

At a meeting of the FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES on May 1, 2012, the following tribute to the life and service of the late Horace Gray Lunt II was spread upon the permanent records of the Faculty.

HORACE GRAY LUNT II

BORN: September 12, 1918

DIED: August 11, 2010

At the end of his first year at Harvard in 1937–1938, Horace Lunt decided to concentrate in Russian studies but was counseled by his faculty adviser, Samuel Hazzard Cross, to stay with German instead because in Russian “there is no chance for a job.” Lunt graduated in German in 1941 but had been bitten by the Russian bug. He went on to become one of the world’s leading experts in Slavic philology and linguistics.

Horace Gray Lunt II, Samuel Hazzard Cross Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures, *Emeritus*, at Harvard University, passed away on August 11, 2010, in Baltimore, Maryland. At Harvard he had been a member of the Slavic Department faculty from 1949 to 1989 and had served as its chair from 1959 to 1974.

After receiving an M.A. in Russian at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1942, he was drafted into the army. His aptitude for languages earned him an assignment to the Counter Intelligence Corps, and ultimately a stint in Italy interviewing Yugoslav refugees while improving his knowledge of Serbian, Croatian, and Slovene. In 1946 he met the eminent émigré philologist and structural linguist Roman Jakobson, a figure who would have a profound effect on the entire trajectory of his career. Following a year-long stay in Prague to study Czech, Lunt entered the Ph.D. program at Columbia in the fall of 1947 to study under Jakobson’s supervision. When Jakobson moved to Harvard in 1949 to join the newly founded Slavic Department, he brought Lunt with him as an assistant professor. A golden age of Slavic studies was about to commence, and it would be the Harvard Slavic Department, with the addition of a number of distinguished, mostly émigré, scholars to its faculty, that would fundamentally alter the field by training scores of new American Slavists to take up college and university posts across the nation over the next several decades, especially after the launching of Sputnik in 1957.

Lunt’s beginnings at Harvard were largely devoted to creating new course materials for teaching the Russian language and Old Church Slavonic (OCS), the oldest written form of Slavic, whose mastery is vital for Slavic studies. His efforts resulted in the publication of his

Old Church Slavonic Grammar (1955) and his *Fundamentals of Russian* (1957). *Old Church Slavonic Grammar*, now in its seventh revised edition (2001), remains one of the best OCS grammars in any language because of its comprehensive coverage, its clarity of explanation, and its rich exemplification.

Lunt's meticulous attention to detail was nowhere more evident than in his signature course, "Old Church Slavonic," typically taken by first-year graduate students. Unlike many instructors who introduced a few Gospel selections at the end of the term, Lunt presented a brief overview of the grammar and then immediately plunged students into the reading and analysis of the texts themselves. It was a baptism of fire that was both intimidating and salutary, eliciting strongly positive reactions from both linguistic and literature students, who viewed Lunt's OCS class as one of the most intensive, well organized, and analytically stimulating courses they had ever taken.

Developing an earlier interest in the newly official Macedonian language of Yugoslavia, Lunt produced *A Grammar of the Macedonian Literary Language* in 1952, the first such work in English. The grammar sparked the ire of Bulgarian nationalists, who viewed Macedonian as a western dialect of Bulgarian. A Bulgarian newspaper that denounced Yugoslav language policies and sharply criticized all attempts to establish a standard Macedonian language stated that "the hapless Yugoslavs were obliged to import a spy to create the language for them. We need no help from any Horace Lunts!" "Luntism" was designated an anti-Bulgarian scourge. Lunt later recalled "feeling flattered at the powers attributed to me, and rather pleased at the notion of a political heresy named after me." The Greeks, on the contrary, were outraged that the name Macedonian could be assigned to a non-Greek tongue and its people. Both disputes rage on to this day. Lunt refused to remain silent on such matters, readily dismantling the flimsy arguments of those manipulating linguistic and historical facts to stifle the cultural, political, and linguistic authenticity of minority ethnic groups.

In September 1973, Omeljan Pritsak, the Director of the newly founded Ukrainian Research Institute at Harvard, suggested convening a weekly seminar to discuss Lunt's ongoing translation of the Primary Chronicle, the most important source for the early history of the East Slavs. Lunt would pre-circulate several pages of translation, which would be evaluated on the basis of the most recent edition published in 1950 by the doyen of Soviet medievalists, Dmitrii Likhachev. The seminar met faithfully every week for six straight years and was attended by the major figures of Slavic medieval studies at Harvard: Ihor Ševčenko (Byzantine studies), Edward Keenan (East Slavic history), Pritsak (Turkic studies and East European history and geography), and Lunt. A single sentence, phrase, or even word could ignite an arcane interchange of expert opinion with the result that often no more than a half page of Lunt's translation would be covered in a session, though only the occasional tweaks were recommended in the end. Lunt served as senior consultant for a new reconstruction of the Primary Chronicle that appeared in 2003. Weeks before his

death, he gave final approval to the text of his nearly four-decades-long translation project, now slated for publication by the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute.

Lunt was promoted from assistant professor to associate professor in 1954 and received a tenured full professorship in 1960, the same year he was named a Guggenheim Foundation Fellow. In 1973 he succeeded Roman Jakobson as the Samuel Hazzard Cross Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures, an ironic reconnection to the very mentor who had advised him to steer clear of Russian as a field of concentration. He is survived by Sally Herman Lunt, his wife of forty-seven years, daughters Elizabeth Gray Lunt and Catherine Lunt Greer, son-in-law David S. Friedman, and five grandchildren.

Respectfully submitted,

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