Glenn Goluska’s Imprimerie Dromadaire: Russian Influences

The notable typographer and book designer Glenn Goluska (1947-2011) has been recognized as “the best letterpress designer-printer in Canada,” “one of Canada’s great typographers,” and “one of North America’s finest all-round book designers and typographers” by Crispin Elsted, Carl Spadoni, and Robert Bringhurst, respectively. Greatly inspired by Russian Futurist and Constructivist book design, Goluska brought, in the words of Andrew Steeves, “a mischievous playfulness to typography, but balanced that out with a keen sense of tradition.” Many of Goluska’s best typographic designs celebrate or pay homage to Russian and East European literature and book design, resulting in a wealth of Russian-themed publications, which will be surveyed below.

Born in Chicago to a father who was a Polish immigrant, and a mother of German descent, Glenn Goluska studied Slavic languages at the University of Toronto, earning a B.A. in 1969 and an M.A. in 1971. While working at Coach House Press in Toronto, he designed visually striking books such as bpNichol’s (1944-1988) Journal (1978) and Robert Kroetsch’s (1927-2011) Sad Phoenician (1979). In 1975, he started publishing his independent letterpress work under the imprint Imprimerie Dromadaire. Showcasing his typographic skills, Goluska initially focused on printing broadsides (large sheets of paper printed on one side only) in editions of twenty to one hundred copies, which often contained only one poem or short text each, starting (in May 1975) with a passage from the Sermon on the First Sunday after Easter by Cyril (or Kirill), Bishop of Turov (1130-1182). Several broadsides followed with texts by Tristan Tzara (1896-1963), Bulat Okudzhava (1924-1997), and Vladimir Mayakovsky.
(1893-1930), among others. Goluska reached formal perfection in two broadsides, which demonstratively draw attention to their typographic design: the Futurist poem “Zakliatie smekhom” (Incantation by Laughter) by Velimir Khlebnikov (1885-1922) is printed in an expressive, yet highly readable manner, while the bilingual Russian-English reproduction of the Symbolist poem “Noch’, ulitsa, fonar’, apteka” (Night, a street, a lamp, a drugstore) by Aleksandr Blok (1880-1921) emphasizes typographic functionality in a highly innovative way, while serving the ideal of good typography.

After experimenting with a rudimentary book-format in Aleksei Kruchenykh’s (1886-1968) Zaum: 3 Transrational Poems, a playfully designed bilingual leporello (published in February 1977 in an edition of forty-five copies), Imprimerie Dromadaire’s first real book appeared in June 1978: The Cry of Distant Ants by Aleksandr Urusov. This sumptuous edition was designed and handset in Palatino and Egyptian Bold Condensed, handprinted in three colors (brown, black and silver) on Nideggen paper, and illustrated with ten striking linocuts by Glenn Goluska himself. The book was produced in an edition of fifty copies in a Japanese style binding and enclosed in a protective folder with gorgeous endpapers designed by his wife, Anne (Bratton) Goluska. Aleksandr Urusov, the author of the translated short story on life in a Soviet Gulag, was a member of the group SMOG (Samoe Molodoе Obschestvo Geniev, or The Youngest Society of Geniuses). The Russian original first appeared as a samizdat publication in 1965 and was reprinted in the tamizdat journal Grani a year later.

Imprimerie Dromadaire’s second book was Velimir Khlebnikov’s A Change-Ringing of the Mind: An Extract from Zangezi. It appeared in an edition of seventy-five copies in October 1978, handset “in Alternate Gothic and several varieties of wood type” which in ever-increasing heights, page after page, emphasize the semantic unit “um” (Russian for “mind,” or “intellect”) that Khlebnikov extends with several new prefixes.

Nineteenth Century Russian Printing Types (June 1979), Imprimerie Dromadaire’s third book, was a Cyrillic type specimen book demonstrating eleven typefaces “acquired as a lot from a Bulgarian newspaper in Toronto,” which are interspersed with type-related quotations from Nikolai Gogol (1809-1852), Yurii Olesha (1899-1960), and Vladimir Mayakovsky.

Encouraged by Margaret Atwood, Glenn Goluska established the imprint Nightshade Press in 1980, “to design & produce handprinted books on commission […] to the same exacting standards” as his Imprimerie Dromadaire publications, “but for profit.” Among the books designed under this new imprint were, for instance, Atwood’s Notes Towards a Poem That Can Never Be Written (1981), Unearthing Suite (1983), and Snake Poems (1983).
Meanwhile, the output of books from Goluska’s Imprimerie Dromadaire came to a halt, and when Goluska revived it in 1983/84, he started devoting more attention to producing fine press books and broadsides of texts by contemporary Canadian writers: “So, while imprimerie dromadaire will continue to issue whimsical ephemera, works of Russian futurism, and pamphlets on typography, followers of our often halting progress can also look forward to original new writing and images.” (Imprimerie Dromadaire, Books & Ephemera, Spring 1984)

Highlights of this new focus on contemporary Canadian literature include the broadside portfolio Nine Poets Printed (1986-1988), and books by Robert Kroetsch, Norm Sibum (b. 1947), and Paul Dutton (b. 1943). Besides a broadside celebrating Andrei Voznesenskii’s (1933-2010) visit to Toronto in 1982, three translations from Russian that appeared under the Imprimerie Dromadaire imprint during the 1980s are among the absolute highlights of Glenn Goluska’s letterpress work: El Lissitzky’s (1890-1941) The Topography [o]f Typography (1983) and Typographic Facts (1985), which indeed seem to be inspired by Lissitzky’s typographic designs, and Mayakovsky’s Brooklyn Bridge (1985), a long accordion-fold with the text of Mayakovsky’s poem printed in black and brown in Metro and wood type above, and a six-foot-long woodcut by Glenn Goluska depicting Brooklyn Bridge below.


Among Glenn Goluska’s numerous non-Russian materials, a broadside illustrating Fernand Léger’s (1881-1955) poem The Bicycle with purely typographic means (1985) is truly outstanding.

Glenn Goluska’s broadsides, books, and ephemera can be consulted in the reading rooms of the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library (University of Toronto) and at the Robertson Davies Library (Massey College), and can be searched online in the catalogue of the University of Toronto Libraries by using the following keywords:

GLENN GOLUSKA
IMPRIMERIE DROMADAIRE
or
NIGHTSHADE PRESS

Tim Klähn
VENTURES IN EAST-CENTRAL EUROPEAN AND RUSSIAN COPYRIGHT

Pursuing copyright permissions can be a worthwhile and rewarding endeavor, and is not universally mired in obstacles and fees. By contacting rights holders for permissions to reprint or digitize their work, one can learn something personal about them, promote academic integrity, and foster a scholarly community.

Yet these days, while unequal access to knowledge is debated globally and information moves into the shadows, there are many examples of individuals and organizations forgoing or subverting copyright conventions. Much of Eastern Europe, and particularly Russia, is awash in digital pirate libraries. Dr. Bodó Balázs, an economist and piracy researcher at the Institute for Information Law, University of Amsterdam, estimates that Russian servers conceal “many of the biggest pirated text collections ever created by humanity,” offering unlimited access to millions of books. This occurs despite Russia having signed many international copyright protection treaties. While much can be ascribed to weak and selective enforcement of rules, a lot has to do with historical practices—political censorship, and societal economic hardships limiting universal access to publications. Balázs argues that these private digital text repositories—particularly of hard to come by works, such as Western literature, banned books, and scholarly materials—have their roots in a culture that learned to disseminate knowledge under hostile conditions, such as the Samizdat distribution networks of the 1950s to 1980s. Pirate collections exist largely because the costs of institutional subscriptions to publisher-provided electronic book repositories are prohibitively expensive for this part of the world, with many libraries there belonging to the “have nots” when it comes to accessing the most recent and relevant scholarly publications.

On the other end of the copyright debate are those authors who give up their rights voluntarily, as in the case of the Russian poet Kirill Medvedev, who has been releasing his work free of ownership since 2003. He openly invites the piracy of his poems, according to his manifesto on copyright, seeing his decision as both a political protest and a liberating step towards intellectual sovereignty. For him, rejection of copyright is an affirmation of an “international progressive intellectual, artistic, and political movement” outside the current economic, aesthetic, and/or ethical system, a movement that breaks free from the current modes of production and distribution of information. In Medvedev’s model it is up to the publisher to decide whether to pay him or not, as they are under no contract. So far, he has had five collections published without copyright in five different countries; he supplements his income working as a courier and freelance book editor.

I would suggest that pirate libraries and the refusal to own the rights to your work are extreme choices. My experiences at the library and in my own research suggest that, at the very least, seeking permissions, while time consuming, can lead to open and engaged scholarship.

Recently, for example, I fielded an interesting request from the City of Windsor to digitize an obscure little volume published in 1959 containing Ukrainian adag-
es, proverbs, and sayings. The book by Joseph Chimczuk (1897–1990) is held by only three libraries in North America, and as Windsor is currently building a museum in honor of the author, the staff of the city’s art gallery were seeking to make it broadly available to visitors. I wanted to help, but as the book is still covered by copyright (life of the author plus 50 years), I wrote back asking if there were any living rights holders, such as close relatives, whom I could contact regarding permissions. What I learned in response was a curious but gratifying story about a simple, hardworking man with a vision as great as his frugality who lived by the adages that “thrift is a great virtue that opens the gates to wealth,” and that “learning and education open up doors to the world.”

Mr. Chimczuk, in his last will and testament, dated 1989, left his entire estate to “The Corporation of the City of Windsor” to build a building to be known as the Chimczuk Museum for use as a cultural museum, archive, and library. Who was this man who left a $1 million gift to his adopted home town? Joseph Chimczuk was born in rural poverty near Pidvolochysk, Ternopil oblast, Ukraine, and as a young man worked there as a lock- and coppersmith. Faced with economic difficulties and political differences during the interwar period, he decided to immigrate to Canada in 1926, living first in Winnipeg before moving to Windsor in 1931, where he worked at the Ford Motor Company. He was a voracious reader and collector of books, spoke seven languages, and appreciated culture. He was also very frugal, and amassed a fortune by investing every spare nickel in real estate, and taking in additional monies by renting out every spare room in his house to boarders—after his wife died. Rather than spending his fortune, he grew his own vegetables, painted fine art, collected proverbs, made crosses out of lead melted down from spare auto parts, and shunned new clothes and automobiles.

His original bequest to Windsor (now at $3.4 million) was disputed by family members and city councillors for over two decades, but in June 2015 the city approved the measure to name the main floor of the city’s Art Gallery the Chimczuk Museum, which will house artifacts from Windsor’s history, children’s and Aboriginal galleries, an auditorium, and more. It is planned to open in November of this year. Had the University of Toronto Library not been approached about digitizing Mr. Chimczuk’s book, I would not have learned of this man’s lasting legacy.

In another example, seven years ago, the Petro Jacyk Resource Centre coordinated a project to digitize library material on Ukrainians published in Canada from 1900 to 1950. The items selected for the digitization are a record of the life and times of this émigré community struggling to maintain its cultural heritage far from its homeland and under very difficult conditions. These struggles are recounted in national- local- and institutional-level histories, as well in novels, plays, poetry, and song. There are also examples of polemical literature by Ukrainian-Canadian socialists, nationalists, and members of vying Christian creeds. Other material is instructional, including: books in Ukrainian informing immigrants about the history, geography, agriculture, political and social life of Canada; Ukrainian-English phrasebooks geared for new arrivals to Canada; recipes from English and Ukrainian cuisines with recommenda-
tions for healthy living; and self-improvement books. The remainder of the collection comprises statutes of Ukrainian-Canadian organizations; directories of Ukrainian businesses, institutions and churches throughout Canada; and statistical data on Ukrainians in Canada.

When seeking permissions for this content, among our contacts were the Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate, Toronto, Ontario, who in 1942 published a jubilee book on the 50th anniversary of the establishment of their congregation. Their gracious response: “We are thrilled with the
inclusion of a publication of our religious congregation … in the Multicultural Canada Project. […] Thank you, Ksenya, for your work for all of us. God bless you in the new year and always.” It is not every day that our Centre and its staff receive such heartfelt blessings.

I recently completed clearing copyright permissions with authors from Poland, Russia, Ukraine, Canada, and the United States for a co-edited book volume on a little-known wartime atrocity—the wholesale murder by the Soviet secret police, the NKVD, of about 25,000 Ukrainian, Polish, Jewish, and other political prisoners in the last week of June, 1941. The volume includes scholarly discussions of the massacre; Soviet, Polish, German, and British documents; eyewitness testimony by Ukrainians, Poles, and Jews; newspaper accounts; and photographic evidence, most of which required approvals from the rights holders. Except for the high cost of fees associated with content managed by the U.S. Copyright Clearance Center and Sage Publications, most authors were willing to have their research reprinted gratis. One scholar wrote, “I am glad that my modest research helped you in your work. I congratulate you on the publication of the book and hope for future cooperation”; another responded, “Thank you very much for your proposal. It is for me a great joy and honor”; while a third one asked “to remain in contact with you and possibly to cooperate in your future projects.” Others, speaking on behalf of their deceased fathers, wrote how much they would have been pleased to see renewed interest in their publications, and how they themselves consider their parents’ work free for academic dissemination.

Is it not better to learn from individuals their views on scholarship and freedom of information than resorting to piracy or disregarding authors’ rights? For questions regarding the reuse and digitization of the University of Toronto Libraries collections, please refer to our Scholarly Communications and Copyright Office at:

copyright@library.utoronto.ca

Ksenya Kiebuzinski
Movable type used in printing was made from wooden blocks or cast from type metal—an alloy of lead, antimony, tin, and copper. It revolutionized the writing and publishing of books and other print materials in Western civilization, and held sway for nearly 550 years—until the invention of digital type: PostScript Type 1 fonts by Adobe Systems in 1984; and TrueType fonts by Apple and Microsoft in 1991. In the world of Cyrillic typography it was the ParaType division of ParaGraph in Moscow that produced the first virtual fonts in 1989. So, what does all of this have to do with the Petro Jacyk Resource Centre?

When PJRC opened its doors in October 1994, the World Wide Web Consortium was just one month old. One year later, PJRC was allowing its patrons to surf the Internet and visit websites all over Eastern Europe. And in 1996, PJRC set up its own website. Immediately, it became evident that different websites used different fonts, often with different encodings, depending on the operating system of the source computer. Instead of meaningful text, only gibberish would appear on the screen. This caused innumerable headaches for us and our patrons. The only solution was to come up with our own set of fonts that would account for all the variables being encountered online.

As early as 1990, I had begun to experiment with font design. There was a personal reason for this. I had just switched from a dot matrix-based music score editor to a PostScript-based desktop publishing software package and needed a Cyrillic font for the Ukrainian lyrics of my songs. Existing fonts, including those produced by ParaType, included only the Russian subset of symbols and not the complete Cyrillic alphabet. Using an arcane series of software conversions (type casting, not typecasting), I was able to compile my own Ukrainian PostScript font, which I then used to publish my operetta for children, Mavpiachyi Korol’ (The Monkey King), in 1992. Later that year, Microsoft released Windows 3.1, which included support for TrueType fonts. But it was only with the release of Fontographer 3.5 for Windows by Altsys, also in 1992, that the path to font creation became open. Nevertheless, there were many other obstacles to overcome before achieving the seamlessness of operation we enjoy today.

Most fonts are encoded using the 7-bit ASCII (American Standard Code for Information Interchange) subset for the first 128 characters. This standard was created in 1963. A 7-bit code allows 7 of 8 bits in a byte to define 128 distinct characters or codes. Mathematically, this is represented by $2^7$, which is equal to 128. In time, as computing power increased, larger arrays of data were used, including 8-bit codes to define sets of 256 characters. Mathematically, this is represented by $2^8$, which is equal to 256. The additional 128 codes are referred to as the Extended Character Set. Various alternate code pages were developed for this Extended Character Set. The first included symbols for Western European languages. Then symbols for Central European languages were added. Cyrillic code pages were created in Europe (ISO-8859-5), Soviet Union (KO17 or KO18), United States (CP866) and finally, in a global sense, by Microsoft and ParaGraph (CP1251).

In 1991, a consortium of companies (Xerox, Apple, Sun Microsystems, Microsoft, and NeXT) published a new standard of character encoding called Unicode (UTF-8). It assigned 2 bytes per symbol, using all 16 bits ($2^{16}$) for a total of 65,536 characters. Since then Unicode’s encoding parameters have further increased to 4 bytes or 32 bits ($2^{32}$) to include millions upon millions of characters. In December 2007 the use of UTF-8 surpassed ASCII as the most common character encoding on the World Wide Web.
So far, I have talked about different encodings. A computer font that works as seamlessly as it does today has to function on many levels, not just on the level of encodings. A computer font must be compatible with the operating system, display on-screen, print on printing devices, work with various software applications, and its characters must be easily accessed using the keyboard. It took almost twenty years to get to where we are today in multilingual computing.

In 1996, I designed a series of fonts that PJRC distributed free of charge on its website. They supported the most common encodings: ISO-8859-5, KOI-8, CP866, and CP1251. Each set included a fixed-width font and a proportional sans-serif font. No font names were used because these are subject to copyright rules.

With all the different encodings in use, there was also a need for conversion utilities that could convert text from one code page to another. As these were unavailable, I assisted many a patron in creating keystroke macros (scripts) to convert text from one code page to another. I helped to convert correspondence, prepare articles and books for publication, and even designed phonetic symbols for those studying Slavic languages and their dialects.

One of the greatest obstacles was, and still is, the lack of keyboard mapping utilities that would allow the user to customize the layout of characters on a computer keyboard. Recently, Microsoft has provided such a utility, but it is not very user-friendly. The Keyboard Layout Creator is available for free from Microsoft: https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/download/details.aspx?id=22339

Here I would like to say a few words about the history of font design. When I travelled to Ukraine in 1992, I searched for partners with whom I could develop a professional series of computer fonts that included all the Cyrillic letters. In those days, ParaType fonts contained only Russian characters. Most people in Ukraine were still using UNIX computers and did not even want to discuss Personal Computers. Two years later, in 1994, I again visited Ukraine and discovered that everyone had migrated to those unmentionable PCs.

When I mentioned the need for the development of decorative fonts, I was told that Arial and Times New Roman were more than enough. I was much surprised by this philistine attitude because there is a long history of Soviet typography and the history of the Cyrillic alphabet is remarkable too.

Most everyone today believes that the Cyrillic alphabet originated with Sts. Cyril and Methodius in 863. In fact, what the Saints did do was design the Glagolitic alphabet, which is based on Hebrew and Samaritan scripts. It looks nothing like the Cyrillic alphabet as we know it. The Cyrillic alphabet is based on Greek characters and was created in Bulgaria in the 890s by students of Sts. Cyril and Methodius. To-
day, there are Bulgarian scholars who believe the name “Cyrillic” should be replaced with the word “Bulgarka” as the proper historical name for this alphabet.

The first printed Cyrillic books appear in Kraków (1491) and Cetinje (1494). In 1563, Ivan Fedorov started printing in Moscow but was chased out of Russia by monk-copyists who felt their careers threatened by this new technology. Twice Fedorov published his *Azbuka* (Primer), which demonstrates the full set of Cyrillic type—in Lviv (1574) and in Ostroh (1578).

Cyrillic printing continued to develop in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, but did not become well-established in Russia until Peter the Great reformed the Russian alphabet in 1708. When the son of Empress Catherine II travelled to Europe in 1781-1782, the famous Italian typographer, Giambattista Bodoni, tried to interest the heir to the Russian throne in his latest development—Cyrillic type. The Grand Duke seemed surprised by the quality of print, but proceeded to inquire about fortifications and horses. The Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library has a facsimile edition (1990) of Bodoni’s *Essai de caractères russes*. So, printing and typography in Russia continued to develop slowly. Many of the print shops were run by foreigners who adapted Latin type for the printing of Cyrillic books. In 1924, Vladimir Adariukov published a study of Russian typography, which includes 46 facsimile pages from 18th- and 19th-century Russian books, *Bibliografia russkikh tipografskikh shriftov*. In 1927, D. A. Pisarevskii self-published in Leningrad a collection of newly-designed typefaces, *Shrifty i ikh postroenie*, representing both traditional and avant-garde styles such as Futurism, Constructivism, Modernism and Eccentricism.
In the Soviet period, typography began to develop in earnest. A wonderful compilation of Cyrillic fonts was published in 1970 by Ukrainian graphic artist and painter Oleh Snarskyi—*Shrift: al'bom-posobie*. The variety of fonts reproduced in it is truly remarkable. Yet, few of these fonts can be found for download or purchase. There are many beautiful Cyrillic typefaces that could be expanded to include Latin characters, but this has not happened to any great extent. I, in particular, adore Vadim Lazurskii’s 1962 award-winning font, which he created for a special edition of Pushkin’s poetry. ParaType digitized this font only in 2014, and expanded it to include English and Western European language support. In the early days, there were many faults with ParaType fonts—missing Latin letters and Russian-only Cyrillic character sets. Almost every font had to be edited to be used outside a Russian context. Today, the ParaType font library includes several hundred font families, but this is still not enough for a true fontoholic!

Robarts Library has a fine collection of books on fonts, type, and letter design. For those interested in creating their own Cyrillic fonts, it is the Z250-Z251 section of the library that you should consult. There you will find hundreds of books on “type and type founding.”

Wasyl Sydorenko
Media Commons would like to announce that it has added to its collection *The Tribe* (Plemya), the only film labelled as using “Ukrainian Sign Language Only.” The film is set in and around Kyiv, Ukraine at a boarding school for deaf teens, where a new arrival is drawn into an institutional system of organized crime. Boundaries are crossed when he falls in love with one of the girls to whom he is assigned as a pimp.

### Maximum Imaginativeness

*Modern Czech Book Design, 1900-1950*

**Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library**
28 September – 18 December 2015

An exhibition featuring Czech books and journals published from the turn of the 19th century to the late 1940s with examples ranging from the beautiful bibliophile movement to works by avant-garde artists and writers centred around the Prague literary association Devětsil. Overview available at:

https://youtu.be/V0DbD0x6rVM

---

**NEW ACQUISITIONS @ PJRC**

Every two months the Petro Jacyk Resource Centre displays select recent publications from Central and Eastern Europe. Please drop by anytime to check out the latest arrivals.

The PJRC is located in Room 3008, Robarts Library. The Reading Room is open weekdays and weekends during regular Library hours.