# *Small Burial Churches in Eighteenth and Nineteenth-Century Russian Monasteries*

***Abstract:***

*During the eighteenth century many small burial churches were built by private persons in Russian monasteries, usually on existing tombs. Monasteries have been prestigious places for burial and commemoration of the dead in Russia since the Middle Ages. Church burial in the Orthodox tradition is often treated as an ambiguous practice placed somewhere between piety and pride. Only the members of ruling dynasties and the higher clergy seem to have the undoubted right to be buried in a church. In spite of this, since the sixteenth century many Russian nobles and wealthy merchants were buried in the above-mentioned way, usually for being church founders. The reasons to build small and short-lived burial churches were to evade the prohibition of building small "cabin" chapels on the graves and not only to be buried in a church but also to become a church founder, receiving greater spiritual benefits and the guaranteed right to church burial.*

***Keywords:*** *burial churches, monasteries, eighteenth and nineteenth-century Russia, Orthodoxy, commemoration.*