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ROMAN JAKOBSON AND AMERICAN SLAVIC STUDIES: THE FIRST POSTWAR DECADE

Памяти Елены Душечкиной (1941-2020)

The title of this article references a paper Roman Jakobson delivered in September, 1955 in Belgrade at the International Slavic Conference (Якобсон 1957). The meeting had been convened to reestablish connections between Slavic scholars and to lay the groundwork for a renewal of International Congresses of Slavists. Jakobson's presence there was well-justified, and not only because of his international reputation as a linguist and Slavic philologist: he attended in his capacity as a senior professor representing a graduate program at a preeminent university, Harvard, which over the course of a few short years had been playing a major role in the florescence of the Slavic studies field in the United States. In that capacity, Jakobson develops and interweaves two principal arguments in his paper. He outlines the rapid growth of the discipline at both traditional centers of strength and at recently established programs and describes the breadth and depth of PhD education in Slavic. This is followed by a discussion of the theoretical bases of research conducted by American Slavists and of various projects, some collective, others individual, undertaken by Jakobson himself and recent graduates from doctoral programs at Harvard and elsewhere.

Assessments of Jakobson's contributions to various fields (Armstrong and van Schooneveld; *A Tribute*) have paid little attention to the extent to which, in the postwar period, in a new country, he embarked on a project to develop Slavistics as a discipline, constructing a program which was implemented at Harvard and which also impacted other universities and colleges. In the process, he combined the roles of pathbreaking researcher and charis-

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matic teacher with that of a visionary builder of institutions, able to inspire and lead others.

In preparing this article on Jakobson as builder of institutions, I have drawn on documents from the Roman Jakobson Papers (MC 72) in the Department of Distinctive Collections at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Libraries. References to and citations of these materials are by box and folder number.

BETWEEN COLUMBIA AND HARVARD: DEVELOPING A PROGRAM

While courses in Russian and, on occasion, other Slavic languages were offered in some American postsecondary institutions since the nineteenth century, full-fledged undergraduate and graduate programs in Slavic were slow to develop. The beginning of institutionalization of American Slavic studies dates back to the decades preceding World War One and is especially associated with Harvard University's Archibald Carey Coolidge (1888-1928) and Leo Wiener (1862-1939) (Raeff 101-104): their students went on to teach in several major institutions (Manning 27-30). During the interwar period, a British commentator noted that, despite a few notable exceptions, "the status of Slavonic studies in American universities" was "still largely experimental. (...) Not infrequently, the same events which encouraged Slavonic studies in one sector of the country were responsible for their decline in others" (Rosenbaum, 14). Real changes came about in the post-World War II period. Faced with the Soviet Union as a great power supported by the new "People's Democracies" of Eastern Europe, the U.S. government, in tandem with major foundations, began to channel support to selected universities for training a cadre of specialists competent in various aspects of Soviet and East European studies. Postwar institution building efforts focused on two major East Coast universities, Columbia and Harvard. In 1946, thanks to a major grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, the Russian Institute was established at Columbia, with historian Geroid T. Robinson (1893-1971) as its founding director. At Harvard, the Russian Research Center was established in 1948 with support from the Carnegie Corporation; the anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn became its first director. While both of these programs engaged in research and training, the latter component was particularly emphasized at Columbia, which in a few short years successfully

produced a cadre of experts (Engerman 33-35). At Harvard, social science research occupied center stage, with the Soviet Refugee Interview Project producing a wealth of data and publications (43-70).

At both Columbia and Harvard, the administration recognized the necessity of developing a strong humanistic component in support of the new area studies programs. In 1946, the literary scholar Ernest Simmons (1903-1972) came to Columbia from Cornell, where during the war years he had initiated intensive Russian language and civilization courses. During the fifteen years he spent at Columbia, Simmons, one of the “founders and pioneers” of the “academic study of Russian culture in the USA” (Mathewson 437), “perhaps the most influential American Slavist organizer of his generation” (Engerman 131), restructured and expanded the Department of East European Languages (later –Department of Slavic Languages). At Harvard, following the death of the medievalist Samuel Hazzard Cross (1891-1946), Russian historian Michael Karpovich (1888-1959) was “persuaded (...) to set up a new department” (Lunt, “Review” 298). Karpovich had come to the United States from Russia in 1917 as secretary to Boris A. Bakhmetev (Bakhmeteff) (1880-1951), ambassador of the Provisional Government, and remained employed at the embassy until 1922. Karpovich remained close to Bakhmetev – a highly successful civil engineer, businessman and philanthropist – and was involved in the latter’s Humanities Fund. In 1927 he began a long and successful career at Harvard, ultimately succeeding Coolidge as professor of Russian history (see his autobiography – Tribunskii 2020). A superb teacher, deeply involved in the Russian community and committed to the promotion of Russian culture and Russian and Slavic studies in the United States, he was, according to Dmitri von Mohrenschild, “that rarest phenomenon among Russians – an even-tempered, well-balanced man of moderate views” (Daly 788-789). Thanks to his considerable diplomatic skills, a full-fledged Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures was formally established in January 1949 with Karpovich as its first chair (Flier, “100 Years”).

Simmons and Karpovich played important roles in the early period of Roman Jakobson’s American career and his efforts to develop Slavic studies in the United States. The scholar, since April 1939 a refugee from Czechoslovakia, arrived in New York City from Sweden on 4 June 1941 together with his wife, Dr. Svatava Pirkova-Jakobson. During the summer and fall he attempted – unsuccessfully, despite his international reputation – to obtain an academic position. The situation changed in February 1942, thanks to the creation of the *École Libre des Hautes Études* under the auspices of the New School

for Social Research and with support of the French and Belgian governments in exile. Jakobson was appointed professor of general linguistics in the *École*; concurrently he was appointed professor of Slavic philology in the *Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientale et Slave*, transplanted from Brussels and also affiliated with the New School. He continued to teach at the *École* into 1946.

The scholar's association with Columbia began in 1943, when he was appointed a visiting lecturer. In 1944, this position was upgraded to that of visiting professor of comparative linguistics; he also lectured on the history of Czechoslovak thought in Columbia's Extension program (Box 2, Folder 17). With Simmons' arrival, Jakobson's status and title changed again. In Fall 1946, as a result of Simmons' initiative in securing a gift from the Czechoslovak government (approved by the U.S. Department of State) (Blejwas 1, 323), the Thomas G. Masaryk Professorship of Czechoslovak Studies was established at Columbia and Jakobson was appointed to it for a three-year term. In 1948, a similar named professorship, the Mickiewicz Chair, was established with support of the Polish government, and was filled by literary historian Manfred Kridl (1882-1957).

As the holder of a named professorship, Jakobson was in a strong position at Columbia; in addition, Svatava Pirkova-Jakobson had an appointment as a lecturer in Czechoslovak studies. For quite some time, his relations with Simmons were fairly close, as is clear from their correspondence during the summer of 1947, when Simmons embarked on a trip to Europe and the Soviet Union that was intended to develop educational and scholarly exchanges (Engerman 36-37), Jakobson provided him with contacts in both Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. In Czechoslovakia, Simmons negotiated with government and university officials on behalf of the Slavic program; he also sent Jakobson via diplomatic pouch the collection of N. S. Trubetzkoy's letters, which had been hidden during the occupation, and arranged to have Jakobson's library sent from Czechoslovakia to New York. In his absence, Jakobson took on a variety of administrative tasks. Simmons wrote the preface to an important collection of papers on the Russian epos which he and Jakobson coedited (Jakobson and Simmons 1949).

While other scholars with knowledge of Russia and Eastern Europe had found their way to America during and after the war, none possessed Jakobson's qualifications as a Slavic philologist with an outstanding record of publications. A founder of both the Moscow and Prague Linguistic Circles, he had had a successful academic career in Czechoslovakia during the 1930s and had demonstrated his teaching ability at both the *École Libre* and at

Columbia, where the need to build up a Slavic program facilitated his rapid promotion to a top faculty rank. It was no surprise that Harvard, having decided on a similar expansion, would seek to recruit him, or that Jakobson would welcome being courted. Negotiations began in Spring, 1947. Conducted by Karpovich with support from Provost Paul Buck (Lunt, "Review" 298-299), they resulted in a provisional offer (Paul Buck to Jakobson, 13 May 1947 – Box 2, Folder 29). After obtaining certain guarantees from Columbia (Simmons to Jakobson, 29 May 1947 – Box 2, Folder 15), Jakobson decided against changing institutions, yet both sides left the door open for a resumption of negotiations, as well as for Jakobson's involvement in shaping the Harvard Slavic Department. In his letter of 4 June 1947, responding to Jakobson, Provost Buck noted that the "decision gives us the summer to think through our problem again. It is quite probable that I shall avail myself of your kind offer to advise us" (Box 2, Folder 29).

During the summer of 1947, Jakobson and Karpovich remained in contact. On 24 August Karpovich, on his way from California to Cambridge, sent Jakobson a response to the latter's proposals regarding the future of Slavistics at Harvard (Jakobson's original letter has not been located):

Сообщенные Вами сведения очень меня обрадовали. Вижу, что «большой проект» начинает переходить из области мечтаний в область действительности. Намеченная Вами схема кажется мне совершенно правильной. Конечно, учебная часть должна быть связана и с исследовательской работой и с издательской деятельностью. Относительно последней я тоже думаю, что в первую очередь надо озаботиться изданием нужных руководств. Я не думаю, чтобы по этим вопросам между нами могли возникнуть принципиальные разногласия. Детали же лучше обсудить в марте. (...) Близкое участие Уоссона я всемерно приветствую. Смутило меня немного упоминание ламонтовского сына. Если это знаменитый Corliss, то не станет ли он посовывать политику и притом самую нежелательную. Лично я считаю, что «политизирование» (сомневаюсь в законности этого слова – м.б. «политицирование» лучше?) славистики было бы большим бедствием, а как Вы сами знаете искушения в этой области очень велики и с разных сторон. Уверен впрочем, что и здесь мы с Вами чувствуем одинаково и что вдвоем мы всякие такие попытки сумеем пресечь в зародыше.

Вы правы, что самая трудная проблема – укомплектование департамента. Вероятно, придется это делать постепенно, довольствуясь разными временными комбинациями пока не подойдет своя, собственного производства, смена. Очень меня тревожит положение в департаменте в этом, настоящем, году. Не вижу, кто будет им руководить и кто будет заниматься с graduate students в области филологии. (Box 43, Folder 1)

Several points in this document require some elaboration:

1) Karpovich agrees to Jakobson's proposal that the teaching component of the Slavic program must be accompanied by both research and publishing activity.

2) He agrees that the publishing program must initially focus on pedagogical materials in the Slavic field.

3) According to Karpovich, for the present the Department will be staffed on an ad hoc basis; however, the goal is to produce specialists who will then take over the vacant slots on a permanent basis. This last point correlates with the broader goals set by the organizers of Soviet and East European studies: to produce high quality researchers-teachers able to fill both academic and non-academic positions.

4) Karpovich is concerned that no one is available to work with graduate students in a major area, Slavic philology; moreover, it is unknown who will direct the future Slavic Department. Indeed, in 1947 two outside faculty members, George A. Znamensky, who taught scientific Russian at MIT, and Nicholas P. Vakar, who had begun teaching at Smith College, were brought in to handle courses at Harvard. A specialist in comparative literature, Renato Poggioli, was appointed jointly in Comparative Literature and Slavic Literatures (Flier, "100 Years"). None of them could be described as a Slavic philologist.

5) Karpovich welcomes the participation, in some capacity, of Gordon Wasson – the very well connected banker, journalist, ethnomycologist, and clear-eyed lover of Russian culture. He met and befriended Jakobson when the latter started teaching at Columbia. Committed to the development of Slavic studies, he became a member of the Visiting Committee for the new department at Harvard (Baran, "Roman Jakobson" 2-4).

6) Karpovich expresses concern about another name put forward by Jakobson – Corliss Lamont (1902-1995), philosopher, author, notable campaigner for civil rights, and left-wing political activist. Son of Thomas W. Lamont (1870-1948), chairman of J. P. Morgan & Co. and major benefactor of both Harvard and Columbia, he was naïve about the Soviet Union, successfully battled the notorious anti-Communist Senator Joseph McCarthy and, later, various U.S. government bodies. With the Cold War underway, Karpovich's desire to protect the Harvard Slavic program from potential accusations of pro-Soviet sympathies was well founded. A profound student of Russian history, moderate in his own politics, it is not surprising that he wrote to Jakobson about "temptations from different sides" (искушения ... с разных сторон).

Karpovich's letter does not specify with what Wasson should be – and Lamont should not be – involved. The answer is found in Jakobson's correspondence with Simmons. On 30 June 1947 he wrote to Simmons:

Very confidentially I convey to you that today the Trustees of Harvard University will discuss the problem of the Slavic Research Institute and the possibilities of cooperation in this field with Columbia's Slavic Department in order to divide the work and not to create competition. This is suggested in a memorandum brought to these Trustees by the son of Lamont (the brother of your friend) and this memorandum was elaborated by Wasson on the basis of my notes.

I consider as the most important thing the fact that before this meeting the old Lamont wired the Board of Trustees that he considers the problem of this research as particularly important and urgent. But means (sic! – *H.B.*) that he is ready financially to support it. Cable whether it is possible to continue to write to you and at what address. I would like to inform you about the further results of these discussions. If you have some ideas or suggestions about this problem write me immediately. Both you and I must cooperate very closely with each other in this matter. (Box 46, Folder 13)

A lack of relevant documentation in Jakobson's archive suggests that the proposal for a joint Harvard – Columbia institute for research in the Slavic field did not meet with a favorable response from the Harvard administration. Still, the very fact that such ideas were put forward and discussed – by Simmons, Jakobson, Karpovich, etc. – testifies to the atmosphere of the time, when institution-building in Slavic studies was a significant concern at two leading American universities.

Jakobson's next round of negotiations with Harvard took place in early 1948. In a 15 January 1948 letter, Provost Paul Buck raised the possibility of Jakobson and Simmons coming to Harvard on professorial appointments as a team. This project did not work out: following a discussion in Cambridge, Buck on 11 February wrote that “what you have in mind diverges quite radically from our plans of development at Harvard” and that he saw “no probability of our making an offer to you” (Box 2, Folder 29).

Three months later, in a 7 May 1948 letter to the Geneva linguist Sergeï Karcevski, Jakobson made these comments regarding his situation:

My debut in America was very difficult. It's a change of air, of climate, of mind, of pattern, of everything. Now I have here a strong position and a possibility of interesting work and vast planning. For the time being I decided to stay in New York. I refused Harvard. There is more mental *courant d'air* in New York, and more kaleidoscopic internationality. There are being built not only the biggest

skyscrapers but also the biggest Slavic Department in the world. And this is amusing. (Баран and Душечкина 180-181)

This commitment to building “the biggest Slavic Department in the world” did not last long. In July, 1948, Columbia University was attacked in the press for having accepted financing for the Masaryk and Mickiewicz professorships from the Communist governments of Czechoslovakia (where a coup d’état took place in February) and Poland. While Manfred Kridl was the primary target, Jakobson did not escape unscathed (“Jakobson ably represents the Soviet point of view in ‘Moudrost Starych Cechuv’ and more recently in the volume of ‘The Tale of Igor’ sold by Columbia University Press” – letter by “Students of Columbia University, Box 2; Folder 24). Similarly, Simmons came under attack for establishing the two named professorships and for his alleged pro-Soviet views. The university, with Dwight D. Eisenhower as its president, defended all the faculty members (Blejwas 2, 436-438), but the atmosphere became highly unpleasant. When Harvard approached Jakobson yet again in the fall of 1948, he was more receptive – supposedly because of the attacks against him (Руди 195), but, in fact, to a greater extent because of Simmons’s “bureaucratic machinations” (Lunt, “Review”, 298). The negotiations dragged on for several months until finally, in March 1949, Jakobson accepted an offer of a professorship at Harvard. He began teaching in the fall, and in January, 1950 was appointed to the newly-established Samuel Hazzard Cross Chair of Slavic Languages and Literatures.

DEVELOPING SLAVIC STUDIES: THE PROM COMMITTEE

An unsigned document under the title “List of the books that could and should be published in the very near future in this country”, dated October 8, 1948, has been preserved in his Jakobson’s archive. Given its contents, there is no doubt that it was produced by the scholar, who enumerates five works that should be produced in English and made available to a student audience and briefly comments on their status. These are: Max Vasmer’s “Etymological dictionary” (to be translated from the German manuscript); Dmitry Čiževsky’s “History of Old Russian literature” (about to appear in German); Adolf Stender-Peterson’s “History of Russian literature of the last three centuries (in progress, urgently needed, since Sviatopolk-Mirsky’s work is

“out of print, fragmentary, and out of date”); Čiževsky’s and Jakobson’s “History of Old Church Slavonic literature and culture” (to be written); Nikolai Trubetzkoy’s “Old Church Slavonic grammar” (being translated by Horace Lunt). The list also includes three additional “subjects in sight”: an “Introduction to Slavic studies,” a survey, “Languages of the Soviet Union,” and “Slavic folklore in New York City and vicinity” (Box 2, Folder 13). Jakobson’s emphasizes that some of these works are ready to be translated from the original into English (Vasmer, Trubetzkoy), while others can be produced in a fairly short time span.

This document, from a time when its author was once again being approached by Harvard, elaborates on one of the points of agreement in Karповich’s 24 August 1947 letter (*«в первую очередь надо озаботиться изданием нужных руководств»*). At the same time, it may be regarded as the precursor of a program outlined in a prospectus published in March, 1949 by the newly-established “Committee for the Promotion of Advanced Slavic Cultural Studies” The PROM Committee (as it was informally called by its members) should not be confused with the much larger Joint Committee on Slavic Studies (established in 1948) – “a sort of executive committee for the field, focusing on the unglamorous but all-important scholarly infrastructure” (Engerman 38). The new non-profit organization would “endeavor to find funds for the preparation and publication of significant scholarly manuscripts in its field, and also on occasion for bringing to the United States Slavic scholars of the first rank”. The studies would be “on the highest plane of scholarly excellence”, would include “valuable tools for advanced students, key works, not a general ‘publications program’” (*Committee* 3). The Committee’s purpose “is to bring into being in the American world a new corps of Slavic specialists, recruited from men and women of intelligence and judgment, who will be thoroughly at home in the Slavic background while retaining their home in the West” (4).

Development of Slavistics in the United States, the PROM Committee emphasized, was made even more necessary because of the situation on the Old Continent, the traditional home of the discipline: “Many of the centers of Slavic studies in Europe, once flourishing, are now destroyed or prostrate from poverty and dissolution, – the effects of the war. This is true of Berlin, Breslau, Königsberg, Vienna, the Dutch and Polish universities, Prague is under a political cloud, and Paris is not fully recovered”. Under the circumstances, “it is not so much a duty as a privilege and opportunity to encourage disinterested Slavic studies in free America” (4).

After noting the dearth of standard reference works in Slavic that other fields of study take for granted – “there is no ‘Skeat’ for the Slavic languages, no ‘Liddell & Scott’ deserving of mention”¹ – the Committee asserted “the acute need, in working toward a long term peaceful relationship with Russia, of such seminal works in the Slavic cultural field” (5). In addition to assisting with the publication of “pioneering contributions ... in areas of Slavic cultural history that the layman might consider remote indeed”, the Committee declared itself prepared, subject to availability of funds, “to aid in bringing over and placing in American institutions such Slavic scholars of first-class quality as find themselves stranded in Western Europe” (5).

The Committee’s Board of Directors initially included Gordon Wasson, Boris Bakhmetev, the former diplomat and historian George F. Kennan (1904-2005), and Philip E. Mosely (1905-1972), professor of international relations at Columbia with broad knowledge of various fields (Dallin). All of them had deep connections to Russia and Eastern Europe and the field of Russian and East European studies. Another member, Frank Altschul (1887-1981), was a prominent financier and major philanthropist who made major gifts to various colleges and universities; a noted collector of manuscripts and rare books, he was also involved in book publishing and had established a private press that published limited editions for collectors. They were joined by an Advisory Board of scholars: Jakobson, Karpovich (chair), and René Wellek, a comparative literature historian at Yale.

Jakobson unquestionably exerted an outsized influence on the Committee’s decisions, both in its formative stage, when the Committee was often closely aligned with Harvard, and in the later years of its operation. Yet even the Harvard-based projects he supported helped American Slavistics as a whole, demonstrated its scholarly viability and competitiveness.

In its first annual report (March 15, 1950), the Committee presented a program of publications that bore a clear stamp of Jakobson’s thinking. The Committee saw itself as supporting: 1. Introduction to Slavic studies – a series of “concise synthetic studies”, in booklet form, covering “common Slavic and inter-Slavic pivotal problems.” Written by distinguished specialists, they were to present “the essential results of the research in the given domain to date, including the research of the respective authors that has remained unpublished until now”; 2. Critical bibliographies, “along the lines

¹ *Skeat* – a reference to Walter William Skeat’s *An Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*, 1879-1882, rev. and enlarged, 1910). *Liddell & Scott* – a reference to *A Greek-English Lexicon*, which has undergone many editions.

of the useful Handbooks that were produced by German scholars in the past”, “of 50-75 small-format pages each”; 3. Annotated texts of Slavic classical works; 4. Manuals; 5. The Milman Parry Collection of Serbo-Croatian Oral Tradition at Harvard (Box 5, Folder 84).

Jakobson’s assumptions about the availability of certain works for publication in the United States, reflected in the PROM Committee’s prospectus, proved unrealistic for a variety of reasons. The program presented in the Committee’s first-year report likewise proved problematic: on the one hand, there was no guarantee that commissioned manuscripts would be of sufficiently high scholarly quality, and, on the other hand, it proved difficult to hold authors to their promised deadlines and to the format originally envisaged.

As discussed in greater detail elsewhere (Baran 11-15), in spite of such difficulties, as well as its fairly modest resources, the PROM Committee accomplished much during its period of operation, 1949-1965. Well aware that preparation and publication of narrowly focused scholarly books involves “an initial deficit for any publisher” (*Committee* 6), it proved quite effective at leveraging small grants (subventions). The multifaceted Dmitro Čiževsky actually fulfilled some of Jakobson’s and the PROM Committee’s goals. He produced an overview of Slavic literatures from a comparative perspective (Čiževsky, *Outline*), a Russian edition of Pushkin’s *Eugene Onegin* with commentaries (publ. 1953), and a magisterial survey of medieval Russian literature (Tschizewskij). The latter two items became widely used in Slavic programs in the United States. Victor Erlich’s 1955 study of Russian Formalism proved to have a major impact on literary studies far beyond the Slavic field.

THE HARVARD PROGRAM AND COMPARATIVE SLAVIC STUDIES

Jakobson began teaching at Harvard in Fall, 1949. He was joined in Cambridge by Svatava Pirkova-Jakobson (appointed as Lecturer), Dmitro Čiževsky (also appointed as Lecturer) and, as Assistant Professor, Horace Lunt, who had recently completed his PhD under Jakobson’s direction. He also brought with him fourteen graduate students who had worked under his direction at Columbia and now continued doing so at Harvard.

As one of those students wrote in a lengthy article on his life and work, “It would surely be difficult to find a more eloquent tribute to Jakobson’s

teaching than this mass transfer of graduate students” (Kučera 879). Another member of this cohort, himself renowned for teaching, put it this way: “What attracted students to him was not only his extraordinary knowledge, scientific imagination, and his dramatic lecture style; much more important were the close personal relationship into which he involved almost every one of his many students, the genuine interest he took in their scholarly efforts, no matter how elementary, and the assistance and encouragement he gave to all who came” (Halle, “Jakobson, Roman” 339).

As a result, Jakobson’s move had a twofold multiplier effect: it significantly expanded the department’s teaching staff and created a substantial core of graduate students well on their way to a doctorate. Within a year of his arrival two new faculty members were added: Wiktor Weintraub (1908-1988), a Polishist, and Albert Bates Lord (1912-1991), a specialist in South Slavic literature and folklore and an associate of epic scholar Milman Parry.

Čiževsky’s presence at Harvard was no accident: bringing to the United States the literary and intellectual historian whom he had known as a fellow member of the Prague Linguistic Circle, was already a priority for Jakobson when he was teaching at Columbia. Ultimately, the PROM Committee financed Čiževsky’s move from Europe. At Harvard, he held the title of Visiting Lecturer. Whether it was difficulty “to adapt readily to the American milieu” (Pritsak and Ševčenko 387) or a lack of “hard money” for a permanent position (Lunt, “Review” 300), in 1956 he returned to Germany.

The faculty of the new Slavic program offered a large number of courses. A document, “Courses and Seminars given in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures”, undated but clearly from the early 1950s, ends with the following:

In sum, the Department delivers 11 courses in philology, 33 literary courses, 15 practical language courses – altogether 59 one-term courses and 2 departmental research courses.

Of the individual courses,
12 are given by Čiževsky
8 by R. Jakobson
7 by Lunt
7 by Weintraub
6 by Lord
6 by Mrs. S. P. Jakobson
3 by Karpovich
2 by Poggioli (Box 2, Folder 31).

A detailed list of courses shows varied coverage of East Slavic (Russian, Ukrainian), West Slavic (Polish, Czech, Slovak), and South Slavic (Serbo-Croatian, Bulgarian) language, literature, and culture, as well as Old Church Slavonic. There is also a group of courses under the label "Comparative Slavic Studies": "Comparative Slavic Linguistics", "Readings in Medieval Slavic Texts", "Slavic Peoples, Their Languages and Civilization", "Comparative Slavic Literature: from the Late Middle Ages to Classicism", "Comparative Slavic Literature: from Romanticism to Symbolism", "Studies in Comparative Slavic Literature", "Studies in Slavic Poetry", "General View of Slavic Folklore", "Slavic Folklore in America". Except for the last of these, which would have been taught by Svatava Pirkova-Jakobson, the remaining courses undoubtedly would have been handled by Jakobson and the Čiževsky ("an outstandingly versatile and productive scholar and teacher" – Lunt, "Review" 300).

In 1954, Jakobson published an article, "Comparative Slavic Studies", in a journal addressed to a broad intellectual audience, in which he discussed the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition and the complex history of Slavism as an ideology and a movement. This exposition was not a purely scholarly exercise: Jakobson emphasized that comparative studies are a vital component of Slavistics in America. "Slavic studies are not possible under a racial obscurantism that treats the Slavs as inferior nations, nor can this inquiry be achieved under a Stalinist dogma". After criticizing current scholarship in the Soviet Union, which "during the post-war years has insisted ever more dogmatically on the absolute self-sufficiency of Russian culture" (Jakobson, "Comparative" 72), he defends Slavic studies, which "have grown into a prominent and responsible domain of American scholarship" from domestic critics, so numerous during the period of McCarthyism. "In the choice of their targets these writers, as a general rule, imitate the professional slanderers who vociferate behind the iron curtain. In their denunciations, both published and unpublished, stupidity and illiteracy compete with baseness". "To counter one variety of propagandistic scholarship by another would be a shameful capitulation. The strength of American Slavic studies lies in the possibility of responsible, fearless, objective discussion of all, even the most burning and controversial questions in the field..." (73). As is clear from the list of courses discussed above, Jakobson's assertions were self-referential: comparative studies were an important part of the program put together in the new Slavic Department at Harvard.

Jakobson's proclaimed position regarding the goals of American Slavistics in the 1950s was strikingly different from the Russia-centric, Eurasianist views he espoused twenty-five years earlier, in a programmatic arti-

cle he published in the first issue of a new journal, *Slavische Rundschau* (Jakobson, “Über die heutigen”). The change, it has been suggested, was prompted by his strategic aim of securing for Slavic departments in the United States an independent existence within the conservative academic milieu of the time; this approach proved highly successful, and the Harvard department was for a long time a center of structuralist Slavistics (Автономова and Гаспаров 338),

In his paper at the International Slavic Conference Jakobson also proclaimed the necessity of comparative studies: “северный страх перед сравнительным изучением славянских литератур уходит в прошлое”, “наряду с общеславянским устным фондом, требует систематического изучения общеславянский письменный фонд”, “идеология (межславянской солидарности – *H.B.*) может найти себе беспристрастную историческую оценку, несклонную ни к панегирику, ни к пасквилю” (Jakobson 427-428). Tellingly, in a paper presented at the first East-West meeting of Slavists since before the war, there is no mention of biased scholarship in “countries dominated by totalitarian doctrines” (Jakobson, “Comparative” 72): implicitly, the problematics of comparative Slavic studies may be addressed by scholars in all countries, including those of the Soviet bloc.

A LARGE-SCALE RESEARCH PROGRAM

One of the attractions of Harvard for Jakobson was the possibility of doing more research than was possible at Columbia. This expectation was borne out in a major way, beneficial for both the scholar himself and for the Slavic Department as a whole. In April, 1950, the Rockefeller Foundation made a five-year grant of \$50,000 to Harvard University “for the preparation of a descriptive analysis of the contemporary Russian language, under the direction of Professor Roman Jakobson” (Box 2, Folder 55). In February, 1955, the Foundation made an additional three-year grant of \$30,000 for the same purpose.

The grants may be seen not only as affirmations of Jakobson’s reputation as pathbreaking general linguist and Slavic philologist, but also of his demonstrated organizational skills, as shown most recently by his experiences after arrival in New York City, where he helped found the New York Linguistic Circle and conducted a successful seminar on the *Igor Tale* that resulted in an important volume of articles (Jakobson and Simmons).

In his account of American Slavistics at the Belgrade conference, Jakobson underscored that it has been affected by the overall character of American science: “Наравне с редкостными возможностями и широкой постановкой новых экспериментов, следует отметить истинную склонность и навык к интердисциплинарным разысканиям, к совместным, согласованным усилиям разнообразных специалистов” (Якобсон 417-418). In his description of Harvard’s Russian contemporary language project, he pointed to its collaborative nature – the participation of researchers from other disciplines and from other institutions in America and Europe.

According to a December, 1953 summary of the Rockefeller project, its main purposes were: 1) to provide an exhaustive description of Standard Russian, “a task which Soviet scholarship, biased and weakened by continuous purges, has never succeeded in fulfilling”; 2) to study changes in Russian over the last forty years; 3) to apply to analysis of Russian “the methodological and technical achievements of the modern American science of language and adjacent disciplines”; 4) to look for “the most economical and comprehensive devices of linguistic description and analysis”; 5) to assure “a most effective inter-disciplinary cooperation between linguistics and all other sciences concerned with language” (Box 1, Folder 23).

Several of Jakobson’s doctoral students carried out research within the framework of the project and completed dissertations under Jakobson’s direction. The original plan called for publication of the results in a series of five volumes: “1. Sounds of Russian; 2. Morphology; 3. Syntactic Structure; 4. Analysis of Vocabulary and Phraseology; 5. Stylistics and various problems connecting language with the cultural and social background” (Box 2, Folder 57). This plan was accomplished to a limited degree; after considerable delay four monographs appeared in a series, “Description and Analysis of Contemporary Standard Russian”, from Mouton Publishers in The Hague: (Halle, *The Sound* [1959]; Fant [1960]; Jurgens Buning and van Schooneveld [1961]; Stankiewicz [1968]). Numerous articles based on dissertations by projected participants appeared in various scholarly journals.

The project proved fruitful for Jakobson’s own research. Analysis of acoustical features of Russian leads to a pioneering monograph by Jakobson and two co-authors – Morris Halle, who followed him from Columbia, and Gunnar Fant, a Swedish engineer visiting at MIT (Jakobson, Fant, and Halle [1952]). Some years later, he and Halle coauthor another, highly influential monograph (Jakobson and Halle [1956]). In 1957, he publishes a very im-

portant paper, “Shifters, Verbal Categories, and the Russian Verb” as a brochure produced by the project.

Rockefeller funding enabled a number of students who came with Jakobson from Columbia to complete their dissertations and make significant contributions to the development of Slavic studies. In addition to Morris Halle, founder of MIT’s Department of Linguistics, these included Robert H. Abernathy, Clayton L. Dawson, Carl L. Ebeling, Lawrence G. Jones, Harold Klagstad, Henry (Jindřich) Kučera, Irina B.-M. Lynch, Lew R. Mickelsen, Edward Stankiewicz.

A separate line of Jakobson’s research in the 1950s focused on medieval Russian texts and 16th-17th century Western records of the Russian language. The most important of these efforts involved preparation for publication by Jakobson, his student Elizabeth van Schooneveld, and three Danish scholars (L. L. Hammerich, T. Starck, Ad. Stender-Petersen) of an early 17th century Low German textbook of colloquial Russian which had been preserved in the Royal Danish Library. Work on this took far longer than expected: the first volume of a commented edition appeared in 1961 (*Tönnies Fenne*).

A PROGRAM OF PUBLICATIONS: PROBLEMS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

At the end of July, 1950, following a trip to Western Europe, Jakobson sent Karpovich a “preliminary report” on his visits to Slavic centers in several countries. Written in English, and intended not only for the addressee but also, potentially, the Harvard administration, it described the response of European colleagues to information about the new Slavic Department:

I was everywhere asked about the pivotal lines of our teaching, research and publication plans and the items which impressed particularly were the high number of languages covered (especially the offering of Ukrainian courses), the high number and thematic variety of Ph.D. dissertations in preparation, the emphasis on the comparative study of Slavic languages, literatures, and popular traditions; and the scope of our research project supported by the Rockefeller Foundation; the uniqueness of the Parry Collection of Serbocroatian epic material we are working over and finally, our publishing program in cooperation with the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and with the Committee for the Unity of Science. (Box 1, Folder 21)

At the time of this letter, the publishing program Jakobson would have described in Europe was tied very closely to the prospective program of the PROM Committee. As discussed above, PROM's first report in March, 1950 presented five types of publications for which support would be sought: 1. Introduction to Slavic studies – a series of booklets by distinguished specialists devoted to “common Slavic and inter-Slavic pivotal problems”; 2. Critical bibliographies – “systematic surveys and evaluations of both existing source materials and of secondary studies”, intended primarily for graduate students (Box 5, Folder 84); 3. Annotated texts of Slavic classical works; 4. Manuals; 5. The Milman Parry Collection of Serbo-Croatian Oral Tradition. Within a year, the Committee no longer referred to this classification while providing funding for some work completed within its framework.

From the start, plans involving the Harvard-based Parry Collection were the most advanced. After Milman Parry's death in 1935, Albert Lord, his student and collaborator, continued to work with the recordings of Serbo-Croatian epics they had gathered on field trips in Yugoslavia. Lord had completed his Ph.D. in comparative literature in 1949, and in Fall, 1950 would join the Slavic Department as a lecturer. In May, 1948 he produced a memo that describes work he and other scholars had already carried out on the first two volumes out of a planned larger series (Box 2, Folder 51). When in Fall, 1949 a proposal for initial support was submitted to the PROM Committee, the directors sought to clarify the full scope of the proposed publication project and to explore outside sources of funds. Ultimately, the Committee committed to financing the initial two volumes, which led to a joint publication by Harvard University Press and the Serbian Academy of Sciences (Lord).

The other categories of proposed publications produced far modest results. Originally, there were to produce critical editions of four “Slavic classical texts”: *The Life of St. Methodius* (to be prepared by C. H. van Schooneveld), Constantine the Philosopher's *Introduction to the Gospel* (Roman Jakobson), *The Igor Tale* (Vladimir Nabokov, Roman Jakobson, Marc Szeftel), and Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* (Dmitro Čiževsky). Only the last of these was published.

Jakobson, Karpovich, Wellek, and Philip Mosely, as editors of the “Introduction to Slavic studies” essay series, put together a list of nineteen topics and scholars best qualified to write about them, from Harvard and other American and European institutions. These included “The Place of the Slavs in the Indo-European World” (Giuliano Bonfante), “Slavic Languages”

(Roman Jakobson), “The Material Culture of the Primitive Slavs” (Max Vasmer), “Early Slavic Laws and Institutions” (George Vernadsky, Sergei Pushkarev), “Comparative Slavic Literature” (Dmitro Čiževsky), “The Essentials of Old Church Slavonic” (Horace Lunt), “Slavic Relations with the Orient” (Karl Menges), “The Role of the Zadruga in the Social Evolution of Eastern Europe” (Philip Mosely), and others (Box 5, Folder 84). In the end, four of these were produced (Jakobson, *Slavic Languages*; Čiževsky, *Outline of Comparative Slavic Literatures*; and Menges, *Oriental Elements*, and *An Outline of the Early History*).

The “Critical Bibliographies” category appears to have never moved past the planning stage. The initial list of twelve items in this group included such topics as “Prehistoric Archeology of Russia” (George Vernadsky), “Bolshevist Ideology” (Geroid Robinson), “Foreign Policy of Imperial Russia: (Philip Mosely), “Polish Literature” (Manfred Kridl, Waclaw Lednicki). As for “Manuals”, or “Scholarly Outlines” (term used in a draft Slavic Department memo), in its first annual report the PROM Committee stated that “the Consultants are busily engaged in bringing into existence a number of Slavic manuals, to submit to us for financial support” (Box 5, Folder 84) – an acknowledgement that the category itself was tenuous at best.

Despite the difficulties in implementing the original plans, the Slavic Department’s publications, subsidized by the PROM Committee (for example, (Weintraub), as well as private donors, continued apace during the 1950s; however, in a reflection of changing priorities, the entire program was reconceptualized. According to a 10 June 1953 letter from Jakobson to Karpovich, the Department was involved in six book series: “Harvard Slavic Studies”, “Survey of Slavic Civilization”, “Slavic Classical Literary Works”, the Milman Parry Collection, “Russian Epic Tradition”, “Русский литературный архив” (Box 43, Folder 1).

The initial volumes from the Parry Collection have already been discussed. Four volumes of “Harvard Slavic Studies” brought together scholars associated with Harvard with researchers from other American and European Institutions. The common theme of the first two, (Lunt et al., *Harvard* vol. I) and (Lunt et al., *Harvard* vol. II), was broadly defined as “the interrelations of Slavic cultures and the mutual influences between Slavs and the rest of the world”. Volume I opens with Jakobson’s lengthy essay “The Kernel of Comparative Slavic Literature” (1-71), which provided the foundation for the program outlined in (Jakobson, *Comparative*). This is followed by Čiževsky’s major study, “Comenius’ *Labyrinth of the World*: its themes and

their sources" (83-135), and articles on various subjects in Russian and East European history of literature and intellectual history. Volume II, dedicated to the Byzantine scholar Fr. Francis Dvornik on his 60th birthday, includes another study by Jakobson, "Minor Native Sources for the Early History of the Slavic Church" (39-74), Trubetzkoy's "Introduction to the History of Old Russian Literature" (translated from his lectures at the University of Vienna) (91-103), and nineteen other contributions on Byzantine-Slavic relations and various topics in 19th and 20th century Russian and East European literatures. Two more volumes came out in 1957 (Lunt, *Harvard* vol. III) and (McLean et al.). The former again contains substantive contributions on a broad range of Slavic topics, including Serge Zenkovsky, "The Ideological World of the Denisov Brothers" (49-66) and Vera Sandomirsky, "The Sad Armchair: Notes on Soviet War and Postwar Lyrical Poetry" (289-330). The impressive fourth volume (McLean et al.) is a tribute to Michael Karpovich on his retirement. It features essays by twenty-seven of his students, including some of the most notable names in the study of Russian history, intellectual history and literature – Hans Rogger, Martin Malia, Richard Pipes, Hugh McLean, Marc Raeff, and Ralph Matlaw.

Two titles appeared in the series "Survey of Slavic Civilization". A monograph by Čiževsky (*Outline*) began as a contribution to the previous series, "Introduction to Slavic studies". Francis Dvornik (1893-1975), since 1949 a professor at Harvard's Dumbarton Oaks Research Library, produced a general history of the Slavs up to the mid-13th century (Dvornik). Both books were published by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, a Boston-based scholarly society.

"Slavic Classical Literary Works", a category carried from the Department's original publication plans, opened with Čiževsky's 1953 edition of *Eugene Onegin*. Two more titles were planned: Waclaw Lednicki's edition of Pushkin's and Mickiewicz's Petersburg poems, and a critical edition and translation of the *Igor' Tale* and the *Zadonshchina*. Work on the latter, which was to appear in the prestigious Bollingen Series, was being done by Jakobson, Marc Szeftel and Vladimir Nabokov. Neither of these publications ever came out; Jakobson's quite promising collaboration with Nabokov ended because of the scholar's trip to Moscow in 1956 and cooperation with the Soviet academic establishment.

The series "Russian Epic Tradition" began with a joint publication on the *Igor Tale* by Jakobson and historian Alexander Soloviev (Соловьѳв, Якобсон). A small monograph on the poetics of the monument by Justina

Besharova, a student of Jakobson's, appeared as the second issue in this series (Besharov). Originally, a dissertation on the lexicon of the *Igor Tale* by another his students, Tatjana Čiževska, was also expected to appear in this series, but came out as a monograph only much later (Čiževska).

According to Jakobson's 10 June 1953 letter, Harvard's Houghton Library of rare books and manuscripts, in cooperation with the Slavic Department, had been supplementing its existing Slavic collection with new acquisitions. Čiževsky and Jakobson had published descriptions of some of these materials in the *Harvard Library Bulletin*. An especially important acquisition, a 16th century primer (букварь) was published in a separate, commented facsimile edition (*Ivan Fedorov's Primer*).

He notes in his letter that the first volume of a separate series, "Русский литературный архив", would feature a range of 19th-20th century texts and studies. In the end, an important collection, based on materials held almost exclusively at Houghton, did appear under the auspices of the Slavic Department and the Harvard College Library (Карпович, Чижевский). Čiževsky contributed three extensively commented publications of texts (Pushkin, Dostoevsky, Turgenev); other contributors included Jakobson (a major study of Mayakovsky's late poetry), Hugh McLean (unknown letters by Nikolai Leskov), and George Ivask (letters by Marina Tsvetaeva). Significantly, the editors of the volume stated explicitly that it was not part of a serial publication (3), and, indeed, it proved the Harvard Department's only such undertaking.

In his 1953 letter to Karpovich Jakobson noted that philological (linguistic) studies by Department faculty would appear in a new journal, *Slavic Word*. A decade earlier he, together with other linguists from the École Libre and Columbia University, formed a group to hold meetings and discuss linguistic problems. The group incorporated in 1945 under the name Linguistic Circle of New York and to began to publish a journal, *Word*, one of the basic tasks of which was "the strengthening of scientific tasks between the New and the Old World" (Muller, 4).

In 1951, thanks to a grant from the PROM Committee, an entire issue of *Word* was devoted to Slavic matters. In 1952, once again thanks to support from the same source, issue No. 1 of *Slavic Word* appeared as an additional, special issue of *Word*; during 1953-1955, three additional annual issues appeared. The journal became, in line with its editors' intent, "a periodical reflecting the progress in the scientific investigation of Slavic languages, past and present" (Jakobson et al. 1952). Jakobson, Lunt, their students and asso-

ciates took up the whole of the first issue. In issues 2 and 3, European authors made a noticeable appearance. The fourth (and final) issue, however, was once again largely taken up by contributions from Jakobson and other American Slavists.

Horace Lunt's articles and reviews in the short-lived journal came in addition to his two major publications during the early 1950s – the first grammar of the Macedonian language in English (1952) and a grammar of Old Church Slavonic (1955), which has been revised and reissued six more times and “remains one of the best OCS grammars in any language” (Flier, “Obituary”).

A TASK ACCOMPLISHED AND AFTERWARD

In May, 1956, following up on the Belgrade conference, the reconstituted International Committee of Slavists met in Moscow. Jakobson, invited by the Soviet Academy of Sciences, attended as the American representative. Subsequently, during 1-10 September 1958, the Fourth International Congress of Slavists was held in Moscow. The American delegation to this gathering, headed by Jakobson, consisted of nineteen contributing members from six universities with Slavic graduate programs (a prerequisite for participation). In the following year, a volume with their papers was published (*American Contributions*). Given that no Americans had attended the previous congresses, and that following the Soviet suppression of the Hungarian revolution some scholars refused to participate, the presence of a sizeable American contingent in Moscow testified to the growth and the vigor of Slavic studies in the United States. It was likewise a tribute to Jakobson's leadership in shaping the field.

By the time of the Congress, the original graduate Slavic programs at Berkeley, Columbia and Harvard had been joined by newer ones at the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Michigan – Ann Arbor, the University of Indiana – Bloomington, Yale University, the University of Wisconsin – Madison, Wayne State University. In all of them, with some variations, course offerings and requirements looked fairly similar to those at Harvard; however, there were no attempts to reproduce the substantive core of comparative courses that Jakobson had offered together with Čiževsky. Some of the departments imitated Harvard by developing publishing as an important component of their profile: the University of Michigan proved to be the most successful in this regard, with such well-received series as

“Michigan Slavic materials”, “Papers in Slavic philology”, and “Cross Currents”. After Sputnik, the flow of government and private foundation money led to another, rapid expansion of Slavic programs, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels; in the 1970s, a period of contraction began.

For Jakobson himself, the second half of the 1950s brought important developments. His 1956 trip to Moscow, followed by subsequent visits to the Soviet Union, allowed him to reestablish contacts with friends and former colleagues, and to forge close links with younger researchers for whom he had become a legendary figure. His international activities, always numerous, now included efforts on behalf of cutting-edge linguistic and structural-semiotic research in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Three initiatives were particularly important. In 1959, with assistance from the PROM Committee, he founded the *International Journal of Slavic Linguistics and Poetics*, which regularly published articles by Russian and East European specialists. Similarly, during the 1960s, Jakobson played a key role in organizing several international conferences on poetics and semiotics in Poland; these were attended by some leading Soviet scholars who were almost never allowed to travel abroad. Finally, in January, 1969, at a meeting in Paris, he became one of the founders of the International Association of Semiotic Studies. The Association’s journal, *Semiotica*, became another venue where scholars at the cutting edge of research, from the East as well as the West, could share their ideas with a like-minded international audience.

Back in Cambridge, Jakobson’s relationship with Harvard was also changing. Since the early 1950s and his joint work with Morris Halle, he had been deeply interested in the kind of language research being done at MIT. This led to his appointment in 1957 as Visiting Institute Professor; subsequently, the appointment as Institute Professor – the highest rank at MIT – was made permanent. From that point on and until his retirement, Jakobson taught at MIT in the fall, at Harvard in the spring.

Michael Karpovich retired from Harvard in 1957. By that time, the Rockefeller project was winding down, and Jakobson had begun to spend more time at MIT. Not surprisingly, the sense of common purpose that had accompanied the process of creating a new institution, of working to develop Slavic studies in the United States, was no longer a motivating force within the Slavic Department. In compensation, the Department had stabilized, having acquired several faculty members at the rank of professor or associate professor: Renato Poggioli, Horace Lunt, Albert Lord, Wiktor Weintraub, and Vsevolod Setchkarev. They were joined by faculty at lower

ranks and visiting faculty. All were pursuing active research and publishing agendas, teaching courses in their areas of strength, and guiding doctoral students. The Slavic Department at Harvard continued to flourish, and remained a center of strength in the Slavic studies field.

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ROMAN JAKOBSON I AMERYKAŃSKIE STUDIA SLAWISTYCZNE:
PIERWSZA DEKADA POWOJENNA

Streszczenie

Uczeni, którzy oceniali spuściznę Romana Jakobsona, koncentrowali się na jego wkładzie w różne dyscypliny naukowe, natomiast ci, którzy go znali, którzy byli jego studentami lub współpracownikami, pisali o jego retorycznej wirtuozerii i wpływie jako wykładowcy. W niniejszym artykule skupiono się na mało zbadanym aspekcie jego biografii zawodowej: sposobach, jakimi w okresie od połowy lat czterdziestych do połowy lat pięćdziesiątych emigracyjny uczony realizował ambitny projekt rozwoju slawistyki jako dyscypliny w Stanach Zjednoczonych. Działalność Jakobsona w zakresie budowania instytucji, obmyślana w okresie pracy na Uniwersytecie Columbia, została rozpoczęta po jego przeprowadzce w 1949 r. na Uniwersytet Harvarda do nowego Wydziału Slawistycznego. Prywatna grupa, Committee for Advanced Slavic Cultural Studies, z którą uczony był blisko związany, odegrała znaczącą rolę we wspieraniu programu Harvardu, a szerzej – w rozwoju amerykańskiej slawistyki jako dyscypliny

Słowa kluczowe: Roman Jakobson; Michael Karpovich; Edward J. Simmons; studia slawistyczne; slawistyka; Committee for Advanced Slavic Cultural Studies; Uniwersytet Columbia; Uniwersytet Harvarda.

ROMAN JAKOBSON AND AMERICAN SLAVIC STUDIES:
THE FIRST POSTWAR DECADE

Summary

Scholars who have assessed Roman Jakobson's legacy have concentrated on his contributions to various scientific disciplines, while those who knew him, who had been his students or his colleagues, have written about his rhetorical virtuosity, his impact as a lecturer. The present article focuses on a little-studied aspect of his professional biography: the ways in which, during the period mid-1940s to mid-1950s, the émigré scholar carried out an ambitious project to develop Slavic studies (Slavistics, *slavistika*) as a discipline in the United States. Jakobson's institution-building activities, conceptualized while he was teaching at Columbia University, were implemented following his move in 1949 to the new Slavic Department at Harvard University. A private group, the Committee for Advanced Slavic Cultural Studies, with which he was closely connected, played a significant role in supporting the Harvard program, and, more broadly, helping develop American Slavistics as a discipline.

Keywords: Roman Jakobson; Michael Karpovich; Edward J. Simmons; Slavic studies; Slavistics; Committee for Advanced Slavic Cultural Studies; Columbia University; Harvard University.