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**GREEK BORROWINGS IN THE RELIGIOUS STYLE OF WORSHIP  
IN RUSSIAN AND MOLDAVIAN/ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH**

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**Abstract**

*The article is dedicated to the problem of Greek lexical borrowings in the Russian and Romanian religious style of worship. Special attention is paid to the analysis of specific Greek words that have preserved their sound and semantics. These ones are categorized into groups. There have been also stated ideas about the importance of the stylistic and expressive function of Greek borrowings in Russian and Romanian religious texts of worship.*

**Keywords:** *Greek borrowings, religious style, stylistic and expressive function, worship, Russian, Moldavian/ Romanian church*

**Rezumat**

*În articol, abordăm problema împrumuturilor lexicale din greaca veche în rusa și româna religioasă pentru a desemna câmpul conceptual „venerare”. O atenție deosebită se acordă analizei glosemelor grecești care au rămas intacte în limbile date, în aspect sonor și semantic. Acestea sunt împărțite în tipuri. Este pusă în valoare și importanța acestor unități în aspect stilistic și expresiv.*

**Cuvinte-cheie:** *împrumuturi grecești, lexic religios, funcțiune stilistică și expresivă, venerare, Bisericile rusă și românească/basarabeană*

In Moldova, the church service in Russian Orthodox Churches is performed in Church Slavonic, and in Moldovan/Romanian Orthodox Churches – it is in Romanian. In such a coexistence of churches, one can observe the interpenetration of languages – since for several centuries the Church Slavonic language was used in this territory as a liturgical language, there are many old Slavic words in the modern Romanian religious texts of worship.

Russian and Romanian literary languages are spoken both in the genres of sermon, confession, and free prayer, that is, they are very widely used for religious purposes. Such functioning gives scientists grounds to distinguish among the speech varieties of the Russian and Romanian literary languages the church-religious functional style, defined by the speech realization of religion as one of the forms of public consciousness.

When considering faith and religion as the extralinguistic basis of this style, it is necessary to interpret them from the standpoint of not atheistic, but religious consciousness, since this consciousness is embodied in religious texts and will determine their specific stylistic features.

According to the teachings of the church, faith is a union between God and man. A person's faith becomes truly deep when the word of God becomes his inner possession, his word. In other words, a person perceives the word of Divine revelation, agrees with it, accepts it, and realizes it as his highest value. Faith appears as a communion in which the human soul is extremely close to God, and God is extremely close to the human soul.

Religion is based on faith as a position of worldview. The content of religion as a form of social consciousness consists of images, thoughts, emotions, values, norms. The main component of a religious worldview is a system of dogmas (the most important religious truths), correlated with the typical states of the spiritual life of a believer. In the Christian religion, such states are the experience of love, awe, a sense of "rank", one's own imperfection. The content of prayer requests is determined by religious teaching: these are requests for Divine help in the fulfillment of Christian commandments. Prayer speech implements a complex of characteristic emotional and psychological states – love, trust, hope, humility, surrender to the will of God, etc.<sup>1</sup>.

Currently, among the functional varieties of the modern Russian language, scientists distinguish the religious style, since its use reveals stable stylistic features due to the sphere of communication, the specifics of faith. The first of the stylistic features – the archaically exalted tonality of speech – is determined by the exaltation of religious thoughts, feelings, and value attitudes, which involve the use of means with an appropriate stylistic coloring, primarily Church Slavonic. Such language and speech units accumulate centuries-old experience of religious communication, they are "populated by the voices" of previous generations of believers – "brothers and sisters", voices expressing the same feeling of love for God and neighbors that a believer feels when saying a prayer or "heart" perceiving a sermon. Therefore, the stylistic coloring of the linguistic units traditionally used in the divine service (coloring, enhanced by a special timbre, intonation, rhythm of speech and forming a single complex of communication means with church music, painting), performs a special function – to maintain in every believer a sense of their inseparability from the spiritual community of people connected by faith in the generations. Such a tone, corresponding to lofty religious thoughts and feelings, serves as a manifestation of the conciliarity/sobornost of the Christian community (*ibidem*).

The well-known Russian homily theorist Valentin Amfiteatrov wrote about the importance of using exalted and archaic Church Slavonic means in religious communication and the unjustifiability of using linguistic units

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.myfilology.ru/145/osobennosti-funktsionalnykh-stilei-russkogo-iazyka/tserkovno-religioznyi-stil-rechi/>.

that evoke associations of a non-religious nature, especially words with reduced connotations. What would happen, he asked, "if we, imitating the secular language, instead of "Lord Jesus" would say "Mr. Jesus", instead of "brothers" - "bro", instead of "baptism" - "bathing", instead of "sacrament" - "secret", instead of "miracle" - "rarity", etc." (*Archbishop...*, 2001, p. 85). The linguistic units regularly used in Russian religious speech have a special archaic-elevated functional color, which can be called ecclesiastical. The fund of these units (and the rules for their implementation) is primarily represented by borrowings from the Church Slavonic language.

Along with the old Slavic words the Greek elements are preserved in the church-religious style, which did not change their appearance when borrowed. Perhaps the sound of the Greek words gives the church-religious style a similar exalted tone, which should be inherent in the divine service - the "situation" of human communication with God. The presence of Greek elements, their "life" in the church-religious style is observed in the liturgical texts heard in the Orthodox Russian and Romanian/Moldovan churches and monasteries of Moldova.

The material of Greek borrowings in the religious style analyzed by us can be thematically systematized in the following way:

1. Basic terms and concepts of orthodoxy:

- *православие/pravoslavie* (Rus.), *ortodoxie* (Rom.) = *orthodoxy* (from Greek ὀρθοδοξία *orthodoxía* - "righteous/correct opinion") is adherence to correct or accepted creeds, especially in religion. The term *orthodox* refers to the set of doctrines which were believed by the early Christians;

- *монастырь/monastyr'* (Rus.), *mânăstire* (Rom.) = *monastery* (from Greek μοναστήριος *monasterios*; μονάζειν - *monazein* "to live alone"; "-terion" denotes a "place for doing something"). A monastery is a building or complex of buildings comprising the domestic quarters and workplaces of monastics, monks or nuns whether living in communities or alone;

- *литургия/liturgiâ* (Rus.), *liturghie* (Rom.) = *liturgy* (from Ancient Greek λειτουργία *leitourgia* - "work for the people") is a literal translation of the two words "litos ergos" or "public service". Liturgy is the customary public worship performed by a religious group;

- *проскомидия/proscomidîa* (Rus.), *proscomidie* (Rom.) = *proskomedia* (from Greek Προσκομιδῆ *proskomidē* - "an offering, an oblation") is the name given in the Eastern Orthodox Church to the act of preparing the bread and wine for the Eucharist;

- *евхаристия/eucharistiâ* (Rus.), *eucharistie* (rom.) = *eucharist* (from Greek εὐχαριστία *eucharistia*, meaning "thanksgiving"). Eucharist is a Christian rite that is considered a sacrament in most churches, and as an ordinance in others;

- *хиротония/hirotonia* (Rus.), *hirotonie* (Rom.) = *ordination* (from Greek χειροτονία *cheirotonia* - "election by a show of hands") is the practice of ordination, only an already ordained (consecrated) bishop or the equivalent may ordain bishops, priests, and deacons.

- *покаяние/rokaânie* (Rus.), *metanie/rocâință* (Rom.) = *metania* (from Ancient Greek *μετάνοια* (*metánoia*) - "to perceive afterwards, repent") is also a "lightened" version of an "earth-low bow" that is used in Orthodox services sometimes.

## 2. Names of service attributes:

- *просфора/prosfora* (Rus.), *prescură* (Rom.) = *prosporon* (from Greek *πρόσφορον* - "offering") is a small loaf of leavened bread used in Orthodox Christian and Greek Catholic (Byzantine) liturgies;

- *епитрахил/epitrahil* (Rus.), *epitrahil* (Rom.) = *epitachelion* (from Greek *ἐπιτραχήλιον* - "around the neck") is the liturgical vestment worn by priests and bishops of the Orthodox Church and Eastern Catholic Churches as the symbol of their priesthood, corresponding to the Western stole;

- *икона/ikona* (Rus.), *icoană* (Rom.) = *icon* (from Greek *εἰκὼν eikōn* - "image, resemblance") is a religious work of art, most commonly a painting, in the cultures of the Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, the Roman Catholic, and certain Eastern Catholic churches;

- *елей/мирра/elej/mirra* (Rus.), *ulei/myrr* (Rom.) = *chrism* (from Greek *τυρρη, Myron* - "fragrant oil") holy anointing oil is a consecrated oil used in the Catholic Eastern Orthodox churches in the administration of certain sacraments and ecclesiastical functions;

- *фимиам/ладан/fimiam/ladan* (Rus.), *tămâie* (Rom.) = *incense* (from Greek *θυμίαμα, θυμιάω* - "I burn, I smoke") likewise church incense (Levon) - aromatic resin, incense; substances burned during worship.

## 3. Names of the ranks of the clergy:

- *дьякон/d'acon* (Rus.), *diacon* (Rom.) = *deacon* (from Greek *διάκονος* *diákonos*, meaning "servant", "waiting-man", "minister", or "messenger") is a member of the diaconate, an office in Christian churches that is generally associated with service of some kind, but which varies among theological and denominational traditions;

- *архимандрит/archimandrit* (Rus.), *archimandrit* (Rom.) = *archimandrite* (from Greek *ἀρχιμανδριτης* - *ἀρχι* *archi-* meaning "highest" or from *archon* "ruler" and from *μάνδρα* *mandra* meaning a "monastery") primarily used in the Eastern Orthodox and the Eastern Catholic churches, originally referred to a superior abbot;

- *иерарх/ierarh* (Rus.), *ierarch* (Rom.) = *hierarch* (from Greek *ἱεραρχία* *hierarkhia* - "rule of a high priest", from *hierarkhes*, "president of sacred rites") is a religious leader in a position of authority;

- *иегумен/iegumen* (Rus.), *egumen* (Rom.) = *hegumen* (from Greek *ἡγούμενος* *hēgoúmenos* - "the one who is in charge", "the leader") is the title for the head of a monastery in the Eastern Orthodox and Eastern Catholic Churches;

- *епископ/episcop* (Rus.), *episcop* (Rom.) = *bishop* (from Greek *ἐπίσκοπος* *epískopos*, meaning "overseer") is an ordained, consecrated, or appointed member of the Christian clergy who is generally entrusted with a position of authority and oversight;

- *митрополиум/mitropolit* (Rus.), *mitropolit* (Rom.) = *metropolitan* (from Ancient Greek *μητροπολιτης* *mētrópolis*) in Christian churches with episcopal polity

the rank of metropolitan bishop, or simply metropolitan pertains to the diocesan bishop or archbishop of a metropolis;

- *мученик/ mučenik* (Rus.), *mucenic/martir* (Rom.) = *martyr* (from Greek μάρτυς *mártys* - "witness") is someone who suffers persecution and death for advocating, renouncing, or refusing to renounce or advocate, a religious belief or cause as demanded by an external party;

- *шимник/šimnik* (Rus.), *schimnic/schimonah* (Rom.) = *schemamonk* (from Greek Σχήμα - "high level of spiritual excellence" reach the final stage, called the Great Schema) is a rare step taken in monastic life and is seldom approved by the abbot or bishop. The monk who has aspired to a spiritual level that transcends worldly desires.

#### 4. Names of sacred texts:

- *Библия/Bibliâ* (Rus.), *Biblia* (Rom.) = *Bible* (from Koine Greek τὰ βιβλία *tà biblía* - "the books") is a collection of religious texts, writings, or scriptures sacred to Jews, Samaritans, Christians and others;

- *евангелие/evangelie* (Rus.), *evangelie* (Rom.) = *Gospel* (from Greek εὐαγγέλιον, meaning "good news, *euangélion* (εὖ *eú* "good" + ἄγγελος *ángelos* "messenger") originally meant the Christian message, but in the 2nd century it came to be used also for the books in which the message was set out;

- *псалтырь/psaltyr'*, *psalm* (Rus.), *psaltire, psalm* (rom.) = *the Psalter, psalms* (from the Greek ψαλμοί *psalmoi*, meaning "instrumental music" and, by extension, "the words accompanying the music") is a book of the Christian Old Testament;

- *кафизма/kafizma* (Rus.), *kafismă* (Rom.) = *kathisma* (from Greek κάθισμα - "seat") is a division of the Psalter, used by Eastern Orthodox Christians and Eastern Catholics who follow the Byzantine Rite;

- *акафист/akafist* (Rus.), *acafist* (Rom.) = *akathist* (from Greek Ἀκάθιστος Ὕμνος - "unseated hymn") is a type of hymn usually recited by Eastern Orthodox or Eastern Catholic Christians, dedicated to a saint, holy event, or one of the persons of the Holy Trinity.

#### 5. Bible names, images of Heavenly Powers, words of prayers:

- *Христос/Hristos* (Rus.), *Hristos* (Rom.) = *Christ* (from Greek χριστός (*chrīstós*), χρίω (*chrīō*) - "to anoin" meaning "anointed one". *Jesus of Nazareth* or *Jesus Christ* was a first-century Jewish preacher and religious leader;

- *ангел/angel* (Rus.), *anghel* (Rom.) = *angel* (from Late Greek ἄγγελος *angelos* - "messenger") is a supernatural being in various religions;

- *архангел/archangel* (Rus.), *arhanghel* (Rom.) = *archangel* (from Greek ἀρχάγγελος "arch-" + "angel" - "chief angel" or "angel of origin") is an angel of high rank;

- *апостол/apostol* (Rus.), *apostol* (Rom.) = *apostle* (from Greek ἀπόστολος *apóstolos* - "one who is sent off") in its most literal sense, is an emissary;

- *аксиос/aksios* (Rus.), *axios* (Rom.) = "*Axios!*" (from Greek ἄξιος - "worthy of", "deserving of", "suitable") is an acclamation adopted by the early Syriac Orthodox Church, Eastern Orthodox church and Byzantine Eastern Catholic churches and made by the faithful at the ordination of bishops, priests and deacons;

- *Аминь/amin* (Rus.), *amin* (Rom.) = *Amen* (from Ancient Greek ἀμήν - "verily", "truly", "it is true", and "let it be so") is a declaration of affirmation, also used colloquially, to express strong agreement;
- *осанна/osanna* (Rus.), *osana* (Rom.) = *hosanna* (from Greek ὁσαννά, *hōsanná*, meaning "save", "rescue", "savior") is a liturgical word in Judaism and Christianity.

Thus, in the church-religious style of the Russian and Romanian languages, you can find a large number of Greek words that have retained their original sound and semantic appearance. It is assumed that this is primarily due to the origin of Christianity itself, namely Orthodoxy, with its Byzantine roots. The attributes of the church, the names of rites, the texts of sacred scriptures and prayers serve as a reminder of the origin of our religion.

If we talk about the stylistic and emotional-expressive coloring of Greek borrowings, it should be assumed they, like Old Slavic words, contribute to the creation of solemnity, "divine", high tonality of the religious style of worship. The similarity of the sound appearance and semantic meaning of the Greek words in the Romanian and Russian languages can be explained by the coexistence and interpenetration in a single space of these cultures, including in the religious sphere, about the influence of the Church Slavonic and Latin languages on the formation of the religious style of worship.

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