

# The H·A·L·C·Y·O·N

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## Two Significant Macedonian Acquisitions

The Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library and Roberts Library recently received nearly three hundred volumes from the Macedonian Collection of Horace G. Lunt, Professor Emeritus of Slavic Linguistics, Harvard University. Included in the collection are rare journals from the nineteen forties and fifties, and numerous first editions of works by the major Macedonian novelists, poets, and folklorists of the twentieth century. Of greatest significance, however, are two volumes published in the nineteenth century: Kiril Pejčinović's *Utešenje grešnim* ("Comfort to Sinners"), a book of teachings and prayers, published in Salonika in 1840; and Gjorgji Pulevski's *Rečnik od tri jezika* ("Three Language Dictionary"), published in Belgrade in 1875. These two works are of particular importance, both for the history of the modern Macedonian standard language, and for the documentation of Macedonian national awareness.

In order to place these works in historical context, it is important to bear in mind that at the beginning of the nineteenth century the south Slavic languages were undergoing processes of standardization, as new nation states were emerging in southeast Europe on the territory of the Ottoman Empire. Macedonia remained under Ottoman domination longer than either Bulgaria or Serbia, and since it was located at the centre of territory claimed both geographically and linguistically by Serbia, Bulgaria,

and Greece, it was slowest in establishing a separate language and state. While a separate Macedonian identity can be said to have its origins in the rise of South Slavic nationalism during the eighteenth century, it is the published works of nineteenth-century Macedonians which allow us to chart the development of Macedonianism, an identity distinct from Bulgarian or Serbian.<sup>1</sup> The works by

Pejčinović and Pulevski are of particular significance.<sup>2</sup>

Kiril Pejčinović was born around 1770 in the village of

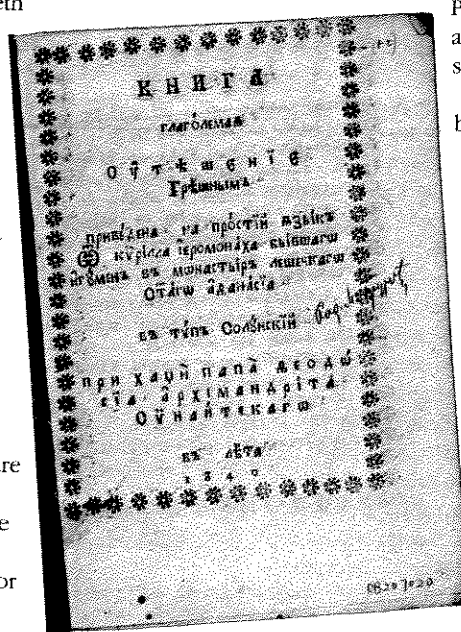
the publication of this work, Pejčinović returned to the Tetovo region with the ambition of restoring the monastery of St. Atanas. He succeeded in this goal and remained at this monastery until his death in March 1845.

During his lifetime Pejčinović had several books published, the most important being the aforementioned *Mirror*, and *Comfort to Sinners*. The latter work, a copy of which is now housed in the Fisher Library, has a particularly interesting publishing history. Records suggest that the work was completed by 1831, but Pejčinović was unable to secure funds for publication. Potential subscribers were

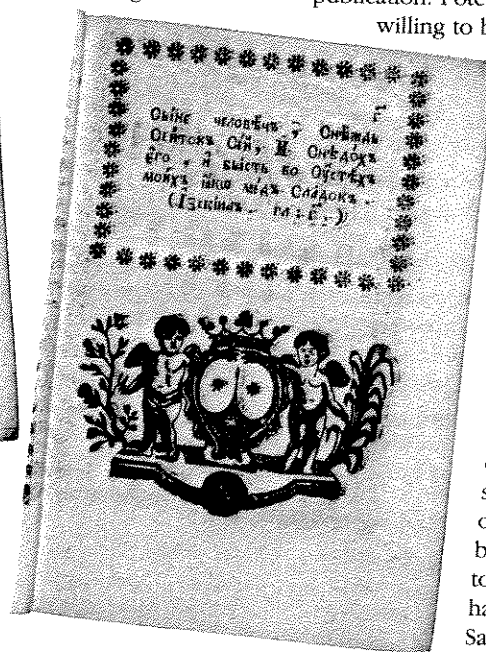
willing to buy the published text,

but were reluctant to make payment in advance. After many delays, the finished text of the manuscript was rejected by the ecclesiastic censorship board and returned to Pejčinović in 1836. In part this rejection was caused by Pejčinović's insistence on writing in the local vernacular rather than in the elevated archaic church style. Pejčinović sought other publishing houses before eventually turning to Teodosija Sinaitski who had established in Salonika the first printing press for publishing books

in the local language. When the press burned down in 1839, Kiril Pejčinović helped finance the rebuilding of the press. In return, Sinaitski published *Comfort to Sinners* at the renovated press in 1840. This small book consists of forty-seven pages dedicated to the education of his congregation. Teodosija Sinaitski wrote an introduction to the work which is



Title page and wood block illustration from *Comfort to Sinners*, (Salonika, 1840).



Tearce in the western part of Macedonia near Tetovo. He received his education in various churches and monasteries. He was ordained in the Hilandar Monastery on Mount Athos, and by the beginning of the nineteenth century he was employed as a cleric in various churches in Macedonia. His first book *Ogledalo* ("Mirror") was published in Budapest in 1816. Following

followed by Pejčinović's teachings and collection of prayers.

During this period discussions were taking place on the nature of the literary languages to be codified in the south Slavic linguistic territory. Some intellectuals hoped to adopt a conservative standard, taking the archaic church language as its base. Pejčinović followed those who supported a language based on the local vernacular. In his works Pejčinović wrote in a hybrid of Church Slavisms and his native Tetovo dialect of western Macedonia. Sinaitski's press burned down a second time between 1841 and 1844 and *Comfort to Sinners* remains the only book to survive from the press. A copy of this extremely rare work is now housed in the Fisher Library. It is printed on a hand-press, and is adorned with wood-block illustrations, and retains its original paper covers.

Gjorgji Pulevski's works date from the latter half of the nineteenth century, by which time both Bulgarian and Serbian had been standardized, and teaching materials for primary schools had begun to appear. Several textbooks were published by Macedonians who sought teaching materials that reflected Macedonian dialects.

This insistence on a separate Macedonian language contributed to the coalescence of a distinct Macedonian identity. One of the most significant landmarks of this period is the *Three Language Dictionary* (Macedonian, Albanian and Turkish) published in Belgrade in 1875 by Gjorgji Pulevski.

Pulevski was born in the western Macedonian village of Galičnik. A mason by training, for much of his life he pursued his trade in Belgrade. Although he had no formal education, Pulevski published several books, including two dictionaries, and a collection of Macedonian songs, customs, and holidays. It is for the *Three Language Dictionary*, however, that Pulevski is best known, and it is this work which now resides in the Fisher Library.

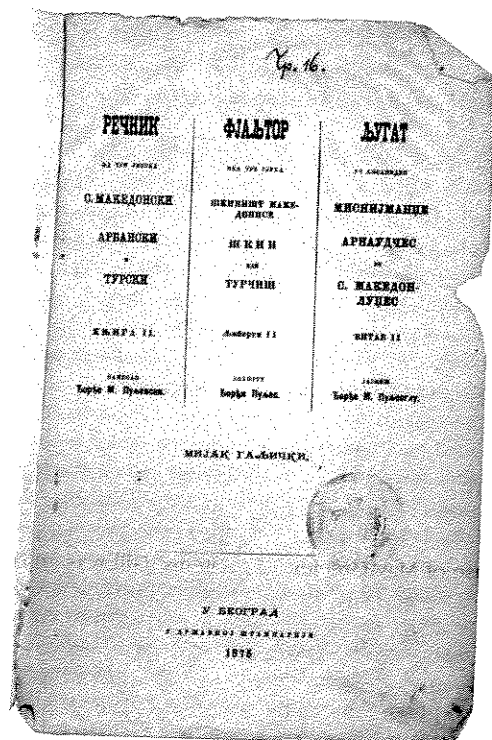
The 1875 dictionary is not a dictionary in the usual sense. It is printed in three columns with parallel texts in the different languages. The columns are not comparative word lists, but parallel conversational phrases, intended to teach the reader about the language and history of the Macedonian people. Because Pulevski was self-taught, he mixed dialect features and elements of Serbian, though features of his

Galičnik dialect predominate. Pulevski wrote of the need for the creation of a standard Macedonian language, and, while recognizing that a single individual could not achieve this goal, he attempted to coin Macedonian words based on dialectisms, or adapted and modified from other Slavic languages. Pulevski's dictionary is of significant linguistic interest for all three languages, for he transcribed them into a modified Cyrillic alphabet. His transcription is of particular interest for Turkic studies. Most Turkish texts of this period were written in Ottoman script without vowels, whereas Pulevski indicated the vowels in his Cyrillic transcription.

In addition to its linguistic interest, the dictionary is as an important milestone in the development of a distinctly Macedonian identity. These works testify to the fact that the term "Macedonian" was in use by Macedonian intellectuals during the nineteenth century. In a question and answer section Pulevski asks: "What does the term 'nation' mean?" He answers: "A nation is a people who are of the same stock and who speak the same language, who live together and interact with one another, who have the same customs, songs, and holidays. These people are called a nation and the place they live in is the fatherland of that people. So too the Macedonians are a nation and their place is Macedonia."

Taken as a whole, the Lunt collection provides a unique opportunity to study the development of the modern Macedonian standardized language. The two books discussed here are of the greatest importance and will be of value to all scholars who are interested in these questions.

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Title page from Pulevski's *Three Language Dictionary* (Belgrade, 1875.)

<sup>1</sup> For details see Victor A. Friedman "Macedonian" in *The Slavonic Languages*, ed. Bernard Comrie and Greville G. Corbett; and Victor A. Friedman "Macedonian Language and Nationalism during the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries." *Balkanistica* 2, 83-98.

<sup>2</sup> Details on these two authors were taken from Blaže Koneski, *Za Makedonskiot literaturni jazik, Skopje, 1981*, and Blaže Koneski, *Makedonskiot XIX vek, Skopje 1986*.