

*Newsnotes: 2CUL Russian, Eurasian & East European Studies  
Resources. No. 2, Winter/Spring 2011*

Dear Colleagues:

I want to take a few moments to update you on recent developments impacting the collections of both Columbia and Cornell, as well as some significant acquisitions made since the fall 2010 *Newsnotes*.

***Grant Opportunities***

As mentioned in the last *Newsnotes*, this summer Columbia will be hosting a three-week NEH Summer Institute “America Engages Eurasia: Study, Teaching, Resources,” from June 13-July 1. The application deadline is MARCH 1. Information may be found at <http://NEHsummerinst.Columbia.edu>.

*Nota bene* that this year, the NEH has designated a limited number of slots for ADVANCED GRAD STUDENTS are available. I am encouraging faculty colleagues on both campuses to bring this Institute to the attention of their colleagues locally and nationally, and suggest that they apply. We always strive for a large, geographically diverse, and competitive applicant pool!

I am also delighted to report that the New York Public Library is offering short-term fellowships for researchers who want to use the library's historic collections. Interested parties should go to: <http://www.nypl.org/short-term>. NYPL is a real treasure for researchers, providing unparalleled opportunities to work with *authentic* monuments of Slavic book culture. At Columbia we are fortunate to have in our midst Edward Kasinec, a distinguished librarian and historian of Slavic book culture, who served the NYPL as Curator of Slavic & Baltic collections for a quarter-century. Edward is presently a Research Fellow at the Harriman Institute, and is happy to speak with you regarding your research interests.

***Collections***

Beginning in late fall, the first shipments since implementing redefined joint approval plans for Cornell and Columbia arrived in Ithaca and Morningside Heights. It is an exciting time, as this is the first time two major research libraries have coordinated their collecting so closely. Throughout the spring, your correspondent will be reviewing invoices, talking with faculty, and getting a “read” on our progress so far. As we near the end of the fiscal year (July 1), readjustments will be made based on this feedback. Since the first approval plan shipments began arriving in December, as of January 31, Cornell had received more than 650 Slavic and east European vernacular-language monographic titles (both approval and faculty-initiated firm orders), as well as around 100 area studies titles in Western European languages. This number will grow substantially in the months ahead, as approval shipments arrive from eastern Europe with increasing frequency.

To date, I’ve only prepped calendar year (CY 2010) stats for Columbia (2CUL approval plans only kicked in September/October). In CY 2010, Columbia received almost 13,000

titles via approval, firm order, or gift. In terms of language, Russian was the largest group--5,747 titles, followed by Polish with 2,069. While the intake of material in many languages rose, overall the number was down slightly from CY 2009, in part due to large increases in postal rates, and a fluctuating dollar.

### ***E-Resources***

For those of you who haven't come across it already, ImWorden is a free, non-commercial digitization project based in Germany. Established in 2000, this site provides digitized full-text of 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> (and even 21<sup>st</sup>) century authors, historians, and reference works. One recently-added source is the digitized, PDF version of the entire first series of the *Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi imperii* (1649-1825). This notoriously complex work has been brought to your desktop! Take a look! [http://imwerden.de/cat/modules.php?name=books&pa=last\\_update&cid=80](http://imwerden.de/cat/modules.php?name=books&pa=last_update&cid=80). What I particularly like about ImWorden (versus, say, Google Books) is that it is very well organized, with authors/titles arranged alphabetically in a sidebar navigation tool.

You should also be aware that Google Books has now partnered with Prague's famed Clementinum to digitize works from its collections. Quoting the press release:

"Today we are announcing the agreement with the Czech National Library to digitize up to 200,000 works from the historical collection, managed by the Department of Historical and Musical Archives of the Czech National Library and the Slavic Library. These are all published between the 16th & 18th centuries."

The full press announcement is at <http://booksearch.blogspot.com/2011/02/printed-treasures-from-golden-city.html>

In the area of subscription e-resources, since the last *Newsnotes*, we have looked in to a subscription to InfoBiro, out of Bosnia. Because of problems with a new server (in Sarajevo), we have yet to subscribe, but expect to do so soon.

In terms of digitization projects, last time I mentioned that we were in discussions with the Hungarian National Szechenyi Library to digitize the newspapers Népszava (1887-1940) and Pesti Hirlap (1840-1939). Since last fall, we have involved the talents of the Center for Research Libraries in Chicago, and hope to be moving ahead with support of this project in the near future. To be continued...

### ***Rare Books***

Since the fall, through gifts we have added to the rare books collections:

- Approximately 38 single-sheet, color lithographed Russian chocolate wrappers (unused!) from the "Krasnyi Oktiabr" Factory, dating from the immediate post World War II period, including some very fetching graphics.

- A small but significant collection of Ukrainian drama and children's literature, mostly from the interwar period. In WorldCat, most have only one or two other holding institutions.
- The three volume, lavishly illustrated and documented catalogue of bibliophile Aleksei Vengerov's collection, which contains most of the cardinal works of Russian book culture.
- Autographed volumes by Vasyl Bykau, a major figure in Belarusian literary circles, and an outspoken critic of the authoritarian government both before and after the collapse of the USSR. He also considered for the Nobel Prize in literature. (The Area Studies offices are graced by a bronze bust of Bykau—a gift of the Belarusian community made in spring 2010).
- The diary of Zora Kipel, although published, is not widely available. Zora was an important figure in the Belarusian Diaspora, and a close colleague at NYPL for many years. Her diary is a wonderful document of the life of the Belarusian émigré community.

### ***Purchases***

Just as we go to “press,” I have been informed that our purchase of the Romanian serial *Alge. Revista de Arte Moderna*. (Bucharest, Alge: 1930-1931) has been approved by the Primary Resources Acquisition Program. This is an extraordinary periodical of the Romanian avant-garde. Apart from Mattis-Teutsch, the Transylvanian veteran of the expressionist and constructivist movements, born in 1884, *Alge* was for the most part produced by teenagers. The four *enfants terrible* who launched the journal all emerged from the same assimilated Jewish milieu. The editor Aurel Baranga (Aurel Leibovici), the poet and artist Gherasim Luca (Salman Locker) and the artist and designer Jules Perahim (Luis Blumenfeld) were all only sixteen years old when *Alge* was launched; their collaborator Paul Paun (Paul Zaharia) was a year younger. Most went on to become members of Romania's Surrealist movement. Luca would later immigrate to Paris and become a major poet. In the atmosphere of rabid nationalism and growing anti-Semitism in Romania, the *Alge* group encountered shrill criticism and eventually legal prosecution.

### ***Enhanced Access to Other Collections***

This spring, major enhancements to the universe of book material are in process of implementation.

First, as announced earlier this month, Harvard has joined BorrowDirect, which is a real boon for students in Cambridge, NYC and Ithaca. This announcement opens all sorts of possibilities for greater collaboration with our neighbor to the north, promising to greatly expand our collecting capabilities by reducing the incidence of duplication. Indeed, in early April, 2CUL's Slavic & East European Studies librarian will host his counterparts in Cambridge and New Haven to discuss just such issues in a regional, BorrowDirect context.

Soon to join the mix will be a new Slavic bibliographer at Princeton, holding out the prospect of enhanced coordination/cooperation, and vastly reduced duplication at our shared offsite facility, ReCAP.

Second, an agreement between Columbia, NYU, and Columbia University Libraries will allow—for the first time—the possibility of borrowing items from NYPL’s collections. Though the details have yet to be publicly announced, this service will be limited faculty and advanced graduate students at these institutions and, from the NYPL side, to a limited number of individuals designated as NYPL Scholars. Now, obviously you can’t expect to bring home the 1564 Fedorov Apostol in your backpack, but it will greatly ease access to a remarkable scholarly resource. We live in exciting times...

### ***Support***

I have been gratified by the strong financial support provided by the Columbia and Cornell University Libraries since my arrival in November of 2008. Even during the depths of the financial crisis, that support has been unwavering. Collectively, 2CUL boasts one of the largest area-specific acquisitions budgets in North America for Slavic, Eurasian, & East European studies materials.

Nevertheless, as we have learned from events in recent years—the downsizing of the European Division at the Library of Congress, and the closing of both the Slavic & Baltic Division at NYPL, and most recently at the University of Illinois—it is imperative that the beneficiaries of Slavic, Eurasian, & East European collections do whatever they can to support the collections with financial support, as well as your good will! In the weeks ahead, I hope to discuss ways in which such support might be channeled into the coffers here in NYC and in Ithaca to enhance existing language-specific endowments, or to establish new, named funds in support of these national resources. In my next 2CUL *Newnotes*, I hope to be able to make a specific appeal for your support!

As always, I welcome your suggestions, and hope to see or speak with you soon. (Cornellians, I’ll be in Ithaca on Monday, February 28 and Tuesday March 1).

Rob Davis  
[Rhd2106@Columbia.edu](mailto:Rhd2106@Columbia.edu) or [RHD65@Cornell.edu](mailto:RHD65@Cornell.edu)  
212 854-4701  
Skype address: robert-h-davis