

Англо-русский и русско-английский словарь религиозной и возвышенной лексики

English-Russian and Russian-English Religious and Spiritual Lexicon

Roy Cochrun, SlavFile Dictionary Editor

Compiler: D. I. Yermolovich

Publisher: R. Valent; **Publication date:** 2004

Price: \$29.95, plus shipping; **ISBN:** 5-93439-121-6

Available from: Eastview Publications

Number of pages: 263; **Number of entries:** About 5,000 terms and quotations

Not everything is taught in class when one studies Russian. Either that, or the student daydreams through part of the course and misses important tidbits of information.

This thought struck me when I realized certain gaps in my own knowledge as I translated my first article for a client that included Biblical references. Because of a dearth of Russian-to-English cultural or religious dictionaries at that time, I thought a reference to *4 Царств* was a typographical error when I found the passage being cited in *II Kings* in a **Revised Standard Edition** translation of the Bible. Either my instructors, native Russian speakers all, had never touched on the books of the Bible, or my brain was somewhere else the hour they did.

With the publication of D.I. Yermolovich's **Англо-русский и русско-английский словарь религиозной и возвышенной лексики**, translators finally have at least one source to which to turn when translating religious terms. With only about 5,000 terms (according to its own claim—more like 4,200 according to my estimate), the dictionary attempts to cover more than Christianity. There are terms from Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, and more, each indicated with an appropriate abbreviation, the expansions of which are found on pages 6 and 7 of the book. Even *мунисты* (the Moonies, followers of Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church) is included.

While the preceding paragraph makes it sound as if this dictionary is complete, bear in mind that the English-only **Zondervan's Pictorial Bible Dictionary**, for example, contains over 5,000 entries for Judaism and Christianity alone! Therefore, the dictionary reviewed here is by no means complete, but it is a very useful addition to one's reference collection.

Unlike some subjects we translate, where numerous cognates or transliterated names are used, religious terms and names are different. For example, *Навуходоносор* certainly doesn't resemble *Nebuchadnezzar*, and *Иисус Навин* might cause the novice translator to believe perhaps

the translation might be *Jesus the Nazarene*, rather than *Joshua*.

Terms that are not always so obvious, such as *возложение рук* (*laying on of hands*), *Антипасха* (*Low Sunday, Quasimodo*) and *неопалимая купина* (*burning bush*), and that do not appear in most other sources, are translated in this book. (Five generalist dictionaries ranging from compilation dates of 1994 through 2006 and Lubensky's *Russian-English Dictionary of Idioms* were searched, in addition to the computerized ABBYY *Lingvo* (release 8). The exception was Multitran (<http://www.multitran.ru/>), which had all three!)

The terms that can be found here include the titles of all Koranic sura, such as *Вьрывающие* (*The Soul-Snatchers*, title of sura 79), names of historic religious personalities such as *Блуа*, *Леон* (*Leon Bloy* who lived 1846-1917), and names and terms specific to Russia such as *Оптина Пустынь* (*Opta's Hermitage*, also known as *Optina Hermitage* or simply *Optina*, a monastery in Russia).

The book itself is hardbound with fairly large, legible print. The first part of the dictionary is English-to-Russian, which is discussed below. The second part, the Russian-to-English, the focus of this review, presents the entry followed by the correct religious translation. Complete head terms are at the top of each page and each main entry is in **bold**. Terms are easy to distinguish from one other and further explanations are provided within parentheses when the translation appears to make little sense or have no real connotation. Pronunciation of names is within brackets, while alternate translations are inside slant bars.

Yermolovich points out in the preface that because religion was ignored for years in the former Soviet Union, most of these terms were not included in dictionaries. This exclusion created a great need for the dictionary, as words

Continued on page 23



RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL LEXICON

Continued from page 22

and terms often are mistranslated when encountered in a religious context. He has included the phonetic renditions of names in that horrid “phonetic alphabet” this reviewer has never learned so they may be pronounced correctly by interpreters and guides. But just how many tourist guides know the International Phonetic Alphabet remains unknown.

From time to time, boxed text provides detailed information about a translation. For example, the entry for *дванадцать праздники* (*Twelve Great Feasts of the Eastern Orthodox Church*) is followed by a boxed list of the 12 feasts in Russian, which are then translated into English.

The English-to-Russian part of the dictionary, not really reviewed here, makes a good cross-reference for the Russian-to-English pages. For example, the English-to-Russian entry for the Russian entry *Фатиха* (*Fatihah*), the first chapter of the Koran) has beneath it the text of the sura in English followed by two different Russian translations. Perhaps this is how the compilers reach approximately 5,000 words.

As a specialist dictionary, this dictionary is especially useful for anyone translating religious texts or histories. In addition, this work should not be overlooked by those who never know from day to day what type of job will land on their desk. The **Англо-русский и русско-английский словарь религиозной и возвышенной лексики** is most definitely one I have on my shelf.

SlavFile



Fall 2007

Vol. 16, No. 4

SLAVIC LANGUAGES DIVISION

AMERICAN TRANSLATORS ASSOCIATION

www.atanet.org/divisions/SLD