HMML’s Latest Acquisition, *The Ostrih Bible*
Front cover: HMML’s most recent acquisition for its Rare Book Collection, the *Ostrih Bible*, printed in Ukraine in 1581, is the first complete printed Bible in Church Slavonic, the common liturgical language of Slavic Christianity, and is one of very few intact copies remaining in the world.

HILL MUSEUM & MANUSCRIPT LIBRARY

In the Benedictine tradition of reverence for human thought and creativity, the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library (HMML) preserves manuscripts, printed books and art at Saint John’s University and undertakes photographic projects in regions throughout the world.

HMML is the home of the world’s largest collection of manuscript images and of *The Saint John’s Bible*, a handwritten, illuminated Bible in modern English.

Illuminations is a publication of the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library and is published for scholars and friends of HMML twice a year.

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Dear HMML Friends:

HMML is now working in Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, Ethiopia, India, Italy, Romania, and Sweden. By Christmas we will also be active in Ukraine, and will have returned to Malta. All of this activity moves us ahead with the top goal of our Strategic Plan, which calls for expanding our preservation activity in the Middle East and adding a “second front” of digitization work in Eastern Europe. As you can see from the global reach of our initiatives, we now have studios operative in the Middle East, Africa, South Asia, and Europe, thus adding both “second” (Romania and Ukraine) and “third” (India) fronts to our work, as well as resuming regular work in Ethiopia.

Expanding into new regions has been an exciting adventure, and sometimes a challenge. Manuscripts are strong bearers of religious and national identity, and building relationships of trust with their guardians takes time and patience. Fortunately HMML’s unique combination of academic reputation and Benedictine sponsorship has proved to be invaluable.

As we expand on the ground, the quantity of digital information flowing back to HMML has become what our Director of Digital Collections and Imaging, Wayne Torborg, has called “the digital tsunami.” We have established workflows to manage the data and make it available to scholars as quickly as possible. Because we are an archive, however, data wrangling isn’t enough. We remind ourselves that the HMML slogan “Think in Centuries” has practical implications here and now for how we keep our collections, both of legacy microfilm and digital media, safe, secure and available. You will be hearing more about our strategies to ensure that these collections really are for the centuries.

Sincerely yours,

Father Columba Stewart, OSB
Executive Director HMML

At the Manuscript Archives in the Monastery at Mor Gabriel, Turkey
When the Benedictine monks came to Minnesota in 1856, they brought with them a chest packed with the books needed to found a monastery: Bibles, liturgical books, theological and devotional works. Within twenty years the monks had built up a library of almost 1,200 books, mostly from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As German monasteries saw the success of the new foundation in Minnesota, they helped to build up the collection by sending their duplicate titles to the frontier monks.

In 1877 two such windfalls from Germany doubled the size of the growing collection, adding incunabula and many seventeenth and eighteenth century books. In the following years, the Abbots of Saint John’s bought books while on visits to Europe, monks sent to Europe for studies acquired more books and manuscripts, and benefactors began to see Saint John’s University as a place to bequeath their own bibliographic treasures.

In recent years, Saint John’s became home to the James A. Kritzeck collection of autographs and letters, Al Müllerleile’s examples of fine printed books from the fifteenth to twentieth centuries, and the greatest gift of all, Arca Artium, Frank Kacmarcik’s personal library of rare books, valuable reference works, and a companion collection of art and sound recordings.

In the years following its founding in 1965, HMML began to build up its own modest collection of old and rare books, most of them gifts from close friends. Particularly notable among them are the medieval western manuscripts known by the names of the generous families who gave them as the Bean, Gavin, Bethune, Dow, Fesler, Koll, and Williams manuscript holdings. Complementing them are the Ethiopian manuscripts donated by the Coskran, Wenner, and Simonson families. In 2004, HMML became the guardian of the historic Saint John’s rare book collection and of Arca Artium. With these complementary collections finally under common administration, full electronic cataloguing and access to selected treasures through Vivarium, HMML’s image delivery system on the web, became possible. A grant of $540,000 from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has supported the complete cataloguing of all of the rare books now in HMML’s care. This major undertaking is scheduled for completion in summer 2008.

Our two principal areas of focus are Bibles and works related to Benedictine monasticism (Benedictina). Other areas in which we have significant strengths are liturgy, typography, paleography, and, because of The Saint John’s Bible, calligraphy. Our collections in these areas support HMML’s holdings of manuscript images, making HMML a unique resource for the study of both handwritten and printed books.

HMML continues to welcome gifts of significant books relevant to its areas of research. We also buy important works as funds permit. In the past few months, we have been blessed with two opportunities to acquire books of critical importance for our collections. In both cases, successful purchase will require the help of our friends.

The Dialogues of Pope Gregory the Great are the only source of information we have about the life and deeds of Saint Benedict. HMML has a fine collection of various editions of the Dialogues, including several old examples of the Latin original and the first Italian (1475) and French (1509) translations. Long on our wish list has been the very first edition of the original Latin text, printed in...
HMML’s newly-acquired first edition of the *Dialogues* of Pope Gregory the Great is the original Latin text and was printed in Strassburg in 1472-73. It was rebound in the early nineteenth century by the noted Parisian binder Bozérian le Jeune, and since then has been well cared for by the distinguished collectors who have owned it over the last two hundred years.

Strassburg in 1472-73. A handful of copies are in the major American research libraries, three copies in the British Isles, a few in continental Europe. No copy is known to remain in a monastic library. This past summer, a copy of this first edition of the *Dialogues* became available for the first time in decades. A handsome, pristine copy, it was rebound in the early nineteenth century by the noted Parisian binder Bozérian le Jeune. Well cared for by the distinguished collectors who have owned it over the last two hundred years, this extremely important monastic work has found its way to a good home, where it joins North America’s best collection of Benedictina.

The *Ostrih Bible*, sometimes known as the “Slavonic Gutenberg,” is the first complete printed Bible in Church Slavonic, the common liturgical language of Slavic Christianity. Printed in the Ukraine in 1581, this was in its day by far the largest Cyrillic printing project ever undertaken. Edited and printed under Orthodox auspices, the *Ostrih Bible* (sometimes called Ostrog after the Russian form of the place name) seems to have been deliberately designed for both Orthodox and Catholic readers, as its arrangement of the biblical books has features of both traditions. It has been suggested that the motivation for its publication was to unite Orthodox and Catholics in opposition to the inroads of
Calvinism in the western Slavic world, giving the older religious traditions a Bible they could use in refuting the Protestant claim that they had neglected the Bible in favor of other religious texts.

The HMML copy was originally owned by the Orthodox Bishop of Lviv, Ukraine, Hedeon Balaban (bp. 1569-1607), and was only recently discovered in northern Romania by a European bookseller. Like the first edition of the *Dialogues*, this is a very rare book, with only a handful of copies in North America. HMML’s copy is in unusually good condition: most copies are very worn, and often are missing pages. With HMML launching a major, multi-site project in Ukraine this fall, the acquisition of the *Ostrih Bible* is timely indeed, and will help place HMML on the map for those interested in the Christianity of the Slavic world.

These acquisitions cannot be covered by HMML’s normal funding for collection development. While existing resources have been used for down payments, HMML must raise the balance to ensure that these precious texts can remain in its Rare Book Collection, where they so naturally find a place. If you would like to consider sponsoring one of these outstanding works, please contact Erin Lonergan, Director of Development (elonergan@csbsju.edu). A significant sponsorship will offer naming opportunities i.e. “The John and Jane Doe *Dialogues of Gregory the Great*” or the “Jane Doe Memorial *Ostrih Bible*” and other HMML recognition benefits.
HMML’s Malta Study Center to be Fully Endowed

On August 6, 2007, the Rev. Columba Stewart, OSB, Executive Director of the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library (HMML), announced that HMML has met a $450,000 challenge grant from The National Endowment for the Humanities by raising $1.8 million in contributions and pledges for its Malta Study Center. The NEH awarded the 4:1 challenge grant in January 2004, requiring HMML to raise the matching funds in four years’ time. The 2.25 million-dollar endowment made possible by this NEH challenge grant will establish a permanent curator and fund a full complement of activities including digital imaging, cataloguing, manuscript preservation, book acquisition, research fellowships and academic conferences.

According to its internationally-recognized curator, Theresa Vann, Ph.D., HMML’s Malta Study Center is the only location outside of Malta where scholars have access to the archives of the Knights of Malta, as well as other major archival treasures of this island nation, all under one roof. “The gathering of these materials at HMML makes research even more convenient than research in the various archives in Malta, where much of the material is either unavailable to scholars or available only on a limited basis. These are the only sources for the complete central archives of an international military religious order, the Order of the Hospital, many crusader sources, printed music and unique inquisition records.”

Since it was established in 1973 in collaboration with the Honorary Consul General of Malta-St. Paul, Joseph S. Micallef, K.M., the Malta Study Center has served national and international researchers and students of the history of Western Europe, the Mediterranean and the island of Malta. The mission of the Center is to preserve and make accessible archival materials related to the history of the island of Malta and the Knights of Malta.

For more information about HMML’s Malta Study Center, please contact Theresa Vann, director of the Malta Study center, at 320-363-3993, or by e-mail, tvann@csbsju.edu.

HMML to Begin Preservation Project in India

The Syriac tradition maintains that Christianity first came to India with the Apostle St. Thomas (yes, that’s “doubting Thomas”) before the end of the first century. Documentary evidence confirms Syriac Christian tradition in India as early as the fourth century, and no evidence has been discovered that contradicts the Apostle Thomas tradition. Indian Christian traditions are unique and promise to be enormously interesting for a number of reasons. One of the most relevant in this age of globalization and India’s rise as a world power, is the fact that the Syriac tradition of southwest India, in the District of Kerala, is the only unbroken tradition of apostolic Christianity that has developed entirely beyond the reach of the Roman empire and its powerful Greco-Roman influence, and instead has been surrounded by a major world religious culture of entirely different origin: Hinduism.

HMML has recently entered into an international partnership with the Association for Preserving the Syrian Christian Heritage in India (APSCHI) to preserve the written legacy of India’s Syriac-tradition Christians. The partnership project has two primary components: digital preservation and archiving.

This combination of scholarly access, as well as both physical and digital preservation, will enable a unique story at least 1,500 years old to be explored, understood and told today and for generations to come.

Watch for upcoming information about this exciting new preservation initiative in the next issue of Illuminations and on HMML’s website, www.hmml.org
Where We’re Working: What We’ve Preserved: *HMML’s Current Projects*

by Phil Steger, HMML’s Deputy Director of Manuscript Preservation

![Large 12th Century Gospel Lectionary in Greek. The Museum of Romanian Literature, Iași. This image is from the first section of a codex written in the 12th Century using a rigorously formal cursive script. The parchment is of mediocre quality, appearing rather thick and dark yellow in color. Purplish molds suggest humidity damage. The different colors of materials, especially in the corners, indicate that this manuscript has undergone extensive restoration.]
Romania

Manuscripts in Romania display the layers, contrasts and connections of its rich past. Bilingual in Greek and Latin during Roman times, Romanians adopted Old Slavonic for their liturgy in the 9th Century, and then gradually developed their own Romanian-language tradition during Ottoman rule. Despite being a Romance language, the Romanian language was written in Cyrillic letters like the Slavic languages, and not Roman letters like other Romance languages, until the 19th Century.

Romanian manuscripts also form an important bridge between Greek and Slavonic traditions. Translations of the Philokalia and writings on the “Jesus Prayer,” were made from Greek to Slavonic here. These texts form the core of the spirituality of the “holy mountain” of Mt. Athos, and their Slavonic translations made possible the remarkable monastic revival of 19th century Russia, which inspired much of this period’s literature, from the Way of the Pilgrim to The Brothers Karamazov, by Fyodor Dostoevsky.

In partnership with the Center for Byzantine Studies in Iași, northeastern Romania, HMML has recently digitized the manuscripts of the Museum of Romanian Literature in Iași. We will continue with other projects in the coming year.

The history of this codex may be reconstructed thus: after buying the mutilated manuscript, the owner had it restored in ca. 1315-1317 by a scribe who was very skillful at imitating archaic graphic forms. Finally, either he himself or the scribe added the note about ownership.

*The palaeographical study of this manuscript was performed by Marco D’Agostino.*
Pathways to Preservation:
How HMML Manages Its Mission

By Phil Steger, HMML Deputy Director of Manuscript Preservation

HMML’s mission of preserving the hand-written cultures of humanity is vast. Human beings have been writing things down for thousands of years, producing millions of pages of text. Furthermore, culture does not stay in carefully managed, pre-set categories. Like language itself, written traditions interact with and influence one another. Since this is the case, how do we at HMML pursue our mission? How do we make our way methodically across this landscape of intersecting cultural trails?

At first glance, it can appear that we are pursuing projects at random – an Arabic-speaking Byzantine church in Syria, a monastery in Turkey continuing a local dialect of the 3,000 year-old Aramaic language, an Armenian Catholicosate in Lebanon, mountain monasteries in Ethiopia, libraries of Greek and Slavonic language in Romania, Latin language manuscripts in Ukrainian museums, and Malayalam palm leaf manuscripts in India. Reading such a list suggests a random hunt for Easter eggs and not a systematic, scholarly pursuit.

Yet, how we pursue our work isn’t random. There is both logic and a system to it. Christianity has a definite number of root language traditions that, even as they interact, can be traced across time and territory. Christianity combined with language and culture in two important ways. First, Christians took inspiration from the literary traditions of a dominant language, for example Greek or Aramaic, and then developed distinctive Christian traditions in those languages. Second, Christians translated these traditions into the languages of newly encountered peoples in order to better communicate Christian tradition to them, in some cases even inventing an alphabet for this purpose. New Christian traditions then developed in these languages. At HMML, we discover preservation opportunities by carefully following the pathways of these traditions.

In Western Christian tradition, there is only one root language tradition: Latin. The Romance and Germanic language traditions of Christianity, as well the religious traditions of many Eastern Europeans, such as Poles, Hungarians, Czechs and others, were all based on Latin Christianity. Eastern Christianity, on the other hand, has seven, distinct, original language traditions, including what may be considered Christianity’s two native tongues: Syriac (a dialect of Aramaic) and Greek. From these, Coptic, Armenian, Georgian, Ethiopian and Slavonic Christian language traditions developed. Latin tradition itself, not incidentally, arose from Greek tradition as Christian faith moved from the Greek-speaking underclass into the higher strata of Roman society.

HMML: From West to East

HMML began its work by taking microfilm images of Latin language monastic manuscripts in Austria, which then lay along the axis of Cold War nuclear brinkmanship. From this starting point, HMML developed a series of far-flung but related projects that, with the exception of work in Ethiopia, were connected by the traditions of the Latin West. These projects were found in:

- Germany
- Austria
- Switzerland
- Sweden
- Italy
- England
- Malta
- Spain
- Portugal
- South Africa
- Ethiopia
HMML pursues new preservation opportunities by working systematically along the pathways of Christianity’s eight original language traditions. HMML’s current strategic focus is to preserve the whole of Eastern Christianity’s manuscript legacy. The seven primary language traditions of Eastern Christianity are: Greek, Syriac, Armenian, Coptic, Ethiopic, Georgian, and Slavonic.
We also began during this time the long-term work of preserving the manuscripts that record the history of the Knights of Malta. The Knights of Malta are a lay order in the Latin tradition that began as the Order of St. John of Jerusalem in 11th Century Palestine and migrated westward to its current home on the Island of Malta.

Our shift of focus from the Christian West to the Christian East was made when we were invited to work in Lebanon in 2003. Lebanon, when measured per square mile, contains the most diverse and richest Eastern Christian manuscript collections of any single country. They are also the most endangered. Our first preservation partner there was the Antiochian Greek Orthodox monastery at Balamand. Antiochian Greek Orthodoxy can be traced back directly to the church established by St. Peter and St. Paul in Antioch (now Antakya, Turkey). Speaking Greek in the cities and Syriac in the countryside, the Church in Antioch followed the native Syrian liturgical rite. Today, our projects in Lebanon include Syriac, Greek, Armenian and Latin traditions.

The importance of these collections, along with surrounding political instability and violence, make Lebanon HMML’s first priority for preservation.

Since 2003, we have expanded our work in the East by following language tradition trails and by returning to the one country in the eastern tradition where we had microfilmed years before, Ethiopia.

SYRIAC-ARMENIAN-ETHIOPIAN PATHWAYS

Syriac Christian tradition, the outgrowth of Aramaic-speaking Christianity, exists in a long arc whose center is in the southeastern part of modern Turkey, where Syriac arose as a literary language, and extends from Jerusalem in the west across Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, Iraq, Iran and, ultimately, to its farthest limit in southern India. Syriac tradition also sparked a new literary and liturgical tradition in the Caucasus Mountains, where Syriac missionaries converted the nation of Armenia to Christianity in the 4th Century. While the Armenian language

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Jounieh, Lebanon, near Beirut on the Levantine coast. HMML currently has three preservation projects in Jounieh. One is in the Greek language tradition and two are in Syriac Christian language traditions. Photo by Phil Steger, 2007.
already existed, the Armenian Christian tradition began when Mesrob Mashtots, a monk, invented the Armenian alphabet in order to translate religious texts into the Armenians’ native language. The Armenian Christian manuscript arc covers Armenia, much of modern Turkey, including Istanbul, as well as parts of Iran, Syria, Lebanon and Jerusalem. Major collections are also preserved in Vienna, which HMML microfilmed in the 1970s, and Venice.

Syriac and Ethiopian tradition also holds that shipwrecked Syriac missionaries led to the conversion of the Ethiopian kingdom, and the subsequent development of Ethiopic Christian tradition, though jurisdiction over this new church was given to the patriarch of Alexandria in Egypt. Ethiopic Christianity remains local to Ethiopia itself (and the modern diaspora in Europe and North America), with only one major church-owned manuscript collection existing outside Ethiopia in Jerusalem.

**Greek-Slavonic-Coptic-Georgian Pathways**

Greek Christian tradition overlaps with Syriac and Armenian traditions along the Levantine shores of the Eastern Mediterranean. Hellenized apostles like Paul, however, spread Christianity quickly beyond the Middle East throughout the Greek-speaking Roman Empire to the West. Later missionaries would carry Greek traditions of Byzantine Christianity northward, beyond the borders of the empire. Greek Christian tradition is directly responsible for the rise of Latin Christian tradition in the West, as mentioned earlier. It is also responsible for three Eastern offshoots: two national Christian traditions, Coptic and Georgian, and one international Christian tradition, Slavonic. Native Coptic Christianity in Egypt emerged from the original Greek-speaking Christian community in Alexandria. The first distinctly Caucasian Georgian traditions began to appear in the 5th-6th Centuries. Slavonic Christian tradition was born when two brothers, Cyril and Methodius, developed an alphabet that enabled the translation of Christian texts into the Slavonic language. Slavonic came to be the liturgical language of Slavic people from the Balkans to the Baltic and across the whole of Russia to the Bering Strait.

**HMML Preservation on the Pathways of Eastern Christian Tradition**

HMML has moved very quickly to follow these pathways in just a few short years. We are preserving Syriac manuscript traditions in Turkey, Syria, Lebanon and India, while an opportunity in Iraq may be developing.

We are preserving Armenian tradition manuscripts in Lebanon and Turkey, and will soon begin a project in Syria. We hope to work in Armenia itself and prospects are strong to start a project in Iran.

While have not yet gained access to ecclesiastical collections in the Greek tradition, opportunities may yet appear on the horizon. We have, however, begun preservation of Greek, Slavonic and Latin manuscripts in Romania and Ukraine.

We are currently supporting an international team of scholars doing field preservation in Ethiopia. And while we have had conversations with Coptic authorities in Egypt, we have not yet found an opportunity to work there.

Finally, we are expanding our Knights of Malta preservation project, and are currently digitizing manuscript collections in Rome and on the Island of Malta itself.

Our work to preserve eastern Christian manuscripts carries us across many countries and into different regions of the world – from the Middle East to Eastern Europe to the Indian subcontinent. And yet, with every step we travel we find ourselves moving within the pathways that brought the manuscripts’ creators to the very same places centuries before.
Wisdom Books is Released

Wisdom Books, the fifth volume of The Saint John’s Bible to be released, includes some of the Old Testament’s literary masterpieces, including Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, and Proverbs. Also in this volume is the much-loved book of Job, the Book of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), which though originally written in Hebrew comes down to us through the Greek tradition, and the Wisdom of Solomon, the only book in the Catholic Old Testament originally composed in Greek.

Wisdom Books continues the work of earlier volumes, with a script created by calligrapher Donald Jackson specifically for this project. Artists that will be familiar to readers, Thomas Ingmire, Suzanne Moore, Chris Tomlin, and Sally Mae Joseph, are joined by new contributing artist Diane M. von Arx to bring light—that is, illumination—to the text. And the images are not to be missed. There are over fifteen large illuminations; among them the spectacular frontispiece for Ecclesiastes and another titled “Creative Wisdom.” Additionally, to recognize the team of calligraphers that have bonded during six years of work and to capitalize on the aphoristic nature of these books, there is a special emphasis on text treatments. As you spend time with Wisdom Books, you will find yourself treasuring both the words and the images.

To order a copy of the Wisdom Books, visit The Saint John’s Bible website at www.saintjohnsbible.org or call HMML at 320-363-3514.

“Wisdom Woman” from the book of “Wisdom of Solomon,” Wisdom Books
Jacqueline C. Breher learned of Saint John’s through her first husband, Paul Breher, who graduated from the Preparatory School in 1944 and spent two years at the University before joining the Army. When Paul returned from his duty in Alaska, he finished college in Saint Paul. Within a year, Jackie also met an Army friend of Paul’s, Fr. Don Lemay, who is now retired after more than 50 years of service to Saint John’s. Jackie, now happily married to Bill Jackson, continues to share a warm friendship with Fr. Don, who now lives in the Abbey Retirement Center.

When asked what makes Saint John’s so meaningful to her, Jackie answers with a smile “the memory of Paul, who was so devout, and Fr. Don.” Jackie began her support of Saint John’s with service as a member of the Board of Overseers at the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library. Dr. Julian Plante was the Director of HMML at the time, and he and Jackie shared an important piece of personal history: they both graduated from Humboldt High School on the West Side of Saint Paul. He also knew that her degree from the College of Saint Catherine was in library science. He asked her to serve on the Board, and she did from 1985 until 2002. Those were years in which HMML was beginning to build its base of individual supporters, and it was Jackie who came up with the idea of a “thousand dollar club.” Dr. Plante liked it immediately and named it the Millennium Club.

In the 1990s, Jackie began her generous financial philanthropy to the institution which has been so close to her heart. Her early giving included a significant gift annuity of almost $2 million dollars whose ultimate proceeds will be apportioned among several programs in the University, and of course, HMML. She chose to establish a gift annuity because of the “unbelievable income stream.” In a way the additional income has made it possible for her to give twice, because it allows her to make more current gifts, even as it gives her the security of the income stream. She has left her planned gift unrestricted, even though it is large enough for an endowed, named fund, because “unrestricted gifts are so necessary.”

The Hill Museum & Manuscript Library is deeply grateful to Jackie for her gift annuity and welcomes her as a founding member of our newest giving club, the HMML Legacy Society.

For more information about HMML planned giving opportunities and the HMML Legacy Society, please contact HMML Director of Planned Giving, Michael Ziomko, at mziomko@csbsju.edu or 612-729-5742.
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