

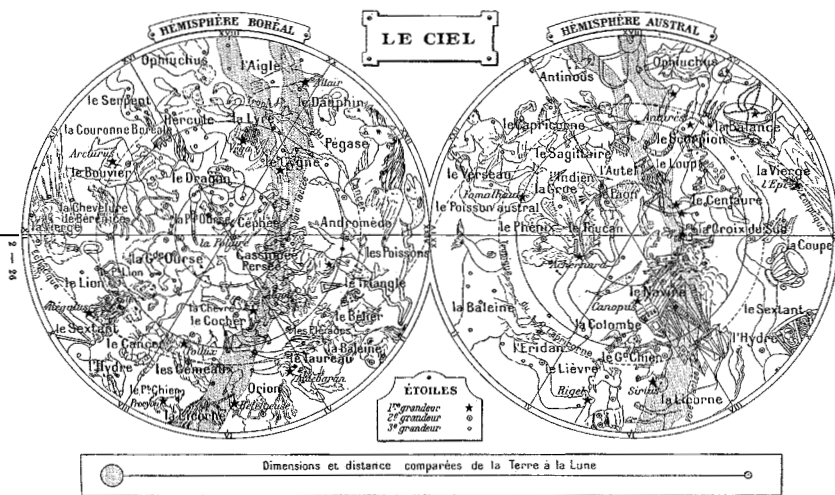
DICTIONARY OF THE KHAZARS

*The Androgynous Edition*

MILORAD PAVIĆ

dereta  
2017

Original title  
Milorad Pavić  
HAZARSKI REČNIK  
Roman-leksikon u 100.000 reči  
Androgino izdanje



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Here lies the reader  
who will never open this book.  
He is here forever dead.



## PREFACE TO THE ANDROGYNOUS EDITION OF DICTIONARY OF THE KHAZARS

As I perceive them, arts are divided into the “reversible” and the “irreversible”. There are arts that enable the beneficiary (recipient) to approach the piece from different sides, or even to circle around it and view it, changing the direction from which it is seen as the viewer sees fit, as is the case with architecture, sculpting or painting, which are reversible. Then there are the other, irreversible arts, such as music or literature, which resemble one-way streets, through which everything moves from start towards finish, from birth towards death. I have long since wished to turn literature, which is an irreversible art, into a reversible one. Thus my novels have no beginning or end in the classical sense of the word. They are created as non-linear narratives.

For example, “Dictionary of the Khazars” has the structure of a lexicon: it is a “lexicon novel in 100,000 words.” And depending on the alphabet in different languages the novel ends differently. The original version of the “Dictionary of the Khazars” printed in the Cyrillic script ends with a Latin quote: “... sed venit ut illa impleam et con firmem, Mattheus.” My novel in the Greek translation ends with the sentence: “I immediately noticed that inside me were three fears, not one.” The Hebrew, Spanish, English and Danish versions of “Dictionary of the Khazars” end like this: “Then, when the reader returned, the entire process would be reversed, and Tibbon would correct the translation on the basis of the impressions he had derived from

this reading walk.” The Chinese and Korean editions of this book also end with that sentence. The Serbian version printed in Latin script, the Swedish version published by Nordstedts, the Dutch, Czech and German versions all end with the sentence: “That look spelled Cohen’s name in the air, lit the wick, and illuminated her way home.” The Hungarian edition of “Dictionary of the Khazars” ends with the sentence: “He simply wanted to draw your attention to your true nature.” The French, Italian and Catalan versions end with the sentence: “Indeed, the Khazar jar serves to this day, although it has long since ceased to exist.”... The Japanese edition published by “Tokio Zogen Sha” ends with the sentence: “The girl had given birth to a mercurial daughter – her own death. In that death her beauty was divided into whey and curdled milk, and at the bottom was a mouth holding the root of the reed.”

When speaking of different endings to one book, it should be noted that the “Dictionary of the Khazars” at its end has something like a sexual organ. It appeared in 1984 both in the male and in the female version, and the reader was given a choice as to which version to read.

I have frequently been asked what the essence of the difference between the male and the female copies of my book is. The thing is that a man experiences the world outside of himself, in the universe, while a woman carries the universe inside her. This difference can be seen both in the male and in the female version of my novel. It is a picture, if you will, of the falling apart of time, which divided into collective male and individual female time. That is what Jasmina Mihajlovic writes about in her piece entitled: “Reading and Gender”.

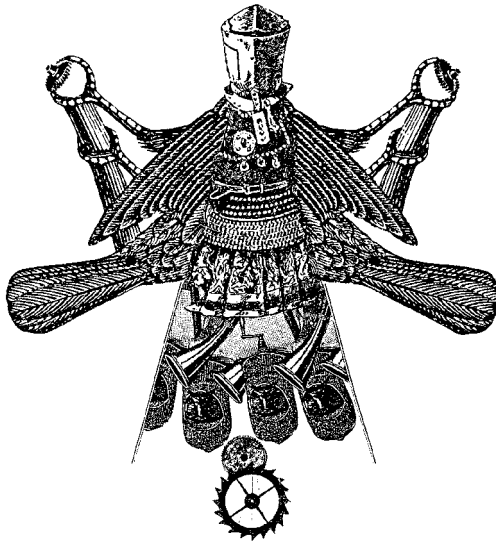
As such, bearing its multiple endings, its female and its male sex, “half an animal”, as Anthony Burgess said about this book, the “Dictionary of the Khazars” traveled the world from Europe to both Americas and back through Japan, China and Russia. Sharing the good and the bad fortune of its writer and of my other books (cf: <http://www.khazars.com>).

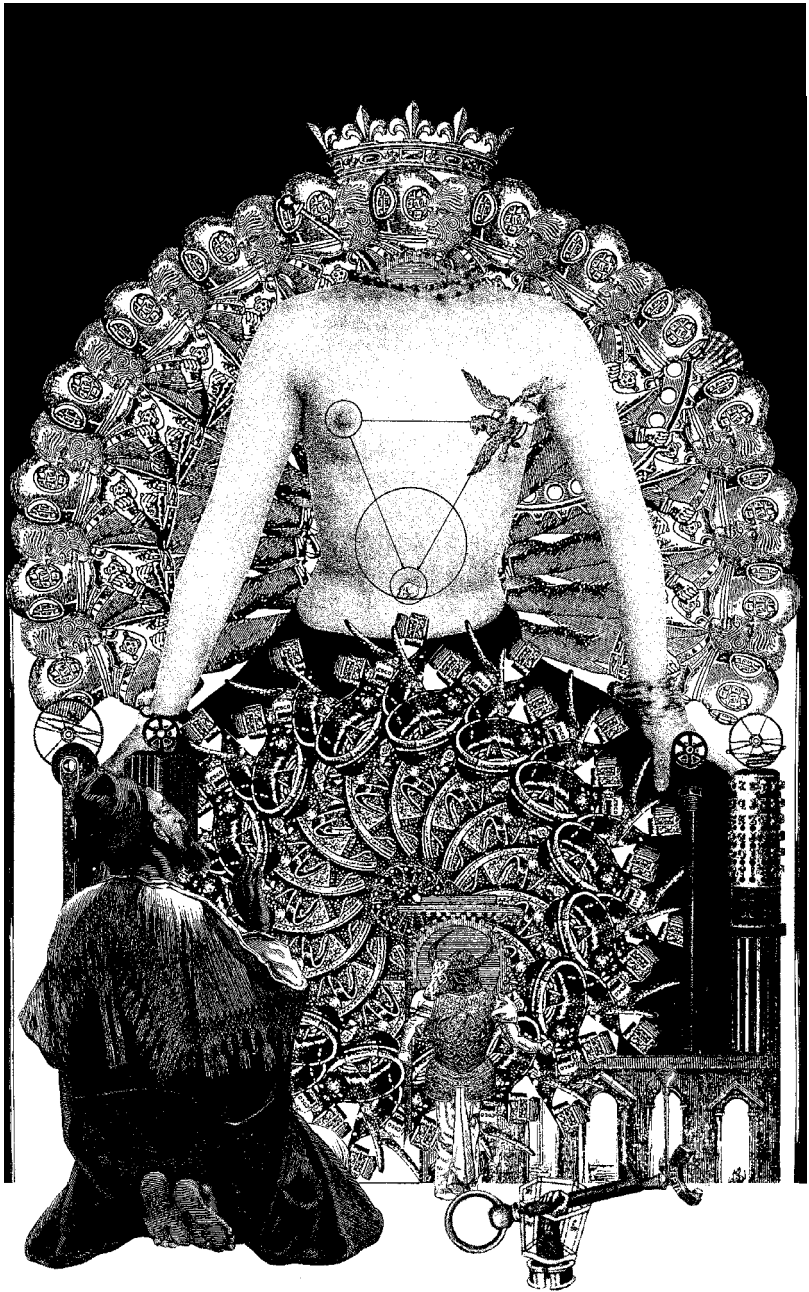
Announced in the *Paris Match* as the first book of the 21st century, the “Dictionary of the Khazars” now enters the 21st century and the age of Aquarius only in the female version, which the reader is holding in his hand, while he is given the male version to review in this preface. So while in the 20th century the book was a bisexual species, in the 21st century it became a hermaphrodite. Androgynous. Or something incestuous. In this new form forced upon us by the publishing economy, we can imagine a book as a place in which female time contains male time. The passage in the female version of the novel that differs from the male version is in the last letter of this book, after

the sentence: "And he gave me a few of the Xeroxed sheets of paper lying on the table in front of him."

This male member of the book, this Khazarian tree entering the female version of the novel, reads as follows:

*"I could have pulled the trigger at that moment. I could not have had a better one - there was but a single witness in the garden - and a child at that. But it played out differently. I reached forward and took those several exciting pages, which I attach to the letter. Taking them instead of shooting, I looked at those Saracen fingers with nails like hazelnuts and thought of the tree that Halevi mentions in his book about the Khazars. I thought that every one of us is such a tree: the more we grow upwards towards the sky, through the winds and the rain towards God, the deeper we have to sink with our roots into the mud and ground waters towards Hell. With such thoughts I read the pages handed to me by the Saracen with the green eyes. They amazed me and I asked Dr. Muawia in disbelief where he had gotten them from."*







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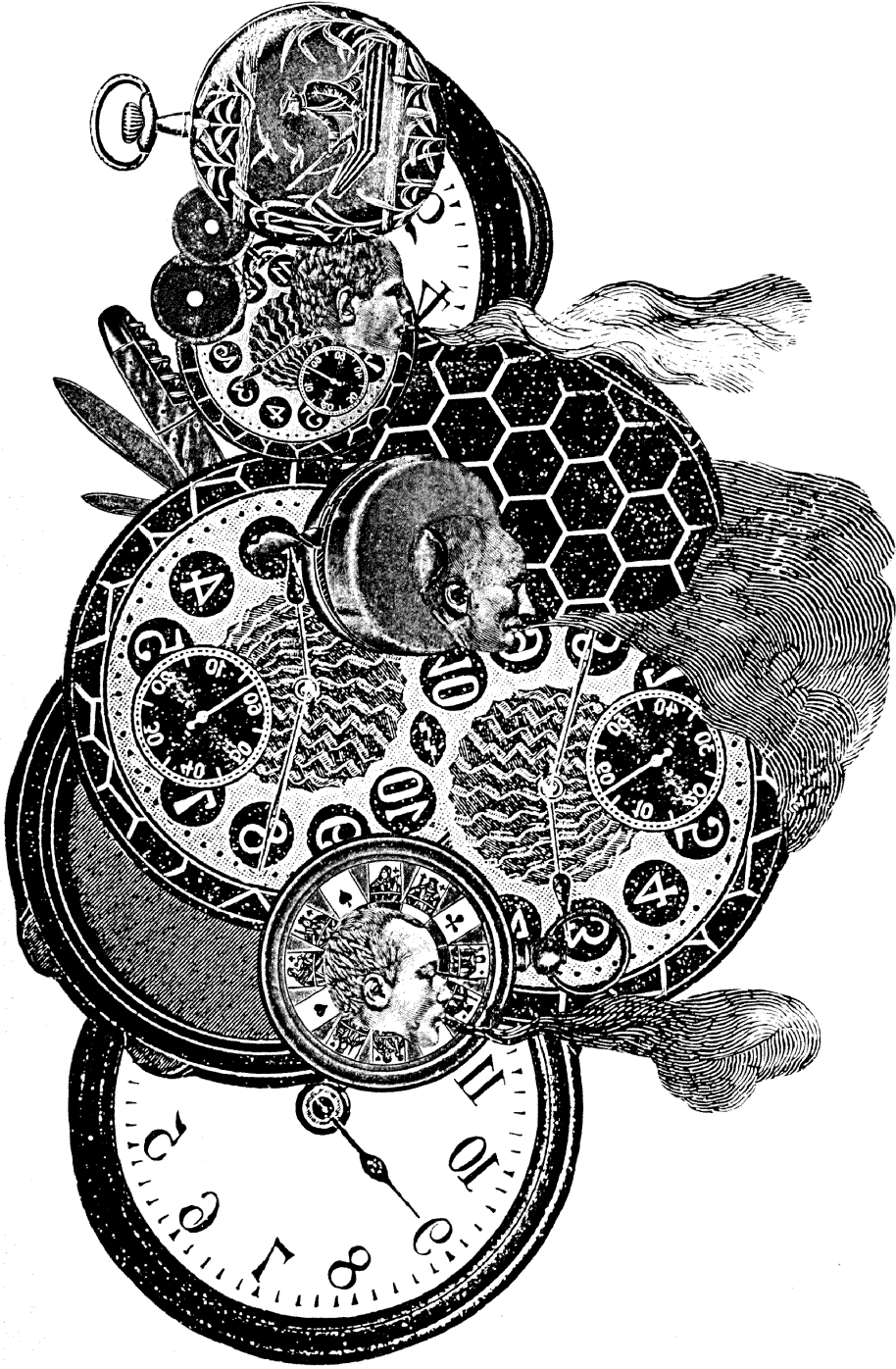
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PRELIMINARY NOTES  
TO THE SECOND RECONSTRUCTED  
AND REVISED, EDITION

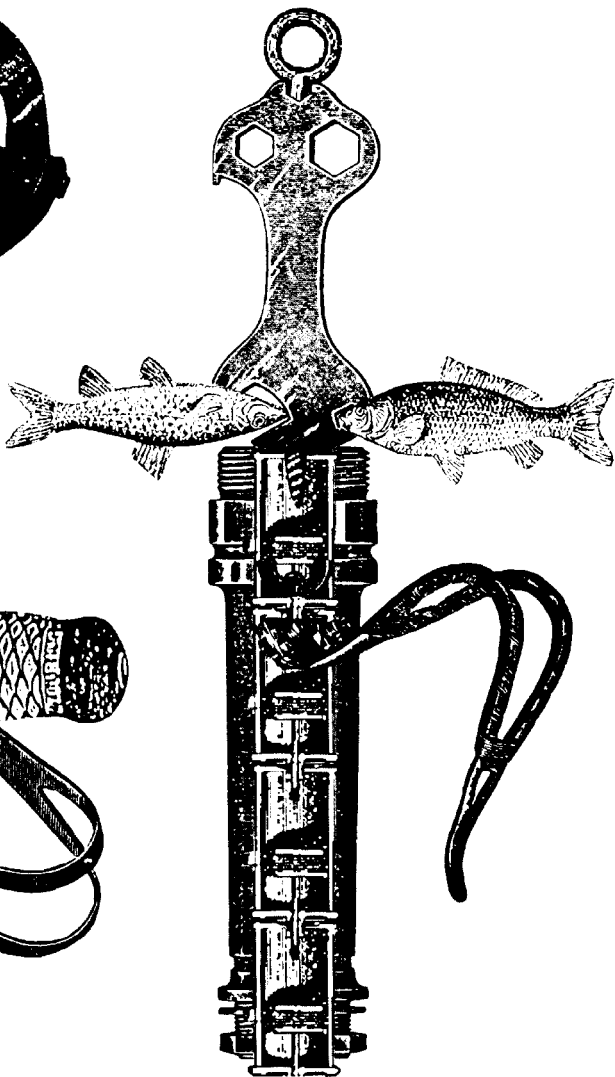
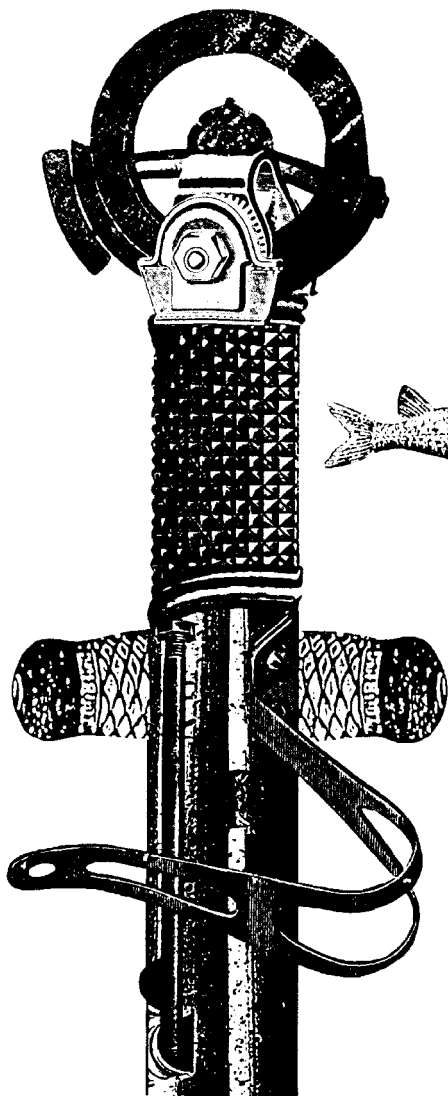
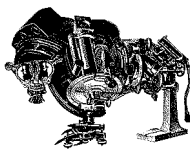
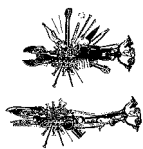
The author assures the reader that he will not have to die if he reads this book, as did the user of the 1691 edition, when *The Khazar Dictionary* still had its first scribe. Some explanation regarding that edition is in order here, but for the sake of brevity the lexicographer proposes to strike a deal with his readers. He will sit down to write these notes before supper, and the reader will take them to read after supper. Thereby, hunger will force the author to be brief, and gratification will allow the reader to peruse the introduction at leisure.

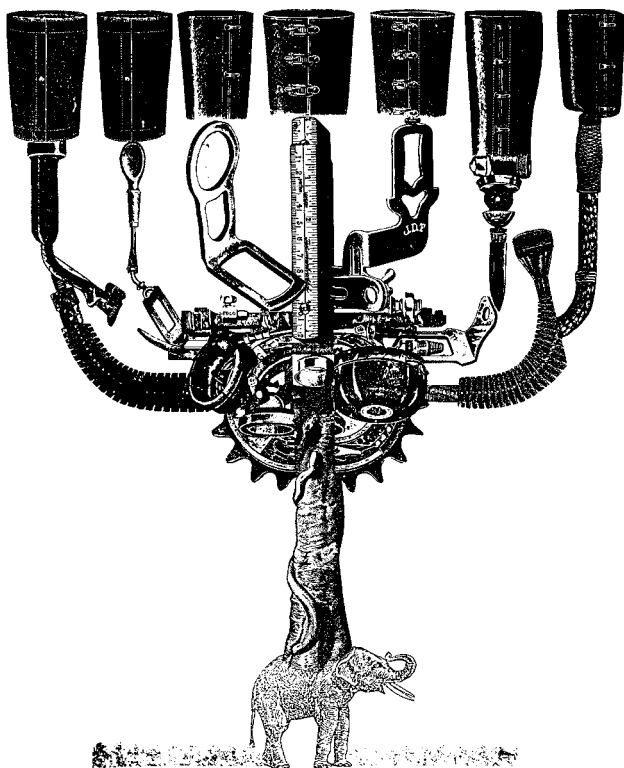
1. A History of *The Khazar Dictionary*

The event discussed in this lexicon occurred sometime in the ‘8th or 9th century A.D. (or there were several similar events), and this subject is commonly referred to by scholars as “the Khazar polemic.”▼The Khazars▼ were an autonomous and powerful tribe, a warlike and nomadic people who appeared from the East at an unknown date, driven by a scorching silence, and who, from the 7th to the 10th century, settled in the land between two seas, the Caspian and the Black.\* It is known that the winds that brought them

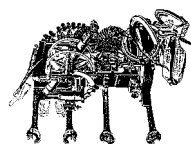
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\* A review of the literature on the Khazars was published in New York (*The Khazars, A Bibliography*, 1939); a Russian, M. I. Artamonov, wrote a monograph on the history of the Khazars in two editions (Leningrad, 1936 and 1962), and, in 1954, in Princeton, I. M. Dunlop published a history of the Jewish Khazars.





were masculine winds, which never bring rain – winds with a yoke of grass, which they trail through the sky like a beard. One Late Slavic mythological source mentions the Kozije Sea, which could be taken to mean that there was a sea called the “Khazar Sea,” since the Slavs called the Khazars “Kozars.” It is also known that the Khazars established a powerful empire between the two seas, preaching a to-us-unknown faith. When their husbands were killed in battle, Khazar women would be given a pillow to hold the tears they would weep for the warriors. The Kazars entered the annals of history when they went to war against the Arabs and concluded an alliance with the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius in 627 A.D., but their origins remain unknown and all traces of them have vanished, leaving nothing to show by what name or people one should look for them today. They left in their wake a graveyard by the Danube, although it is not sure it is really Khazar, and a



pile of keys surmounted by silver or gold triangular coins, which Daubmannus<sup>0</sup> believed had been minted by the Khazars. The Khazars, and the Khazar state, vanished from the stage of history as a result of the event that is the main concern of this book – their conversion from their original faith, unknown to us today, to one (again, it is not known which) of three known religions of the past and present – Judaism, Islam, or Christianity. The collapse of the Khazar Empire followed soon after their conversion. A Russian military commander of the 10th century, Prince Svyatoslav, gobbled up the Khazar Empire like an apple, without even dismounting from his horse. In 943 A.D. the Russians went without sleep for eight nights



to smash the Khazar capital at the mouth of the Volga into the Caspian Sea, and between 965 and 970 A.D. they destroyed the Khazar state. Eyewitnesses noted that the shadows of the houses in the capital held their outlines for years, although the buildings themselves had already been destroyed long before. They held fast in the wind and in the waters of the Volga. According to a 12th-century Russian chronicle, Oleg was already called archon of the Khazar state by the year 1085, but by that time (the 12th century), another people – the Kuman – were already to be found on the territory of what had once been the Khazar state. There are very few material remnants of Khazar culture. No public or private inscriptions have been discovered, no trace of the Khazar books mentioned by Halevi,<sup>\*</sup> or of their language, though Cyril “1” notes that they prayed in the Khazar language. The sole public building excavated in Suwar, on erstwhile Khazar territory, is probably not Khazar, but Bulgar. Nor was anything noteworthy found in the excavations at Sarkel, not even traces of the fortress we know the Byzantines built there for the Khazars’ use. After the fall of their state, the Khazars are barely mentioned. In the 10th century a Hungarian chieftain invited them to settle on his territory. In the year 1117 a group

of Khazars went to Kiev to see Prince Vladimir Mono-makh. In Pressburg, in 1309, Catholics were forbidden to enter into matrimony with Khazars, and in 1346 the decision was confirmed by the Pope. That is about all there is.

The Khazars' act of conversion, which was to seal their fate, occurred in the following way. According to ancient chronicles, the Khazar ruler, the kaghan,▼ had a dream and sought three philosophers to interpret it for him. This was a matter of importance to the Khazar state, because the kaghan had decided to convert, together with his people, to the faith of the sage who would give the most satisfactory dream interpretation. Some sources assert that, when the kaghan made his decision that day, the hair on his head died, and although he felt it happen, something nevertheless drove him on. And so it was that a Moslem, a Jewish, and a Christian divine — a dervish, a rabbi, and a monk — were to be found at the kaghan's summer residence. Each received a knife made of salt as a gift from the kaghan, and they began their debate. The sages' viewpoints, their contest based on the tenets of their three different faiths, the characters involved in, and the outcome of the "Khazar polemic" aroused keen interest and strongly conflicting opinions about the event and its consequences, the victors and the vanquished, and through the centuries they became the subject of repeated debate in Hebrew, Christian, and Moslem circles; all this continues to the present, although the Khazars have long since ceased to exist. Sometime in the 17th century there was a surprising renewal of interest in Khazar affairs, and the immense body of studies concerning the Khazars was systematized and published in Borussia (Prussia) in 1691. Among the items examined were samples of triangular coins, names inscribed on old rings, images painted on a pitcher of salt, diplomatic correspondence, portraits of writers in which all the book titles etched in the background were transcribed, reports from spies, testaments, voices of Black Sea parrots thought to speak the extinct Khazar language, painted scenes of music-making (from which musical annotations drawn on score books were deciphered), and even a tattooed human skin, not to mention the Byzantine, Hebrew, and Arab archival material. In short, everything that the imagination of 17th-century man could tame and turn to his own advantage was drawn on. And all this was collected between the covers of one dictionary.

An explanation for the awakened interest in the 17th century, one thousand years after the event, was left by a chronicler in the following obscure sentences, which read: "Each of us promenades his thought, like a monkey on a leash. When you read, you always have two such monkeys: your own and



one belonging to someone else. Or, even worse, a monkey and a hyena. Now, consider what you will feed them. For a hyena does not eat the same thing as a monkey....”

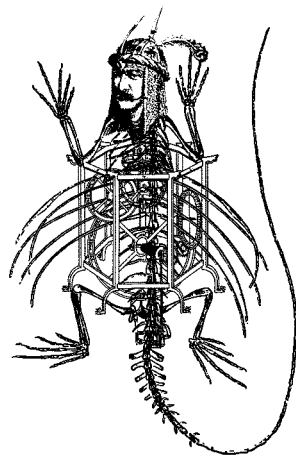
In any case, in the said year of 1691 the printer of a Polish dictionary, Joannes Daubmannus\* (or a successor under his name), published a listing of sources on the Khazar question in the one format that made it possible to include the sundry material that had been amassed and lost through the centuries by those who, with quills in their earrings, use their mouths as ink bottles. The work was published in the form of a dictionary about the Khazars and entitled *Lexicon Cosri*. According to one (Christian) version, the book was dictated to the publisher by a monk named Theoctist Nikolsky, A who had found various material about the Khazars on an Austrian-Turkish battlefield and had memorized it. Daubmannus’ edition was divided into three



dictionaries: a separate glossary of Moslem sources on the Khazar question, an alphabetized list of materials drawn from Hebrew writings and tales, and a third dictionary compiled on the basis of Christian accounts of the Khazar question. This Daubmannus edition — a dictionary of dictionaries on the Khazar Empire — had an unusual fate.

Among the five hundred copies of the first dictionary, Daubmannus printed one with a poisoned dye. This poisoned copy, with its gilded lock, had a companion copy with a silver lock. In 1692 the Inquisition destroyed all copies of the Daubmannus edition, and the only ones to remain in circulation were the poisoned copy of the book, which had escaped the censors' notice, and the auxiliary copy, with its silver lock, which accompanied it. Insubordinates and infidels who ventured to read the proscribed dictionary risked the threat of death. Whoever opened the book soon grew numb, stuck on his own heart as on a pin. Indeed, the reader would die on the ninth page at the words *Verbum cam factum est* ("The Word became flesh"). If read simultaneously with the poisoned copy, the auxiliary copy enabled one to know exactly when death would strike. Found in the auxiliary copy was the note: "When you awake and suffer no pain, know that you are no longer among the living."

From the legal case concerning the 18th-century Dorfmer family and its inheritance, we see that the "gold" (poisoned) copy of the dictionary was passed down from one generation to the next in this Prussian family: the eldest son received one half of the book, and the other children each received one quarter, or less if there were more of them. The rest of the Dorfmer inheritance — orchards, meadows, fields, houses, water, livestock — was divided up with each section of the book, and for a long time the book was not associated with the deaths that occurred. Once, when pestilence struck down the livestock and there was a drought, someone told the members of the household that every book, like every girl, could turn into the witch Mora, that her spirit could go out into the world and infect and torment those around her. Therefore, into the book's lock should be placed a small wooden cross, like those put in a girl's mouth when she turned into this witch, so as not to release its spirit to plague the world and the household. This they did with



*The Khazar Dictionary* – a cross was placed on its lock as over a mouth – but matters only got worse, and members of the household began to choke in their sleep and die. The family went to the priest and told him what was happening, and the priest came and removed the cross from the book; that very same day the plague ended. He told them: “Be careful, in future, not to place the cross on the lock like that, when the spirit is residing outside the book. It fears the cross and, not daring to go back into the book, it wreaks havoc all around.’ And so the little gilded lock was bolted and *The Khazar Dictionary* remained on the shelf for decades, unused. From that shelf at night could be heard a strange rustling sound that emanated from the Daubmannus dictionary, and some diary notes kept at the time in Lvov say that built into Daubmannus’ lexicon was a sandglass, made by Nehama, a man familiar with the Zohar and able to speak and write at one and the same time. This Nehama claimed that in his own hand he recognized the consonant “he” of his Hebrew language, and in the letter “vav” his own male soul. The hourglass he had built into the binding of the book was invisible, but, as you read you could hear the trickle of the sand in the utter silence. When it stopped, you had to turn the book over and continue reading it the other way around, back to front, and therein the secret meaning of the book was revealed. Other records relate, however, that the rabbis did not approve of the attention their compatriot Nehama paid to *The Khazar Dictionary*, and the book was subject to periodic attack by learned men from the Jewish community. The rabbis had no quarrel with the orthodoxy of the Hebrew sources for the dictionary, but they could not agree with the claims of the cither sources. Finally, it must be said that the Lexicon Cosri did not fare well in Spain either, where, in the Moslem | Moorish | community, an eight-hundred-year ban was placed on reading the “silver copy”; since that period has yet to expire, the ban still applies. This act can be explained by the fact that families that originally came from the Khazar Empire were still to be found in Spain at the time. It is written that these “last Khazars” had an unusual custom. When they came into conflict with someone, they would try at all costs to imprecate and curse him while he slept, yet were careful not to awaken him with their invectives and curses. Evidently they believed that such imprecations had a stronger effect, and that curses worked faster when the enemy was asleep.

## 2. Composition of the Dictionary

It is impossible to tell what the 1691 Daubmannus edition of *The Khazar Dictionary* looked like, since the only remaining exemplars, the poisoned

and the silver (companion) copies, were both destroyed, each in its own part of the world. According to one source, the gilded copy was destroyed in an utterly ignominious way. Its last owner was an old man from the Dorfmer family, famous for his ability to judge a good sword, like a bell, by its sound. He never read books and used to say, "Light lays its eggs in my eyes like a fly lays larvae in a wound. We know what that can spawn. ..." Greasy foods were bad for the old man, and every day, when no one in the house was looking, he would lower a page of *The Khazar Dictionary* into his bowl of soup to skim off the fat and then throw away the telltale leaf. And so it happened that, before anyone in the house even noticed, he had used up the Lexicon Cosn. The same source says that the book was embellished with drawings, which the old man did not want to use because they spoiled the taste of the soup. These illustrated pages of the dictionary were the only ones to be preserved, and they could still perhaps be located today, provided one could ever identify, amid the trails of a path, that first trail, from which all others followed. A professor of Oriental studies and medieval archeology, Dr. Isailo Suk/ is believed to have owned a copy or transcript of *The Khazar Dictionary*, but after his death nothing was found among his possessions. Hence, only fragments of the Daubmannus edition have reached us, just as sleep leaves a dusting of sand in the eye.

On the basis of these fragments, cited in writings that disagree with the author or authors of *The Khazar Dictionary*, it has been firmly established (as mentioned above) that the Daubmannus edition was a sort of Khazar encyclopedia, a collection of biographies or hagiographies of individuals who had in any way crossed the firmament of the Khazar Empire, like sparrows flying through a room. Lives of the saints and of other individuals who participated in the Khazar polemic, in recording and studying it through the centuries, provided the foundation of the book, and everything was divided into three sections.

The composition of the Daubmannus dictionary, consisting of Hebrew, Moslem, and Christian sources on the Khazars' conversion, also serves as the basis for this second edition, a decision that was made, in spite of the lack of source material for the dictionary and the insurmountable difficulties this posed, after the lexicographer had read the following lines from the Khazar lexicon: "A dream is a garden of devils, and all dreams in this world were dreamed long ago. Now they are simply interchanged with equally used and worn reality, just as coins are exchanged for



promissory notes and vice versa, from hand to hand....” In such a world, in such a phase of that world, this was a responsibility one could indeed accept.

Here it is important to bear in mind the following.

The publisher of this second edition of *The Khazar Dictionary* is perfectly aware that Daubmannus’ 17th-century material is not reliable, that it is largely based on legends, that it is something like a feast eaten in a dream, and that it is caught in a web of various ancient misconceptions. Nevertheless, this material is offered here for the reader to inspect, since this dictionary does not concern itself with the Khazars as we see them today, but is, rather, an attempt to reconstruct the lost Daubmannus edition. Contemporary findings about the Khazars are used only as unavoidable supplements to the fragments of the unpreserved original.

It is also necessary to mention that, for understandable reasons, it was impossible to preserve the order and alphabetical arrangement of the Daubmannus dictionary, in which three alphabets and three languages were used – Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic – and in which dates were given according to the three calendars of the three above-mentioned groups. Here all dates are calculated according to a single calendar, and a translation of Daubmannus’ sources and his entries in three languages is given in a single language. In the 17th-century original all the words were arranged differently and, in changing from one language to another, the same name would appear in different places in each of the three dictionaries (Hebrew, Arabic, and Greek), because letters do not follow the same sequence in every alphabet, just as book pages are not always turned in the same direction, and, in the theater, leading actors do not always make their entrances from the same side of the stage. Indeed, the same principle would apply to each new translation into any other language, because the material for this dictionary on the Khazars would inevitably have to be grouped differently in each new language and new alphabet, so that the entries would always appear somewhere else and the names would acquire an ever-changing hierarchy. Hence, important entries in the Daubmannus edition, such as St. Cyril†, Judah Halevi,★ Yusuf Masudi, ☾ and others, do not appear in the same place here as in the first edition of *The Khazar Dictionary*. This is certainly the main shortcoming of the current version in relation to the Daubmannus edition, since only someone who can read through the sections of one book in their proper order can create the world anew. This approach was adopted, however, because it is impossible to reproduce Daubmannus’ alphabetical order.

All these shortcomings need not be considered as a major drawback: the reader capable of deciphering the hidden meaning of a book from the order of its entries has long since vanished from the face of the earth, for today's reading audience believes that the matter of imagination lies exclusively within the realm of the writer and does not concern them in the least, especially with regard to a dictionary. This type of reader does not even need a sandglass in the book to remind him when to change his manner of reading: he never changes his manner of reading in any case.

### 3. How to Use the Dictionary

For all its problems, this book has preserved some of the virtues of the original Daubmannus edition. Like that one, it can be read in an infinite number of ways. It is an open book, and when it is shut it can be added to: just as it has its own former and present lexicographer, so it can acquire new writers, compilers, and continuers. It has a register, concordances, and entries, like a holy book or a crossword puzzle, and all the names or subjects marked with the small sign of the cross, the crescent, the Star of David, or some other symbol can be looked up in the corresponding book of this dictionary for more detailed explanation. Words under the sign ♣ are to be found in "The Red Book" of this dictionary (Christian sources on the Khazar question) ♠ are to be found in "The Green Book" of this dictionary (Islamic sources on the Khazar question) ♠ are to be found in "The Yellow Book" of this dictionary (Hebrew sources on the Khazar question)

Entries marked with the sign ♠ will be found in all three dictionaries, and those with the sign A are in Appendix I at the back of the book.

Thus, the reader can use the book as he sees fit. As with any other lexicon, some will look up a word or a name that interests them at the given moment, whereas others may look at the book as a text meant to be read in its entirety, from beginning to end, in one sitting, so as to gain a complete picture of the Khazar question and the people, issues, and events connected with it. The book's pages can be turned from left to right or from right to left, as were those of the Prussian edition (Hebrew and Arab sources). The three books of this dictionary – Yellow, Red, and Green – can be read in any order the reader desires; he may start with the book that falls open as he picks up the dictionary. That is probably why in the 17th-century edition the books were printed in three separate volumes. The same has not been done here, for technical reasons.





# DICTIONARY OF THE KHAZARS

A Lexicon Novel in 100.000 Words

*The Androgynous Edition*

## MILORAD PAVIĆ

*For the Publisher* Dijana Dereta

*Editor* Jasmina Mihajlović

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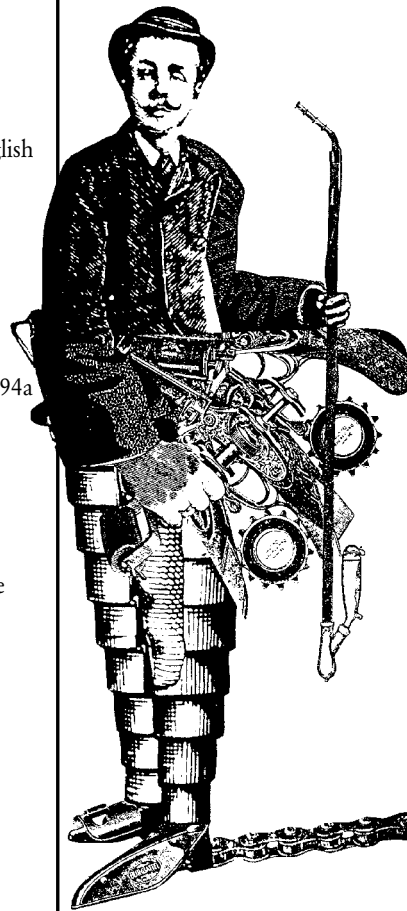
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