education level, and discipline control. The negative reaction from the Kursk Seminary's teachers is evident in the introduction of subjects such as land surveying, medicine, and natural history (п.12 «History of the Development of Culture, Science, and Education in Russia, its Regions, and Peoples» of the passport of scientific specialty 5.6.1. «National History»)

4. It has been proven that the counterreforms did not find sympathy among the teaching corporation of the Kursk Seminary, which was deprived of direct influence on the life of the theological school. This contrasts sharply with the liberal period preceding the counterreforms, when the academic teaching corporation directly participated in administering the educational process. The counterreforms also failed to gain support among the students of the Kursk Seminary, whose discontent manifested itself in mass disturbances of 1901–1902 and 1905–1906. Analysis of subsequent events, particularly the activities of the Kursk Union of Theological School Teachers, revealed the teaching corporation's стремление to a clear division between general and theological education. However, this could not be realized due to the change in the socio-political system and the anti-church activities of the state (п.4 «History of the relationship between власти and society, state bodies and public institutions of Russia and its regions», п.12 «History of the development of culture, science, and education in Russia, its regions, and peoples» of the passport of scientific specialty 5.6.1. «National History»).

**Compliance of the dissertation topic with the requirements of the VAK's specialization passport.**

The research complies with the passport of scientific specialty 5.6.1. National History:

п.4 «History of the relationship between власти and society, state bodies and public institutions of Russia and its regions»

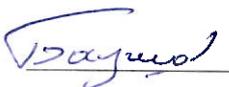
п.12 «History of the development of culture, science, and education in Russia, its regions, and peoples»

**Theoretical and practical significance of the research.**

The theoretical significance of the research is determined by the впервые conducted analysis and обобщение of significant empirical and theoretical material. This allowed, using the example of the Kursk Theological Seminary, to understand the process of origin and transformation of theological education in the 19th – early 20th centuries. The practical significance of the work lies in the fact that the dissertation materials can be used in compiling courses on the history of the отечество, the history of the Russian Orthodox Church, and the history of theological education. The обобщения and conclusions of the research can become the basis for improving publicchurch interaction in the field of гуманитарного education and нравственного воспитания in the Russian Federation.

### **Scientific problem.**

The scientific problem is обусловлен by the need to conduct a comprehensive analysis of changes in the system of theological education in the Russian Empire in the 19th early 20th centuries using the example of the Kursk Theological Seminary. It is necessary to clarify the nature of these changes, evaluate their consequences, and assess the impact on transformations in the theological education system from the state, church, and clergy.

 R. B. Baushov