

A NEW CYRILLIC-LATIN TRANSLITERATION SYSTEM

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A new transliteration system is provided for the Russian alphabet in terms of Latin characters, which differs favorably from previous ones in using all 26 letters of the current Latin alphabet and using no diacritical signs above the letters, as it enables one to transmit a Russian text of any complexity in terms of Latin letters and vice versa with maximal simplicity and exceptionally unambiguously.

At present, the personal computer is becoming an article as necessary as at least the telephone and typewriter taken together, but there is a barrier between the international computer network, which operates in Latin characters, and the graphical expression of Russian writing in Cyrillic, which is being felt all the more strongly. Although there are special programs for converting the letters of one alphabet to those of another, they can be used only if the character generator of the computer whose owner for example you are addressing in the United States has Cyrillic characters (Russian alphabet) in the same way as yours. It is agreed that such coincidence is completely unnecessary. Multilingual attachments to computers will be very expensive, although they will bring together users in the near future and enable one to convert freely from the letters of one language to those of another, and one can hardly expect that the English-speaking user will acquire one for the convenience of his potential Russian-speaking guest.

What is the solution? It has been found (Table 1) in the form of a new and much more convenient Russian-Latin transliteration table (by comparison with the existing transliteration method in sending international telegrams), which for brevity (and by analogy) may follow the custom of being called after the author: *Mikhailitsa*. While not everybody commands English, everyone can now write in Russian by means of Latin script as freely as in Cyrillic (for example, in the case of Serbo-Croat, there are two graphics: Cyrillic in the Serbian form and Latinica in the Croat form). This is not surprising because the Latin alphabet is no less adequate to fit the Russian language with its 27 letters (in which, there are four paired letters or digraphs) than it is to the Latin languages itself, in which one often finds digraphs, while vowels are often supplied with diacritical marks, and it is even less adequate for English (with not less than nine two-letter symbols for individual sounds), and this applies the more so to German or French, in which respectively there are from six to ten digraphs and one trigraph each, and there is use made of from three to 13 letters with diacritical marks [1].

Who knows whether the new alphabet will propagate Cyrillic in its modern sequestered form after the era of 1917, when several letters were eliminated? This should not be surprising if one recalls that the civil alphabet in Cyrillic in turn arose at the start of the 18th century from bringing the previous church Slavonic form (by eliminating several letters) closer to the Latin script (in its antique form), and that form in turn displaced the graphically more complicated Glagolitic from Slavonic writing. It is true that the ways of alphabets are inscrutable, and free competition between them is the basis of their improvement during development.

For example, the name of Table 1 is: *Vvrajenie bukv russkogo alfavita cherez latinskie dlya perepiski po "Internetu" po-russki*, or:

часть — *chastʹ*,
Цхалтубо — *C'haltubo*; шоры — *shorw*, czod —
s'hod; Дос — *E'os*. Ларм — *Lae'rt*; ецѣ — *eqe''*,
объѣм — *ob'e''m*; дюйм — *dyuyt*, Гүүүс — *Guy'us*;
Маи́я — *Mayya*, Маи́аму — *May'ami*;

with the pronoun я rendered as *ya* or *Y* and the letter ъ as '.

Table 1

Expression of the Russian Alphabet in Terms of Latin Letters
for Russian Transmission Over the Internet

Alph.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	№
Rus. Lat.	а а	б b	в v	г g	д d	е e	ё e''	ж j	1 2
Rus. Lat.	з z	и i	й y	к k	л l	м m	н n	о o	3 4
Rus. Lat.	п p	р r	с s	т t	у u	ф f	х h	ц c	5 6
Rus. Lat.	ч ch	ш sh	щ q	ы w	ь x	э e'	ю yu	я ya	7 8

The apostrophe ' acts as the letter ъ only if it separates a consonant and a vowel, including the semivowel *y* (Cyrillic *ы*), letters (but not semivowel and vowel, vowel and consonant, two vowels or consonants)*. An apostrophe appears as such if it separates a vowel (apart from *e* in the absence of a gap after it) and a consonant or a number, two consonants (apart from *c'h* and *s'h*), or a consonant and a number (but not a semivowel and a vowel). The apostrophe separates the letters in the letter combinations *c'h*, *s'h*, *y'u*, and *y'a*, which coincide with digraphs. If each letter in these acts as an independent phonetic unit**.

This transliteration table differs favorably from the previous ones (see surveys on this in [2-4]) in using all 26 letters of the current Latin alphabet and in lacking diacritical marks over letters, whose role in the case of the two letters *e''* and *e'* is taken by the apostrophe, in contrast to the diacritical marks always present together with Latin letters in the international telegraph and printed inventory and on standard keyboard computers. This transliteration (Mikhailitsa) allows one to transmit a Russian text of any complexity by means of Latin letters and vice versa with maximal simplicity and exceptional unambiguity (this compensates for the phonetic conflict in interpreting the letters - *u-q*, *bi-v*, and *b-x*), and it may become a parallel Russian orthography on a Latin basis.

REFERENCES

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*An apostrophe separating a consonant and a vowel in foreign surnames in a text in Cyrillic can be transmitted as a double apostrophe to distinguish this from the letter ъ in retransliteration (for example, *д'Артаньян* — *d''Artanyan*).

**Letters in the old Russian alphabet may be denoted in the Latin texts by circumflexes correspondingly as *^i*, *^e*, *^j* and *^y*.