

THE DEDICATION AS A STRUCTURAL COMPONENT OF AN ARTISTIC TEXT

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Abstract. This article is theoretical in nature. It considers various kinds of poetic dedications that are traditionally accepted as components of an artistic work's heading system. The article is an attempt to re-imagine this understanding of a text's aforementioned element. This analysis aims to clarify the authorial dedication's general character and forms of explication. To do so, the article's authors employ comparative typological, structural-systematic, biographical, and cultural-historical methods of analysis. The study's material is Russian lyrical poetry from the 18th-20th centuries (works of M.V. Lomonosov, V.A. Zhukovsky, P.A. Vyazemsky, A.S. Pushkin, V. Bryusov, I. Severyanin, S. Esenin, P. Ivnyev, N. Gumilyev and others), as well as some epical and lyric-epical works (A.S. Pushkin's «The Captain's Daughter» and «The Bronze Horseman»). As a result, this article reveals the specificities of a fully realized dedicative discourse, and distinguishes between various kinds of titular and extra-titular dedications. The authors show that the dedication is not always part of the heading system; they consider other kinds of dedications (the acrostic, the date of composition as a display of dedicative intent, and other un-explicated forms of the dedication); they offer new criteria to classify dedications, and new terminological designations that can be studied and used to further clarify problems tied to the academic concept of dedicative strategies.

Keywords: theory of literature, dedication, dedicative strategies, dedicative criteria, artistic structure.

1 Introduction

It is well known that so-called framing components, which surround the basic text and establish its borders, underscore the text's inner unity, express authorial intention, and create a certain expectation in readers [1]. As such, it is unsurprising that heightened attention is paid to these aspects of the artistic structure, both in the theory and in the practice of literary analysis [see in particular 2-11]. Researchers have justly noted that a text's dialogic nature often shines through in these components. As Yu. Gerchuk correctly noted, this occurs especially clearly in dedications, which «return the dead book-thing to the realm of living human relations...» [12]. Traditionally, the dedication has been considered a component of the heading complex, those opening, introductory lines to a work, which denote the person to whom the work is addressed or given as a gift [see in particular 13-16]. However, in our view, the definition needs refining: a dedication is not always a part of the heading system and cannot always be defined as words or lines that precede the basic text and denote an intended addressee. Dedicative intent can appear in meaningfully broader and more diverse ways. Our goal is to clarify criteria for how authors decide on their dedications, to research their strategies, and to identify basic types of dedications. The main subject of analysis is lyrical poetic texts, and also some epical and lyric-epical works, from classic Russian literature of the 18th-20th centuries: works from M.V. Lomonosov, N.M. Karamzin, V.A. Zhukovsky, P.A. Vyazemsky, A.S. Pushkin, V. Bryusov, I. Severyanin, S. Esenin, P. Ivnyev, N. Gumilyev, and others.

2 Methods.

The study's object and the given goal demand various analytic methods: first, comparative typological analysis allows an understanding of how dedications appear and function; second, the structural-systematic method offers an understanding of every component of the work as a whole artistic system; third, the biographical method must be considered, since dedications as a rule are tied to a writer's biography; finally, since dedications are often unique documents of their era, their study requires techniques from the cultural-historical method.

3. Results And Discussion

3.1. Criteria for Distinguishing Between Dedications

One criterion to define dedications' character is the discursive form of their functioning. Dedications can be literally formed and fixed on the text's external level, but they can also exist between elements of the external framework, or be completely absent. In connection with this we can distinguish between titular, extra-titular, and non-titular dedications. Another criterion, which is important for defining dedicative intent, is the type of addresser. Often, a writer brings a dedication into the text; there are dedications made by printers, publishers, or translators, but these have a mediated relationship with the artwork, since they do not depend on subjective artistic intent and have little overlap with the artistic process. Authorial dedications are of particular interest for specialists, as they express the addresser's targeted strategies. The type of addressee is another criterion that lets one speak about the diversity of dedicative forms and their autonomous explications. The most common form for an embodied, addressed dedication is the dedication as a

fixed textual inscription, i.e. a name or a whole line(s) addressed to the poem's recipient. As a result, one should distinguish such dedications from gift inscriptions, which are a subject of academic interest for philologists.

Titular inscriptions have become firmly inscribed into literature, and have expressed specific, stylistic dominant ideas. Generally, when people talk about dedications as part of the heading system, they are talking about such inscriptions.

3.2. Types of Titular Dedications

The first titular inscriptive dedications to appear were patronal dedications. It is well known that dedications first appeared as expressions of gratitude to a given protector, as glorification for a patron (Horace's "Odes to Maecenas") and at their base had a panegyric, servile, complimentary character. The role of such dedications is limited by the boundaries of the study of literary strategies. However, among patronal dedications, there are those where this panegyric style had deep foundations connected to an author's desired worldview. In Russian literature, this has been especially well traced in the odes of the classicist poets (M.V. Lomonosov, V.K. Trediakovsky, G.R. Derzhavin, etc.). The character of their dedicative addresses was determined by classicism's canons. As is known, their key socio-political idea was tied to an understanding of a strong centralized power as a sign of a society's reasonable organization. In particular, we find indicative examples of such dedications in M.V. Lomonosov's odes for his patrons, where the dedications often practically take the title's place:

«Ode to the Most Radiant Head of State, Her Majesty the Great Empress Elizaveta Petrovna, Ruler of All Russia, on the Luminous, Solemn Occasion of Her Majesty's Ascension to the Russian Throne on the Twenty-Fifth of November, 1761, Most Humbly Proffered as a Rendering of True Joy and Jealous Zeal from a Most Devoted Slave, Mikhail Lomonosov»;

«Ode for the Occasion of the Birth of His Imperial Highness, His Majesty Grand Duke Pavel Petrovich, on the Twentieth of September, 1754»;

«Ode on the Name Day of His Imperial Highness, His Majesty Grand Duke Pyotr Feodorovich, in 1743,» etc.

As is known, M.V. Lomonosov, as a court poet, was responsible for writing odes for court holidays; however, he incorporated ideas about the fate of the Russian government, its science, and its culture into these odes. The poet saw laudatory odes as a convenient form of conversation with the tsars. He spoke on the truth's behalf, and thus felt justified in advising his rulers.

Odes often showed aesthetic and moral stances that were meaningful for an author. This explains the growth of programmatic (or projective) acts in titular dedications, when a dedication showed both the writer's position and an addressee's name. Inscriptive dedications to patrons often contained, either in the title or as subtext, ideological or spiritual solidarity between addresser and addressee. For example, D.I. Fonvizin affixes the following dedication, which contains his enlightening stance, to the journal «A Friend of Honest People, or Starodum:» «A periodic journal, dedicated to Truth.» Another, sentimental intention links the addresser and addressee in Karamzin's "Missives to Dimitriev in Response to His Verses, In Which He Bemoans the Transience of Happy Youth." In general, as literary forms evolved, dedications at the head of a work took on a freer and more personal character. Here, open compliments were replaced by a modality of sympathy or antipathy. Dedications to friends and lovers were common. V.A. Zhukovsky's ballad «Svetlana» appears with the dedication «For Al. An. Pr-vaya,» A.S. Pushkin's «A Prisoner of the Caucasus» is preceded by the phrase «Dedicated to N.N. Raevsky,» P.A. Vyazemsky's «A Conversation on the Seventh of April, 1832» is dedicated «To Countess E.M. Zavadskaya,» etc.

"Dedicative prefaces" are often tied to a message. In works with similar forms and functions, the headings also suggest a dedication. We find many examples of this parallel planning in Pushkin's lyrical poetry, primarily in his verses from his lyceum and Petersburg periods, when his poetic persona was emerging. There are many epistles to his teachers and friends from his lyceum, and even to the latter's siblings («To My Aristarkh», «To Galich», «To Prince A.M. Gorchakov», «To Pushin», «To Delvig», «For Kiuchelbeker», «To the Gentleman M.A. Delvig», «To N.G. Lomonosov,» etc.); there are addresses to poets and readers, for various literary occasions («To a Poet Friend», «To Batiushkov», «To Zhukovsky,», «For a Portrait of Zhukovsky», «For a Portrait of Vyazemsky», «The Ode «Liberty,» Dedicated to Princess Golitsynaya»); there are also numerous romantic and friendly dedications, some of which are humorous («To the Beauty Who Sniffed Tobacco »).

Researchers often pass over the genre-specific qualities of dedications, believing that in such cases the whole work becomes a dedication. A.P. Kvyatkovsky, in his «Poetic Dictionary,» gives the following definition: «The dedication is a poetic genre, a lyrical verse preceding a larger work...» [19,20]. In our view, such statements demand further refinement. We will consider a few examples.

In Pushkin's «To I. I. Pushin» the titular lines are viewed as a naming. However, from the start this title was a dedication, which grew beyond its limits and functions. A synthesis of two forms – message and dedication – emerged when the latter element took the place of the title. The dedication and the message, as individual genre forms, did not completely combine, but they both assimilated the other's specific traits. The dedication in Pushkin's messages «To K.» has an even more complex discursive character. Here, the target is latent, anonymous: "K.," on the one hand, is perceived as a title, but on the other it appears as a titular, confidential, dedicative inscription, occupying an unusual

position. So, in the famous missive «To K. (“I Remember a Wonderful Moment...”))» the letter can be the Russian preposition “K (meaning to)” and a cryptographic anagram (the first letter of the last name Kern).

3.3. Extra-Title Dedications

There are other kinds of dedications besides the traditional forms of the titular dedication. The acrostic is one of them. It is classified as a “border” text, arising from the first letter of every line of a work and forming a word, collocation, or phrasal statement. In Russian literature, the first appearances of the acrostic are tied to the 17th century and to the name Archmandrite Herman, from the Resurrection Monastery (a.k.a. the New Jerusalem Monastery), a student and attendant of Patriarch Nikon. According to A.M. Panchenko, Herman would create hymns and spiritual songs reacting to contemporary events (including ones concerning Patriarch Nikon), as well as works for church holidays. Herman's acrostics serve mostly as a source of facts about the author and scribe, about his personal worries and private life: his acrostics become their own kind of signature, or autograph [21]. From the 17th century until the first half of the 19th century, the acrostic lost its popularity, ceding ground to other forms of dedicative messages in verse. In the Silver Age, it arose once again. The most common type of acrostic was the nominative acrostic, where the addressee's given and last names are spelled out by the first letters of each line of poetry. This was often a unique form of dialogue between poets. For example, Valery Bryusov writes “To Igor Severyanin. An Acrostic Sonnet with a Code,” and his addressee responds – “To Valery Bryusov. A Sonnet in Answer.” Or: Sergei Esenin dedicates an acrostic, «Joy, Like a Roach...» to Riurik Ivnev, who answers him in turn with «An Acrostic.» Nikolai Gumilev writes several acrostics to Anna Akhmatova: «Addis-Ababa, City of Roses...» and «An Acrostic ('An Angel Lay at the Edge...').»

With such a form, the dedication in acrostics moves outside of the heading complex and into the “border” field (or into its middle, as in mezostics, or into the poetic diagonal, in a diagonal acrostic).

The dedication can become the conclusion to a verse, too. The date of a work's completion becomes a representation of this kind of dedication. We will call it a temporal dedication. It is known that many works of Pushkin's are signed on the 19th of October. This date becomes a unique form of dedication for some of Pushkin's works about his sacred lyceum brotherhood. As is known, the date under a work is not always an indication of the calendar date when work on a text finished. For example, the novel “The Captain's Daughter” was finished in summer (it was first released on June 23rd, 1836), but the signature at its end acquired the date October 19th, 1836. The date of the novel's completion is thus mystified, and the work gains an extra-titular dedication to the upcoming anniversary of the lyceum.

Besides the dedication as acrostic or the temporal dedication, there are also grounds to focus on un-explicated forms of the dedication (such as “album” verses), i.e. forms with a concealed, cryptographic character, which possess hidden possible meanings that can only be comprehended via a dive into the historic-cultural atmosphere of the forms' period, via acknowledgment of (auto)biographical goals, signs, and other pieces of evidence in an artistic text. The research devoted to ascertaining that the dedication in Pushkin's “Bronze Horseman” has an addressee serves as an example of this idea. The cultural-historical context, aggregated biographical knowledge, and a meticulous comprehension of structural, compositional components in the text allowed for the assertion that Pushkin's “Petersburg tale” was implicitly addressed to his friend from his lyceum, and member of the insurrection on Senate Square, Wilhelm Kiukhelbeker.

4. Summary

Dimitri Kuzmin, in his article devoted to the study of dedicative strategies in contemporary Russian poetry, stated that, with time, a new field of studying the artistic structure of a text should appear: “dedicology.” [18]. Indeed, one must admit the necessity of building a typology for dedicative strategies, based on a series of criteria. These may include the author's modal position, the status of the addressee's axiological values, the means or factor of address, the subject/object of address, means of address and authorization, dialogic intensions, etc. Even at the most preliminary level of the chosen system of coordinates, addressive inscriptions (explicit or implicit, titular and extra-titular, etc.) can be differentiated as direct and indirect, subjective and objective, discriminate or indiscriminate, addressed and anonymous/confidential, generalizing or concretizing, complete and reduced, named and initialized, open and veiled, serious and ironic, etc. The stylistic level of a dedication's form also deserves attention – dedications in verse or in prose, involving complimentary (or negative) markers, using/not using stylistic formulas, etc.

5. Conclusions

Whatever the foundational matrix of the system of dedications might be, it is evident that the text of a dedication in some form is important not only in and of itself (as a part of an author's single, artistic metatext), but as a significant artistic (and in some measure biographical) document of perspective, which allows one to fill in the image and personality of an author-creator, to underscore the originality of a message's poetic confidant, and to enrich our understanding of the specificities and character of the interrelations between addresser and addressee: thanks, it seems, to a facultative element of the artistic textual field, we can hear an intersubjective dialogue between dedicator and dedicatee, between the author-creator and the lyrical hero of a work.

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