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Livello bibliografico Monografia Intro -- PREFACE -- ILLUSTRATIONS -- 1. INTRODUCTION -- 1.1 The Balkan space between problems of multiplicity and claims of homogeneity -- 1.2 The role of writing and of the "Other" in the national discourse -- 1.3 Methodological considerations: sources and approaches -- 1.4 Semiotic and relational aspects of alphabets and nationalism -- SECTION I. ALPHABETIC DISPUTES OF THE 1920s AND 1930s IN BULGARIA -- 2. THE RECEPTION OF THE ABECEDAR PRIMER (1925) IN BULGARIA -- 2.1 Issues related to the adoption of new writing systems -- 2.2 Post-imperial national identity dynamics -- 2.3 The situation in Aegean Macedonia after World War I -- 2.4 The publication of the Abecedar (1925) -- 2.5 Some peculiarities related to the characters of the Abecedar -- 2.6 The "involvement" of Cyril and Methodius -- 2.7 Conclusions: the fate of the Abecedar after 1925 --3. THE "LATINIZATION" IDEOLOGY AND THE BULGARIAN DEBATES --3.1 Introduction: issues of script change -- 3.2 The Latinization ideology in the Soviet Union -- 3.3 The Latin alphabet as a "modernizing" tool in the Balkans -- 3.4 The positions in support of Latinization in Bulgaria -- 3.5 The positions in defense of Cyrillic: contextual and internal factors -- 3.6 Defensive and symbolic motivations rejecting Latinization -- 3.7 Technical imperfections of the Latin alphabet -- 3.8 Conclusions: the national character of the alphabet -- 4. THE CONTRAST BETWEEN ARABIC AND LATIN SCRIPTS AMONG THE BULGARIAN TURKS -- 4.1 The impact of the Eurasian alphabet reforms on Turkey -- 4.2 The ambivalent status of the Latin alphabet in Bulgaria -- 4.3 Language and script restrictions for the Turks of Bulgaria -- 4.4 Conclusions: the disruption of writing practices -- SECTION II. SCRIPT ISSUES IN THE "SERBO-CROATIAN TERRITORIES" IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD. 5. SERBO-CROATIAN IN TWO SCRIPTS: DIGRAPHIA, "ALPHABET SYNTHESIS" AND BILITERACY -- 5.1 Linguistic and historical introduction -- 5.2 Post-war alphabet ideologies: four parallel trends -- 5.3 The influence of the "pro-Latinization" factors -- 5.4 The first proposals of "alphabet synthesis" appearing in Život i rad -- 5.5 The "Yugoslav alphabet" by Pavle Ž. Radivojevi -- 5.6 Reactions to the "mixed alphabet" proposals -- 5.7 Živaljevi's rejection of the Yugoslav alphabet and Trivunac's defense of Cyrillic -- 5.8 Conclusions: the developments of the alphabet question in Yugoslavia -- 6. CYRILLIC AT WAR: SCRIPT IDEOLO-GIES IN THE INDEPENDENT STATE OF CROATIA, 1941-1945 -- 6.1 From unitarian ideologies to assertions of difference in the language field -- 6.2 The development of the language situation before the NDH -- 6.3 "Cyrillicide" in the Independent State of Croatia -- 6.4 Writing ideologies between purism and denialism -- 6.5 The "Orientality" of the Serbs and the role of the Glagolitic alphabet -- SECTION III. FROM THE GLAGOLITIC REVIVAL TO THE NEW DISCRIMINATIONS AGAINST CYRILLIC IN CROATIA -- 7. THE REDISCOVERY OF GLAGOLITIC: FROM REGIONAL TO NATIONAL PHENOMENON -- 7.1 The new signification context of the Glagolitic alphabet -- 7.2 The alphabet issue during the period of socialist Yugoslavia -- 7.3 The creation of the Aleja Glagoliaša in Istria and the role of Zvane rnja -- 7.4 The rebellious and democratic character of Glagolitic -- 7.5 The universal value of regional Istrian culture -- 7.6 The Glagolitic as a marker of continuity and prestige after the end of Yugoslavia -- 7.7 The institutionalization of the Glagolitic alphabet by the Croatian state -- 7.8 Glagolitic as a national symbol in an "exclusivist" sense -- 8. THE MODIFIED STATUS OF CYRILLIC IN POST-SOCIALIST CROATIA AND SERBIA.

8.1 Introduction: Issues of biscriptality -- 8.2 The first changes in the status of the Cyrillic alphabet -- 8.3 The Serbian case: will

bialphabetism survive? -- 8.4 The destruction of allographic traditions -- 8.5 Croatian reactions to the bialphabetic plagues in Vukovar -- 8.6 The Serb minority in Croatia as the "Other" -- 8.7 The relevance of the public writing context -- 8.8 The multigraphic character of the Croatian writing tradition -- 8.9 Conclusions: patterns of symmetrical differentiation -- SECTION IV, THE NEW CHALLENGES OF CYRILLIC IN BULGARIA IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM -- 9. BULGARIAN CYRILLIC BETWEEN TRADITION AND MODERNITY: THE "KRONSTEINER AFFAIR" --9.1 Introduction: the post-socialist ideological context in Bulgaria --9.2 The first debates on writing issues in the late 1990s -- 9.3 The origins of the "Kronsteiner affair" -- 9.4 Bulgarian Cyrillic between "Europhilia" and "Russophilia" -- 9.5 The issue of alphabetic coexistence in the European context of pluralism -- 9.6 Cyrillic as a "communist" alphabet -- 9.7 Bulgarian institutions against Kronsteiner -- 9.8 Further reactions in the periodical and scientific press -- 9.9 Moderate positions on opening to the Latin alphabet -- 9.10 Conclusions: open issues of transliteration -- 10. THE POPULAR DIMENSION OF THE CYRILLIC ALPHABET AND THE REDISCOVERY OF GLAGOLITIC -- 10.1 The "Kronsteiner effect" -- 10.2 Cyrillic and modern technologies -- 10.3 The link between Cyrillic and capitalism and the Bulgarian typefaces -- 10.4 The popularization of Cyrillic and the May 24 celebration -- 10.5 Conclusions: the revitalization of Glagolitic and "ethnogenetic" questions -- 11. FINAL NOTES -- 11.1 The relevance of the post-imperial and post-socialist factors -- 11.2 The symbolic dimension of the alphabet in the Balkans -- 12. LIST OF REFERENCES -- Primary Sources. Official Legislative Sources -- Secondary Sources.

Sommario/riassunto

What is the relationship between writing systems and nationalism? How can different alphabets coexist in the same country? What is the destiny of the Cyrillic alphabet in Europe? Giustina Selvelli's original work provides detailed answers to these far-reaching and potentially divisive questions and many more by examining several intriguing debates on topics of alphabets and national identity in a number of countries from the Balkan area over the course of the last 100 years. Following an encompassing perspective on alphabetic diversity, Selvelli, an expert on Southeast European Studies, reconstructs the ideological context of national discourses connected to the Latin and Cyrillic alphabets, also taking a look at the Arabic and Glagolitic scripts, and interweaving issues on the symbolism of the alphabet with the complex recent history of the region, marked by the parallel influences of the East and the West. She also sheds light on the impact of a range of alphabet policies on ethnolinguistic minorities, proposing a new definition of "alphabetic rights" with special regard to the multiethnic legacy of the former Ottoman and Habsburg empires. This comprehensive book makes us discover the privileged role that writing systems played in the region's delicate post-imperial and post-socialist transitions, leaving us captivated by peculiar stories such as that of the utopian "Yugoslav alphabet".