

Tell me, O Muse, of the man of many devices, who wandered full many ways after he had sacked the sacred citadel of Troy. Many were the men whose cities he saw and whose mind he learned, aye, and many the woes he suffered in his heart upon the sea, seeking to win his own life and the return of his comrades.

Homer, *Odyssey* 1.1
translated by A. T. Murray

... The Man of Many Devices, Who Wandered Full Many Ways ...

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THE VERNACULAR LANGUAGES OF EAST CENTRAL EUROPE IN THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

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Some years ago, János Bak asked me to contribute a survey of the vernacular languages of the pertinent region during the Middle Ages to *Medieval East Central Europe: An Encyclopedia* of which he was to be the editor-in-chief. Unfortunately, the project did not materialize and my contribution turned out "homeless." Though János is not to be blamed, I figure, for the fact that his ambitious plan came to naught, it gives me a certain satisfaction to publish at least an abridged version of my original essay in a volume honoring him on the occasion of his seventieth birthday. While I cannot claim to present any genuinely new insights in what follows, I nonetheless believe that a synopsis, as it were, of the medieval beginnings of the vernacular tongues of East Central Europe (henceforth, ECE) and their earliest written attestation may be of some value and use if not for János himself (who, of course, is fully cognizant of what I have to say here) then at least to some of his many students at the academic department which—after his many wanderings—presumably is the venue of his ultimate professional activity, in his native city of Budapest. It is in this spirit, therefore, that I am offering him—and his students—these remarks.

When it comes to discussing the linguistic pluralism in ECE during the Middle Ages, it may be useful first to indicate the geographic area as well as the chronological framework envisaged, keeping in mind that the pertinent boundaries in space and time were somewhat fluid. Thus, the core region in question encompasses Poland, Lithuania, Ruthenia (present-day western Ukraine), Hungary (including Slovakia and Transylvania), the Czech lands of Bohemia and Moravia, as well as Croatia, with Dalmatia. In addition, some of the adjacent regions will be considered where appropriate. In terms of the time frame, the main focus is on the first five centuries of the second millennium, though the preceding two hundred years must also be taken into account, as must a shorter, transitional period between medieval and modern times, beginning in the late fifteenth and extending well into the sixteenth century.

In terms of the languages included, the bulk are Slavic. The West Slavic languages are Polish and Czech (Slovak did not achieve the status of an autonomous literary or even written language until much later; other languages of this linguistic subbranch were recorded only in post-medieval times and therefore do not concern us here). Of the East Slavic languages, Ruthenian—that is, the language of southwestern (or Lithuanian) Rus'—was in the process of crystallizing during the last centuries of the medieval period, soon to split into two separate languages, Belarusian and Ukrainian. Of the South Slavic group, the Croatian variety of Serbo-Croatian (or, in dialectal terms, Kajkavian, Čakavian, and Štokavian-Jekavian), as well as Slovenian, belong here.

Closely related to Slavic are the Baltic languages: West Baltic Old Prussian (extinct) and East Baltic Lithuanian and Latvian, while other Baltic dialects were never recorded and thus are known only fragmentarily, reconstructed from loanwords and onomastic data. However, of the attested three Baltic languages, only Old Prussian was recorded still in the late medieval period, while both highly archaic Lithuanian and more developed Latvian were not written down and/or printed until the sixteenth century; yet there is reason to assume that some Lithuanian prayers and baptismal formulae, which have not been preserved, were first recorded as early as the fourteenth century.

Of the two other Indo-European language families found in ECE—Romance and Germanic—Romance is represented by the two East Romance languages, Romanian and Dalmatian (the latter now extinct and by some scholars considered transitional to West Romance) as well as the East Alpine dialect known as Friulian (earlier considered part of Rhaeto-Romance but probably closer to Italo-Romance), which was not recorded in the medieval period, however. Italian—in Friuli and sporadically along the east Adriatic coast, here particularly in its Venetian dialectal form—also entered the periphery of ECE during the Middle Ages but will not be included here as its focus always remained outside this area.

Of the Germanic languages it is primarily German (in several "colonial," regionally colored varieties, extending from the northern and central Balkans in the south to the Baltics in the north) that is to be considered here. Of other Germanic or German-based languages, Yiddish did not take its final shape as a separate language of eastern, including EC, Europe until late medieval times. However, its immediate predecessor, Judeo-German (originating, as recent scholarship has shown, in Bavaria and Bohemia, and notably in the cities of Regensburg and Prague, and not, as was earlier thought, in the Rhine valley), spread, at least with the first wave of Jewish settlers, to Silesia, Poland proper, Lithuania, Belarus', and western Ukraine during the high and later Middle Ages. Earlier Jewish ethnic groups had arrived in ECE (or its fringes) from the southeast: the former Khazaria (and beyond) and Kievan Rus', switching in the new setting to some form of East Slavic speech, and from the Crimea—the so-called Karaites—who settled in Lithuania and Galicia and who long retained a mixture of Turko-Tataric and Hebrew. While until the last century the descendants of the Karaites kept their language blend, in our day and age they have suppressed the Hebrew component of their speech and are now identified as speaking a West Turkic language. The eastern ("Varangian") variety of Old Norse—or, more precisely, Old Swedish and initially separate Old Gotlandish—though very much a medieval phenomenon, did not appear in ECE except quite marginally, being essentially restricted to the famous trade route "from the Varangians to the Greeks," that is, from Scandinavia to Byzantium, along the Dnieper River. At most, the Scandinavian Northmen briefly entered its northern periphery, namely where the Daugava/Dvina connection offered an alternate waterway to the one along the Neva River, Lake Ladoga, the Volkhov River, Lake Il'men', and some minor streams before reaching the headwaters of the Dnieper. The East Germanic languages, represented chiefly by Gothic, need not concern us here, since the Goths had left their temporary sites on the southern shores of the Baltic and migrated, largely through Slavic territory, reaching their later area of settlement on the Black Sea littoral and its hinterland during the first centuries A.D.

The main non-Indo-European language found in the area is Hungarian, extending—after the more permanent settling of the Magyars in their present habitat by the late tenth century—over present-day Hungary, southern (and, in part, central) Slovakia, western Romania (Transylvania), and northern Serbia (Vojvodina).

In addition to the several vernacular languages just listed, of which only some attained the status of literary—or even written—languages, two other languages were widely used in medieval ECE—Latin and Church Slavonic.

Latin occurred in at least two varieties: on the one hand, an only slightly distorted, orthographically simplified form of Classical Latin, used in official and administrative documents, some of which were issued by chanceries and scriptoria outside the East Central European area, for example, by the Holy See, the Imperial Court in Germany or Italy, and some of their agencies. (Classical Latin, restored to its erstwhile purity, was used by the earliest Neo-Latin poets and humanists, active toward the close of the Middle Ages, as it was subsequently by their followers in the age of the Renaissance and of Humanism.) On the other hand, a considerably adulterated variety was Medieval Latin, an outgrowth from the Vulgar Latin of Late Antiquity and the first centuries of the Middle Ages. It was used, in particular, by monks and other clerics, as well as itinerant scholars and students, occasionally also by some popular poets in ECE, notably Poland, the Czech lands, Hungary, and Croatia, as was also the case in other, westerly parts of Europe.

Church Slavonic existed in ECE (in its broad sense) in the original as well as several later "recensions": early medieval, classical (or canonical) Old Church Slavonic, an only slightly adapted form of Old Bulgarian, in ninth-century Moravia (extending considerably beyond the region of the same name in the present-day Czech Republic) and Pannonia, the latter roughly corresponding to today's western (Transdanubian) Hungary and northern Croatia; Czech Church Slavonic, in tenth/eleventh-century Přemyslide Bohemia; Croatian Church Slavonic in Istria, the Kvarner archipelago, and northern and central Dalmatia (epigraphically attested from the late eleventh/early twelfth centuries onward); a hybrid Croatian-Czech variant of Church Slavonic, in fourteenth-century Bohemia, or rather in one particular Benedictine monastery at the outskirts of Prague, Emmaus (Emauzy); a Croatian-Czech-Polish variant of Church Slavonic, an offshoot of the previous one, in fifteenth/sixteenth-century southern Poland (or rather, again more specifically, in one Silesian monastery, Olešnica/Oels, and another monastic house in a suburb of Cracow, at Kleparz). The East Slavic—broadly Russian or, more correctly perhaps, Rus'—variety of Church Slavonic and its several regional variants fall outside the purview of this survey except possibly (if indeed identifiable) Galician Early Church Slavonic and Ruthenian Middle Church Slavonic. Generally, Church Slavonic was, in its earliest, Old Bulgarian, phase created in the second half of the ninth century on the basis of a late Common Slavic dialect spoken in the environs of Salonica (Thessaloniki) in northern Greece, rapidly to rise to the prestigious status of a liturgical language on a par with Hebrew, Greek, and Latin; soon it turned, particularly in its regional "recensions," into a full-fledged literary language—to be sure, limited to a fairly narrow range of genres. It is debatable, however, whether Church Slavonic was restricted to a "diglossic," that is, mutually exclusive, relationship with several vernacular Slavic tongues (notably East Slavic) other than perhaps toward the end of the medieval period and, if so, in milieus falling largely outside the area of ECE. In many ways,

Church Slavonic came to play a role as an inter-Slavic literary medium and official vehicle, the same way as did Latin in central and western Europe, and Greek in the Byzantine orbit. In particular—with the qualified exception of the earliest period (in Moravia, Pannonia, and Bohemia during the ninth/eleventh centuries) and the coastal Croatian region from Istria to central Dalmatia—Church Slavonic became the shared cultural language of the Slavic Orthodox community. However, this prominent supranational function of Church Slavonic was primarily characteristic of centers and regions outside the area discussed here.

More specifically, of the Slavic vernacular languages it is Czech—in its earlier form (up to the fifteenth/sixteenth centuries) usually referred to as Old Czech—that has the longest written tradition. The earliest extant texts from the Czech language area are in Church Slavonic. Of these, the Kiev Folia, part of a sacramentary according to the Roman rite and translated from Latin, are thought to date from the mid-tenth century (or, according to some scholars, even the late ninth century) and were written in virtually unadulterated Old Church Slavonic, however with a few generally North Slavic and characteristically Czech features, notably the reflexes *c*, *z* for Common Slavic **tj*, **dj* (where canonical Old Church Slavonic has the Bulgarian reflexes *št*, *žd*). Opinions vary as to whether the language of the *Kiev Folia* can be considered a deliberate mixture of Old Church Slavonic with some added Czech (and generally North Slavic) features, or whether it rather reflects an actually spoken early Slavic dialect, presumably of Pannonia, the region of Lake Balaton, transitional between North and South Slavic. Pure Czech Church Slavonic is the language of the Prague Fragments from the eleventh century, reflecting the Byzantine rite and containing liturgical prose and poetry translated from the Greek (possibly via an East Church Slavonic protograph). Both the Kiev Folia and the Prague Fragments are written in Glagolitic, the early Slavic script devised in the 860s by St. Constantine-Cyril (in preparation for the mission he and his brother, St. Methodius, undertook to Moravia). Several other Czech Church Slavonic religious texts have come down to us only in later Glagolitic (Old Croatian) and Cyrillic (Old Russian and Serbian) manuscripts. From the eleventh or twelfth and the thirteenth centuries are extant some Czech—partly perhaps Czech-cum-Croatian—biblical and patristic glosses (the Vienna Glosses, St. Gregory—or Patera's—Glosses), using Latin script and being renditions of Latin, as well as a brief, three-word text, surprisingly written in Cyrillic (the Levín Inscription). Also in Czech Church Slavonic and originating probably as early as the third quarter of the tenth century is the oldest Czech hymn, *Hospodine pomiluj ny* ("Lord have Mercy upon us"), preserved in several copies, all in Latin script, the earliest (without musical notes) dating from the 1380s. While this hymn, integrated into Old Czech literature and the cultural life of medieval Bohemia, even in its extant form exhibits some unequivocal Church Slavonic linguistic traits, other hymns deriving from the late thirteenth century are written in pure (Old) Czech and display a considerable mastery of language and meter (though not of orthography, resorting to the awkward Latin alphabet as yet without diacritics and digraphs). This, therefore, is suggestive of a preceding literary tradition of that genre. The earliest such hymn recorded is *Slovo do světa stvořenie* ("Lay of the Creation of the World"). However, it was not until ca. 1300 that a continuous Czech written tradition began and we can speak of the existence of a Czech literary language. This Old Czech literature included hagiographic, epic, and annalistic writings: lives of saints, such as in particular the *Legenda o svatém Prokopu*

("Legend of St. Procopius"); *Alexandreida* ("Alexandreis"); *Dalimilova kronika* ("Dalimil Chronicle")—all in rhymed verse—and soon also secular, notably love, poetry. Initially, though, the Old Czech literary language was restricted functionally to hymns and verse narratives. Only as of the mid-fourteenth century is there evidence of administrative and other vernacular prose usage.

The literary language was based on the central Bohemian dialect, spoken in and around Prague, with only occasional dialectal features from other regions, most notably in the versified *Život svatě Kateřiny* ("Life of St. Catherine"). During the reign of Emperor Charles IV (1346-78) the Czech literary language extended into new fields; thus, vernacular prose began to be used not only for religious, edificatory, and didactic purposes, but also in scholarship and for pure entertainment. Legal and administrative documents were drafted in Czech beginning in the last quarter of the fourteenth century. A scientific and technical vocabulary is also found in three word lists in verse, translated from Latin, attributed to Master Klaret (Bartoloměj z Chlumce, Claretus de Solencia, d. 1349), and intended for students of Prague (Charles) University, which was founded by Charles IV in 1348. Tomáš ze Štítného, active in the late fourteenth century, wrote moral and religious tracts in the vernacular which were intended to be read also by less educated people; he therefore contributed greatly to make Czech a pliable medium of didactic prose, in addition to possibly having been involved in the compilation of the first complete Czech Bible.

A major milestone in the evolution of literary Czech was set by the church reformer Jan Hus (d. 1415), who in addition to his religious works not only wrote several treatises in Czech, promoting, commenting on, and modernizing the vernacular, but also is the author of a Latin tract, *De orthographia bohémica*, introducing as a main innovation diacritic signs, albeit in a shape somewhat different from that used in modern Czech. By the end of the Hussite wars, in the 1430s, Czech was in use in most spheres of life in Bohemia-Moravia, including administrative and legal documents as well as learned and technical writings. Though not outshining the great literary achievements in prose and verse of the "Golden Age" of Charles IV, the Hussite period nonetheless produced lively, straightforward polemical, and moving religious poetry and prose. By the mid-fifteenth century the Czech literary language was largely standardized, polyvalent, and acknowledged nationwide. During the late fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries, Latin, the purified language of the humanists, patterned on classical models, gained ground in the Czech lands as elsewhere in ECE, without, however, threatening the, by then, widespread use of the Czech vernacular, the syntax of which was, to be sure, substantially influenced by the example of the Neo-Latin writers. The first Czech drama, by Beneš Optát (1533), followed in much the popular *Ars grammatica* of the Roman grammarian Aelius Donatus (fourth century A.D.). The publication of the six-volume *Kralice Bible* in 1579-94 by the Protestant *Unitas fratrum* (Community of Brethren) marks the definite end of the earlier—Old Czech and, if so posited, early Middle Czech—period in the evolution of the native language in the Czech lands.

The first vestiges of Polish appear in Latin ecclesiastic documents (papal bulls) of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, containing Polish toponymic and anthroponymic data. The earliest and most important of these texts, Pope Innocent II's bull to the Gniezno archbishop, Jakub (*Bulla gnieźnieńska*), dated 1136, contains over four hundred such Polish names. The first continuous Polish sentence is recorded under

the year 1270 in the *Księga henrykowska* (i.e., the Latin foundation book of St. Mary's Monastery at Henryków in Silesia): *day ut ia pobrusa a ti poziwai* (or in modern spelling: *daj ut [=ač] ja pobrucę a ty poczzywaj*), meaning "Let me make noise" (probably in the sense of "turn the millstone") and you take a rest." The conversion to Christianity of the Polish ruler Mieszko I and his people in 966 brought a number of Czech loanwords—some in turn reflecting underlying Latin items—into the Polish language in the process of its formation. There is some evidence that by the beginning of the eleventh century Polish national consciousness and a more or less unified language, based on a number of eastern Lekhitic (i.e., North West Slavic) dialects, was in existence.

The earliest recorded text in Polish is the *Kazania świętokrzyskie* ("Holy Cross Sermons") from the mid-fourteenth century, a copy of an earlier text representing a native literary tradition going back to the previous century. The archaic, poetically sophisticated hymn, *Bogurodzica* ("Mother of God"), attested in many copies of which the two oldest ones, containing the two first stanzas only, date from the early fifteenth century, betrays Czech—or rather, Czech Church Slavonic—influence. Yet, some scholars have suggested, on flimsy grounds I submit, an East Slavic (Ruthenian) origin of the song. It was probably composed in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century, while earlier datings (eleventh or twelfth century) are less compelling, as is the suggestion that it only arose in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century, as a national or royal anthem of the Jagiellonian dynasty. Still, its model may well have originated in ninth-century Moravia or, rather perhaps, tenth/eleventh-century Bohemia. From the turn of the fifteenth century dates the important Old Polish text, *Psalterz floriański* ("St. Florian's Psalter"), in three chronologically definable portions; the fragmentary *Żywot św. Błażeja* ("Life of St. Blaise") from the very end of the fourteenth century; the *Kazania gnieźnieńskie* ("Gniezno Sermons") from roughly the same time; trial oath transcripts (*Roty przysięg sądowych*) from the late fourteenth century and thereafter; daily prayers and confessions from the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; the *Psalterz puławski* ("Puławy Psalter"), fifteenth century; the *Biblia królowej Zofii* ("Bible of Queen Sophia"), also known as *Biblia szarospatacka* ("Sárospatak Bible"), fifteenth century; various hagiographic legends in verse: *Legenda o św. Dorocie* ("Legend of St. Dorothea"), *Legenda o św. Aleksym* ("Legend of St. Alexis"), and others; apocryphal texts such as *Rozmyślanie przemyskie o żywocie Pana Jezusa* ("The Przemyśl Meditation on the Life of Lord Jesus"); and moralizing verse dialogues, for example, *Rozmowa mistrza ze Śmiercią* ("A Conversation between the Master and Death").

These and a few other mostly religious texts reflect the evolution of the medieval Polish language but do not match the rich secular literature of western and central Europe, including that of Bohemia, where, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, chivalrous epic, courtly poetry, and love lyrics, as well as political verse flourished in the vernacular and even a school of poets, headed by Smil Flaška of Pardubice, was active.

The controversy as to whether the Polish literary language originated in Great Poland (Wielkopolska) or in Little Poland (Małopolska) has as yet not been settled, although certain compromise solutions have been proposed. The chief argument for a West (Great) Polish origin is the lack of the phenomenon of *mazurzenie* (i.e., the merger of the hissing and hushing series of fricatives in one, hissing series) shared

with the standard language, while cultural-historical considerations rather point to the Polish south (Little Poland). The history of the modern Polish literary language begins with the age of the Renaissance and Humanism, notably with the poetry and prose writings of the largely self-taught "father" of Polish literature, Mikołaj Rej (d. 1569), and the towering figure of Polish (and, generally, Slavic) Renaissance poetry, the learned and broadly cultured Jan Kochanowski (d. 1584).

As for the East Slavic vernacular extending into ECE territory (in the broad sense), the indigenous language of Kievan Rus'—mostly recorded in texts where it essentially functions as a native admixture to the literary Church Slavonic language adapted to East Slavic linguistic habits—can be considered the ancestral language of Ukrainian and Belarusian just as much as it is traditionally conceived of as the immediate predecessor of modern Russian (Great Russian). The term Russian (derived from Rus') recently proposed for the early common East Slavic language has therefore some merit and is perhaps preferable to the more traditional term Old Russian. Yet it would be difficult to identify a particular western variety of East Slavic for most of the medieval period, even though some literary texts came into being in Galicia-Volynia; so, for example, the *Galicko-Volynskaja letopis'* ("Galician-Volynian Chronicle"), covering events from 1201 to 1292 but extant only in a codex compiled ca. 1425 in northeastern Russia, in the town of Kostroma in the Vladimir-Suzdal' region. In this manuscript, known as the *Ipatevskij spisok* ("Hypatian Copy"), the Galician-Volynian Chronicle is preceded by one of the two chief variants of the *Povest' vremenyx let* ("Primary Chronicle") and the subsequent *Kievskaja letopis'* ("Kiev Chronicle"). The partition of the Ukrainian lands among Lithuania, Poland, Moldavia, and Hungary by 1387, more than a century after the Tatar invasion—Kiev fell in 1240—prevented an early unified and autonomous evolution of the Ukrainian language, especially as the Euthymian recension of Church Slavonic (called so after the last medieval Bulgarian patriarch, Euthymius, active at the end of the fourteenth century) reversed the previous trend toward a synthesis between Church Slavonic and the vernacular.

Another early written East Slavic language, Ruthenian, served primarily administrative purposes and had the Lithuanian capital Vilnius as its center. Its vernacular base was early Belarusian rather than Ukrainian. This language was introduced after 1433, the year of King Władysław Jagiełło's decree concerning the unification of the judiciary system, which limited the official use of Latin to the royal court and its chancery. Nonetheless, some Ukrainianisms can be found in a few fifteenth-century religious texts (e.g., the *Kamjanka-Buz'ka Gospel* of 1411 or the second portion of the *Četja* or "Readings" of 1489) as well as in some early fifteenth-century legal documents and records. Overall, though, native Ukrainian had to contend with two written languages: an esoteric Church Slavonic and Belarusian-based Ruthenian. Moreover, Polish (increasingly replacing Church Slavonic) and Latin were strong and initially successful competitors of native Ukrainian. A genuinely Ukrainian literary language based on the "plain speech" (*prostaja mova*) of the commoners, with a minor Church Slavonic and a substantial Polish component, did not therefore crystallize until the very end of the sixteenth and mostly during the seventeenth century.

Serving as one of the official languages of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Belarusian evolved (as a chancery language) somewhat earlier than Ukrainian. Thus, for example, the law code known as the *Statut Velikoho Knjaz'stva Litovskoho* ("Statute of

the Grand Duchy of Lithuania") issued on three occasions—in 1529, 1566, and 1588—was essentially written in Belarusian Ruthenian. For religious-rhetorical purposes Belarusian was used by the printer Francišak Skaryna (d. 1540), a trend continued by Symon Budny (d. 1593) and Vasil' Cjapinski (d. 1603), who brought the language of religious writing ever closer to the secular vernacular usage. However, the Church Union of Brest (1596) did not further the use of Belarusian whose decline and increasing Polonization now set in, until, in 1697, the Diet (Sejm) explicitly prohibited the use of Belarusian for state documents and court proceedings.

Turning now to the South Slavic language area to the extent it marginally pertained to ECE during the Middle Ages, it should be noted that the three brief *Freising Fragments* of ca. 1000 (whose Church Slavonic language, though apparently largely unrelated to the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition, with the possible exception of the second fragment known as *Adhortatio ad poenitentiam*, surmised to echo a homily by Methodius) betray a number of Slovenian features. Otherwise, this northernmost South Slavic language is virtually not recorded during the medieval period. Still, a Slavic sentence found in a thirteenth-century Middle High German text (*Buge vas primi gralva Venus* = Modern Slovenian *Bog vas primi, kraljeva Venus* "May God accept you, Queen Venus") suggests that early Slovenian was known among the local German-speaking gentry. For the preliterate period, it can be assumed that Alpine Slavic, the immediate predecessor of Slovene, covered a considerably larger area than does the modern language; Alpine Slavic thus extended deep into present-day Austria as well as into southwestern Hungary and northeastern Italy (Friuli). However, it was not until the age of the Reformation and, more specifically, in the second half of the sixteenth century, that a Slovenian written language took shape, primarily thanks to the efforts of the printer and translator Primož Trubar (d. 1586).

The situation is different when it comes to Serbo-Croatian, or rather, Old Croatian, which for the medieval period may be considered a separate language (written in Glagolitic, later in Latin script) by contrast to Old Serbian (using Cyrillic letters). The early history of Croatian—in recent years again about to become a separate language—is somewhat similar to that of Czech in that it shades from a local variety of Church Slavonic ("Croato-Glagolitic") into vernacular Croatian. As for the Croatian Church Slavonic tradition, it begins at the end of the eleventh century with a few Glagolitic inscriptions (in Istria and on the islands of Cres and Krk) and continues through the following centuries in the same area as well as the Croatian Littoral and northern and central Dalmatia. It is now generally believed that the Glagolitic script reached the Istria-Kvarner-Dalmatian area from Moravia-Pannonia after the expulsion of Methodius' disciples in 885/6 and the collapse of the Moravian state at the hands of the Hungarians in 906/7. Handwritten Glagolitic texts in Croatian Church Slavonic are not known before the early fourteenth century, although it can be gathered from other sources that Croatian Glagolitic liturgical writing (and the use of liturgical books, notably missals and breviaries, but perhaps also complete—now lost—texts of the Bible) continued, with interruptions, in Dalmatia and adjoining northern regions and islands from the tenth century on. The Glagolitic scribes, usually clerics, are referred to as Glagolites (*glagoljaši*). The dialectal base of this early Croatian writing was Čakavian, whereas texts in the Kajkavian dialect do not appear before the fifteenth century in inland (or Pannonian) Croatia. Popular Croatian literature began only by the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries with the love poetry of the "Petrarchist"

poets Đore Držić (d. 1501) and Šiško Menčetić (d. 1527) of Dubrovnik, the religious drama in verse *Judita* ("Judith") by Marko Marulić of Split (d. 1524), and the barely preserved poetry of the less well known Zadar poet, Jerolim Viduliis (d. 1499). The earliest verse fragment from Dubrovnik dates from ca. 1430, but it is assumed that early Croatian "lute" poetry, using the dodecasyllabic meter, was recited by itinerant minstrels and scholars—if perhaps not recorded—already as early as the end of the fourteenth century. Though this poetry was mostly in the Čakavian dialect, it seems that the native dialect of Dubrovnik was Štokavian (of the Jekavian subvariety), as prose literature was written in that dialect; it is therefore now assumed by most scholars that Čakavian poetry in Dubrovnik emulated models from central and northern Dalmatia (where Čakavian was indeed indigenous).

As indicated above, the written Baltic languages—Old Prussian, Lithuanian, and Latvian—hardly enter the picture during the medieval period. The earliest known Baltic text is the Old Prussian *Basel Epigram* of 1369 or shortly thereafter, a couplet saluting someone while telling him that he is not a good fellow if he wants to drink without paying. The Latin manuscript where this earliest Baltic text is entered can probably be traced to Prague, whose then newly founded university (1348) attracted students from many countries, including Germany and Poland. The Old Prussian *Elbing Vocabulary* (from shortly after 1400, containing 802 lexical items) does not qualify as a literary text, even though its evidence is linguistically significant. The next Old Prussian vocabulary, Simon Grunau's (about 100 words), dates from the early sixteenth century. The first written Lithuanian texts (Lord's Prayer, Hail Mary, Creed), known as the *Dzukian Prayers* (called so after the East High Lithuanian dialect of the Dzukians, or *dzukai*, who shift *t, d* to *č, dž*), date from ca. 1515, while the earliest Lithuanian printed text is from 1547 (*Mósvydas/Mažvydas' Catechism*) and the first printed Latvian catechism dates only from 1585.

Lithuanian distinguishes between two basic dialect areas, Samogitian and High Lithuanian, the latter further subdivided into western, central, and eastern. The West High Lithuanian dialect forms the basis for modern standard Lithuanian. Latvian distinguishes three dialect regions: Tamian, Central, and High Latvian, with Central Latvian providing the foundation for the literary language.

Hungarian has no cognate languages in ECE except the distantly related Baltic-Finnic languages Estonian and Livonian (the latter now virtually extinct), and Finnish being outside our purview. The closest ethnolinguistic relatives of the Hungarians are the Ob-Ugric Ostyaks and Voguls living in western Siberia, east of the Urals.

Writing in the Hungarian vernacular developed at a slow pace, overshadowed by the long prevalent documentation and literature in Latin. The earliest recorded specimens of Hungarian are—not unlike the situation in Poland—place-names and personal names found in Latin documents and chronicles. Among them are King Stephen's laws of the 1030s, the Tihany Abbey foundation charter of 1055, the *Gesta Hungarorum* by a priest and royal notary, known simply as Anonymous, or Master P. (written during the reign of King Béla III in the late twelfth century but echoing in part some earlier *Gesta*, probably written in the mid-eleventh century), and King Andrew II's *Golden Bull* of 1222. Hungarian translations of French chivalrous literature (*Trojan War, Alexandreis*), with which Master P. has been credited, have not come down to us. The Latin script was suitable for the notation of Hungarian sounds, while

a runic alphabet has survived only in a few short texts among the Seklers (Székely) of Transylvania.

The earliest continuous Hungarian text is the *Halotti Beszéd* ("Funeral Oration"), comprising twenty-six plus six lines (the latter portion containing a supplication); it is tentatively dated to the very beginning of the thirteenth century. This brief text is found in the Latin *Pray Codex* (called so after Gy. Pray, who described it in 1770) and is a prose translation, by a Dominican friar, of a Latin hymn composed by Geofroi de Breteuil and found in the same manuscript. The earliest original Hungarian poem, and one of great formal sophistication, is the thirty-seven-line *Ó-Magyar Mária Siralom* ("Lament of Mary") from ca. 1270, also found in a Latin manuscript and presumably written for a Beguine community—nuns as well as members of the laity were not knowledgeable in Latin. It was also for the needs of these people—nuns and the less educated populace—that the stereotypical Hungarian-language *Szt. Margit legendája* ("Legend of St. Margaret," daughter of King Béla IV, living in the Dominican nunnery on Rabbit Island, later named Margaret Island after her) and the *Szt. Ferencz legendája* ("Legend of St. Francis") were composed in the fourteenth century. While the former is known in a revised version dating from the sixteenth century, a copy of the latter is contained in the *Jókai Codex* from ca. 1440, the earliest manuscript made up entirely of Hungarian texts.

The Hussite movement reached Hungary as early as the beginning of the fifteenth century. The first Hungarian translation of the Bible (or rather the bulk of it) was undertaken by two Hussite preachers, Thomas and Valentin, around 1430. Most of Hungarian literature of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries consists of translations from Latin—legends (*vitae*), sermons, parables, monastic rules, hymns, as well as writings of famous mystics. Among these Hungarian works, translated but in part also original, are the first Hungarian mystery play, *Három körösztyén leán* ("Three Christian Maidens"), the *Szent Katalin legendája* ("Legend of St. Catherine of Alexandria"), *Ének László királyról* ("Song about King Ladislas," about a king who was canonized), and the original *Himnusz Szűz Máriáról* ("Hymn on the Virgin Mary"), the latter composed by the Franciscan Andreas Vásárhelyi. Only very little secular literature in Hungarian is extant from the late medieval period. Among literary pieces from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries are those by traveling scholars and returning students, often with a satirical tone or vulgar note, such as some fragmentarily preserved love and flower songs or the *Cantilena* by Ferenc Apáti (from ca. 1520).

The rule of King Matthias Corvinus (1458–90) marks Hungary's entry into the age of the full-blown Renaissance, with the Neo-Latin poet Janus Pannonius (d. 1472), a native of Slavonia, the most prominent literary figure. The country's decline after Matthias' death, the peasant uprising of 1514, and, finally, the defeat at Mohács in 1526 (at the hands of the Turks) signaled a new era in Hungary's history when vernacular writing, inspired in particular by the Reformation, spread swiftly and widely.

Hungarian has a large stock of loanwords and foreign borrowings. Earliest among them are the Turkic loans, followed by Slavic and Latin borrowings, soon to be supplemented by German, Italian, French, and—toward the end of the Middle Ages—Ottoman Turkish lexical items.

Romanian, having its roots in the Daco-Romanian portion of Balkan Romance—dating back to the less than two centuries (up to 271 A.D.) when Dacia, north of the

lower Danube, was part of the Roman Empire—is not attested in vernacular texts until the sixteenth century and falls, therefore, essentially outside the scope of this survey. The earliest Romanian document is a letter written in 1521, and the first longer text in the vernacular is the *Codicele Voronețeanu* ("Codex of the Voroneț Monastery"), which also dates from the sixteenth century and contains a translation from Church Slavonic of the Acts of the Apostles. Church Slavonic (of the Bulgarian and, to a lesser extent, Serbian and East Slavic recensions) was used as the liturgical language of the medieval principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia. Theoretically, we can distinguish between a Proto-Romanian period (seventh-ninth centuries), preceding the disintegration into Daco-, Macedo-, Megleno-, and Istro-Romanian, and an Old Romanian period (ninth through early sixteenth centuries), the latter extending from the breakup of the Romanian linguistic unity to the earliest written attestation of Daco-Romanian and marked by massive Slavic linguistic interference, which has left Romanian a Romance language heavily overlaid with Slavic elements (in all parts of its linguistic structure). The beginning of the New Romanian period therefore coincides with the first recorded texts in the vernacular. From a typological point of view, Romanian is characterized by many Balkanisms, making it a prime member, along with Bulgarian, Macedonian, and Albanian (and only peripherally Serbo-Croatian and Modern Greek), of the Balkan language league (*Sprachbund*).

Dalmatian, the native Romance tongue of the urban population along the east Adriatic coast from Istria to the Bay of Kotor, never quite made it to the status of a literary language, though written documents in Dalmatian have come down to us. To a large extent, Dalmatian was early influenced and infiltrated by the Venetian dialect of Italian and/or replaced by Serbo-Croatian (in the north in its Čakavian, in the south in its Štokavian variety). Thus, Dalmatian became extinct early on in central Dalmatia and in the city of Zadar under Venetian pressure, while it survived until the fifteenth century in Dubrovnik (where it was used by the nobles) and until the late nineteenth century on the island of Krk (where it remained the spoken language of the lower classes, while the nobility preferred Venetian-type Italian). The Istro-Romance dialect, bridging Vegliotic Dalmatian and Venetian Italian, was once spoken on the island of Cres and can sporadically still be heard in some places in Istria (e.g., in Rovinj). Originating in the Friuli region, this particular transitional Romance dialect never stood a chance against the overpowering Venetian variety of Italian after Venice had conquered the Patriarchate of Aquileia in 1240.

It would lead too far to attempt even to sketch here the medieval history of German (Old High German, Old Saxon; Middle High German, Middle Low German) at the fringes of ECE. Suffice it to point to the Slavic-German symbiosis, particularly in Bohemia, where a work like *Der Ackermann aus Böhmen* by Johannes of Tepl (or Saaz; in Czech, Jan ze Šitboře) was written in 1400/1401 and is somehow related to the Old Czech allegorical dialogue *Tkadleček* (opinions on the primacy of one or the other varying). Moreover, along the southern and eastern shores of the Baltic German (Saxon) advances—the much maligned but not always and merely detrimental *Drang nach Osten*—led to the conquest of the Baltics by the Teutonic Knights (and its more northerly counterpart, the Order of the Livonian Knights) as well as to the foundation of many medieval Hanseatic towns, among them Danzig/Gdańsk, Riga, and Reval/Tallinn. For centuries, the Hansa also had its own trading station, the "German Yard," in the North Russian boyar and merchant city of Novgorod. Prior to that,

Bavarian and Frankish clerics had entered Moravia (in the ninth century) and, by the tenth/eleventh centuries, German—in addition to the just-mentioned groups, also Saxon—officials, clerics, and artisans had settled in the Czech lands in great numbers. The influx of Germans and German-speaking Jews to these regions was followed by massive settlements in Poland, beginning in the thirteenth century and especially during the rule of the last Piast king, Casimir III the Great (d. 1370), giving rise to the specific Judeo-German speech, resulting in the formation of Yiddish, with numerous Slavic and Lithuanian elements grafted on a German and, to a lesser extent, Hebrew stock. (On the influx of Ashkenazi Jews to ECE, cf. above.) Bavarian settlers migrated during the early Middle Ages down the Danube, establishing the "eastern march," *Ostarrichi* (the subsequent core region of Austria) of the Holy Roman Empire (Leopold I Babenberg appointed by Emperor Otto II as its ruler in 976; mentioned for the first time in an official document of 996). Finally, from the High Middle Ages on Saxon craftsmen and miners moved into Hungary (including, in particular, Transylvania) and portions of Bosnia and Serbia; subsequently these Saxons were in part replaced by, or mingled with, new German arrivals from Swabia.

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