
The Word Entry Structure of the Russian Manuscript Lexicons: Evolution through the Centuries

Kira Kovalenko

Institute for Linguistic Studies, Russian Academy
of Sciences e-mail: kira.kovalenko@gmail.com

Abstract

Early Russian lexicography is represented by diverse types of manuscript glossaries and lexicons, compiled in Kievan and then in Moscow Rus'. At first they were intended to help in reading and understanding texts translated from Hebrew and Greek and were based on glosses to obscure words. That determined the word entry structure; entries in such glossaries consisted of the head word and explanation. Later, glossaries were developed into complicated lexicographical works, which were oriented towards scribes and editors of Russian literature. The compilers made the word entry structure more complicated, and the last representatives of the lexicographical genre to appear had such information categories as headword, explanation, language mark, references to the literary sources, examples of use and collocations and a reference to words with close semantics or the same topic group. A detailed description of how the word entry structure evolved in manuscript glossaries and lexicons from the 13th to 17th centuries will be presented in this article.

Keywords: glossary, lexicon, azbukovnik, Russian manuscripts, word entry, loan words.

The beginning of the Russian lexicography is typical for Slavic countries which accepted Christianity and, with it, Greek culture, literature and notions. The official baptism of Rus' in 988 was followed by the appearance of many religious books translated into Church Slavonic. Along with the Holy Scripture and liturgical texts, other Greek books came to Russia (some of which were already translated into Church Slavonic in Bulgaria). We can assume that there were some glossaries among them, as the first Russian lexicographical works, which survived to arrive in our hands from the 13th century, used materials of translated Greek lexicons Ἑρμηνεία ὀνομάτων καὶ λέξεων ἐν ταῖς θείαις γραφαῖς ἐμφορομένων τῆ ἑβραϊδὶ διαλέκτῳ, Ἑρμηνεία τῶν θηλυκῶν ὀνομάτων τῆ ἑβραϊδὶ διαλέκτῳ, and Λέξεις κατὰ στειχεῖον τῆς ἑβραϊδοῦ διαλέκτου (Kovtun 1963: 52-65). Apart from entries from Greek lexicons, they also contain materials from “The Book of Psalms” and its exposition by Pseudo-Athanasius, Genesis, Gospels and other sources which may have been added later.

All glossaries had a similar word entry structure, which was very simple. Here are some examples from a glossary called “Words of the Hebrew language” (published in Kovtun 1963: 399-418):

- (1) Акелдама, село крови¹ — *Akeldama*, field of blood.
- (2) Рогъ, сила — *Rog* (‘horn’), strength.
- (3) Бисеръ, камень ч(е)стьнъ — *Biser* (‘pearls’), precious stone.
- (4) Лепта, цата — *Lepta* (‘lepton’), denarius.

¹Word entries are given according to the guidelines “Pravila izdaniya...” (1990).

It can be seen that all word entries consist of a headword and its definition, while definitions could contain various types of information. In example (1) the toponym *Akeldama* is given with its translation from Aramaic; in (2) a metaphorical explanation is provided, which is taken from the psalm commentary of Pseudo-Athanasius – cf. «horn is told to be strength» (op. by Kovtun 1963: 23); in (3) a hyperonym is given; and in (4) a the word of the same semantic field.

The wide range of definition types given in the explanatory part is determined by the sources of the word entries. Most of them were based on glosses to the proper names or unclear words from the Holy Scripture, which contained either Russian equivalents of foreign words, or variants of translation, or references to the literary sources, or explanatory comments to the original text (Romodanovskaya 2001: 138-139).

Another glossary which spread widely in Russia in the 14th century was “Words of the Ladder” (published in Kovtun 1963: 421-431). Its aim was to explain obscure words from John Climacus’s “The Ladder of Divine Ascent”, specifically from its first translation made in Preslav in the 12th century. The prototype of the glossary was created presumably in Serbia in the 14th century (Popova 2010: 137) and then enlarged by Russian scholars. The word entry structure there was the same, but explanations here are more accurate; Church Slavonic words and words typical for the Preslav region are followed by their Russian equivalents, e.g.

(5) Непщюю, мню – Nepschuyu, (I) think.

The compilers of the first glossaries did not include extra information in word entries. The origin of the words were often indicated in the title, such as “Words of the Hebrew language translated into Russian”, and “Explanation of unknown words which were put by the translators in Slavic, or Serbian, or Bulgarian language and which were not put in Russian”. Information about the literary source can also be found there; e.g. “Words from the Ladder” (already mentioned), or “Word list from the Acts of the Apostles” (compilation of the 16th century).

In the 1540s—50s, there appeared “An Alphabetical Explanation of names”, written by Maximus the Greek (published in Kovtun 1975: 313-331). He was the first to use the alphabet in a lexicographical work, an innovation which greatly influenced the further development of the Russian lexicography. In the lexicon, there are explanations of anthroponyms and toponyms, mostly by translation into Russian. Sometimes the language of the word origin is indicated as well; for example,

(6) Исус, еврѣиска пословица, а тлькуется, сотиръ, еже есть по рускы сп(а)съ (MDA 35, 121r) — *Iisus* (Jesus) is a Hebrew word, it is interpreted as *sotir* (σωτήρ ‘saviour’²), that is *spas* (‘saviour’) in Russian.

“An Alphabetical Explanation of names” by Maximus the Greek had several later editions; scholars added new entries to it, taken from various literary sources. The same happened with early word lists; the scribes combined them and added new materials. This led to the creation of a new lexicographical genre known as *azbukovnik*³, where words from different sources and languages of all kinds were

² Translations of the Greek words are taken from Liddell and Scott’s *Greek-English Lexicon* (Liddle, Scott). Classification of the lexicons can be found in (Kovtun 1989: 9-10).

collected and put in alphabetical order (at that time only the first letter was taken into account). At the same time, the word entry structure became more complicated: the source language was shown by initial letters over the headwords (usually written in cinnabar), and numerous references to the literary sources in the margins appeared (besides the contracted name of the book, they could contain the chapter number for Old Testament books, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles and some books of the Saint Fathers, and the pericope for the Gospels). The typical word entry looked like this:

(7) Номось (with the letter “r” over the word), законъ – *Nomos* (νόμος), low (O.XVI.1, 79r⁴).

In the marginal note was written: Ефрем м̄. From the reference, we can understand that the word was taken from Ephrem the Syrian’s work, specifically from his teaching hymn № 40, where we can find both the word and its translation: “буди намъ крѣпость номъсе рекъше законъ” — “let our strength be *nomos* (νόμος), i.e. low” (TSL 7 (2016), 51r⁵). The letter “r” indicates the word origin — греческий (the Greek language).

Language marks and literary sources were nevertheless optional; word entries taken from the previous compilations did not have them, and even if they were in the original lexicon, they were sometimes omitted when a new copy was created⁶.

By the time the number of word entries was approaching 6,000, two new approaches had been devised. Firstly, lexicons created in Moscow (Pogod. 1145 and others⁷) combined words of the same topic, and we can find such groups as “names of cities”, “animals”, “birds”, “stars”, “months” inside the letter subdivision — earlier, semantic organisation of the word entries occurred only in a small wordlist “Explanation of Unknown Words” (published in Kovalenko 2014a). Secondly, in the Novgorod lexicon (Pogod. 1642), created at the same time, the compiler Davyd Zamaray introduced a system where the second vowel letter was taken into account. He also invented the numeration of every five to seven word entries, which allowed references to similar words to be given. For example, for the word entry Афродита (Aphrodite), describing the goddess and the planet named in her honour (Venus), there is a marginal reference to the word entry Планеты (Planets). For the entry Таблица, пинакида, the reference to the Пинакида (πινακίδα) is provided. Sometimes there is no definition at all; only a reference to the related word is given. For example, in the word entry Влахерне (or В Лахерне), only the reference to the word Лахерна is given. This entry shows the result of rebracketing: because it was used repeatedly in the description of the Orthodox feast, the Intercession of the Theotokos taking place in the Blachernae church, the first letter of the Greek toponym Βλαχέρναι (Blachernae) began to be perceived as the preposition *ε* (‘in’), and the name of the place, having lost its first letter, changed to Лахерна.

Besides changes in macrostructure, some innovations in the word entry introduced. Thus, in the Moscow lexicon, citations which illustrate word use appear sporadically:

⁴Published in (Kovtun 1989: 136-282).

⁵<http://old.stsl.ru/manuscripts/big.php?col=1&manuscript=007&pagefile=007-0057>.

⁶At the same time, these small elements are of great importance for research, as they can help to trace the history of manuscripts and find an original text. For example, observations on the manner of writing the language mark and their place in the text assisted to reveal the original manuscript and its copy (see details in Yudin 2012: 93-94).

⁷See the full list of the lexicons of the type in (Kovalenko 2014b).

(8) Финиѣъ, есть оубо птица в велицѣи индѣи, нарицаема финиѣъ, в ней ж(е) Д(а)в(и)дъ прор(о)къ, въ чѣ-мъ псалмѣ рече: праведникъ яко ѳиниѣъ процвѣтетъ (Pogod. 1145, 160r) — *Finix* ('phoenix'), there is a bird in the Great India, which is called *finix* and about which prophet David tells in the 91th Psalm: the righteous shall flourish like a *finix*.

In the English translation, the citation looks like “The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree”⁸ (Ps 91:12), which corresponds more to the general sense of the psalm. The difference in the translation of the Greek word φοῖνιξ in the Psalm book – *finix* ('phoenix') in Russian⁹ and *palm tree* in English – is connected to the fact that the Greek word could mean both 'date-palm' and 'the fabulous bird', which leads to the contamination of the two senses in the word entry.

In the Novgorod lexicon, the compiler separates the two meanings:

(9) ѳиниѣъ ес(ть) птица в Велицеи Индѣи, есть же и древо нарицаемо финиѣъ, о нем же гл(агол)етъ пр(а)в(е)дникъ яко ѳиниѣъ процвететъ (Pogod. 1642, 152r) — *Finix* ('phoenix') is a bird in the Great India; there is also a tree called *finix*, about which is said: the righteous shall flourish like *finix*.

Attention to differences in meaning is a general peculiarity of the Novgorod lexicon. The compiler often draws the reader's attention to the fact that a word has two or more meanings or underlines the difference between words that look similar or have close meanings. There was no rigid place for his observations of the type. He could

- place both words as headwords, so that in the explanatory part, only the difference between the words is given:

(10) Разтвореніе и размѣшеніе естество, ѳно ес(ть), ѳ ино. Разтвореніе гл(агол)ется яко водѣ с виномъ в совокупленіи. Размѣшеніе же серно пшенично со ячменным, в совокупленіи несмѣсно (Pogod. 1642, 128r) — *Raztvoreniye* ('diluting') and *razmesheniye* ('mixing up') of substances is one thing and another. *Raztvoreniye* is said when water and wine are mixed together. *Razmesheniye* is grain of wheat with barley, which are together but not combined.

(11) Целованіе и лобзаніе ѳ ино ес(ть) ѳ ино. Еже рещи коему ч(е)л(ове)ку радуиса, то ес(ть) целованіе; лобзаніе же еже оустнами кого облобызати. Обое же сотвори Іюда предатель ко Х(рист)у Б(о)гу (Pogod. 1642, 159v) — *Tselovaniye* and *lobzaniye* is one thing and another. If is said to any person Hail, that is *tselovanie* ('greeting'); *lobzaniye* is kissing somebody on the lips. Both things did Judas, betrayer of Christ our God.

In example (10) two words sound similar, but have different meanings, while in (11) the words sound differently; explanation of the difference between the words is necessary, because the word *целование* has changed its meaning ('greeting' → 'kissing').

- make one headword, but underline the difference in the explanatory part:

(12) Рака сирскіи оплевана. рускіи рака гробница, или рака животное еже в водахъ (Pogod. 1642, 128r) — *Raka* (Hebrew and Aramaic קָרָק 'empty, vain'¹⁰), in Syrian being spit on, in Russian

⁸Citations from the Bible are given according to the King James Version represented on the website Bible-Center (<http://www.bible-center.ru>).

⁹'Date' in Russian is финик (*finik*).

¹⁰<http://bible.knowing-jesus.com/strongs/H7386>

raka is a tomb or a crayfish — an animal which is in waters.

(13) Сатуры есть камень честень, иже в Сирїи родиться, или четвертая часть златницы; їни же рѣша статурь перьстень (Pogod. 1642, 132r) — *Satury* is a precious stone, which is born in Syria, or a quarter of zolotnik, others told that *statir* (στατήρ ‘standard coin’) is a signet ring.

- add comments at the end of the word explanation:

(14) Оѳеось, б(о)гъ; ино же ес(ть) оѳеось ї ино аѳеось, безбожныи (Pogod. 1642, 108v) — *Ofeos*, god; one thing is *ofeos* (ὁ θεός ‘god’) and another *afeos* (ἄθεος ‘godless’).

(15) Поману кивну; їно есть помяновенїе ї ино помановенїе (Pogod. 16426 123r) — *Pomanu*, I will nod; one thing is *potyanoveniye* (‘commemoration’) and another one is *pomanoveniye* (‘inclination’).

This shows that the system of representation of polysemy in the lexicon was not thoroughly elaborated. This fact is also testified by word entries in which examples of word use are the only information that is given in order to understand the word's meaning:

(16) Пята, натрое гл(агол)еться. Пята ноги. Пята двери. Пята, ков, творимыи отаи на кого (Pogod. 1542, 127r) — *Pyata* has three meanings. *Pyata of a foot* (‘heel’). *Pyata of the door* (‘bottom door pivot’). *Pyata*, plot made secretly against somebody.

Another innovation in the Novgorod lexicon is representation of case government, which is given after verbs or participles:

(17) Огавїе, стуженїе, еже кто стужаетъ кому в чемъ (Pogod. 1542, 107v) — *Ogaviye*, oppression, when somebody keeps somebody down in something.

(18) Посредство, печалованїе о ком (Pogod. 1542, 123v) — *Posredstvo*, care of somebody.

(19) Тяжанїе, дѣло, порученое кому (Pogod. 1542, 147r) — *Tyazhaniye*, a business entrusted to somebody.

In modern Russian dictionaries, case government is almost obligatory, but for the beginning of the 17th century it was a completely new category of information.

The compiler of Pogod. 1651 (created in 1666) introduced another idea: he completely removed the language marks from the word entries in some letter subdivisions. Instead, he grouped words according to their origin. It should be noticed that language marks sometimes denoted not the real original language, but the language from which a literary source was translated or the lands it described. Hence, besides Greek, Hebrew, Roman, Tatar, Syrian, Serbian and Czech, such exotic language subdivisions as Egyptian, Cypriot, Ethiopian or Indian appeared in Pogod. 1651.

At the same time, a big change in word entry structure was made in the lexicons of the famous scholar Sergy Shelonin, a clergyman of the Solovetsky monastery. Many of his works were pioneering for the 17th century (see details in Sapozhnikova 2010), and his lexicon was no exception. As the base for his work, he took the Novgorod lexicon by Davyd Zamaray (Pogod. 1642) and significantly improved on it. The third edition of his lexicon (Solov. 18/18) includes more than 16,000 word entries. References to the literary sources are numerous and often contain the page numbers of books from the monastic library. The definitions became more complicated; for example, many equivalents

from other languages were given. In the entry

(20) Манголтъ (over which the word нем — i.e. the German language — is written) крутъ, по руски свекла, по гречески селон, а по латынски блата или блита, по немецки же, ромискер колъ” (Solov. 18/18, 305r) — *Mangolt krut*, in Russian *svekla*, in Greek *selon*, in Latin *blata* or *blita*, in German *romisker kol*,

we find German (*Mangolt krut*, *Romisker kol*), Russian (свекла), Greek (σεῦτλον) and Latin (beta) equivalents. It is interesting that the word entry was taken from a German herbal medicine guidebook translated in the 16th century: Hieronym Brunschwig’s “Das Distillierbuch”.

Word entries in Sergy’s lexicon also contain citations and examples of word use:

(21) Лихва, знаменуем, плод или то что ся родит, приплодок. г. моис(ея). кѣ. Сребра твоего не даси в лихву” (Solov. 18/18, 298r) — *Likhva* means fruit or what is born, animal yield. 3d (book) of Moses, (chapter) 25. Thou shalt not give him thy money upon usury (Lev 25:37).

The quotation from Leviticus illustrates the use of the headword *лихва* ‘usury’.

Another feature of Sergy’s lexicons is the abundance of encyclopaedic information supplied, which resulted in long entries. Some of them are so long that they occupy several pages in folio.

Sergy’s lexicons represent the highest level of manuscript lexicography development. Unfortunately, Church reform prevented them from being spread widely and only two selective lexicons based on them are known (Rumyan. 2 and Solov. 20/20). Still, there is no doubt that the manuscript lexicons had a great influence on the lexicography in the Grand Duchy of Moscow and in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. This is evidenced by the fact that such famous lexicographers as Petr Alexeyev, Fyodor Polikarpov, Lavrenty Zizany, and Pamva Berynda used the materials and principles of the Russian manuscript lexicons in their works.

In spite of the important role played by manuscript lexicons in the history of the Russian lexicography, they have yet to be subjected to detailed classification, and some of the manuscripts do not even have a proper scientific description. Computerised methods of investigation will inevitably simplify the process of comparison and, as a result, stimulate the detailed classification of the large lexicons. Examination of the word entry structure is an essential step in that direction.

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