

MEMORY OF THE WORLD REGISTER

Ostromir Gospel (1056–1057)

Ref N° 2010-02

PART A – ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

1 SUMMARY

The Ostromir Gospel (1056–1057) is the world's earliest dated East Slavonic manuscript book to date (the date is reported in the book by the scribe). It is written in Old Russian using Cyrillic alphabet.

The Ostromir Gospel was made at a time when the old Russian State was prospering and developing culturally, following the official adoption of Christianity in 988 and there was an integration of the Russian State into the centuries-old Christian cultural tradition. The singular role of the Ostromir Gospel in introducing Christianity to previously isolated and pagan East Slavonic tribes, and in distributing Slavonic literature across the vast expanses, is beyond doubt. The Ostromir Gospel represents the cradle of Russian literature and culture; and modern research in this documentary heritage has made a decisive contribution to the emergence and further development of international Old Slavonic studies.

2 DETAILS OF THE NOMINATOR

2.1 Name (person or organisation)

National Library of Russia

2.2 Relationship to the documentary heritage nominated

Depository of national ownership

2.3 Contact person (s)

Zaitsev, Vladimir Nikolaevich, Director General National Library of Russia

2.4 Contact details (include address, phone, fax, email)

National Library of Russia. Sadovaia St. 18, Saint Petersburg,
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3 IDENTITY AND DESCRIPTION OF THE DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE

3.1 Name and identification details of the items being nominated

The Ostromir Gospel, 1056–1057.

Call number: PHБ, F.п.I.5. Manuscripts, National Library of Russia.

Sadovaia St. 18, Saint Petersburg, 191069. Russia.

3.2 Description

- The Ostromir Gospel (aparakos summary) was made in 1056–1057 as seen from the note in ff. 294-294 verso, written by the scribe, Deacon Gregory. It contains 294 leaves of parchment (size 355 x 290 mm). The text is written in Old Russian with nutgall ink in large Ustav script. The headings are in slaked gold over dark cherry-colored lettering. Some of the leaves show ecphonetic notation. The book contains three polychromatic miniatures using gold: 1. Evangelist John and Prokhor (f. 1 verso); 2) Evangelist Luke (f. 87 verso); 3) Evangelist Mark (f. 126). The rich decoration is indicative of Old Byzantine style: enamel-type ornamented headbands – one large (f. 2) and 18 minor (ff. 58, 89, 127, 164, 204 verso, 210 verso, 226 verso, 239 verso, 243, 256, 263 verso, 267 verso, 270 verso, 271 verso, 274, 281 verso, 283, 288 verso); 242 large initials, most including zoo- and anthropomorphous elements; 27 medium initials. The manuscript contains: aprakops summary lectures (ff. 2–204 verso), Sunday morning Gospel lectures (ff. 204 verso –210 verso), Gospel Calendar lectures (ff. 210 verso –288 verso), and occasional Gospel lectures: "Consecration of a Church", "Commemoration of Distress", "For the King's Victory in Battle" "For a Monk", "For a sick husband or wife", "Over anointing oil", "For those possessed", scheduled Gospel lectures on Good Friday (f. 290 verso –294 verso). A shorthand note f. 1, made not before the 16th c., says: «Евангелие Софейское апракос» (St. Sophia Gospel aprakos). No stamps or labels. Kept as unbound books.
- Call number: PHБ, F.п.I.5.
- According to the note made by scribe Gregory, the Ostromir Gospel was commissioned by the eminent Novgorod Governor Ostromir (baptized as Joseph) in the reign of Kiev Prince Izyaslav Yaroslavich (1024–1078), begun on 21 October 1056 and completed on 12 May 1057. The book was intended as a donation to St Sophia Cathedral, the main church of North West Russia built in Great Novgorod between 1045 and 1050. It was kept there for several hundred years, and then removed to Moscow. No documentary evidence is available for the period before the 18th century. The inventory of the Kremlin Resurrection Church in Moscow for 1701 reports the manuscript was there. In 1720, the book was dispatched to Petersburg. In 1805, the Ostromir Gospel was discovered by Catherine II's Private Secretary, Ia.A. Druzhinin, among the personal belongings of the deceased Empress. In 1806, Emperor Alexander I requested that the Ostromir Gospel be deposited in the Imperial Public Library (currently the National Library of Russia) where the manuscript found its permanent location. This deposit initiated continuous research.
- The calliper differs both in individual parchment leaves and different parts of the same leaf. Some leaves show oval and circular holes with thickened hard edges, indicating intravital damage of the hide by insects. Fourteen leaves clearly show brittleness remaining after hide-ashing and machine work on the fleshing side. Some leaves

demonstrate minor reach-through holes, oval or circular. These were made by skin-pesting worms before dressing, being scattered and inconsistent. Many leaves shows undersize holes probably made with a pin or some other piercing instrument. These may be due to a scribe ruling or fastening the parchment to the desk when writing. Some leaves show wax beads, in others the text is seen through; there are occasional corrections - letters or words written over scraped ones; also some blotting. Judging from the holes at the back bend, the book was bound several times.

- The Ostromir Gospel was restored at the M.E. Saltykov-Shedrin Public Library Book Hygiene and Restoration division (restorer – E.Kh. Trey) in 1955. The process removed surface layers, rough patches in broken places, dark glue staining at the back bend, wax beads, etc. Distortions were then smoothed over by stepwise moistening. Major ruptures were braced with parchment strips, and minor ones with long-fibered cotton paper. Decorated segments (miniatures, headbands, initials) show some pre-restoration paint- and gold fall. The current condition of the Ostromir Gospel can be described as good. There are no distorted leaves. No paint disintegration has been reported since the restoration. There is no visible damage. Each manuscript book is interlaid with restoration paper. The illuminated leaves and headbands are interlaid with mica tape. The manuscript has been kept in a specially designed case made of aged oak. The case has a flap lid and a low sidewall with copper hinges and screws.

3.3 References:

Ostromir Gospel 1056–1057. Supplemented with Greek Gospels and grammar comments, ed. by A.Kh.Vostokov. SPb., 1843.

Vostokov A.Kh. Slavic Grammar rules as seen from the Ostromir Gospel // *Uchenye zapiski 2-go Otdelenia AH.* SPb., 1848. B. 2, iss. 1. P. 28–76.

Kozlovsky M. M. A linguistic study of the Ostromir Gospel // *Issledovania po russkomu iazyku* языку. SPb., 1885. Vol. 1. P. 1–127.

Karinsky N.M. Writing in the Ostromir Gospel (a paleographic study) // *Sbornik Rossiskoi publichnoi biblioteki.* Pg., 1920. Vol. 1, iss. 1. P. 168–192.

Shukovskaia L.P. Typology of manuscripts in the Old Russian complete aprakos from the 11th to 14th century, in connection with linguistic research // *Pamiatniki drevnerusskoi pis'mennosti: Iazyk i tekstologia.* M., 1968. P. 199–332.

Garzaniti M. *Die altslavische Version der Evangelien.* Köln; Weimar; Wien, 2001. S. 322–328, 481–508.

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4 JUSTIFICATION FOR INCLUSION/ ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

4.1 Is authenticity established?

Authenticity

The Ostromir Gospel is a manuscript book made in 1056–57. Documentary evidence is represented by a scribe's note on p. 194. Codicological, paleographic and linguistic data permit the library to confidently describe it as the original copy rather than a later falsification.

4.2 Is world significance, uniqueness and irreplaceability established?

Uniqueness and irreplaceability

The Ostromir Gospel is the only book treasure representing a singular combination of 10th- and 11th- century Eastern (Byzantine) and Western cultural traditions. The decorative design is unique: Old Byzantine-type initials with zoomorphous elements typical for Western illumination, and anthropomorphous elements quite unusual in a manuscript. The unique 11th-century treasure, the Ostromir Gospel, was made in Russia, a crossroads of different cultural traditions at the time. The book was commissioned by a prominent statesman as an act of historical significance, influencing political, ideological and cultural developments in that immense territory.

4.3 Is one or more of the criteria of (a) time (b) place (c) people (d) subject and theme (e) form and style satisfied?

Criterion 1 – time

The Ostromir Gospel is the earliest dated manuscript book in the East Slavonic tradition. This both typical and unique product of mid 11th-century Slavic literature formed the basis of Slavic paleography starting from dated sources. Research on the Ostromir Gospel may be thought of as an exceptional impulse for Slavonic paleography and comparative study of the world manuscript heritage. On the other hand, the Ostromir Gospel is the latest monument of superior craftsmanship and practical national significance, representing the union of Christian

Church before its disintegration into Western and Eastern churches in 1054. The Ostromir Gospel Calendar lists the names of saints from the All-Christian pantheon.

Criterion 2 – place

The Ostromir Gospel was made in Old Russia as an ideological symbol of the new Christian state facing the world arena with confidence. Old Russian Princes had close dynastic relations with Byzantine and West European elites. Russia appeared at the intersection of political and economic interests, and different cultural traditions, this specific combination giving rise to matchless innovations in manuscript book design, as exemplified by the unique Ostromir Gospel. One example is the unique, occurring in no other manuscript book across the world, iconography of Evangelist John with disciple Prokhor (f.1 verso): the lion over the frame symbolizing Christ Resurrected and also representing the traditional symbol of governmental authority.

Criterion 3 – socio-cultural context

The Ostromir Gospel provides a dramatic representation of contemporary historical and cultural developments across the vast expanses populated by pagan Slavic tribes. Among the more important ones was the emergence of a united feudal state, and the dissemination of Christianity and writing.

Criterion 4 – subject and theme

The content is not restricted by canonical New Testament texts, also including "occasional" liturgical lectures (their content offering an insight in a number of material events, and 11th-century ideology), and the Calendar is of exceptional value due to reference to major events of worldwide importance.

Criterion 5 – form and style

The Ostromir Gospel is a model of the centuries-old manuscript tradition for New Testament manuscripts, adopted in Slavic lands in the 10th century and then introduced to Old 'Rus'. The highly sophisticated mastership and singular style clearly demonstrate the unique agreement between the place, time and circumstances.

4.4 Are there issues of rarity, integrity, threat and management that relate to this nomination?

Rarity.

The Ostromir Gospel is certainly the rarest specimen of contemporary culture surviving to date.

Integrity.

The body of the book is integral, the original binding missing (as typical of the early manuscript book heritage).

Threat.

The document is stored in the National Library of Russian Manuscripts division according to existing safety norms. Security involves continuous control currently provided by the Library's Security service. Safeguards include:

- 1) physical protection (vault storage)
- 2) automated fire alarm system
- 3) burglar alarm/intrusion protection (two-level)
- 4) video surveillance with data backup

5) 24-hr militia (police) protection

5 LEGAL INFORMATION

5.1. Owner of the documentary heritage (name and contact details)

Russian Federation

5.2 Custodian of the documentary heritage (name and contact details, if different than the owner)

National Library of Russia. Address: 191069, Saint Petersburg, Sadovaia St., 18-20.

5.3 Legal status:

(a) Category of ownership

State ownership

(b) Accessibility

Access is provided under the Federal Law of Archival Services in the Russian Federation of 22.10.2004 № 125-FZ, and Federal Law of Library Services in the Russian Federation of 29.12.1994 № 78-FZ.

(c) Copyright status

Public property; access is provided in the National Library of Russia Reading Room on authorization; free access to facsimile edition in the Reading Room.

(d) Responsible administration

Authorization for publication is by the National Library of Russia Administration.

(e) Other factors

6 MANAGEMENT PLAN

6.1 Is there a management plan in existence for this documentary heritage? YES/NO

Provision of access for research purposes requires high-grade digitizing conforming to current reproduction safety and insurance standards.

Planned safety strategies include:

1. A state-of-the-art armored vault for treasure protection.
2. A special equipped room for more valued manuscripts in custody of the National Library of Russia Manuscripts (adjoining the current depot).

7 CONSULTATION

7.1 Provide details of consultation about this nomination with (a) the owner of the heritage (b) the custodian (c) your national or regional Memory of the World committee

Regarding the nomination, I.L. Linden, NLR's Deputy Director General for International Activities, consulted RF National Commission Secretary for UNESCO, G.E. Ordzhonikidze, by telephone.

PART B – SUBSIDIARY INFORMATION

8 ASSESSMENT OF RISK

8.1 Detail the nature and scope of threats to this documentary heritage

No immediate threat to the treasure (unless there are unavoidable physical or political circumstances) today.

9 ASSESSMENT OF PRESERVATION

9.1 Detail the preservation context of the documentary heritage

The treasure is stored in the NLR in compliance with the main preservation principles. Records are kept in proper order: the treasure is entered in the inventory and represented in printed catalogs; exhibition usage of the original copy is documented.

Various efforts are taken to maintain the required storage conditions for manuscripts. Temperature and humidity control involves loggers and a thermal hygrometer; air conditioners are installed.

Analyses of instrumental measurements indicate that the RH (Relative Humidity) is below 15-30% in the room during the heating season. The Humidity in the glass cabinets is 15-30 % higher due to its being a closed space with delayed value changes. In the non-heating season, ambient RH varies between 30 and 40%. Thus relative humidity in the Manuscripts room is 10-35% below the GOST (7.50-2002) standard for paper and 20-45% of that for documents on parchment. In addition, daily humidity variations are kept within 3-5%.

Ambient temperature in the depot varies between 17 and 25°C. The daily range remains within 1-2 °C. Temperature generally varies between 22 and 24° C. The ambient temperature only conforms to GOST standard under the two simultaneous conditions of cold weather and no heating. As indicated by logger data, temperature in the vault containing the Ostromir Gospel is held constant at 22.3-22.5° C, i.e. 2° C above the GOST standard. RH value is kept constant at 30.5%, i. e. 25% below the GOST standard for documents on parchment.

Total lighting and UV light values are several times in excess of GOST standards (7.50-2002).

Ambient air analysis for organic and nonorganic substances is passable. No MPC surplus is reported. Microorganic concentration is found below 10 OEC/hr, i. e. normal.

Thus storage conditions are found to be somewhat defective with regard to basic standards in: 1) parallel uses as a work- and exhibition room; 2) inadequate air circulation; 3) excessive aridity (particularly in spring season with elevated ambient temperature and the heating system still in operation), affecting parchment-based manuscripts.

The custodians strive to provide maximum possible care for the treasure in extreme cases of inevitable removal from its permanent vault storage during scheduled examination for preservation or exhibition purposes. Yet taking the original copy out of the vault is a tedious process because the vault contains some other valuable manuscripts, and the tightness is intolerable.

Public access to the treasure is provided via the facsimile edition produced in 1988.

PART C - LODGEMENT

This nomination is lodged by:

(Please print name).....Zaitsev, Vladimir Nikolaevich, Director General, National Library of
Russia.....

(Signature)..... (Date).....21.07.2009