



***The Palgrave Handbook of Slavic Languages, Identities and Borders.*** Ed. Tomasz Kamusella, Motoki Nomachi, and Catherine Gibson. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. xxii, 561 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Chronology. Index. Figures. Tables. Maps. \$210, hard bound.

This handbook, motivated by the notion that “a quarter of a century after the fall of communism and the breakups of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia, it is high time to re-evaluate the imprint these processes have left on the linguistic landscape and on the interface between the linguistic and political” (1), contains a brief forward (by historian Peter Burke), a programmatic introduction by the editors and twenty-four learned articles by twenty-five authors, divided into three sections: (I) “North Slavs and Their Languages,” (II) “South Slavs and Their Languages,” and (III) “A Glimpse into the Future.” Aside from the four future-oriented chapters—Sarah Smyth on speakers of Russian in Ireland, Anna Novikov on Russian in Israel, Dieter Stern on language in postsocialist cross-border retail markets, and Tomasz Kamusella on Polish speakers in Ireland—the majority of the chapters focus on historical phenomena. Paul Wexler’s chapter on “Cross-border Turkic and Iranian Language Retention in the West and East Slavic Lands and Beyond: A Tentative Classification,” covers more than a millennium of developments, while most of the others focus on the nineteenth century to the recent past. A central concern is the ethnolinguistic “equation”: language=nation=state” that informed the emergence of new central European states in the last decades of the twentieth century (2), as exemplified by chapters on Czech and Slovak (Mira Nábělková), Slovak (Alexander Maxwell), Slovene (Andrej Bekeš), Croatian (Anita Peti-Stantić and Keith Langston), and Bosnian-Serbian-Montenegrin (Robert D. Greenberg). Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov provide a wide-ranging overview of Roma communities, both Romani-speaking and

otherwise, distributed throughout Central Europe, the Balkans, and the former Soviet Union. Others focus on languages and identities within states (*iazychie* and *surzhyk* in Ukraine by Andrii Danylenko, Polish Livonian in Latgalia [Latvia] by Catherine Gibson, Sorbian by Roland Marti), or supra-state phenomena (chapters on Rusyn by Paul Robert Magocsi and Michael Moser, phonology and border construction in the Balkans by Brian D. Joseph, the Gorani in eastern Albania and Kosovo by Klaus Steinke, and nationalist discourse in the Balkans by Jouko Lindstedt). “Hungarus” patriotism is the subject of István Fried’s essay, a topic arguably less treated in Anglophone scholarship than its imperial counterpart, Austro-Slavism, which is why this chapter is noteworthy.

An Anglophone student of Slavic languages coming of age before 1989 (such as this review’s author) might have considered an essential reference, with chapters devoted to each standard language, the handbook *The Slavic Literary Languages: Formation and Development* (Alexander M. Schenker, Edward Stankiewicz, and Micaela S. Iovine, eds., New Haven, 1980). In the period after 1989 in a hyper-globalized and politically volatile world, languages and identities are far more fluid and dynamic; accordingly, an arrangement of topical chapters as in the volume under review fits better with today’s circumstances. Will this book serve as the go-to resource for today’s budding Slavist or for the non-specialist looking for an overview? Partly, to be sure. But there are some lacunae. A remarkable negative space in the *Handbook* is outlined by the paucity of coverage of the Russian language, Russian identity, and Russian in relation to the languages both in the Russian Federation and in the post-Soviet states, arguably an appropriate cluster of topics for a handbook on Slavic languages and identities (see, for example, this writer’s survey “The Slavic Area: Trajectories, Borders, Centres, and Peripheries in the Second World,” in Dick Smakman and Patrick Heinrich, eds. *Globalising Sociolinguistics: Challenging and Expanding Theory*, London, 2015, 164-77). Russian does make an appearance in one of the future-oriented chapters, Stern’s intriguingly titled “Negotiating Goods and Language on Cross-Border Retail Markets in the Postsocialist Space,” which describes modes of pidginization across the Russo-Chinese border. Whether this is a new—or even future-oriented—topic remains a question (see Johanna Nichols’ 1986 article “The Bottom Line: Chinese Pidgin Russian” in Wallace L. Chafe and Johanna Nichols, eds., *Evidentiality: The Linguistic Coding of Epistemology*, New York, 1986).

Writing about the future is an obvious risk, but Kamusella’s “Migration or Immigration? Ireland’s New and Unexpected Polish-Language Community” admirably approaches the question pan-chronically, looking at the multilingual past of Poland, its monolingual present (1940–), and the effects and consequences of a new Polish diaspora, even within the confines of the EU, as well as the entailments of virtual communities enabled by the Internet. There is surprisingly little discussion of the effects of cyberspace in the chapters, despite foreshadowing the issue in the Introduction to the volume (2) and the obvious role online communication plays in shaping and reshaping linguistic communities. Nevertheless, this is less a criticism of the volume than an observation on the state of research in the field of Slavic sociolinguistics. With regard to the present and future of languages, identities, borders, and migration, there are now new chapters to be written about the Arabic-, Persianate-, and Turkic-speaking migrants to and through the Slavic-speaking countries of Europe, not to mention the important and changing role of Russian in post-Soviet Central Asia and the Caucasus.

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