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## Editorial evaluation of articles on Church History or its sub-branches: brief recommendations

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Editorial evaluation (expertise) is one of the most important tools for working with academic articles. The formulation of standards (criteria) for the expert review of publications on the specialty of Church History and its sub-branches is an important step towards the formation of a collection of high-quality printed materials that reflect the contemporary academic research carried out by specialists in the Russian Federation.

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The editorial evaluation (examination) of articles is a fairly new concept for the Russian segment of scientific journals, but in the international scientific community, whose publications are regulated by the rules of citation systems, electronic libraries and open access platforms, it is a full-fledged system for evaluating the content presented in material journals along with the peer review. For example, the large aggregator of open access journals The Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), when selecting journals indexed on the platform, as additional criteria establish the requirements for journals with a thematic focus on arts and humanities to conduct the peer review or editorial assessment by at least two editors. The specializations that relate to this section are indicated in the international standard of classification of education, adopted by UNESCO in 2013<sup>1</sup>: specialty code 0221 — Religion and theology (history of religion, study of holy books, studies of various religions, theology). This classification also includes — code 0222 History and archeology, code 0223 Philosophy and ethics, code 0231 Language research (interpretation, language features), code 0213 Fine arts (history and philosophy of art).

Thus, in order to meet modern world trends, the specialization “Church History” and its sub-branches (including Christian archeology and the history of Christian art) need to create specific criteria for editorial (expert) evaluation of research materials prepared for publication in scientific journals. Its purpose should be not only to make sure that the authors comply with formal requirements (for example, the correspondence of the topic of the article to the profile of the journal, the correspondence of the title of the article to its content, the presence of conclusions, the presence of a list of literature with links to sources from it in the text of the article), but also provide adequate assessment of the scientific content by the editorial board, and not only by external expert reviewers.

The examination of articles in the field of “Church history” and its sub-branches, presented in the *Russian Journal of Church History*, is aimed at determining the scientific novelty and significance of the research results. The scientific journal in its activity focuses on the scientific community and readers, therefore, the articles of most interest are those that contain serious academic work carried out by the author on the specific topical problems.

Topics in the following areas are considered standard:

1. Problems of church history, archeology and the history of church art of different Christian confessions and denominations, both Western and Eastern.
2. Translation into Russian and interpretation of sources.
3. Philological and archaeographic research.
4. Activity of church institutions in Russia and abroad.

<sup>1</sup> <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/international-standard-classification-of-education-fields-of-education-and-training-2013-detailed-field-descriptions-2015-en.pdf>

5. The history of the Russian Church from the time of the adoption of Christianity to our time, including the Old Believers.

6. History of biblical texts, history and development of manuscript books and the printing of sacred texts.

7. Methodical work in the study and teaching of Church history or its subsectors.

The structure of the scientific journal assumes the publication of the following types of materials: research articles, publications and translations of sources, review articles, reviews of scientific monographs, collections and articles. A pre-developed program of scientific research allows the author to structure the material according to the type of article.

The subject of the manuscript should correspond to the profile of the journal, the title — to the content. The abstract (abstract) of the article should be short and informative<sup>2</sup>. The first sentences must contain the purpose of the study, an overview or a theoretical concept, depending on the type of article. Key words should be publicly available not only in Russian, but also in English. Usually, the editorial board, when first considering an article, immediately pays attention to the structure of the resume; if the author was unable to draw up an abstract according to the recommendations of the journal, then, logically, it is possible to expect the presence in the text of certain, sometimes significant flaws, the correction of which will take too much time from the editor and reviewer. Such an article can be immediately sent for revision or be refused admission for consideration.

Criteria for scientific novelty, theoretical and practical significance of the content, the possibility of introducing the presented results into practice should be presented in advance. To do this, it is necessary at the beginning of the text to evaluate the contribution of the theoretical generalizations which it contains, expanding and deepening the problems of Church history or its sub-branches, to the development of science and the empirical contribution: how important and new is the primary material that is introduced into scientific circulation. These two aspects should be placed in the "Introduction" section, which describes the problem posed and the ways to solve it.

A review of the literature relevant to the research topic should then be submitted by the author. In this regard, it is necessary to pay attention to the correctness of reference formatting in the literature and footnotes (once again familiarize yourself with the rules of the journal or look at previous publications — how, in different cases, references to sources and literature, interlinear notes and references are made there). The list

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<sup>2</sup> In the first sentence (or paragraph) after the review of the problem, the goal of the study is set, which should be reflected in the title of the article. The goal includes the words "to study, analyze, research, etc." and ends with the result, which the author of the article intends to get as a result "The sources and methods" used by the researcher are described below. At the end, a summary should be submitted, which provides a statement of the achievement of the goal (obtaining a significant scientific result), as well as the possibilities of practical application of the scientific results obtained.

of sources and literature for articles of a historical orientation is not as strictly formalized as in other specialties, but care should be taken not only in the selection of sources, but also in the completeness and correctness of filling in the data: year, publisher, number of pages, ISBN, etc. It is permissible to indicate in the list of references only the main editions, while other editions are mentioned in the footnotes, but they must also be carefully attributed. The requirement of scientific journals to submit two lists of literature, in Russian and in English, is due to the fact that Russian-language publications, when placed in the Scientific Electronic Library system, are indicated in the original language, and in international citation bases, literature in all languages, except for the Latin alphabet, is excluded from bibliography (visually the reader sees only numbers and spaces).

Citation of the works of colleagues, like self-citation, should be used in reasonable amounts to visually support the conclusions drawn in the article, and must be in quotation marks (to avoid plagiarism). The content of the text of the article, first of all, shows the work of the author and the degree (skills) of his mastery of methods of analysis, comparison, systematization of information, as well as familiarity with the current publications of colleagues.

The visual information provided by the authors of the articles must be of good print quality and support the written conclusions. The use of borrowed illustrations is permissible only with the permission of their author or with an appropriately formatted link to the source of the illustration, if the work is in the public domain. The author of an illustration is considered to be the one who took a photograph of a visual object or painted it in any graphic way. In any case, the author or source of the picture must be indicated. The rights to publish illustrations from museum collections are often a stumbling block in Russia today, but in most other countries a link to the museum or a reference to the Creative Commons (CC) license is sufficient.

Attention should also be paid to the formal requirements of a scientific journal for the formatting of the text of the manuscript and accompanying documents. When an author sends a manuscript to a journal, he concludes with the editorial board a kind of agreement that defines the rights, obligations and responsibilities of the parties. The journal has the right to determine its publication policy, the author has the right to independently determine the journal to which he or she sends the manuscript. The duty of the journal is to edit, correct and publish the manuscript, the duty of the author is to prepare the manuscript according to the Rules for Authors and to agree the edited text for publication. The responsibility of the journal to the author: to conduct a scientific assessment of the text, if necessary — to give recommendations for revision, to check for compliance with the norms of publication ethics, to publish, and send information about the publication to available citation databases and libraries.

The author also bears responsibility before the journal and its readers: the information presented in the study must be verified, reliable, not contain plagiarism or other manipulations with text and figures.

Separately, it should be noted that the text of the manuscript is the intellectual property of the author, and editing is seen as making corrections. Scientific journals of different specialization have their own specifics of working with the text — the author can see the final version of his article only after publication, or any changes are carefully coordinated. Sometimes the author may disagree with the changes made by the editor, and if an agreed decision is not made during the negotiations, the only way out is to withdraw the article.

In assessing the quality of research, editors often pay attention to design, methodology, analysis, and interpretation. If these points are stated without the necessary accuracy or are in doubt, experts can return the manuscript for revision.

In the style of writing, it is required that the text be homogeneous (the Russian-language text should not be constantly interrupted by English loan words). In terminology, it is necessary to adhere to constancy; professional jargon should not be used.

When reviewing or reviewing the text, the editor pays great attention to the terminology. It is especially important to proofread a text of a historical or art history for the use of exact titles, names and terms, especially those that represent a translation from a foreign language into Russian. The specialty of “Church History” and its sub-branches require:

- accurately indicate the names of settlements, geographical names (they can change in historical time); one should either indicate modern historical names, or vice versa, but not mix); if Cyrillic transliteration is used, the original name should be indicated in brackets at the first mention;

- use the names of church leaders, dignities, titles, churches, dioceses in the officially accepted spelling (for example, the correct spelling is the Patriarchate of Antioch); distinguish between ecclesiastical dignities, historically entrenched nicknames and other anthroponyms, for example, the God-Bearer, Porphyrogenites, the Warrior, of Carthage;

- to observe the correspondence of the names of authors, names of sources in different parts of the text of the article, with the official names, their use in the well-established transliteration. After completing the work on the manuscript, it is necessary to check again that the names or years coincide with the description of the source given in the bibliography.

- the use of names of Greek origin in Slavic transcription, and not in Latin.

- write the pronouns of God and Christ with capital letters personal (I, Him, etc.) and with lowercase when reflexive, relative, etc. (own, which, etc.).

— write abbreviated names of biblical books in the text, but in full in the titles.

Thus, the work submitted for publication should be logically completed, show previous research on this topic, have novelty, significance for science and a practical basis for further use of the results, which makes the publication popular and cited in the professional environment.

It is worth noting the importance of the “counter” process — the training and improvement of specialists who conduct editorial assessment or review. At present, in the Russian-speaking environment, there is very little methodological material that can be used by reviewers not only in the work on articles on the history of the Church and its sub-branches, but also on the historical discipline as a whole. There is often a lack of understanding that peer review is a necessary link in formal scientific communication, which is at the heart of the scientific approach, and scientists who want to contribute to science are obliged to carry out the work of peer review of the quality of published or already published materials. ... Quality assessment is not a subject equivalent to the concept of “criticism”. The requirements for the reviewer’s work include such concepts as objectivity, ethics, diligence and confidentiality, but also a completely different approach — the reviewer corrects the errors made by the author and gives recommendations for improving the presentation of the results of the work, without bias (bias — bias, is the main negative moment when reviewing) speaking not on his own behalf, but as a representative of the scientific community. There is a practice to thank the reviewers for the suggested comments and even refer to them.

Editorial evaluation (examination) of articles is one of the important tools for working with scientific articles. The formulation of standards (criteria) for peer review of publications in the specialty of the history of the Church and its subsectors is an important step towards the formation of a community of high-quality printed materials reflecting the modern scientific activities of specialists in the Russian Federation.

**Relationship and Activities:** none.