



Newsnotes: 2CUL Russian, Eurasian & East European Studies Resources. No. 24. Winter-Spring 2022.

Dear Colleagues:

The tremendous optimism we all felt—vaccinated, boosted, and still masked—at the start of the fall semester evaporated all too quickly with the arrival of Omicron. Following the opening of the Harriman 75th Anniversary exhibit “People, Books & Archives in Pictures, 1903-2021,” on September 7, and the joyful reception surrounding that occasion in the early fall, the mood turned dark again pretty quickly!

At both Cornell and Columbia, after months and months of stability, cases spiked on the eve of the December holidays. Even my ever-cautious daughter came down with COVID (thankfully a very mild case) over the break. Your correspondent—despite my handy spray bottle of isopropyl alcohol and masking even on the street—likewise came down with the ubiquitous loss of smell/taste this month. It passed quickly, but a reminder of our vulnerabilities...

The latest, faint glimmer of a light at the end of the tunnel is, hopefully, not once again the headlight of an oncoming train, but rather a true sign of hope for this weary nation. I live in hope.

This report is brief—there was far less antiquarian buying to this point in the Fiscal Year than in the past, which is something I hope to renew in the coming weeks. Yet I am hopeful for the remainder of the calendar year, and for the new FY just four months away.

I am hopeful, too, to return to beautiful Ithaca in sometime in the coming weeks and catch up with colleagues face-to-face, now that campus has returned to “code green,” after the abrupt turn to red in the closing days of last semester.

In the meantime, I wish you all good health, good cheer, and as always, keep in touch.

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CURRENT ACQUISITIONS

Several of our smaller vendors were hit hard by COVID, in some cases enduring protracted hospitalization, but are now bouncing back. A general survey of publishing in the various

regions in my bailiwick revealed that while the number of scholarly titles appearing seems to have actually increased—in part, no doubt, to a backlog of COVID-delays--in general, the *tirazh* has declined, making the effort to secure copies for foreign buyers a bit more challenging. Outside of Russia, the e-book market for academic titles remains very limited, as concerns about piracy and copyright infringement remains widespread, and the market remains limited for scholarly works. Some of our vendors report that there are signs this may shift a bit in the year ahead.

E-book purchases work well in the case of titles that are likely to get higher usage on campuses—for example, works published by ROSSPEN, or NLO. In such cases, our efforts to minimize duplication don't make a lot of sense. In those cases, we have e-book approval plans across institutions, in which we get a better price and distribute costs for acquiring bibliographic records from the vendor. Currently, our partners in this e-book “package deal” include 2CUL, Harvard, NYPL, NYU, Princeton, and Yale. However, for the vast majority of the many languages we curate, *paper* remains the way to go: shareable among institutions, and subject to far less demand than, say, Russian imprints.

ANTIQUARIAN ACQUISITIONS

You may recall from my last *Newsnotes* that we acquired an approximately 650-item archival collection of the book design of Jaroslav Šváb (1906-1999). The collection included printing samples and specimens, test printings, alternate variations, publisher's ephemera, and original renderings, spanning the period 1928-1968 created by this important Czech graphic artist.

In the fall of 2021, this was supplemented by the purchase of some sixty-six printed books that Šváb designed, dating from 1929-1967. Searching the list against the OCLC database revealed only three duplicates.



Two examples of Šváb-designed volumes.

Šváb was a key participant in the inter-war avant garde in Czechoslovakia, proved himself to be a master of disparate forms of graphic art and design during a long and focused career, and, in the process, became the most prolific 20th Century designer of books and book bindings in Central Europe. His earliest commissions are notable for their use of constructivism, photo collage and photomontage.

Cornell's world-renowned Human Sexuality Collection was enhanced by the purchase of a single issue of the scarce, pioneering Czechoslovak homosexual rights journal, *Nový hlas: list pro sexuální reformu* [The new voice: a journal for sexual reform]. Vol. I, no. 3. (Hranice: Josef Hladký, [1932]). This journal offered scientific, literary, and historical articles on homosexuality, as well as poems, stories, and columns, and even classified and dating ads. Several Prague restaurants, "gentlemen's clubs," but also rural hotels used the opportunity to advertise. The present issue contains an interview with Magnus Hirschfeld given to the editors following his lecture in Prague in 1932, which touches, among other things, on the "homosexual movement" in the Czechoslovak Republic.

ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS

The Bakhmeteff Archive and the Rare Book & Manuscript Library at Columbia added or enhanced records for the following collections:

Alexandra Kollontai oral history collection, 1976-1978. A collection on the life and career of Alexandra Kollontai (1872-1952) was undertaken by Sonya Baevsky as part of a larger project on the Russian revolutionary and diplomat. Some of the taped interviews are with persons who knew Mme. Kollontai; others discuss the significance of her career for Russian history, revolutionary movements, and women's history.

Bela Bartok Manuscripts, 1940-1942. Consists of three manuscripts by Bela Bartok, 1940-1943. These manuscripts totaling approximately 2,170 pages are as follows: 1) Romanian Folk Music - Vol. 1 Instrumental Melodies, Vol. 2 Vocal Melodies, Vol. 3 Texts; 2) Turkish Folk Music; and 3) Serbo-Croatian Table of Materials. Also, a small group of letters by Bartók and others concerning his association with Columbia University.
https://findingaids.library.columbia.edu/ead/nnc-rb/ldpd_4079017

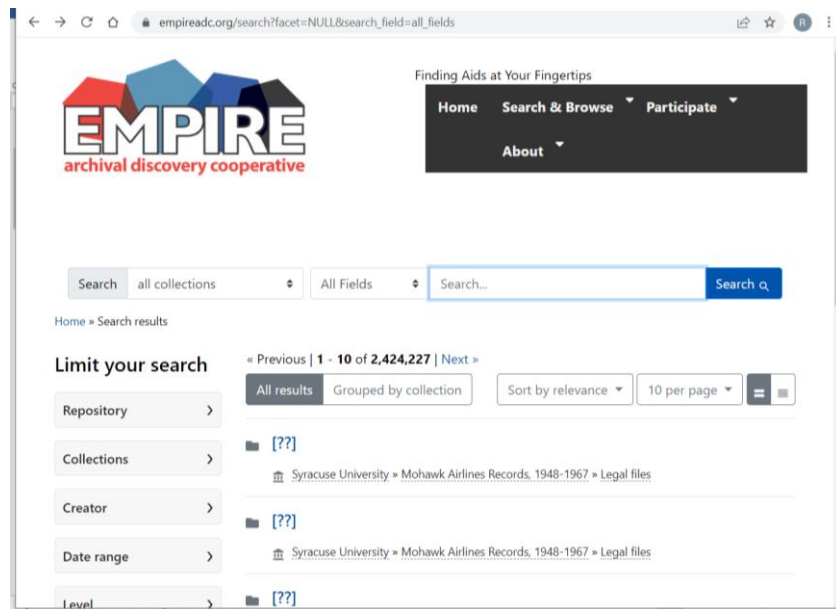
Aleksei Alekseevich and Nadezhda Vladimirovna Brusilov Papers, 1880-1940. Brusilov (1853-1926) served as a general in the Russian Army during World War I, joining the Red army in 1920. His second wife, Brusilova-Zhelikhovskaia (1864-1938) was a writer, who in 1930 emigrated to Czechoslovakia and remained in exile.
https://findingaids.library.columbia.edu/ead/nnc-rb/ldpd_4078014/dsc#view_all

Nikolai Nikolaevich Chebyshev Papers, 1887-1937. Chebyshev (1865-1937) was a Senator under the Provisional Government and a journalist who emigrated to France, where he wrote for the Parisian Russian language periodical "Vozrozhdenie".
https://findingaids.library.columbia.edu/ead/nnc-rb/ldpd_4078332

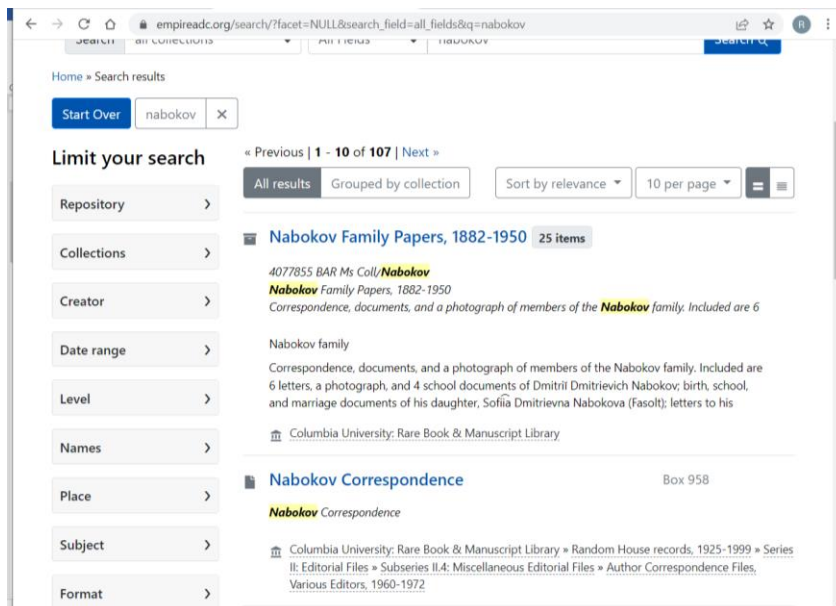
Rakhil' Samoilovna Chekver Papers, 1939-1957. Chekver (1893-1957) was born in Romny (Romen), Poltava province, died in New York and was a poet and publisher, wrote under the name of Irina Iassen. https://findingaids.library.columbia.edu/ead/nnc-rb/ldpd_4077464

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One new, and very handy tool for searching many New York State-based archives is the [Empire Archival Discovery Cooperative](#). Currently consisting of almost 2.5 million records, the database is a quick way to zero-in on NYS resources.



Below is a simple search for the name “Nabokov,” yielding 107 records:



One very important feature not available in CLIO's own infrastructure is the ability to search full-text of finding aids (a CLIO search will only pick up instances of a term in the record or subject fields, NOT the accompanying register, or finding aid).

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

In January 2022, **Columbia** added access to the Brill-published e-journal *Russian Politics* (Leiden, 2016-). <https://clio.columbia.edu/catalog/15888707>

“*Russian Politics* (RUPO) is an international, peer-reviewed journal examining the scholarship of intersections between on the one hand, Russian studies, and on the other hand Politics, Law, Economics and Russian history.”

Columbia University Libraries has also purchased “Central Asia, Persia and Afghanistan, 1834-1922: from Silk Road to Soviet Rule.” This resource provides digital access to official British government records relating to the region, from the decline of the Silk Road, through the diplomatic confrontation between the British and Russian Empires during the "Great Game" era, to the influence of the emergent Soviet Union in the 20th century. Correspondence and eyewitness accounts from the region's key players document the Anglo-Afghan Wars; the perspectives of Afghan and Persian rulers on foreign activities in the region; the interplay between China and Russia; and the expansion and fall of the Russian Empire; allowing scholars to build a balanced picture of the tumultuous history of the region.

<http://www.columbia.edu/cgi-bin/cul/resolve?clio15759296>

WEB-BASED RESOURCES

The Ivy Plus Libraries Confederation launched its collaborative Uyghur Human Rights web archive, preserving web resources documenting the displacement and repression of Uyghurs, Uzbeks, Tatars, and Kyrgyz peoples in East Turkestan/Xinjiang. <https://archive-it.org/collections/17504>

A new open access journal *DiSlaw* (Didaktik slawischer Sprachen) is now available online: <https://www.uibk.ac.at/slawistik/dislaw/ausgaben.html.de> <https://doi.org/10.25651/3.2021.0001> with contributions in German, English, Russian and Slovenian from scholars on Slavic language teaching has now appeared.

For those utilizing materials from Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Slovenia, COBISS (COBISS.net, Co-operative Online Bibliographic Systems and Services) provides a unified catalogue of imprints held in various in-country libraries.

GIFTS

The distinguished translator, and Barnard and Columbia alumna Antonina Bouis donated a number of her works to the Columbia and Cornell libraries, filling gaps in our holdings.

OUTREACH & EXHIBITION PROJECTS

In the area of publications, the companion volume marking Harriman's 75th Anniversary will appear in print and online as Volume 23, no. 1-2 (2022) issue of *Slavic & East European Information Resources*. The issue is guest edited by Columbia alumnus Edward Kasinec, now Visiting Fellow, Hoover Institution and Research Associate at the Harriman Institute. Thirteen of the articles are already available to affiliates via CLIO (<https://clio.columbia.edu/catalog/4843447>) and through the Cornell catalogue ([SEEIR](#)).



The Harriman Atrium Gallery in the International Affairs Building hosted an exhibit devoted to the library collections at Columbia and Cornell, marking the occasion of the 75th Anniversary of the Harriman (originally the Russian) Institute. A **virtual version** prepared by the Harriman's Aleksandra Turek and Erica Stefano may be found [HERE](#).

In September, Global Studies launched an [online exhibit](#): *Imagining the World: Unexplored Global Collections at Columbia* which is a reworking of a physical exhibit held in the Chang Room of the Rare Book & Manuscript Library several years ago. A number of Slavic and East European items are shown.

On October 27, I was one of the panelists (along with Thomas Keenan of Princeton, and Megan Browndorf of the University of Chicago) at "The Future of the Profession," as part of the 50th Anniversary of the annual *University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's Slavic Library Institute* (SLI), held virtually September 27th through October 29th. I was also a panelist for "Great Collectors of Slavica and East Europeana along the East Coast," at *ASEEES 53rd Annual Convention*, New Orleans, LA (virtual), Dec. 2, 2021.

IN MEMORIAM

This past November, we all lost a much-esteemed and beloved colleague, Dr. Deborah Martinsen. Since her passing, much has been said and written about Deborah's remarkable life, career, and legacy to scholarship. Here I will only add that she was a longtime friend (my Russian tutor back in my undergrad days!), and one of the most loyal and vocal supporters of the library collections of both Columbia (from which she received her PhD), and Cornell (from which she received her MA). I miss her greatly.

In January, I was saddened to learn of the passing of The Reverend Canon John Robert Wright (1936-2022), a noted Episcopal priest at St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery, church historian, and Professor Emeritus of Ecclesiastical History at the General Theological Seminary in New York City. Father Wright donated a large collection on Eastern Orthodoxy to Columbia in 2009-2010, and served as an advisor to our past NEH Summer Institutes at both NYPL and Columbia. He was enormously erudite, and will be greatly missed.

