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Preface

by

Tomasz Kamusella, Motoki Nomachi and Catherine Gibson

During the 1980s, Central Europe re-emerged as a concept of socio-political analysis in samizdat publications brought out in the region when the Cold War division of the continent into Eastern and Western Europe still stood fast. This concept of a newly found self-definition among Central Europe's literati and dissidents was brought to the wider attention of the West in 1984 by the Czech(oslovak) writer Milan Kundera in his seminal essay published in the *New York Review of Books* (Kundera 1984). To some it was a revelation that Central Europe could be a world unto itself, while others criticized this concept as a political delusion. More nationally-minded critics also saw it as a tool for a potential renewed German domination over the region. They reiterated how during the First World War *Mitteleuropa* had been a blueprint for building an economic-cum-political bloc in Central Europe under the joint control of Germany and Austria-Hungary (Naumann 1915).

The breakup in 1989 of the Soviet bloc gave a lease of political reality to Central Europe. However, following the 1993 founding of the European Union (EU) the region's freshly postcommunist states applied for membership in this union, seen as a synonym of the West or, more exactly, of Western Europe. The Central European wish to join the European Union was a desire to become part of Western Europe. The curiously changing membership of the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) vindicates this view. Founded in 1992 by Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland, the original member states promptly left it when they joined the EU in 2004. Nowadays, CEFTA embraces Albania, Moldova, and the post-Yugoslav states that have not joined the EU yet.

Apart from politics and wishful thinking, it appears that the difference between Central Europe and the western and eastern sections of the continent lies in the unusually high politicization of language that prevails in the region. This politicization of language in Central Europe is clearly visible in the widespread normative perception of language as the foundation of national identity and the indispensable cornerstone of any legitimate national statehood. According to this view, for a nation-state to be a proper polity it must possess its own unique national language not shared with any other state or nation. This equation of language, nation, and state has been sometimes evoked across the entire continent of Europe, but never so consistently as in Central Europe. Hence, the national language of the interwar Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (since 1929, Yugoslavia) had to be Serbo-Croato-Slovenian in order to embrace and meld in the Yugoslav nation all the three ethnic groups that featured in the polity's original name. Likewise, the protracted 1991–2008 breakup of Yugoslavia necessitated the split of Serbo-Croatian into Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin, and Serbian, so that each of the post-Yugoslav nation-states could be supplied with its own unique and unshared national language.

Tomasz Kamusella has researched the rise and the dynamics of this specifically Central European politics of language during the last two centuries from the vantage of political science. Motoki Nomachi has delved into the importance of extralinguistic elements in the standardization and emergence of languages in the region, especially in the Balkans. Catherine Gibson meanwhile has probed into the uses of cartography for nation and state building. In this volume, they present an interdisciplinary portrait of Central Europe in the form of an in-depth reflection on Tomasz Kamusella's work-in-progress, *Atlas of Language Politics in Modern Central Europe*. This *Atlas*, by marrying the insights of history, linguistics, and social sciences, aspires to show how, especially during the last two centuries, the use of languages and scripts has evolved in Central Europe, how the political and the social have impinged on these languages and scripts, and how linguistic factors exerted influence on the social reality and politics in this part of Europe. The discussion chapters are followed by a presentation of the 11 maps (roughly a quarter of the planned total) that have already been completed.

Five maps (A1–A5) present historical changes in the use of languages through Central Europe's history at the level of dialect continua. Map six (B1) reflects on the classification of the region's languages in the form of linguistic areas prior to World War II. In contrast to the purely linguistic concept of dialect continuum, linguistic areas tend to take into consideration extralinguistic features such as political and social changes and events. Map seven (B2) has a synoptic look at the changes in the use of different writing systems in Central Europe during the last millennium. Three further maps (C1–C3) focus squarely on how ethnolinguistic nationalism utilized language for building and legitimizing nation-states in the region during the 20th century, which brought about This process marginalized all the many languages that were not selected for these successful national projects. The last map (D1–D2, that is, consisting of two plates) is devoted to these forgotten languages and their speech communities, many of which survive to this day.

The aforementioned maps and the presentation of the project of the *Atlas of Language Politics in Modern Central Europe* constitute a platform for critical reflection on the work-in-progress and its methodology. For this task, we invited four specialists from Canada, Austria, Japan, and Italy (Britain) to share their thoughts on the *Atlas*. Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly first offers a general reflection on the subject of language and politics. Michael Moser delves into the assumptions and methodology of the proposed *Atlas* and offer comments and suggestions for improvement. Yukiyasu Arai reflects on the *Atlas* from the perspective of historical atlases. Last but not least, Catherine Gibson reflects on the topic of ethnolinguistic atlases.

In light of the findings presented in the *Atlas*, it appears that official and everyday multilingualism (or more correctly, polyglossia) and multiscriptualism (the use of many scripts) was the norm across the breadth and length of Central Europe until the age of nationalism. From the mid-19th to the mid-20th centuries, Central Europe was split among ethnolinguistic nation-states with their specific national-cum-official languages. This development did not reduce the multilingualism of Central Europe as a whole, but largely did away with polyglossia and multiscriptualism. In most cases, the aforesaid nation-states were founded as normatively monolingual entities, meaning that in a nation-state only one language is permitted and it must be written in a single script.

Until its progressive breakup between 1991 and 2007, the sole Central European polity that escaped this fate of parallel monolingualization and monoscripturalization was federal Yugoslavia with its two official scripts (Cyrillic and Latin) and its numerous official languages (the dominant Serbo-Croatian, and alongside it, Albanian, Hungarian, Macedonian, Slovak, Slovenian, Romanian, and Rusyn). In the wake of the destructive wars of Yugoslav succession, however, the polity had been replaced by the turn of the 21st century with monolingual nation-states or national polities aspiring to such monolingualism. This development required the splitting of Serbo-Croatian into (thus far) the state languages of Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin, Serbian, and Bunjevac. Bunjevac is a community language with a semi-formal status in Serbia's Vojvodina.

At present, only one fully recognized polity remains officially bilingual in Central Europe, defined here as the vertical midsection of the continent, namely Finland with Finnish and Swedish as its co-official languages. Furthermore, Cyrillic-based Moldovan, Russian, and Ukrainian are all official in the de facto polity of Transnistria. Otherwise, multilingualism is relegated in Central Europe to autonomous regions submerged within their home states, for instance, to Italy's Trentino-Alto Adige (South Tyrol), Moldova's Gagauzia, Serbia's Vojvodina, or Ukraine's Crimea. Bosnia is officially trilingual, while Kosovo enjoys two official languages. Yet, in both the aforementioned cases, it is more a case of "compartmentalized multilingualism." Namely, in different, geographically separate areas of the state, as apportioned to this or that ethnic or national group, the languages of these groups are used to the exclusion of any other. As a result, in an officially multilingual polity, the normative monolingualism is instituted in its nationally specific regions.

When it comes multiscripturalism, only Montenegro is officially biscriptural, its official and national language of Montenegrin written in the legally equal Cyrillic and Latin alphabets. In this small way, the tradition of the biscriptural Serbo-Croatian continues, though otherwise Montenegro is officially monolingual in Montenegrin only (however, with some concessions for minority languages at the regional level). Apart from the multilingual and biscriptural autonomous Vojvodina, Serbia is officially monolingual and monoscriptural. The 2006 Constitution recognizes Cyrillic as the sole official script for writing the nation-state's official language of Serbian. But in reality, roughly half of printed matter produced in Serbia is in Latin characters. A degree of multiscripturality in Latin and Cyrillic letters is observed in Moldavia's autonomous Gagauzia and Ukraine's autonomous Crimea thanks to the official use of Cyrillic- and Latin script-based languages side by side. However, in 2014 politics intervened Russia's annexation of Ukraine's Crimea led to the gradual limitation of the use of the Crimean Tatar language that is written in the Latin alphabet.

The two aforementioned legally and de facto multilingual polities in today's Central Europe, the bilingual Finland and the trilingual Transnistria, are fully monoscriptural, the latter employing exclusively Cyrillic and the former the Latin alphabet. This again leaves the multiscriptural Bosnia and Kosovo as a category in its own right. Regionally-based official monolingualism in different languages, as observed in the two polities is complemented by a similar spatial compartmentalization of scripts. Only one

script, in which a given official language is written, is employed in a specific nationally construed autonomous area of Bosnia or Kosovo. These two officially multilingual and biscriptural polities, practice de facto monolingualism and monoscripturalism in their nationally delineated autonomous regions.

For better or worse, nationally construed monolingualism and monoscripturaism are the political norm of today's Central Europe of ethnolinguistic nation-states. For a polity to be deemed a "true" nation-state in the region, it must be a home to one nation only, this nation composed from—ideally, all—the speakers of a given national language. And in turn, this language must be written in a single script, which is emotionally deemed as "true" to the language's national and historic character. Until today, the borders and territories of nation-states have been drawn and redrawn in Central Europe in agreement with this principle.

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A NOTE ON THE TEXT

Readers should bear in mind that the majority of texts in this volume were written in 2009, hence new relevant developments from the period 2009–2017 are not covered in this book.

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