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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".
