

PONOMAR PROJECT

Proposal to Encode An Outstanding Early Cyrillic Character in Unicode

Aleksandr Andreev, Yuri Shardt, Nikita Simmons

In early Cyrillic printed editions and manuscripts one finds many combining (superscript) characters. The majority of these have been encoded in the Cyrillic Extended A block with a number of additional characters in the Cyrillic Extended B block. Notably, one combining Cyrillic letter is missing—the letter *ef* (ϕ). Based on an examination of the literature, it can be seen that such a combining character actually exists. Thus, we propose for encoding one additional character, Combining Cyrillic Letter Ef. Since these symbols are often found in Slavonic Church books, this symbol should be encoded at the last available spot U+A69E in the Extended Cyrillic Block B in the Unicode standard.

New Proposed Character

Table 1 presents a summary of the proposed new character for encoding in Unicode: COMBINING CYRILLIC LETTER EF, which is commonly found in many early Slavonic printed books, including the monumental Ostrog Bible. This character can be found with or without a pokryttie and is used to denote an abbreviation. Its DUCET collation order should be given as “ϕ << superscript ϕ < x.” Examples of these characters can be found in Figure 1 and Figure 2.¹

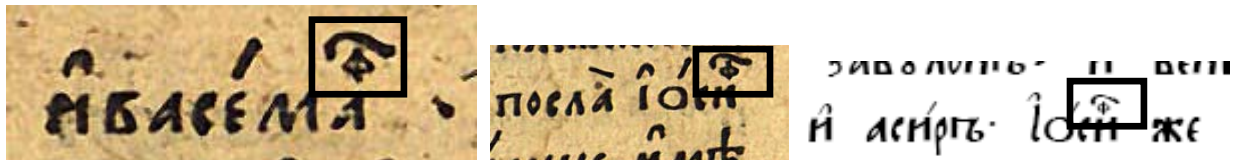


Figure 1: Extracts from the Ostrog Bible showing a superscript fert (boxed) (left) Genesis 36:4, (centre) Genesis 46:5, and (right) Exodus 1:4. The first two examples are from the actual Ostrog Bible printed editions, while the third example is from a digitisation and scholarly analysis of the Ostrog Bible.

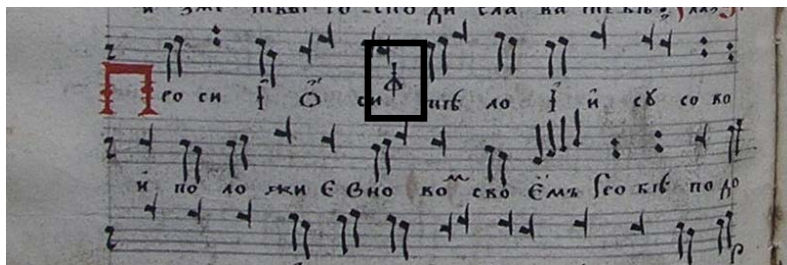



Figure 2: Extract from Lenten and Paschal Triodion set in Kievan notation of early 18th century provenance. It can be noted that in this manuscript the superscript letter are not placed over a letter, but between the two characters (or space).

¹ Assistance from Messrs. Konstantin Spektorov and Aleksandr Kovalenin is acknowledged in uncovering examples of combining ef in the print editions.

Table 1: Summary of the Proposed Characters for Encoding

Proposed Character	Proposed Name	Location	Comments
	COMBINING CYRILLIC LETTER EF	U + A69E	