Fig. 1. The Kiev Missal, parchment, from the tenth to eleventh centuries.
П. 328, fol. 1v, Library of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, Kiev.

CYRILLIC SCRIPT

Vladimir Vodoff

Constantine (Cyril in religious writings, d. 869), "the Philosopher" (meaning "the learned"), and his brother Methodius, archbishop of Moravia (d. 884) were commanded by the Byzantine Emperor Michael III and the patriarch Photius to assist Prince Rostislav of Moravia in his desire to see his people converted to Christianity, but in their own language. This would remove them from Latin and Teutonic influences. Just as the language used for these translations—Old or Church Slavonic—was an artificial creation based on the dialects heard by the two missionaries in the region of their birth (Thessalonia and its surroundings), the alphabet, known as "Glagolitic" but originally known as "Cyrillic," was apparently created by Constantine/Cyril. This is the script used in the Kiev Missal (Fig. 1), a sacred Latin text translated into Old (Church) Slavonic. As for the alphabet from which the missionary drew his inspiration, was it the Hebrew alphabet? Or Greek cryptography? The question remains open. The name "Glagolitic" (*glacolica* from *glagol*, "verb"), only appeared in the late Middle Ages, in Croatia, where the priests who used the Slavic liturgy were called *glagoljaši*, "those who speak [the local dialect]."

This alphabet consisted of forty signs that rendered Slavic phonology quite accurately. As in Greek, the letters also had a numeric value. The originality of the alphabet seems to have hindered its diffusion since it had to compete with the Greek and Latin alphabets that had a long written tradition behind them. The Slavic nations who owed allegiance to Rome gradually adopted Latin as the language of liturgy and literature, later borrowing its alphabet to transcribe their own languages (Polish, Czech, Slovak, Croatian, and Slovenian). The nations that remained in the Byzantine orbit—the regions that correspond to modern Bulgaria, Macedonia, Serbia, the Ukraine, Belarus (Byelorussia), and Russia—abandoned Glagolitic in favor of an alphabet that more closely resembled Greek and is now known as "Cyrillic." Glagolitic persisted in the western Balkans, and continued to be used in Macedonia until the eleventh century, in Serbia until the twelfth century, and in certain parts of Croatia until modern times. As yet, there is no convincing explanation for the traces of Glagolitic discovered by epigraphers among eastern Slavs.

The Gospels copied for Ostromir (Fig. 2), a lieutenant of Izjaslav Jaroslavič, Prince of Kiev who held court at Novgorod, is the oldest codex preserved in the eastern region and one of the oldest to have been written in the Cyrillic alphabet. Although this alphabet inherited the former name given to Glagolitic, it was actually created long after the death of Constantine/Cyril and Methodius by disciples of the Thessalonian brothers who found refuge in Bulgaria at the court of Tsar Simeon (893–927). The modern Cyrillic alphabet is more or less a hybrid of the original Slavic alphabet (Glagolitic) and the Greek alphabet, which was widely used in Bulgaria—a country whose elite had adopted Byzantine Christianity, giving it access to Greek culture.

In practical terms, of the forty-three letters (all of which also have a numerical value), twenty-four are borrowed directly from the Greek alphabet, others are modified Greek letters, and the rest are descended from Glagolitic. Several were created by making ligatures between existing letters (for example by linking **i** with a vowel). Early Cyrillic manuscripts contain some abbreviations, like the Greek and Latin texts of which they are a translation, but these are limited to holy names. There is also a notable tendency to reproduce the superscript signs used in Greek, as well as

Fig. 2. The Ostromir Gospel, parchment, 1056–1057 CE. F.I.I. 5, fol. 2; John I: 1–7, National Library of Russia, St. Petersburg.

occasional accents, and the "soft sign" above the initial vowel of a word.

This alphabet was used initially for Old Slavonic, especially in Bulgaria, then in the various local adaptations of this scholarly language (Slavonic), and later in countries of the Greek Orthodox faith to transcribe their local languages. The religious and cultural community that these countries constituted in medieval Europe is sometimes known as *Slavia orthodoxa*.

The adaptation of Old Slavonic to the local dialects produced certain modifications in the language that transferred themselves to the lettering. Thus the nasal vowels / ǫ / and / ’ę / were respectively replaced by /*u*/ and /’*a*/, causing the letters Ѫ and Ѧ to disappear, while the Ꙗ and Ѩ henceforth competed with Ѩ to produce either /*ya*/ or /’*a*/.

The most formal Cyrillic lettering, like the Greek on which it is based, is known as uncial (*ustav*). As can be seen

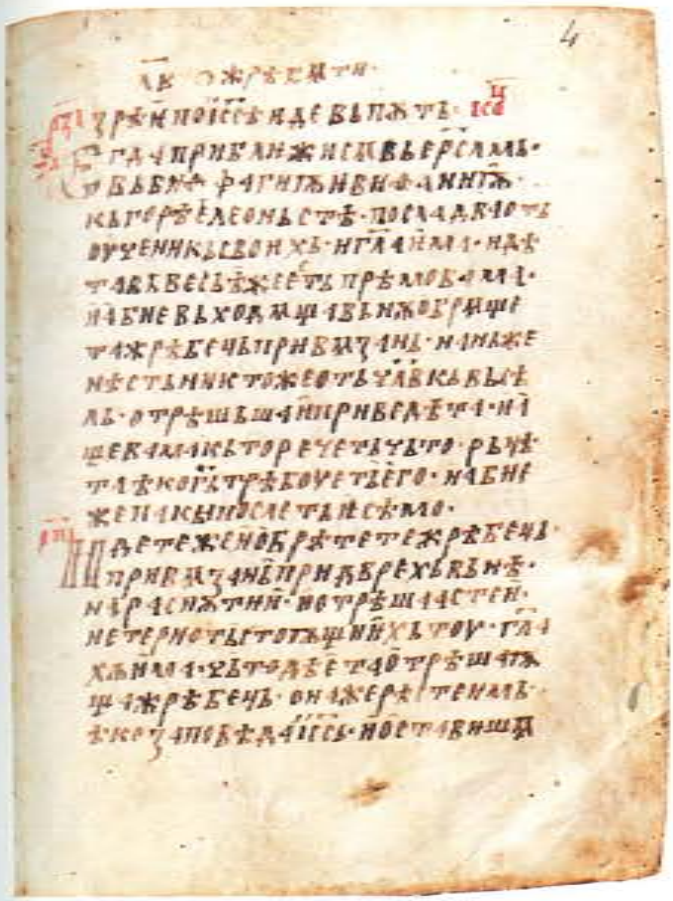


Fig. 3. Dobromir Gospel, parchment, twelfth century. Ms. Slave 65, fol. 4; Mark X: 52 to XI: 6, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.

in the example shown here, it is a precise, regular block style, most of which fits between two horizontal parallel lines. The Ostromir Gospel is one of the handsomest examples of a manuscript written in uncials or indeed of any manuscript in the whole of *Slavia orthodoxa*.

The Dobromir Gospel (Fig. 3) was copied out in Bulgaria by a priest called Dobromir (except for a few later folios that are fourteenth-century additions from Serbia). Most of the manuscript is preserved in St. Petersburg in the National Library of Russia (Q.п.I.55); twenty-three folios are in the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai (no. 43) and there are two in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris (Slave 65, fol. 3–4). It is written in Bulgarian Middle Slavonic. The difference between this version of Slavonic and Eastern Slavic Slavonic (commonly known as "Russian Slavonic") is in the characters, which include nasal vowels, but the confusion between the two ultra-short vowels / ĭ / (= Ь) and / ŭ / (= Ъ) caused the second of these graphemes to disappear. For the same reason, the etymological hard /y/ is rendered as Ы and not as ЪІ.

The script remains uncial but the letter is less careful than that of the Ostromir Gospel, hence his designation as "popular." The letters no longer rest on the lower horizontal line but appear to be suspended from the upper line; they are irregularly drawn. It is quite possible that this script was influenced by Glagolitic, which remained in use in Macedonia until the late eleventh century.

The *Guide Book* (Fig. 4) reproduces the start of the long version of *Pravda russkaya* (*Russian Justice*), the oldest collection of laws known to the Eastern Slavs (the long version dates only from the thirteenth century). This text also constitutes one of the oldest examples of the use of Old or Church Slavonic, the language of religion and scholarship, to transcribe the vernacular.

In this late manuscript, the writing has evolved somewhat. The uncial has become a semi-uncial (*polu-ustav*), the letters are more irregular and often asymmetrical (the letters **Б**, **В**, **К**, and **Н**, for example).

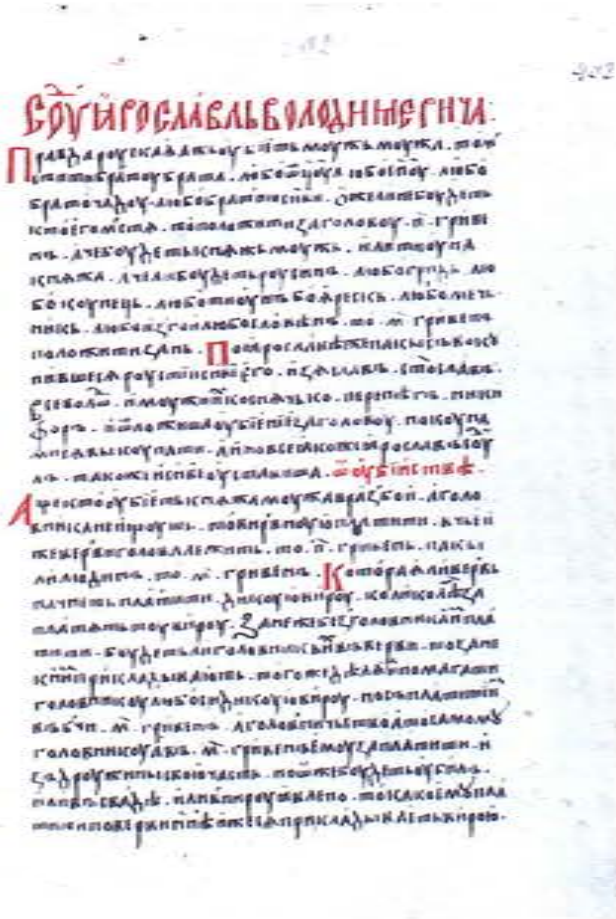


Fig. 4. *Kormčaja kniga* (Guide Book), compilation of canonic and civil law, written on paper, mid- to late-fifteenth century CE. From the St. Sophia cathedral in Novgorod, no. 1173, fol. 402; the beginning of *Pravda russkaja* (Russian Justice), long version, National Library of Russia, St. Petersburg.

Fig. 5. Note on birch bark concerning domestic matters, late fourteenth century CE. No. 363, Novgorod Museum.

Superscripted letters, generally final consonants, have become more numerous and they have lost the tilde that was placed on top of them.

The Cyrillic alphabet itself only underwent a few modifications. These were generally the result of changes in the language, the most important of which involved the disappearance of the ultra-short vowels /ŭ/ and /ĭ/ in the weak position and their replacement by /o/ and /e/ in the strong position. However, the script does not really convey this change. The ь or "soft sign" was retained to indicate a softening of the previous consonant, and the ъ or "hard sign" was used to indicate the end of a word or even the end of a closed syllable. The arrival in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries of Balkan priests who were fleeing the Turkish invasion explains various modifications linked to the development of the southern Slavic languages, such as the substitution of ьі for ъі. Yet, in general, Cyrillic lettering changed little. This situation would persist until modern times because handwritten documents continued to predominate, not only because the Balkans were under Ottoman rule but also because in Russia the communities of Old Believers rejected the printed books produced by the official Russian Orthodox church.

Hundreds of texts inscribed on birch bark, for the most part fragmentary (Fig. 5), have been found buried in the earth in Novgorod and, to a lesser extent, in other cities of Russia, Belarus, and the Ukraine. They are generally brief notes, discarded by their recipients once they had been read, and they by no means constitute a structured archive. But the location in which they were discovered makes it possible to link them with a particular piece of urban real estate whose owner may even be identifiable. The content of the document may be an indication of the sender's occupation, or it may involve a landlord and concern the management of an estate covering the vast tracts of land ruled by the oligarchic republic of Novgorod. The language of these notes is not characteristically Slavonic and is not composed of legal formulae. It thus provides valuable evidence of the language as it was spoken in the Novgorod region in the Middle Ages.

The script used in these documents is very much dictated by the material employed for the writing. The need to carve the letters on wood gave the semi-uncials a more angular shape. It is also perfectly possible that the use of wood, necessitated by the late introduction of paper, may have delayed the development of a cursive script among the eastern Slavs.

Paper was first introduced in the fourteenth century but continued to compete with parchment and birch bark. However, paper encouraged the development of a cursive style of writing. From the sixteenth century, cursive began to be used predominantly in diplomatic papers, charters, and

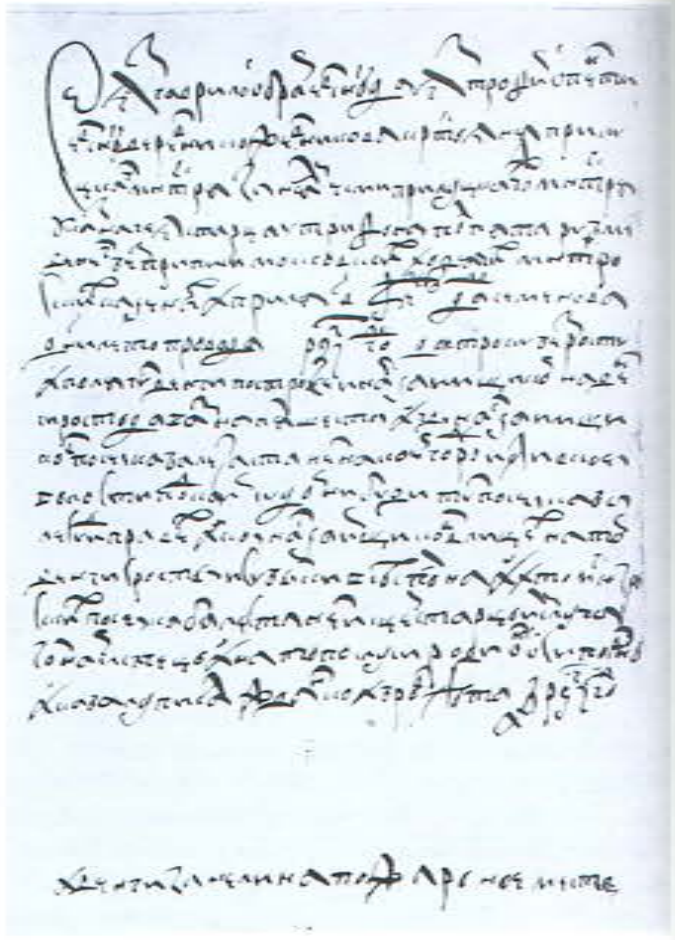
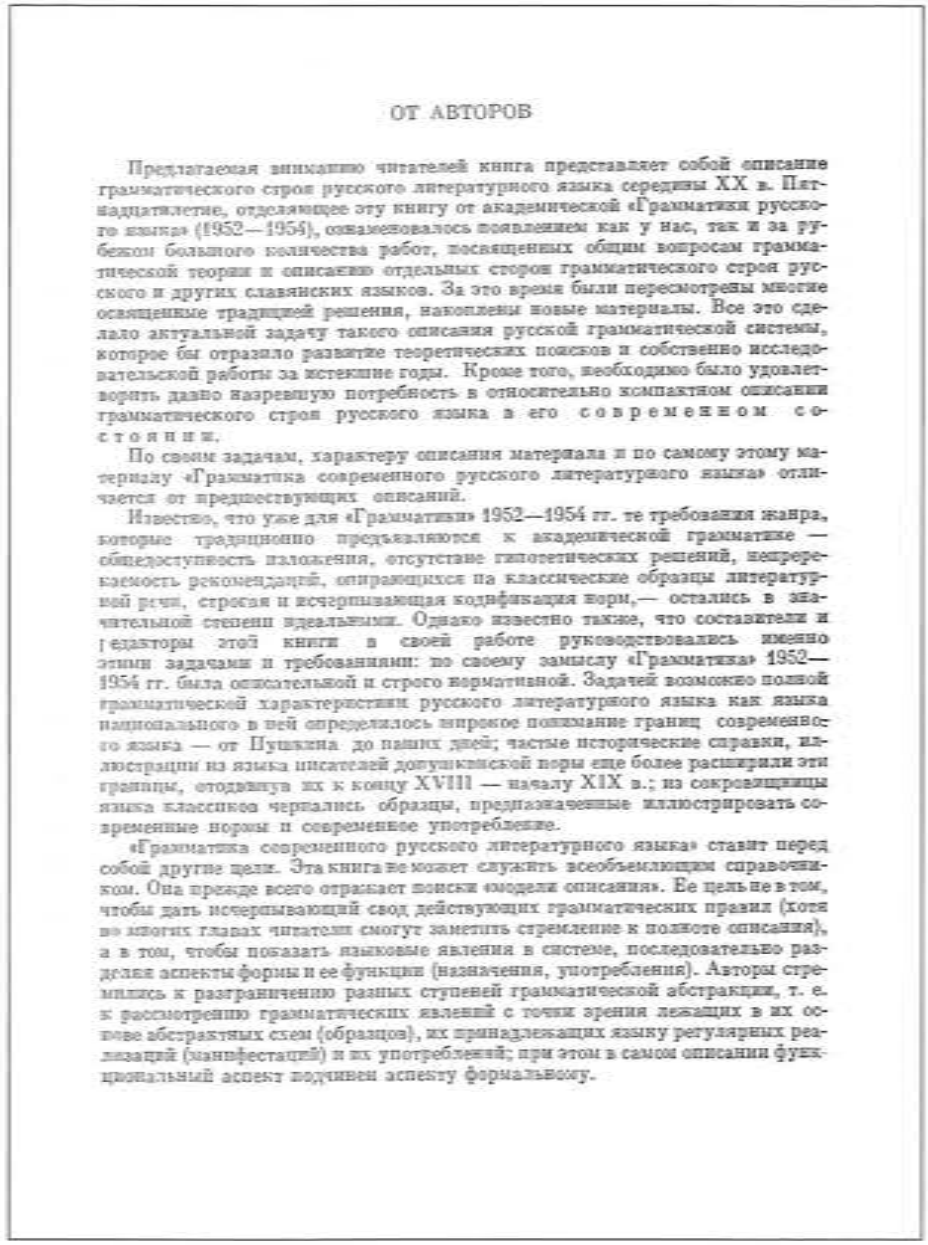


Fig. 6. Record of a debt from the peasants of the village of Koževnikovo to the treasurer of the monastery of St. Savior at Priluki, near Vologda. Paper, 1608. P.M. Stroev Collection, no. XVII, 19, Institute of Russian History of the Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg section.

Fig. 7. Ivan Fedorov. *Alphabet Primer*. L'viv (L'vov, Lemberg), Ukraine, 1574.



ОТ АВТОРОВ

Предлагаемая вниманию читателей книга представляет собой описание грамматического строя русского литературного языка середины XX в. Пятнадцатилетие, отделяющее эту книгу от академической «Грамматики русского языка» (1952—1954), ознаменовалось появлением как у нас, так и за рубежом большого количества работ, посвященных общим вопросам грамматической теории и описанию отдельных сторон грамматического строя русского и других славянских языков. За это время были пересмотрены многие освященные традицией решения, накоплены новые материалы. Все это сделало актуальной задачу такого описания русской грамматической системы, которое бы отразило развитие теоретических поисков и собственно исследовательской работы за истекшие годы. Кроме того, необходимо было удовлетворить давно назревшую потребность в относительно компактном описании грамматического строя русского языка в его современном состоянии.

По своим задачам, характеру описания материала и по самому этому материалу «Грамматика современного русского литературного языка» отличается от предшествующих описаний.

Известно, что уже для «Грамматики» 1952—1954 гг. те требования жанра, которые традиционно предъявляются к академической грамматике — общедоступность изложения, отсутствие гипотетических решений, непререкаемость рекомендаций, опирающихся на классические образцы литературной речи, строгая и исчерпывающая кодификация норм,— остались в значительной степени идеальными. Однако известно также, что составители и редакторы этой книги в своей работе руководствовались именно этими задачами и требованиями: по своему замыслу «Грамматика» 1952—1954 гг. была описательной и строго нормативной. Задачей возможно полной грамматической характеристики русского литературного языка как языка национального в ней определялось широкое понимание границ современного языка — от Пушкина до наших дней; частые исторические справки, иллюстрации из языка писателей допушкинской поры еще более расширили эти границы, отодвинув их к концу XVIII — началу XIX в.; из сокровищницы языка классиков черпались образцы, предназначенные иллюстрировать современные нормы и современное употребление.

«Грамматика современного русского литературного языка» ставит перед собой другие цели. Эта книга не может служить всеобъемлющим справочником. Она прежде всего отражает поиски «модели описания». Ее цель не в том, чтобы дать исчерпывающий свод действующих грамматических правил (хотя во многих главах читатели смогут заметить стремление к полноте описания), а в том, чтобы показать языковые явления в системе, последовательно разделяя аспекты формы и ее функции (назначения, употребления). Авторы стремились к разграничению разных ступеней грамматической абстракции, т. е. к рассмотрению грамматических явлений с точки зрения лежащих в их основе абстрактных схем (образцов), их принадлежащих языку регулярных реализаций (манифестаций) и их употреблений; при этом в самом описании функциональный аспект подчинен аспекту формальному.

Fig. 8. Modern Cyrillic script: page 3 of the Introduction to a Russian grammar published in Moscow in 1970.

the various registers of the Moscow civil authority (Fig. 6). The shape of the letters, which had become fixed in the semi-uncial style, gradually became distorted and the number of superscripted letters increased. Nevertheless, the Cyrillic alphabet *per se*, as used by the eastern Slavs since the eleventh century, did not undergo significant changes.

Printing did not emerge until relatively late in the sphere of eastern Slavic influence. The first printed books using Cyrillic characters were produced in Lithuania in the sixteenth century. One of the earliest printers was Ivan Fedorov. In 1564, he even succeeded in publishing a printed book (an epistolery) in Moscow, but he was soon forced to flee to L'viv (L'vov, Lemberg) in the Polish Ukraine, where he published his Alphabet Primer (Fig. 7).

The primer reproduces the letters of the Cyrillic alphabet in their uncial form, just as in the West, incunabula were being printed in Gothic letters. These characters, in which the holy names are abbreviated, were used in Slavic printing until the late seventeenth century and well into the eighteenth century for books of a religious nature. Even today, the characters continue to be used in books of liturgy published by Slavic Orthodox churches that follow the Byzantine rite.

In modern times, the Cyrillic alphabet used in Russia has undergone two important alterations. The first occurred in 1710, at the initiative of Peter the Great. In all secular publications, the old Cyrillic alphabet was replaced by a civil Cyrillic alphabet: the shape of the letters was modernized and made to look as far as possible like those

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На он брже сигну књигу пише,
Те је посла Анђелији Вуку:
„Богом брате, Анђелији Вуче!
„Шаљој моме ђеце поварке,
„Поварке и гајде и меху;
„Пустићу ти брата Малутина."
Ал' Вук њему књигу отпосиље:
„Господине, бане Задранине!
„Не ћу тебе ђеце поварке:
„Нема нама од њих бешике,
„Него ми је дрвени бешика,
„Ја ћу послат јелова дрвета;
„Нема нама меда ни мећера,
„Нит' ми има ране материне,
„Но ми има сироба овсеног
„И добрих меса овчијега;
„Ал' ти њему ја посиљем не ћу,
„Јер ми се зове брата Малутина,
„И узећу три товара блата;
„Јер су сиротиња два бишова сина
„Од јединога сужња из тамнице."
Кади њему сиђоша књига доље,
Те он виђе, што му књига вели,
Од зла се вељу не могаше,
Већ по пусти сужња Малутина,
И даде му три товара блата,
Те повратя до два своја сина.

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24.

Опет Вук Анђелији и бан Задранин.

Вино паје бане Задранине
Усред Задра на бијелој кули,
С баном паје тридесет Задрана;
Кад се бане напитао вина,
Вино оде међу бесједама:
„Чујте ви, тридест ђеце луда!
„Ово једну чешу научите,
„Добру чешу три стотине Задрана,
„Шћете ћу се, ђеца, подигнути,
„Слуситаћу се ми приповиједи
„До бијела сама Челебдија,
„А до куле Вука Анђелића,
„Бјелу ћу му кулу потрти,
„Бјерам ћу му дубу поробити,
„Погубићу Вука Анђелића,
„Мила брата Анђелића Вука;
„Пак ћу онде чешу повратити
„У Удбину у Турску крајину,
„Ће ћа л' каки робља поробит."
Што је бане паје говорио,
То пређене бане ученио:
Он видимку на тргу тобџије,
Оплиће двадесет топова,
Бане просу рушке по кладиви,

Fig. 9. Two pages of modern Serbian Cyrillic. In Vuk Karadžić, *Narodne srpske pjesme*, vol. IV (Peć, 1833), pp. 136–137.

of the Latin alphabet. Some of the letters borrowed from Greek that were superfluous to requirements in Slavonic languages were removed (ξ, ψ, ω). On the other hand, a breve was introduced over the "i" (**И** = */i/*) to represent */iy/* at the end of a syllable (**Й**, or *i kratkoc*); the letter **Э** was gradually introduced to annotate the */e/* in foreign words, as distinct from the */'e/* or */ye/*, written as **Е** or **е** in Cyrillic. The alphabet was reformed yet again in 1918, on the basis of proposals that had been made over the years by linguists such as A. A. Sakhmatov. More letters were discarded, such as **Ѳ**, **Ѵ** and also **І** and **Ѣ**, these last two being pronounced identically to **И** and **Е**. The "hard sign" **Ъ** (*tvyordyi znak*) was no longer added at the end of a word. The final version of the alphabet can be seen in Fig. 8.

A similar reform took place in Bulgaria in 1945. In the wake of these changes, Macedonian was also modernized and given the status of a valid written language in its own right. In practical terms, each Slavic language uses a slightly different version of the Cyrillic alphabet, due to differences in the phonetics, the medieval written tradition, and the initiatives of nineteenth- and twentieth-century reformers. The differences are greatest in Serbian.

After four centuries of Ottoman domination in the Balkans, when few books were published in Slavonic using the Cyrillic alphabet, spoken Serbian was codified by the philologist and ethnographer Vuk Karadžić (1787–1864) [Fig. 9]. As in Russia, the shape of the Cyrillic letters was modernized, and letters that were no longer needed for use in modern speech were discarded. On the other hand, the **Ћ** (*ć* in Croatian), which represented the */č'/* sound—as distinct from the */č/* Cyrillic **Ч**—was retained, and so too were the **Џ** and the **Ђ**, which rendered */dž/* and */dž'/* respectively. An important innovation was the introduction of the German */j/*, which made redundant the compound letters formed by means of a ligature between and **і** and another vowel (as in the Russian **Ю**).

Unlike most Slavic languages, the Serbian alphabet is not only phonological but also phonetic. The same consonant may be rendered in different ways depending upon its position, whether it precedes a vowel or a voiceless consonant. For instance, there is **Срб**, **Срба**, but the adjective is **српски** (*Srb*, *Srba*, *srpski* in Croatian). Each grapheme of Serbian has its exact equivalent in Croatian, a Slavic language that uses the Latin alphabet, supplemented by a number of diacritical signs.

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