

## THE PRAGMATICS OF RUSSIAN DEDICATIONS

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What I would like to tell you today is a story: the story of one of my current projects.

Contemporary Russian dedications, defined as ‘addresses prefixed to books and inscribed to someone by the author, as a mark of esteem or love’ are one among a handful of interrelated topics on which I am currently working. I chose to talk today about it because it comes closest to the declared interest of the Philology Research Group in textual study. This is work-in-progress and it will be presented to you in the sequence in which the issue occurred to me. My talk will consist of three parts. First, I will give you some idea of the general framework in which my interest for dedications as a literary genre and a speech act arose. Then, I will go on to show how the analysis of dedications from a pragmatic point of view can contribute to proving my hypothesis. Finally, I will point out to some interesting possibilities for further research on Russian dedications.

### I.

In my contacts with Russians,<sup>1</sup> ever since I visited Russia for the first time in 1979, I have experienced communicative difficulties that puzzled me. Those were never purely linguistic troubles because I was from the beginning fairly fluent in Russian. Over the years I was faced with communicative breakdowns repeatedly but could not put my finger on the reason for them. By **communicative breakdown** I understand “a mismatch of communicative intention and communicative effect” caused by “a lack of shared expectations” (M. Clyne in ELL, 2, 959-960). Now I can offer a tentative explanation for this recurring experience in the framework of functionalism. According to Ralph Linton’s classical definition, each social system consists of **statuses**, that is, positions occupied at a given time by particular individuals. **Social roles** is the term used to denote the activities associated with statuses. (Linton 1945, 76-82). My hypothesis is that from the point of view of the relationship between statuses and their incumbents, societies form a continuum between two poles. On one pole are societies which require from their members to repress latent statuses that a person might have while exercising the social role of the active status. On the other pole are societies which allow their members to overlap social roles. It should be noted that I refer here to societies of the same level of complexity and differentiation.<sup>2</sup> Obviously, there must be a hierarchy of statuses which controls which statuses a person should repress in a given situation and which can be simultaneously active. I will denote the type of personality required by society to repress latent statuses as **faceted personality** and the opposite type – as **monolithic personality**. A division especially relevant for the faceted personality appears to be that between the private and the public sphere of life. The probability of overlapping of social roles across the private / public boundary is lower than that of overlapping inside each sphere. In other words, a person who has the social roles of [ENGINEER], [CITIZEN], [HUSBAND] and [FRIEND] will keep less transparent boundaries between [ENGINEER] and [CITIZEN], on one hand, and [HUSBAND] and [FRIEND], on the other, than between [HUSBAND] and [FRIEND]. Of course, the opposition faceted vs. monolithic personality is not an absolute one. It is more a distinction of degree. In the framework of this hypothesis, my experiences of communicative breakdown are, at least partly, to be understood as a clash between the faceted personality typical for Russia and my own personality which happens to be closer to the monolithic type. In my contacts with Russians, I was doing what I normally do: I was systematically trying to convince my interlocutors to go beyond their active status and deal with me from the positions of one human being to another. This strategy of mine as a part of argumentative discourse (i.e. discourse aiming at persuasion) was much less successful in Russia than it has been in other countries where I have lived. My attempts in the majority of cases led nowhere which I perceived as a slap

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<sup>1</sup> I am using the term **Russian** here in accordance with the Western practice to denote not only ethnic Russians, but anyone who was born and raised in the Soviet Union. My own experience, however, comes mostly from contacts with residents of the capital, Moscow.

<sup>2</sup> It is well known that there is a correlation between the degree of complexity of a society and the differentiation of social statuses.

in the face. I feel that it is time to give an example. I'll choose a situation which I witnessed in the Kiev railway station in Moscow last year.

In order to get onto a train, a passenger in Russia is supposed to show a valid ticket for that particular carriage to the carriage attendant. Normally, a passenger would not be allowed to enter a carriage which is not the one for which s/he has ticket. Before the train pulls off, each carriage attendant picks up the steps to the carriage. While the train gains speed, carriage attendants stand in the open doors of their carriages.

A passenger with two suitcases arrived running in front of the door of the last carriage (which was closest to the station) at the moment when the Moscow – Sofia long distance train was in still stand yet but the steps had already been removed. He tried to persuade the carriage attendant to let him in, although this was obviously not the carriage for which his ticket was issued. The carriage attendant did not agree, telling the passenger to look for his own carriage. At that moment the train pulled off. The passenger started running after it with the suitcases and shouting: “Let me in. Будь человеком! (Be a human being!)”. It would have been easy for the carriage attendant to step back and let the passenger in but he didn't. The passenger missed the train and lost the fare (tickets are not refundable after the departure of the train).

Behaving like a human being is exactly what one cannot expect from the faceted personality. It is meaningful that the appeal that someone sees reason and reacts decently in spite of the prescriptions of the social role can be worded by speakers of Russian with an expression like *Будь человеком!*<sup>3</sup> which contains the noun *человек* ‘person, human being’. There are, therefore, two alternative perspectives on the situation witnessed by me: **a)** from the vantage point of the statuses involved – [PASSENGER] and [CARRIAGE ATTENDANT]; **b)** from a general human vantage point. Let us consider what our two types of personality would rather do in a situation like this. Any competent status holder corresponds by definition to the expectations that society has of the status in question. If society expects non-transparent boundaries among statuses, holders who stick to the letter of the respective social role description are safe. Such persons will not be sanctioned for not being decent and /or kind. On the other hand, shirking one's duties can potentially be detrimental. The **principle of ordering**, an aspect of the notion of preference, introduced by H. Sacks and analyzed by J. Bilmes, can be employed to make sense of the different options that faceted and monolithic personalities have at their disposal. It states:

In the appropriate situation do (or say) X, unless you have reason not to (Bilmes 1988, 163).

The preferred actions of a faceted personality would be those that allow it to remain in the space confined by its active social role. It will need a special reason to go beyond that space. A monolithic personality, on the contrary, will be conducted in its choice of a course of action more by general human considerations. It will need a special reason to do something that contradicts these considerations. I would like to emphasize that a monolithic personality has this preference only because society expects it to have it. It will be sanctioned by society for doing otherwise. I do not mean to say that a monolithic personality is necessarily superior morally to a faceted personality or that a monolithic personality is always going to be kind or decent. This framework also can explain why bribes should be a more efficient means of appeal of official decisions in a society which favours the faceted personality structure, whereas use of personal connections would do a better job in a society which favours the monolithic personality structure. Bribed officials remain in the boundaries of their social role, whereas the officials who do a favour to someone who happens to be a close friend of an old aunt display an overlapping between their public and private statuses.

This entire line of thinking acquires in significance when we recall Slavophile views on the different structure of personality in Russia and the West. Ivan V. Kireevsky, in a famous essay “On the Nature of

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<sup>3</sup> For another illustration of the use of this appeal cf. A. Терехов. *Избранное*. Москва: Terra, 1997, 12.

European Culture and Its Relation to the Culture of Russia” (1852) claims that the relation of a person to private property, fundamentally different in pre-imperial Russia from that in the West, produced a different structure of personality. The western individual has “fragmented his life into separate aspirations”, the separate dimensions of the westerner’s personality – such as religious sensibility, the practical faculty, ethical and family life, etc. – are held together through abstract reason. Traditionally, a Russian, on the other hand, used to have a spontaneously integral character (Marc Raeff (ed.) *Russian Intellectual History: An Anthology*. Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 1999, 200-201). It should be remembered that the nostalgic writings of Slavophiles about the “true” Russian character date from a time when the reforms of Peter the Great had made traditional Russian way of life a thing of the past, partially preserved only by peasantry. It has also been pointed out that the portrait of the true Russian finds parallels in early nineteenth-century German Romantic writing (Andrzej Walicki, *The Slavophile Controversy: History of a Conservative Utopia in Nineteenth-Century Russian Thought*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975, 160 ff.). Even so, there is a certain resemblance between my experience of Soviet Russians and that of westerners, as presented by Kireevsky. Could it be that a hundred years or so after the Slavophiles, Russians had acquired even more pronounced western features than before, becoming – so to say – more catholic than the pope? Anyway, my experience and the questions it raises echo a debate of long standing in Russian society and thus deserve serious attention.

As a linguist, I am first of all interested whether linguistic data can corroborate my hypothesis about the predominance of the faceted personality in Russia. A prediction on the basis of this hypothesis would be that Russian would have a more abundant and nuanced vocabulary designating behaviour related to social roles either corresponding to expectations or in defiance of them than a language spoken in a society with a preference for the monolithic personality. Speakers of Russian would also be expected to pay close attention to the lack of correspondence of individuals to their active statuses and to comment on it. Such linguistic data can be found. Russian sociolinguists have noticed that statuses are connected with a specific speech behaviour as a part of the corresponding social roles: *офицер командует* ‘a (military) officer gives orders’, *продавец грубит* ‘a salesman behaves rudely’, *учитель ругает* ‘a teacher scolds’ (Markasova 1997). These are the stereotypes which make phrases containing an explicit or implicit comparison with a social role understandable to speakers of Russian: *начальственный окрик* ‘peremptory cry’, lit. ‘bossy cry’, *оставь свой прокурорский тон* ‘drop your prosecutor’s tone’, *кричит как базарная торговка* ‘s/he yells like a market-woman’ (Krysin 1989, 134). Competent members of society are sensitive to any changes of status-related speech stereotype. I will illustrate this with two quotations, one regarding to the speech stereotype of teachers and the other – to that of bureaucrats. The first comes from a transcribed conversation which took place in 1991 among three female residents of Moscow. They were talking about an acquaintance, a dance teacher, who had emigrated to the United States:

**Н.** Она единс(твен)ный специалист в своём гор(о)де / (*пауза*) но пишет / что “здесь мне работа / не приносит такого (*конец фразы произносится с улыбкой в голосе*) удовлетворения / как в Москве // Почему? Потому что / детей ругать нельзя //

**М.** Угу //

**Н.** А ко(г)да их не ругаешь / они и ни фигу не делают // (*смеются; последующие слова произносит со смехом в голосе*) Поэтому гыт / я просто бьюсь как / (*усмехаётся*) рыба об лёд / и желаемых результатов / я не достигаю / хотя все остальные довольны // И родители / и дети // Но у меня / удовлетворения нет / никакого” пишет она // (Kitajgorodskaja and Rozanova 1995, 79)

**N.** She is the only professional in her town (*pause*) but she writes that “here work does not bring me such (*the end of the phrase is pronounced with a smile in the voice*) a satisfaction as it did in Moscow. Why? Because one is not allowed to scold the children.

**M.** Uh huh.

**N.** But when one doesn’t scold them they do not put forth any effort (*All laugh. The next words are pronounced with laugh in the voice*) That’s why, she says, I just struggle (*smiles*) desperately but I do not achieve the desired results. Although everyone else is pleased, both parents and children. But I myself do not have any satisfaction” she writes.

The dance teacher feels that she is not as efficient in performing her role as she could have been because in the United States she is confronted with a different definition of the teacher's role which is not associated with scolding as a legitimate "trade-mark" speech behaviour.

The second example comes from an article by a journalist. It describes the surprise that a representative of the general public experiences at the unexpected friendly manner of an official.

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| Сначала послышался голос. Но не тот, ставший уже привычным всем нам, – сухой, резкий, не терпящий возражений – чиновный. А совсем наоборот: теплый, мягкий и даже, как нам показалось, сочувственный. [...] Однако, к сожалению, нежный голос, журчащий из министерского далека, вымолвил, по сути, то, что с давних времен стало уже стандартом... ( <i>Юность</i> 1989, № 4, 84) | At first we heard a voice. But that was not the voice of a high rank bureaucrat with which we all are so well acquainted – dry, strident, brooking no contradiction. On the contrary, it was a warm, gentle voice and even, it seemed to us, sympathetic. [...] But, unfortunately, the kind voice murmuring from the ministerial remoteness pronounced the same things which have long ago become a standard... |
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The typical *чиновный голос* 'voice of a high rank bureaucrat' is characterized as "dry, strident, brooking no contradiction". Even if the atypical warm, gentle and sympathetic voice turns out to be no more helpful, its deviance from the norm is duly noted.

## II.

Further research along these lines can improve the understanding of the Russian folk model of social roles. A different set of linguistic data can also support my hypothesis. The Russian preference for the faceted personality can be analyzed in conjunction with Russian discourse patterns. It has been noted, for instance, that kinship terms like *мама* 'mom', *папа* 'dad' and *тетя* 'auntie' have a pattern of complementary distribution in speech with their synonyms *мать* 'mother', *отец* 'father', *тетка* 'aunt'. The former series is used mostly by family members and only in situations where their active status allows it. The latter is preferred in official situations, defined very broadly as any situations involving strangers. If one meets a subordinate (or, alternatively, a boss), while shopping with mom, it would be inappropriate to make acquaintances referring to her as *мама* (Petrishcheva 1984, 129-132).

It is in this framework that my interest in dedications arose. 'Dedicate' is an illocutionary act which can be classified as a **declaration** according to Searle's taxonomy of illocutionary acts or "general ways of using language" (Searle 1979, viii, 16-19). Declarations are "performative" illocutionary acts, i.e. acts brought into existence by being declared to exist. Searle exemplifies the category with sentences like:

You're fired.  
I christen this ship the battleship Missouri.  
War is hereby declared.

An important characteristics of declarations is that simple linguistic competence is an insufficient condition to make a speaker eligible to perform a declaration. Only speakers who are holders of a particular status have the necessary authority to *excommunicate*, *appoint* or *resign*. One needs to be the author of a piece of work in order to be eligible to dedicate it to anyone. Being a prerogative of the author, the act of dedication can be construed as a part of the associated social role. On the other hand, however, dedications are at present "a mark of esteem or love". As such, they can be addressed to a person whose past conduct to the individual who is the holder of active status [AUTHOR] has been such to deserve it. In other words, the addressee of a dedication might have earned merit in his dealings with the author not as an [AUTHOR] but in some other status, such as a [FRIEND] or a [SISTER]. Dedications, therefore, have a flexibility of form which can accommodate both authors with a faceted and a monolithic personality. My prediction is that the

former will try to stick to their active status, whereas the latter will feel free to dedicate their books to whomever they choose.

The overview of the corpus of dedications collected for this project shows that there is no one general status [AUTHOR] but rather a plethora of statuses: [POET], [FICTION WRITER], [MEMOIRS WRITER], [SCHOLAR], etc. The social roles associated with each of these statuses allow for a varying degree of status boundary transparency. This degree is highest for poets (with fiction writers following them closely) because their personal lives are thought to be intertwined with the process of creative production. This explains the traditional interest in the personal lives and individual character traits of poets and writers of fiction which is almost totally lacking in the case of scholars who are perceived in a modernist perspective as machines for discovering objective truths.<sup>4</sup> Most numerous and most personal are the dedications by Russian poets. There are fewer Russian novels and short stories which are dedicated to anybody. Even fewer are the Russian scholarly books which are provided with a dedication. It is the social status [SCHOLAR] that I chose to look into here. Before proceeding to do so, however, I would like to cite an indirect confirmation of the relevance of dedications as a marker of status, offered in Fazil Iskander's short story "Принц Олденбургский" (The Prince of Oldenburg). The Oldenburg family had been for generations in Russia and was thoroughly russified but it was known for its eccentricity. One of the queer things that members of the family did was the following:

Так дед Александра Петровича, принц Георгий, будучи генерал-губернатором нескольких губерний и при том дельным генерал-губернатором, писал стихи. Мало того, что он их писал, он их еще и печатал на всеобщее обозрение, неизменно посвящая стихи собственной жене, великой княгине Екатерине Павловне, что было почти неприлично (Iskander 1979, 49).

Thus, Alexander Petrovich's grandfather, Prince George, being governor general of several provinces and at that an efficient one, wrote poems. As if it were not enough that he wrote poems, he also published them for everyone to read and also invariably dedicated them to his own wife, the Grand Duchess Ekaterina Pavlovna, which was almost indecent.

It is this perceived "indecent" marking dedications of scholarly work to members of one's own family that I would like to explore here with statistical data. In order to support my statement about the overall paucity of scholarly dedications, I searched 456 Russian linguistics monographs and textbooks owned by our University Library and found that only 36 of them or 7.9% had a dedication. English language linguistics monographs and textbooks, on the other hand, have many more dedications: out of the same number of 456 randomly chosen books 265 [58.1%] turned out to have a dedication. This last number agrees with Robert Gifford's (1988) statistics which was based on a sample of 557 psychology books and found that 389 of them or 69.8% had a dedication. Rule # 1 of Russian scholars appears, therefore, to be: If you can avoid writing a dedication, do so. Rule # 2 states that people who have passed away are a more appropriate addressees for a dedication than living people. To 53.2% of dedications to the memory of addressees in my corpus of 78 Russian humanities monographs corresponds 9.6% in the English language linguistics books. In a letter from September 3, 1899 to Maxim Gorky, Anton Chekhov explicitly supports this finding, stating that dedications to living people are unacceptable to him and that he regrets having dedicated in the past some of his work to living people (Chekhov 1950, 310).

The majority of dedications in Russian, as in English, are addressed to people (either individuals or whole categories of people). The status of some of these people and /or their relation to the author are made explicit in the dedication itself, others are just named. Let us first have a look at the addressees whose status is a given. Close relatives are represented in greater numbers and in a much broader range in the

<sup>4</sup> For a typical treatment of a poet's dedication cf. Budyko 1984. The positioning of dedications as a literary genre in the liminal area between literature and the life of its creators is made obvious in memoirs as those by the poet Evgeny Evtushenko in which the act of dedicating and re-dedicating poetry is mentioned as relevant on many occasions (cf. e.g. Evtushenko 1998, 6, 236, 441).

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English language sample than in the Russian language one. The English sample includes positions such as grandparents, uncle, grand-uncle, nephew, son and children, which are not represented in the Russian sample at all. Representatives of the public sphere are mostly scholars, colleagues, teachers and informants. In general, it is the senior and the peer generations of the author that are better represented in the Russian sample. My English language data find confirmation in Robert Gifford's sample (who included in his public status data only scholars and students).

Although the status of a number of addressees is not defined by the author in the dedication itself (and this number is much greater in the English language sample than in the Russian one), information about the status of some of them can be deduced with some degree of certainty. One can consider addressees whose last name coincides with that of the author as kin and addressees of whom only first name (or, in Russian, first name and patronymic) is mentioned as kin or (maybe) friends. A category of English language dedications which has no counterpart in Russian scholarly books are dedications that are of such a private nature that they do not even give the name of the addressee but only initials and sometimes contain some other cryptic message understandable only to the addressee. As an example I can cite the following dedications:

For A.S.W.  
JTLDMIDTNDNFUDMDGK

TO  
H W L  
FOR  
12 IV 46

I have considered that such dedications belong to the private sphere. They are private in two ways: they not only address a person with whom the author has a private relationship but the author also directly talks to that person, so to say, over the head of the reader. For a moment, the author suppresses the active status, which, I would like to repeat, is the one that makes the dedication possible in the first place, in order to pay his or her regards as a private person. The total absence of this type of dedications in the Russian sample is significant.

Some names of addressees, on the other hand, belong to well known people, frequently, specialists in the field in which the author works. Examples include names like Harold Garfinkel, Harvey Sacks, Hilary Putnam, Noam Chomsky and Sebastiano Timpanaro (mentioned by Dario Del Puppo, the previous speaker at the series of talks organized by the Philology Research Group) or - in the Russian sample - Alexandr Alexandrovich Reformatskij, Pavel Konstantinovich Simoni, Sergei Ivanovich Ozhegov, Innokentij Fedorovich Annenskij. The work of other addressees is cited in the book. These considerations allow me to include at least some of the addressees represented by name only in my statistics.

Predictably, much more frequent in the Russian sample than in the English one are dedications expressing civic feelings and solidarity with a specific group. To cite only some examples:

Светлой памяти моих родных,  
оставивших безымянный след  
в великом трудовом и ратном  
подвиге России.

To the luminous memory of my  
relatives who have left a nameless trace  
in the great feat of labour and arms of  
Russia.

Светлой памяти нашего друга,  
Российского орла Георгия Тимо-  
феевича Берегового. посвящает-  
ся. В нем были многие качества  
прославленных екатерининских  
орлов, и прежде всего беззавет-  
ная любовь к Отечеству.

Dedicated to the luminous memory of  
our friend, Russia's eagle  
G.T.Beregovoj. He had many of the  
qualities of Catherine the Great's  
illustrious eagles and first of all selfless  
devotion to the Fatherland.

Памяти наших учителей и коллег – совет-  
ских филологов и лингвистов, замученных, со-  
сланных, умолкнувших, посвящаем наш скром-  
ный труд.

We dedicate our humble work to the  
memory of our teachers and colleagues  
– the Soviet philologists and linguists,  
tortured, sent into exile, silenced.

АВТОРЫ

THE AUTHORS

Эту скромную книжку я хочу посвятить  
Русской службе корпорации Би-би-си,  
которая много лет говорила со мной  
нормальным человеческим голосом.

I want to dedicate this humble booklet  
to the Russian service of the BBC  
corporation who for many years talked  
to me with a human voice.

As predicted, many more public figures are honoured in dedications in Russian than in the English speaking world. The rate is 63.8% to, respectively, 16.4%. There are also quite a number of other significant differences between the Russian and the English language understanding of dedications as a literary genre which I will not touch upon here. These differences are of three kinds:

**Content:** what information is deemed necessary to make the dedication as informative as required in the particular cultural context but no more (according to Grice's maxim of quantity). A dedication hardly possible in the Russian context in this sense appears to be "To my Dad, Bill Simpson, for teaching me the art of fly fishing" unless some relevance of fly fishing for understanding the connection between language, ideology and point of view is presumed (which is the topic of the book carrying the dedication). In English, on the other hand, there is a greater variety of merits that can deserve one the honour of becoming an addressee of a dedication and such a dedication can, therefore, be accepted even without any connection with the subject matter of the dedicated book.

**Linguistic organization:** what typical syntactic structures and word order are employed in dedications. Russian dedications are more explicit in this sense, incorporating more frequently a metalinguistic component, i.e. the designation of the illocutionary act, into the text than English language dedications.

**Formatting:** how are dedications typically formatted and what are the relations between dedication and main body of the book and other components (such as preface, title page etc.) that can be established on the basis of formatting. Alexander Reformatskij's insights into the semiotics of the printed text (Reformatskij 1987 (1933), 141-179) can form the framework in which the obvious differences between the two traditions in this regard can be interpreted.

All these types of differences are meaningful in the framework of the existing intercultural variation in discourse organization discovered by contrastive rhetoric (J. House in ELL 9, 4581-4584).

### III.

What I asked myself at this point – and this leads me directly into the third part of my talk – was how could I be sure that there was nothing in the evolution of the literary genre of dedication in the Russian literature since its inception that would refute my conclusions? Couldn't it happen that, if seen in a historical perspective, the facts interpreted by me above would take a different meaning? I recognize that any analysis of contemporary data divorced from their historical path of development would be skewed. So I set forth to find out more about the origine and evolution of the genre of dedication in the Russian literature. My bibliographical search convinced me that there are no studies of Russian dedications, comprehensive or otherwise, of the kind that exist for other traditions (e.g. Leiner 1965, Maché 1991, Rogers 1993). A far as I can tell now, the first dedications appear in Russian books and engravings in the second half of the seventeenth century, in the pre-petrine period. Russian rhetorics, starting with the first handwritten one from 1620 (Annushkin 1989; Vomperskij 1988)<sup>5</sup>, give no explicit information about dedications, although the rhetoric descriptions of *предисловие* 'preface' make quite clear the use of the term for preface at the early stages to denote dedication as well as some of the tasks fulfilled by dedications at that time. I cannot, therefore, attribute the Russian style of writing dedications to an educational tradition which implanted a set of rules in generations of Russians. Last summer I saw 36 eighteenth century Russian books with dedications at the Russian State Library in Moscow. I have bibliographical information about other dedications from the pre-petrine and petrine period (Pekarskij 1862; Alekseeva 1977). An example of a typical dedication of this period can be the 1718 translation of Samuel Pufendorf's *Introduction into the European History*. The overview of eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth century dedications shows that their evolution can be divided in two distinct although overlapping periods:

- I. **Baroque dedicatory letters:** from the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century;
- II. **Modern dedications:** since the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century until present time.

A late example of the former type of dedications can be: Nikolaj Karamzin's dedication of his *History of the Russian State* to Tsar Alexander I (1815).

TO HIS MAJESTY  
**ALEXANDER PAVLOVICH,**  
AUTOCRAT OF ENTIRE RUSSIA

**GRACIOUS SIRE!**

I present with reverence to **YOUR MAJESTY** the fruit of assiduous twelve year long labours. I am not praising myself for my ardour and persistence for, being encouraged by **YOU**, how could I not have them?

In 1811, in happiest, impossible to forget minutes of my life, I read to **YOU**, Sire, chapters of this History – about the horrors of Batyi's invasion, about the feat of the Hero, Dimitry of Don – at a time when a thick cloud of disaster was hanging over Europe, endangering our beloved fatherland as well. **YOU** were listening with attention which delighted me, [you] were comparing the remote past with the present and were not envious of Dimitry's glorious perils because [you] foresaw even more glorious ones for Yourself. The magnanimous foreboding came true: the cloud burst out over Russia – but we are saved, covered with glory; the enemy is destroyed, Europe is free, and **ALEXANDER'S** head shines in a radiant wreath of immortality. Sire! if the happiness of **YOUR** virtuous heart equals **YOUR** glory, **YOU** must be happier than all the people born on earth.

A new era came. The future is known to God alone; but we, basing ourselves on the probabilities of reason, expect the durable peace, desired so much by nations and Monarchs, who want to rule to the benefit of people, for the success of morality, virtue, Sciences, civic Arts, the public and private welfare. Having eliminated with [your] victory the obstacles in

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<sup>5</sup> I would like to express here my gratitude to Nicholas Žekulin for the suggestion to look in rhetoric textbooks for any instructions on how to write dedications.



the path of this truly Regal deed, is there anything, Sire, that **YOU** will not be able to achieve in the maturity of [your] manhood, during the long life promised to **YOU** by the law of Nature and through the hearty prayers of [your] subjects!

Keep vigil, beloved Sovereign! A reader of the human heart reads thoughts, History recounts the deeds of magnanimous Monarchs, and instills love for their sacred memory in the most remote posterity. Accept kindly a book which is a proof of this. A nation's history belongs to its Monarch.

### GRACIOUS SIRE!

### YOUR EMPEROR'S MAJESTY

loyal subject  
NIKOLAJ KARAMZIN

December 8,  
1815.

As an early example of the latter type I'll cite: Vasilij Trediakovskij's posthumous dedication of his tragedy *Deidalija* to his fellow writer Alexander Sumarokov (1775).

Его превосходительству господину статскому действительному советнику, ордена святыя Анны кавалеру и Лейпцигского ученого собрания члену Александру Петровичу Сумарокову сия трагедия, по завещанию сочинителя, в знак вечныя памяти, посвящается.

This tragedy is dedicated according to the will of the author as a sign of eternal memory to his Excellency Alexandr Petrovich Sumarokov, councillor of state, bearer of the order of St. Anna and member of the Leipzig Assembly of Scholars

Since the two categories of dedications vary according to several parameters, there are many intermediate types between them which form a continuum between the "pure" types at the extremes. The most important of these parameters, as I can define them now, are the following:

**Type of addressee.** An important category replaces in the early period the addressees discussed above which, as we have seen are characteristic to various degrees for the second period. This is the social elite in power. In his translation *Братняя любовь и матерняя ненависть, или Слепая любовь Солимана турецкаго императора, и плачевная смерть двух принцов сыновей его*, in a particularly candid dedication from 1794 to Prince Nikolaj Volkonskij, Dmitrij Orlov states:

Справедливость того требует, чтоб упражняющиеся в науках приносили плоды своих трудов высокорожденным и добродетелями украшенным Особам, как жертву их качеству должную.

Justice demands that those who practise the sciences bring the fruit of their labour to noble Persons adorned with virtues as an offering due to their standing.

The relations between authors and addressees of dedications are those of patrons and clients with all consequences that result from this fact. It is only with time that new categories of addressees start to infiltrate the field and they are limited for a long time to the public sphere: fellow-writers lead, followed by friends and relatives. Russian 19<sup>th</sup> century sociologist Nikolaj Mikhajlovskij notes the significance of dedications to important public figures as a source of information on the evolution of a society (Mikhajlovskij 1896, 734). He puts side by side and comments the dedications on two books representative of two centuries: Semion Veniceev's 1776 translation of Thomas Hobbes' *De cive* and Z. Pineto's 1871

business reference tool *New Charts for Quick Calculation of Percentages of State Obligations, the Turnover of Credit, Joint-Stock and Insurance Companies as Well as the Private Turnover Known as Payment at a Fixed Date*. Veniceev's translation was dedicated to Count Grigorij Potiomkin and Pineto's work - to the wealthy businessman Samuil Solomonovich Poliakov, marking the appearance of a middle class in Russia. It is interesting to note that books dedicated to personalities in power reappear in post-communist Russia as an expression of the gratitude of authors to their sponsors.

**Motivation.** Viewed in the general framework of exchange, a dedication is, obviously, a reward. In the early period it assumes the form of glowing praise and promise of eternal memory and is frequently an advance reward in the hope for future benefit. It places the addressee under an obligation to do in return a favour to the author. While dedications have a monetary value and belong to the realm of business transactions, it is the first type of dedications that dominate the scene. When dedications are later on given the status of gifts with no direct money equivalent, they start to be perceived as a reward for previous merit and can be addressed to fellow-writers, relatives and friends as well as to benefactors, thus making public their sponsorship. During the first period, the Russian elite must have valued glorification through dedications greatly. There is historical evidence, for instance, that Peter the Great did appreciate the potential of dedications as a means to spread the renown of the Russian empire beyond its borders. In 1702, he commissioned Baron von Hüyssen to persuade Dutch, German and other scholars to dedicate to the Tsar, to members of the royal family and to other Russian potentates scholarly work of high quality, especially in the field of history, politics and mechanics (Pekarskij 1862, 1, 92).

**Form and content.** The addressee and the motivation of a dedication have a considerable impact both on its form and its content. Dedications start their literary career as letter-long eulogies prefacing a book and as such represent a sub-genre of panegyric literature. They are shortened, as time passes, to come eventually to the irreducible form which some dedications have at present: a name in the Dative case. The reasons for choosing this particular addressee become more varied and are sometimes passed over in silence. The praise (if at all present) is cut down to an adjective modifying the name of the addressee. Some of the humility with which authors talk of their persons and their work has persisted. An interesting illustration showing how changes of form and content lag behind the changes of addressee and motivation (or, in other words, how forms continue to be employed after the reasons for their emergence have died away) is offered by the consecutive dedications of the three parts of a single literary work written by Prince Piotr Ivanovich Shalikov in 1797, 1799 and, respectively, 1801. All three dedications are addressed to private persons (a friend, a relative and a beloved woman) so from the point of view of their addressees and motivations they are firmly situated in the modern period. The form and content of the first dedication, however draw it together with the previous period.

Другу моему Е.И.Андреевскому.

Тебе, любезной мой, посвящаю труды мои – так как и каждую минуту жизни моей, и каждое чувство сердца моего – прими их с тою улыбкою, с которою обыкновенно принимаешь ты от меня всякой дар дружбы – всякое слово искренности!

Тебе обязан я всем счастьем моего существования, всеми удовольствиями души моей – ты благодетельный Гений мой!

В беседе с тобою просветлилося сердце мое, познало всю сладость дружества – и души наши заключили вечной, священный союз между собою.

В скучные, унылые часы разлуки нашей, могу ли я иным чем заниматься, как не тем упражнением, которое напоминает мне наше времяпровождение?

To my friend E.I.Andreevskij.

To you my dear I dedicate my labours – as well as every minute of my life and every feeling of my heart – accept them with the smile, with which you usually accept from me every gift as a sign of friendship – every word of sincerity!

I am obliged to you for every happy moment in my life, for every pleasure of my soul – you are my beneficial Genius!

My heart enlightened in conversation with you and tasted the sweetness of friendship – and our souls concluded an eternal, sacred union.

What else can I do in the boring and dismal hours of our separation but practise what reminds me of our pastime together?

И кем мне заменить отсутствие твое, как  
не Музами, которых стали любезны нам с  
тех пор, как мы узнали друг друга?

Без них не нашел бы я утешения в горести  
моей; не умел бы сносить разлуки с тобою;  
не устоял бы против вихрей случаев.

И так тебе, любезной друг, принадлежит  
всякая мысль моя, всякое дело мое – тебе их  
и посвящаю.

К[нязь] П. Шаликов

Who can compensate your absence but  
the Muses whom we grew fond of since  
we got acquainted with each other?

Without them I wouldn't have found  
consolation in my sorrow, wouldn't have  
been able to bear our separation,  
wouldn't have resisted the whirlwinds of  
chance.

So, my dear friend, since all my  
thoughts and all my deeds belong to you  
– to you I dedicate them.

P[rince] P. Shalikov

Графине Елисавете Павловне Заводовской  
в знак  
Родственной любви и истинного почтения

Праху моей милой

To Countess Elisaveta Pavlovna  
Zavodovskaja as a sign of  
Kinship love and true esteem

To the ashes of my darling

To conclude, my research in the evolution of Russian dedications as a literary genre did not uncover any facts that contradicted my hypothesis but it convinced me that dedications are interesting from more than one point of view and that their philological study would lead to important insights into "the social and cultural history of communication by print"<sup>6</sup> in Russia.

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<sup>6</sup> This is the definition of the scholarly discipline *history of the book* as defined by Robert Darnton (cited after Rogers 1993, 213).

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