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DATABASE OF UKRAINIAN MANUSCRIPT BOOKS OF 11th — 16th CENTURIES: SIGNIFICANCE, CREATION METHODOLOGY, SUPPORT OF UKRAINIAN CULTURAL FOUNDATION

The aim of the work is to create a unified electronic database of Ukrainian manuscript books of the 11th — 16th centuries, which are stored in Ukraine and in other countries. The principal task is to identify and attribute manuscripts preserved in foreign archives, libraries, and museums (predominantly in Russia) by reassessing their national attribution on a scholarly basis and distinguishing Ukrainian books within the so-called common East Slavic heritage. **The research methodology** is grounded in the principles of historicism, scholarly objectivity, and systematic analysis. Codicological and palaeographic methods are employed, in particular the newly developed palaeographic-orthographic method of attribution, facilitating the inclusion of manuscript books in the Database as part of Ukraine's national heritage. **The originality of the study** lies in the creation of a unified and innovative



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290 database of Ukrainian manuscript books dating from the 11th to the 16th centuries, as a symbol of the struggle for the Ukrainian cultural heritage of Rus-Ukraine. It has been established that, in existing foreign catalogues, reference publications, and digital databases, medieval Ukrainian manuscript books — even when precise identification data is available — are predominantly recorded as Old Rus or even simply as Russian. **Conclusions.** The Database of Ukrainian Manuscript Books of the 11th — 16th centuries is the only digital resource of national significance devoted to manuscript books held in Ukraine and abroad. It is available on the *Ukrainian Manuscript Book* website (<https://ukrmanuscript.com/catalog>). No comparable database currently exists online. The Database is being developed within the ongoing project *Returning the Cultural Heritage to Ukraine*, implemented by the private publishing house Gorobets. Of particular importance to the creation and compilation of the Database is the state grant support provided by the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation amid the Russian-Ukrainian War, specifically in 2025 and 2026. To date, 1,400 books have been included in the Database of Ukrainian Manuscript Books. The creation of the Database constitutes a distinct project in its own right. Its innovative character lies in the fact that, for the first time, modern database management systems are being used to develop a full-scale, open-access database of Ukrainian manuscript books dating from the 11th to the 16th centuries. This important digital resource devoted to Ukraine's historical book heritage is intended to counter the informational and cultural dimensions of Russian military aggression and the ongoing annexation of Ukrainian book heritage, as well as to advance the cultural de-occupation of books of Ukrainian origin. The Project's long-term objective is to register all Ukrainian manuscript books that have survived to the present day.

Key words: Ukrainian medieval manuscript book, database, metadata, digital resource, codicology, palaeographic-orthographic methodology, attribution.

The relevance of the study is determined by the national significance of creating a unified Database of Ukrainian Manuscript Books of the 11th—16th centuries (hereinafter, the UMB Database), which, due to historical and political circumstances, are held both in Ukraine and in other countries and have generally not been attributed as being of ethnic Ukrainian origin. The creation of important digital resources devoted to Ukraine's ancient historical and cultural book heritage, with permanent online access to them, is intended to counter the informational and cultural dimensions of Russian military aggression, to facilitate the de-occupation of books of Ukrainian origin, and to oppose contemporary Russian cultural annexation. The relevance of the Project is further heightened by the context of the war and the threat of the physical destruction of manuscripts. Of foremost importance is the restoration to the national heritage of manuscript books that Russia treats as part of a common Russian history.

The inclusion of manuscripts in the unified UMB Database secures their status as part of the national manuscript book heritage. At present, Ukraine has no comprehensive database of Ukrainian manuscript books of the 11th — 16th centuries; therefore, the precise extent of the national source heritage represented by books held in Ukraine and beyond its borders remains unknown. It should be noted that, according to scholarly estimates, approximately 90 per

cent of books of Ukrainian origin are held in Russia, while the remainder are held in Poland, France, Sweden, Germany, and other countries. Of the surviving inventoried Cyrillic heritage, approximately 1 per cent is held in our country. The creation of this Database is intended to provide the fullest possible information regarding the extent of the source base of medieval Ukrainian manuscript books. An urgent task is to separate from the Russian heritage those books that have been annexed to it in the scholarly catalogues of their repositories and in the works of Russian scholars, particularly in the *Consolidated Catalogues of Slavic-Russian Manuscript Books* («Сводные каталоги славяно-русских рукописных книг») [1; 2]. Equally urgent is the decolonisation of written monuments that, within the global scholarly and cultural sphere, as well as in the catalogues and databases of other countries, are also recorded as Russian or Old Rus' (= Russian). Manuscripts currently held in Ukraine are at risk of physical destruction, which likewise necessitates their documentation and digitisation. The creation of the Database will provide access to information about digital copies of manuscripts held outside Ukraine, whose originals are difficult to access.

In accordance with the aim of the study, it is essential to address the principal task of identifying and attributing manuscripts held in foreign archives, libraries, and museums — predominantly in Russia — by reassessing their national attribution on a scholarly basis and distinguishing Ukrainian books within the so-called common East Slavic heritage. For the UMB Database, it is necessary to conduct a scholarly bibliographic search for manuscripts and, where required, to carry out their new attribution; to compile the principal metadata for concise scholarly descriptions to be entered into the Database, with references to the main specialist studies; and to record the available digital copies of the originals¹.

Review of Research. This article is the first scholarly analytical study in the field of cultural heritage devoted to the work on creating the *Database of Ukrainian Manuscript Books* of the 11th — 16th Centuries. Information on the creation of the UMB Database was presented by the project participants in 2025 at a series of special presentations, including those held at St. Sophia of Kyiv and the Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine initiated the creation and compilation of the State Register of Book Monuments of Ukraine. Methodological guidelines for compiling the State Register were developed by scholars of the Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine, specifically by researchers of the Institute of Manuscript: L. Dubrovina, L. Hnatenko, N. Zubkova, and O. Ivanova. General methodological principles were developed, and recommendations were proposed for populating a database of Cyrillic manuscript books dating from the 11th to the 16th centuries and early printed editions

¹ The article was prepared with the support of the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation. The position of the UCF may not coincide with the views of the authors

dating from the 15th to the 18th centuries [3]. It should be noted that only Cyrillic manuscript books held in Ukraine are entered in the State Register, including all books dating up to and including the 16th century. This Project has not been fully implemented and is not currently operational; it remains at the stage of implementation and supplementation, under the supervision of the Yaroslav Mudryi National Library of Ukraine. The library's website hosts the digital database *Book Monuments of Ukraine*, which contains information on rare and valuable editions submitted to the Yaroslav Mudryi National Library of Ukraine by expert groups established to organise the selection of book monuments in accordance with Section III of the Procedure for the Selection of Manuscript Books and Rare and Valuable Editions for the State Register of National Cultural Heritage, approved by Order No. 437 of the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine dated 14 June 2016 (<https://kp.nlu.org.ua/>). For this purpose, an expert commission was established in 2014 pursuant to Order No. 919 of the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine dated 30 October 2014, *On Approval of the Regulations on the Expert Commission for the Selection of Manuscript Books and Rare and Valuable Editions from Library Collections for the State Register of National Cultural Heritage*. The compiled register of manuscript books is not presented on the website in digital form, while the books once submitted to it, together with their principal identification metadata, remain inaccessible both to professional staff of Ukrainian archival, library, and museum institutions and to researchers.

Individual codices of Ukrainian manuscript books are represented on various contemporary Ukrainian and foreign digital portals, particularly in the database *Codex: Manuscript Books*, launched in 2001. For two decades, this database has been compiled on the basis of metadata from recent descriptions of manuscript books of East Slavic and South Slavic origin dating from the 12th to the 16th centuries and held in the collections of the Institute of Manuscript of the Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine [4–8]. The idea of creating the database and the principal methodological developments concerning the metadata of 16th-century codices held by the Institute of Manuscript belong to O. Ivanova [9]. Methodological developments concerning the further expansion of the database fields for the description specifically of 17th-century Ukrainian codices were carried out by T. Dobrianska [10; 11]. The database operates within the library's internal digital network; the portal of the Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine currently presents metadata for individual Cyrillic manuscript books, specifically Ukrainian manuscripts of the 16th and 17th centuries (http://www.irbis-nbuv.gov.ua/cgi-bin/irbis_mi/cgiirbis_64.exe?C21COM=F&I21DBN=RUKOP).

With regard to the representation of Ukrainian manuscript books in international and European digital resources, mention should be made of the centralised German portal *Manuscripta Mediaevalia*. Among the medieval manuscripts recorded there, the metadata of Cyrillic Church Slavonic monuments held in European archives are extensively represented. The European digital library

Europeana also presents notable Ukrainian manuscript books among integrated digitised manuscripts, early printed books, and historical documents from various national collections. The leading global digital manuscript archive, the *Hill Museum & Manuscript Library* (HMML), likewise contains in its *Reading Room* database a vast number of microfilmed and digitised Eastern Christian Cyrillic manuscripts, including individual Ukrainian manuscripts. Only recently have manuscripts newly attributed as Ukrainian begun to be recorded accordingly in foreign digital databases, while East Slavic codices whose provenance has not been precisely localised are still predominantly presented as Russian. Russian catalogues and digital databases, in turn, do not distinguish Ukrainian books within the East Slavic heritage, recording them as Old Rus' or even simply as Russian. Only occasionally is a regional designation provided, for example, an Old Rus' or Russian manuscript book with Halician-Volhynian features.

Presentation of the Main Material. The Database of Ukrainian Manuscript Books of the 11th—16th centuries is being created with long-term state grant support from the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation (hereinafter, the UCF), which is of particular importance during Russia's war against Ukraine, at a time of the physical and mental destruction of the Ukrainian nation and its cultural heritage.

The Database of Ukrainian Manuscript Books of the 11th — 16th centuries is being created within the framework of the ongoing project *Returning the Cultural Heritage to Ukraine* of the private publishing house Gorobets, as a symbol of the struggle for Ukrainian identity. The Project has been operating since 2009 and has resulted in the publication of twelve notable Ukrainian manuscript books in facsimile-type editions accompanied by scholarly studies; these books have already become part of the printed cultural heritage of both Ukraine and European countries. Detailed information about the Project was presented in 2021 in the special article «We return to the Ukrainian cultural heritage» [12]. At present, the Gorobets publishing house is the only publisher in Ukraine that systematically, thoroughly, and consistently engages in the search for, study, and reproduction of ancient Ukrainian manuscript monuments.

The head of the project *Returning the Cultural Heritage to Ukraine* and of the project *Database of Ukrainian Manuscript Books of the 11th — 16th centuries*, which operates on its platform, is Hanna Horobets, Director of the Gorobets publishing house. She is the driving force behind the team of scholars implementing the Project and laid the foundations of its methodological concept.

The originator of the idea of creating the *Database of Ukrainian Manuscript Books of the 11th — 16th centuries*, the Project's scholarly curator, and its compiler is Liudmyla Hnatenko, Doctor of Historical Sciences and Candidate of Philological Sciences. As early as 2017, she proposed the creation of attribution databases for medieval Ukrainian Cyrillic manuscripts [13]. In 2019, it was proposed to H. Horobets, head of the project *Returning the Cultural Heritage to Ukraine*, that the creation and compilation of a database of Ukrainian manuscript books held

in other countries and in Ukraine itself should begin on the Project's platform. The idea and its implementation received comprehensive support. Volodymyr Hurovych, a leading participant in the Project, made a productive contribution to the realisation of the idea and its practical implementation in the Database, particularly with regard to presenting metadata in the continuously operating online database register on the Ukrainian Manuscript Book website. The *Ukrainian Manuscript Book* website was developed by the *Jam Development* web studio, represented by Yuliia and Dmytro Matiash.

The Project provides for the compilation of a registration list of the source base of medieval Ukrainian manuscript books and the inclusion of scholarly attributional and archaeological metadata in the Database. Since the Project is ongoing, this work is carried out on the basis already established by its participants through the processing of reference and source materials. The principal criterion for including particular manuscript books held abroad in the Database is their significance as national heritage. This entails entering into the Database all Cyrillic books of Ukrainian origin dating up to and including the 16th century that were created in ethnic Ukrainian territories, written in Church Slavonic of the Ukrainian recension or in Old Ukrainian, and characterised by distinctive artistic decoration and other features.

Work on the creation and compilation of the Database began in 2019 with the establishment of the *Ukrainian Manuscript Book* website (<https://ukrmanuscript.com/about>) and the continuously operating online register of Ukrainian manuscript books hosted on its platform (<https://ukrmanuscript.com/catalog>). The concept and format of the Database Project were developed methodologically. The Database was initially based on the metadata of six Ukrainian manuscript books published by the publishing house at that time; today, twelve books form part of the Database of Ukrainian Manuscript Books: 1. the Lutsk Gospel, 14th century; 2. the Lutsk Psalter, 1384; 3. the Kholm Gospel, 13th century; 4. the Lavryshiv Gospel, 14th century; 5. the Reims Gospel, a convolute of the 11th and 14th centuries; 6. the Vienna Octoechos, 13th century; 7. the Prayer Book of Prince Volodymyr, 14th century; 8. the Gertrude Prayer Book, 10th – 11th centuries; 9. the Apostolus Christinopolitanus, 12th century; 10. the Halician-Volhynian Gospel, 12th century; 11. the Dubno Gospel, 16th century; and 12. the Turov Gospel, 11th century (<https://ukrmanuscript.com/books>) (see Fig. 1; the illustrations were provided for publication by the Gorobets publishing house). These ancient manuscripts clearly display the linguistic features of the Kyivan and Halician-Volhynian recensions of Church Slavonic liturgical books, which are also attested in modern Ukrainian.

From the very beginning of the Project, the UCF contributed to supporting the creation of the website and the online register of Ukrainian manuscript books by providing the principal grant support for projects involving facsimile-type editions accompanied by scholarly studies: the Reims Gospel of the 11th



Fig. 1. Database of Ukrainian Manuscript Books of the 11th – 16th centuries

century and the Vienna Octoechos of the 13th century (2019–2020, Project No. 71905), and the Gertrude Prayer Book and the Prayer Book of Prince Volodymyr (2021–2021, No. 3PLUS3-01905).

In 2025 and 2026, the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation began providing dedicated targeted grant support for the creation of the Database within cross-sectoral cultural heritage preservation projects: *Database of Ukrainian Manuscript Books of the 11th – 16th centuries within the Framework of the Project “Returning the Cultural Heritage to Ukraine”* (8CUH21-01905) and *Database of Ukrainian Manuscripts of the 11th – 16th centuries as a Symbol of the Struggle for the Ukrainian Identity of Rus’-Ukraine* (9CUH21-01905). The projects provide for the updating and technical maintenance of the Database and the Ukrainian Manuscript Book website. In 2026, under the grant agreement, the publishing house also produced English-language editions of the Reims and Turov Gospels of the 11th century [14; 15].

The Project is of exceptional national importance because it addresses such concepts as the self-identification of the nation, Ukrainian culture, and Ukrainian history, which for centuries have been subject to attempts at appropriation or rewriting. Both Ukrainian scholars and scholars from other countries have the opportunity to participate in it. The study of ancient Ukrainian volumes, their identification, the determination of the time and place of their creation, and the

clarification of the circumstances and routes by which they reached their present repositories enrich the culture of Ukraine and the entire Slavic world. The innovative character of the Project lies in the creation, through modern database management systems, of a comprehensive open-access database of Ukrainian manuscript books dating from the 11th to the 16th. The sustainability of the Project lies in its continuity, extending from the implementation of previous projects to further cooperation with foreign Slavist partners in order to locate other rare items of Ukrainian origin held in Europe, the Vatican, Mount Athos, and the United States; and to involve foreign specialists in the study of ancient Ukrainian manuscripts, including innovative manuscript research such as chemical and multi-spectral analysis of the writing material — parchment — as well as the pigments and inks used to write and decorate the texts. An important social component of the Project is the representation, through the medieval Cyrillic manuscript book heritage, of the Ukrainian nation as an ancient cultural community.

Work on the Project during Russia's war against Ukraine also involves certain risks, as it requires the use of the websites of Russian manuscript repositories (nlr.ru, rasl.ru, rgada.info, and others), ranging from technical inaccessibility — the blocking of access to Russian websites from the territory of Ukraine — to the ethical and legal unacceptability of a scholarly project's dependence on the resources of the aggressor state. First and foremost, we wish to emphasise that it is our Ukrainian book heritage — plundered and annexed — that is being studied. The use of the websites of Russian manuscript repositories is of paramount importance for the decolonisation of the ancient Ukrainian written heritage, which was annexed by imperial Tsarist Russia, during the Soviet period, and by modern Russia as Old Rus' heritage — that is, as Russian heritage. This acquires particular importance amid the military threat to Ukrainian statehood and, specifically, to the cultural heritage that identifies the distinctiveness and uniqueness of the Ukrainian nation. The *Database of Ukrainian Manuscript Books of the 11th — 16th centuries* is being created as a legally independent resource, without entering into cooperation agreements with foreign institutions holding ancient Cyrillic manuscripts, particularly Russian institutions, and without infringing copyright. Printed and manuscript materials used in the work are freely available in printed catalogues, manuscript editions, and the online resources of holding institutions, references to which are provided in the Database. Since there is no cooperation whatsoever with Russian institutions or scholars, there is no ethical issue in this regard. The scholarly Project is independent not only legally and ethically, but also technically, particularly with regard to the use of materials made freely available through online resources. Special access software is used to reach the online resources of Russian and other foreign institutions holding Cyrillic manuscript heritage. This is our cultural front in defence of the national cultural heritage! Russia's complete closure of access to its resources would not significantly affect the Project, since in 2026 the emphasis is placed on the heritage of Rus' from the

11th to the 13th centuries, for which scholarly materials are available in printed catalogues, manuscript publications, monographs, and articles. The manuscript collections of Poland are also being productively studied in order to identify Ukrainian manuscripts dating from the 15th and 16th centuries. The principal objective is to record manuscript books officially in the Database specifically as Ukrainian written heritage, rather than as East Slavic and, still less, as Russian.

“Unavailability” is not related to the technical blocking by Ukrainian internet service providers of Ukrainian users’ specialised access to the foreign websites of libraries, archives, and museums around the world, but rather to the unresolved technical issue of distinguishing the web addresses of such institutions or to certain technical problems in general. Some websites of holding institutions are also unavailable outside working hours, even when specialised access software is used. Digitised manuscripts can be accessed through the web addresses indicated in the Database, either directly or by means of specialised access software, which users employ independently. An example of the problem of direct technical inaccessibility for users in Ukraine is the digital copy of the *Egbert Psalter–Gertrude Prayer Book*, dated 984–993 and 1078–1086 and held in the National Archaeological Museum in Cividale, Italy (<https://ukrmanuscript.com/catalog>). The digital copy of this manuscript book is accessible through the use of specialised software providing access to the unrestricted internet. It is important to record in the Database that a particular manuscript has an digital copy and is accessible at a specific web address. The placement of digital copies of manuscripts directly on the ukrmanuscript.com website is not envisaged, as this would infringe the copyright of the holding institutions. It should be emphasised that, through the links to digitised manuscripts provided in the Database, these manuscripts are accessible to users in other countries who study or are interested in Ukrainian manuscript books. Through the Database, foreign users learn about the antiquity of our nation and its national written heritage, including the fact that the books of the period of Rus’, centred in Kyiv, constitute Ukrainian rather than Russian heritage.

On the ukrmanuscript.com website, access to digital copies is provided through links to the online locations where they are hosted. Copies available on the websites of the libraries whose materials are used in the Project are freely accessible and, in most cases, do not require a prior request for research use. However, placing copies directly on the *Ukrainian Manuscript Book* website (ukrmanuscript.com) without the consent of the holding institutions would constitute an infringement of copyright. As a rule, holding institutions make digital copies of manuscript collections available only through their own resources. Such co-operation is not currently envisaged within the Project, particularly with Russian institutions. Moreover, the technical resources of the website itself are limited. In our view, the presentation of digital copies exclusively on the websites of holding institutions does not call into question the long-term accessibility of the results of the current Project, since this is a common worldwide practice.

The Project allows for the possibility that access to Russian websites may be prohibited; accordingly, information sources independent of Russian digital resources are directly used in the work, including published scholarly archaeographic and codicological catalogues, facsimile and metagraphic publications of manuscripts, specialist monographs, and articles. The Project scholars and researcher-compilers also use their own methodologies and materials.

The principal work on creating the Database and compiling its metadata is carried out directly by leading practising specialists who work with manuscripts: the palaeographer and codicologist Liudmyla Hnatenko and the codicologist Mariya Kolbukh, Candidate of Philological Sciences, who have studied and described Cyrillic manuscript books for more than thirty years.

The work is based on the Database researcher-compilers' own experience in preparing modern scholarly catalogues and working with databases of medieval Cyrillic manuscript books [4—8; 13; 16], as well as on Ya. Zapasko's monumental work *The Ukrainian Manuscript Book* [17]. Certain provisions of the methodological recommendations for the State Registration of Book Monuments of Ukraine, in the preparation of which L. Hnatenko directly participated, have also been taken into account [3]. A number of L. Hnatenko's works present palaeographic, codicological, and graphic-orthographic studies of monuments dating from the 11th to the 17th centuries. Considerable attention is also devoted to the Second South Slavic influence on Ukrainian writing, which is of major importance for the attribution specifically of monuments of Ukrainian origin dating from the 14th to the early 17th century (see the works available on Academia.edu: <https://independent.academia.edu/ЛюдмилаГнатенко>). The work on ancient book codices also draws upon philological metadata from collective academic monographic studies on the history of the Ukrainian language [18; 19], the chrestomathic study by A. Shakhmatov and A. Krymskyi of Ukrainian monuments dating from the 11th to the 18th centuries [20], and the modern chrestomathy on the history of the Ukrainian language from the 10th to the 13th centuries compiled by V. Nimchuk [21]. The data from a study by V. Moysiyenko, a participant in the project *Returning the Cultural Heritage to Ukraine*, prepared in collaboration with the Polish scholar J. Getka, are also taken into account [22].

The attribution for the Database of books of Ukrainian origin is directly based on the many years of research into Ukrainian palaeography and orthography conducted by L. Hnatenko, the originator of the idea of creating the Database. In particular, it is based on her own development of an original methodology and a new palaeographic-orthographic method for identifying Ukrainian *ustav* and semi-*ustav* codices dating from the late 13th to the early 17th century, proceeding from the traditional and revolutionary development of the writing of Rus' in the 11th and 12th centuries. A new palaeographic method involving a "formal" approach to distinguishing attributive orthographic features — or a method of "visual" observation of attributive orthograms — has been proposed

and developed. It provides for establishing the time and place in which manuscripts, or their protographs, were written, as well as identifying scribes and other features, on the basis of orthograms in doublet oppositions at the phonetic-orthographic and non-phonetic levels. These can be clearly observed visually in the text, through the external features of the writing, without conducting a specialised linguistic analysis. The methodology for studying the graphic-orthographic systems of medieval Ukrainian written sources requires direct analysis of possible combinations of letters, the identification of their distinctive features, and the establishment of letter doublet oppositions according to their location and position within the word, line, and syllable [23; 24].

No comprehensive consolidated catalogue of ancient Cyrillic manuscript books exists. In specialist scholarly catalogues compiled according to particular disciplinary or thematic criteria, as well as in catalogues of individual library and archival collections, nearly all books are recorded as Old Rus', Rus', or even Russian. Therefore, when descriptions are prepared for the Database of Ukrainian Manuscript Books, a scholarly bibliographic and source-study search is first conducted, and a substantial body of books — considerably larger than the number planned for inclusion in the Database at each annual stage of the work — is selected in order to establish their Ukrainian provenance. Where necessary, a new scholarly attribution is then carried out, including palaeographic, codicological, and linguistic attribution. Scholarly attribution is conducted on the basis of the originals, where they are accessible to the Project scholars, and predominantly on the basis of digital copies available on the websites of holding institutions, facsimile and metagraphic publications of texts, and other materials. Thus, the highly important task of distinguishing Ukrainian heritage from the so-called East Slavic heritage — that is, Russian and Belarusian heritage — is being addressed.

One of the important tasks is to search the official websites of archives, libraries, museums, and religious institutions for available digital copies relevant to the attribution of manuscript books, with information about them subsequently entered into the Database where their Ukrainian origin has been established. This is not a simple task because, as already noted, books are traditionally identified as being of Russian origin. Moreover, a book may be listed under a title that does not fully reflect its genre, or under an entirely different title, while information concerning its shelfmark may also be ambiguous. The websites of holding institutions do not provide digitised copies of all manuscripts for consultation, but mainly of individual collections or manuscripts. It is therefore necessary to record in the Database the existence of an digital copy of a manuscript, together with the web address at which it is available. At the same time, it is important to establish that no copy of a book exists and, where possible, to request one so that it may be made available in digital form for research and publication. This is particularly important for the identification and study of physically inaccessible originals of Ukrainian manuscript books held in Russia, including when manuscript

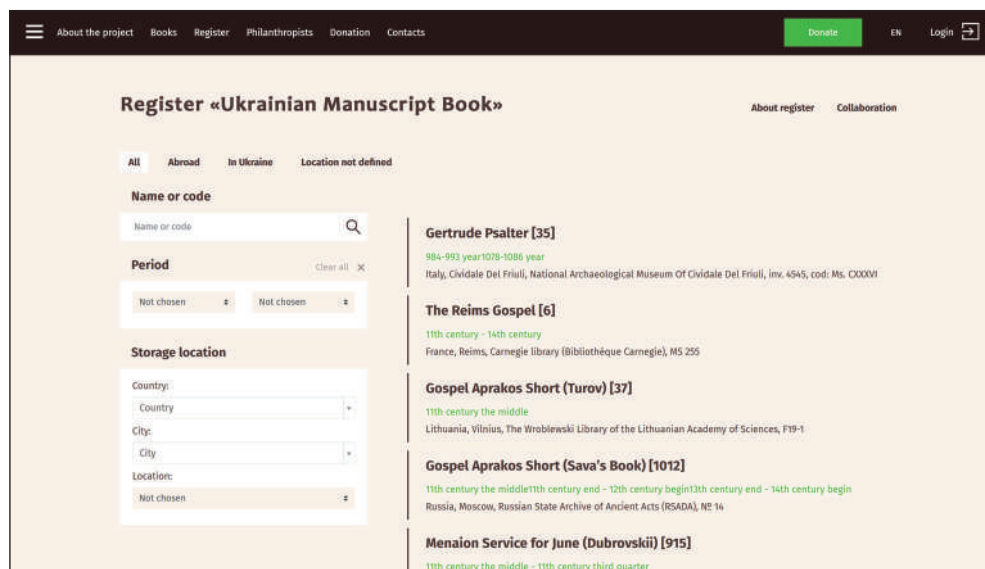


Fig. 2. Main Page of the Database of Ukrainian Manuscript Books

collections are examined on the basis of descriptions and digital copies provided by the National Library of Russia (<https://nlr.ru/manuscripts>), the Library of the Russian Academy of Sciences (<http://ecatalog.ras.ru:8080/>), the Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts (<http://rgada.info/kueh/index.php?T1=&Sk=200>), and other institutions. The same work is also conducted with regard to manuscript holdings and collections in other countries, including the Carnegie Library in France (<https://www.bm-reims.fr/PATRIMOINE/accueil-portal.aspx>) and the Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences (<http://elibrary.mab.lt/>). Particular attention is devoted to manuscript holdings in Poland, with the principal focus on the National Library of Poland (<https://polona.pl/public-collections/collection/3f977eb5-18b7-4133-8596-1f50403e47f9>).

Manuscript codices attributed as Ukrainian are subjected to codicological and palaeographic analysis; their principal metadata are compiled and entered into the internal structure of the Database, from which they are then displayed on the website. The UMB Database is compiled in Ukrainian and English.

Presentation of the Database of Ukrainian Manuscript Books on the Electronic Resource of the Ukrainian Manuscript Book Website (<https://ukrmanuscript.com/catalog>). On the main page of the Database, the *Ukrainian Manuscript Book* register is located on the right, while the index-based search interface is located on the left. The metadata of the digital book descriptions are presented separately on the other pages of the Database (see Figs. 2 and 3).

On the main page of the Database, under the “All Books” section of the register, the manuscripts are arranged by default in chronological order, enabling

Register "Ukrainian handwriting book"

About register Collaboration

The Reims Gospel [6]

France, Reims, Carnegie library (Bibliothèque Carnegie), MS 295
11th century - 14th century
4* * , 54 apr., parchment, uncial writing, illumination, binding

Description

Hnatenko Ludmyla. *Reims Gospel – a unique Cyrillic-Glagolitic written monument (Paleographic and Codicological Study)* // *Reims Gospel. Research / Exec. eds. V. Kornienko, Myr: Gorobets, 2026. P. 31-67.*

Писемно Л. Реймське Євангеліє – унікальна кирилично-глаголицька писемна пам'ятка (палеографічно-кодікологічна розвідка) // *Реймське Євангеліє. Вивчення факсимільного типу. Дослідження: у 2 т. Київ: Горобець, 2019. Т. 2. Дослідження. С. 31-67. (Bibliography of the Reims Gospel, p. 58-67).*

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Publications

Silvestre J.-B. *Évangélie slave, quibus olim in regum Francorum oleo sacro inuigendorum solemnibus uti solebat ecclesia reimensis, vulgo "Texte du sacre", ad exemplaris similitudinem descripsit et edidit J. B. Silvestre et B. Kopitar. Lutetiae Parisiorum, 1843. 428 p.*

Silvestre J.-B. *Évangélie slave de Reims, ou Texte du Sacre, édition fac-simile in-4°. Paris, 1843.*

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Electronic copy
Official website of the Carnegie Library: <https://www.bm-reims.fr/PATRIMOINE/doc/SYRACUSE/1866490/>

Fig. 3. Description Page in the Database of Ukrainian Manuscript Books: The Reims Gospel 11th centuries

users to view all the books included in the Database. It should be noted that this feature constitutes a significant qualitative distinction between the UMB Database and other databases, whose entire contents cannot be viewed continuously. Since the register is still operating in test mode, the sections intended for the separate presentation of books held "Abroad," "In Ukraine," and in an unidentified location, "Unknown," do not function correctly.

The register provides brief metadata: the title of the manuscript book, the date of its creation or copying, and its present place of preservation.

In the search interface, the required manuscript book can be located by title, shelfmark, a particular chronological period, or present place of preservation. Drop-down menus are used to select searches by chronological period, country, city, and the name of the manuscript-holding institution.

Once the required book has been found, the user can access its description page by clicking on it; see, for example, the Gospel ("Reims") (<https://ukrmanuscript.com/catalog/evangelie-evangelie-rejmske>) (see Fig. 3).

The book description pages provide the following metadata: the title of the book and the manuscript's registration number in the UMB Database; the author, where known; the present place of preservation and shelfmark; the date and place of creation, whether exact or established through research; the scribe, where known; the dimensions of the book; the number of folios; the writing material; the type of script; illumination; and binding. They also include a description, comprising the principal bibliography containing descriptions of the book, and, where available, a publication, digital publication, and digital copy. Scholarly notes for website users are provided at the end of the page.

The Database operates online and is dynamic in terms of both its contents and changes to the metadata of the descriptions. Provision is made for adding attributional clarifications to descriptions previously presented in the Database concerning the title of the book, the time and place of its creation, changes to its present shelfmark, bibliographic references to new facsimile and metagraphic editions, new scholarly studies, web addresses providing access to newly created digital copies, and other information.

The following fields are used to present *the principal manuscript metadata in the Database of Ukrainian Manuscript Books, in the order in which they appear on the description pages*:

Title of the Book (of a complete book or a fragment). A unified title based on genre affiliation and established in scholarly circulation or usage is provided. *The List of Unified Titles of Cyrillic Monuments*, compiled during the preparation of the 2007 methodological recommendations, was taken as the basis [3, pp. 33—52]. This list was coordinated by L. Hnatenko with the leading scholars of the Institute of the Ukrainian Language of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, V. Nimchuk and I. Chepiha.

If a book has its own title or a title established in scholarly circulation, it is given in the Database after the unified title, in quotation marks within parentheses, for example, Gospel ("Reims"). The dates of the protograph from which the book was copied, as well as geographical or toponymic features, may be added to the title.

In this field, the *manuscript's registration number in the Database* is placed after the title of the book in order to facilitate communication when working with the Database. This number is not permanent, since manuscripts may be removed from the Database owing to the reattribution of the location of their production or an erroneous identification of their provenance. For technical reasons, the numbers of manuscripts removed from the Database may remain vacant, or another book may be registered under them; a number may also remain vacant as a result of a technical error. Thus, the Database does not employ continuous sequential numbering of the manuscripts included in it.

Author. The author (authors) of the book, work, or several works included in the book is indicated (if available).

Present Place of Preservation and Shelmark. The current name of the manuscript-holding institution and the shelfmark are provided.

Date of Creation. An exact date or an indirect date established by a researcher is indicated.

Place of Creation. The exact location stated in the manuscript or a hypothetical location established by a researcher on the basis of indirect evidence is provided; the latter is indicated in square brackets.

Language. The books are predominantly written in Church Slavonic of the Ukrainian recension; therefore, the language is not indicated, as this is understood by default. This is also connected with the use in scholarly circulation of varying terminology concerning Church Slavonic and the linguistic recensions of written monuments. Only books written in Old Ukrainian (the so-called *prosta mova*) and in the Old Ukrainian literary language are specifically identified in the Database.

Bookman-scribe. The given name, surname, byname, rank, ecclesiastical dignity, office, and title are indicated, where known.

Book format. The generally accepted formats 1° (F), 2°, 4°, 8°, and 16° are used.

Number of Folios or Pages. The total number of folios, according to foliation, or pages, according to pagination, is indicated in Arabic numerals.

Writing Material. Parchment or paper is indicated.

Type of Script. The type of Cyrillic script is indicated: ustav, new Ukrainian ustav, semi-ustav, semi-ustav with elements of cursive, or cursive.

Illumination. Only the presence of illumination is recorded.

Binding. Only the presence of a binding is recorded.

Description. The principal works containing a description of the book are indicated. The first listed is the work whose dating of an undated book is accepted by the Database compiler. This need not necessarily be a recent study containing a new attribution. The researcher-compiler may also provide their own dating. Other works are arranged in chronological order. It should be noted that, if scholars subsequently refine the date of a manuscript's production, the first work listed will be the one in which a new attribution is substantiated and accepted by the Database compiler.

Publications. Facsimile, metagraphic, and other editions of the books are listed chronologically. Where available, the web address of a PDF version is provided.

Digital Publications. These are listed separately from traditional printed publications, with links to their online locations.

Digital Copies. Available copies of manuscripts presented on online resources, including the official websites of holding institutions or private collections, are indicated together with links to their locations. These may be freely accessible or available through digital resources subject to special access conditions,

for example, registration as a reader of a particular library. Where digital copies are unavailable, existing microfilms and their shelfmarks are also recorded. It should be noted that full-text digital copies of manuscripts cannot be hosted on the Horobets publishing house's *Ukrainian Manuscript Book* website, as this would infringe the copyright of holding institutions or private owners. Using the active links provided in the Database, website users access the relevant digital-resource platforms and consult copies of manuscript books.

Illustration. The Database presents an illustration of one manuscript page or, where necessary, several pages, predominantly when an digital copy is available.

These principal fields are used; however, other fields have also been developed for the Database, their optimal number allowing the necessary codicological information about a book to be entered.

The Database of Ukrainian Manuscript Books is a non-commercial project and a freely accessible digital resource. Its use of metadata created by manuscript researchers, scholars who compile scholarly catalogues, digital resources, and databases does not infringe copyright, as references are provided to their works. In general, the terms “database” and “data compilation” are synonymous. This definition conforms to international standards. The Database of Ukrainian Manuscript Books is an individual product and is protected by copyright in Ukraine [25].

The Database is a comprehensive software and technological solution consisting of four principal components: 1. a database management dashboard; 2. an automated remote workstation for the database administrator-compiler or compilers; 3. the web interface of the *Ukrainian Manuscript Book* database; and 4. metadata content concerning both the originals themselves and the archaeographic and codicological descriptions of Ukrainian Cyrillic manuscript books held in the collections of archives, libraries, museums, other institutions, and private collections both in Ukraine and in other countries.

Use of the Database does not require mandatory registration on the Ukrainian Manuscript Book website. The Database is continuously updated. *The Database of Ukrainian Manuscript Books of the 11th — 16th Centuries* is hosted by MiroHost, the largest hosting provider in Ukraine.

The originality of the study lies in the creation of a unified and innovative database of Ukrainian manuscript books dating from the 11th to the 16th centuries, as a symbol of the struggle for the Ukrainian cultural heritage of Rus-Ukraine. It has been established that, in existing foreign catalogues, reference publications, and digital databases, medieval Ukrainian manuscript books — even when precise identification data is available — are predominantly recorded as Old Rus or even simply as Russian.

Conclusions. The Database of Ukrainian Manuscript Books of the 11th—16th centuries is the only digital resource of national significance devoted to manuscript books held in Ukraine and abroad. It is available on the *Ukrainian Manuscript Book* website (<https://ukrmanuscript.com/catalog>). The innovative

character of the Project lies in the fact that, for the first time, modern database management systems are being used to develop a comprehensive open-access database of Ukrainian manuscript books. No comparable databases exist online.

The Database is being created within the framework of the ongoing project *Returning the Cultural Heritage to Ukraine* of the private publishing house Gorobets. State grant support provided by the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation, particularly during the Russo-Ukrainian War in 2025 and 2026, is of considerable importance to the creation and compilation of the Database. To date, 1,400 books have already been included in the Database of Ukrainian Manuscript Books.

The creation of this important digital resource devoted to Ukraine's ancient book heritage is intended to counter the informational and cultural dimensions of Russian military aggression and the contemporary annexation of book heritage, as well as to facilitate the de-occupation of books of Ukrainian origin. The Database already provides eloquent evidence to the entire world that manuscript books from the period of Kyivan Rus' and the Rus' principalities, which functioned as distinctive medieval state formations within the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Polish state and were copied in ethnic Ukrainian territories, constitute a heritage belonging specifically to the modern Ukrainian state!

An important social component of the Project is the representation, through the medieval Cyrillic manuscript book heritage, of the Ukrainian nation as an ancient cultural community.

The digital resource of the Database of Ukrainian Manuscript Books will help engage the interested cultural and scholarly communities of both Ukraine and the wider world with our ancient national source heritage. Work on the Project contributes to the identification and return to Ukraine, in the form of digital or facsimile copies, of valuable written codices, thereby enriching the national treasury of books and enabling their study by Ukrainian scholars and their use in the education of school and university students, so that every interested Ukrainian may engage with the national cultural heritage.

The long-term objective of the Project is to register all Ukrainian manuscript books that have survived to the present day. The implementation of the Project and the scholarly attribution of books as Ukrainian will contribute to their recognition by the world scholarly community as part of Ukraine's book heritage, with their corresponding identification in scholarly research and in the scholarly catalogues and databases of archives, libraries, and museums.

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БАЗА ДАНИХ УКРАЇНСЬКИХ РУКОПИСНИХ КНИГ XI—XVI СТОЛІТТЯ: ЗНАЧЕННЯ, МЕТОДИКА СТВОРЕННЯ, ПІДТРИМКА УКРАЇНСЬКОГО КУЛЬТУРНОГО ФОНДУ

Метою роботи є створення єдиної електронної бази даних українських рукописних книг XI—XVI ст., які зберігаються в Україні та в інших країнах. Найвагомішими основними завданнями є виявлення й атрибутування рукописів, які знаходяться в іноземних архівах, бібліотеках, музеях (переважно російських), наукове переосмислення їхньої національної приналежності, виокремлення українських книг з так званого спільного східнослов'янського спадку. **Методологія** роботи ґрунтується на принципах історизму, наукової об'єктивності й системності; застосовані кодикологічні та палеографічні методи аналізу, безпосередньо новітній палеографічно-орфографічний метод атрибуції, що сприяють включенню рукописних книг до Бази даних як національного надбання. **Новизна роботи** обумовлена створенням єдиної інноваційної бази даних українських рукописних книг XI—XVI ст. як символу боротьби за українську культурну спадщину Русі-України. Встановлено, що в наявних закордонних каталожних довідкових виданнях, електронних базах даних середньовічні українські рукописні книги, навіть з точними даними ідентифікації, переважно фіксуються як давньоруські, чи взагалі — російські. **Висновки.** База даних українських рукописних книг XI—XVI ст. є єдиним національного значення електронним ресурсом рукописних книг, що зберігаються в Україні й за кордоном. Вона розміщена на сайті «Українська рукописна книга»

(<https://ukrmanuscript.com/catalog>). Аналогічні бази даних в інтернет-просторі відсутні. База даних створюється в рамках постійного діючого проєкту «Повертаємо в Україну культурну спадщину» приватного видавництва «Горобець». Значущою у створенні й укладанні бази є грантова державна підтримка роботи Українським культурним фондом безпосередньо під час російсько-української війни, у 2025 та 2026 роках. На сьогодні до Баз даних УРК уже включено 1400 книг. Створення Баз є окремим проєктом. Інноваційність Проєкту полягає в тому, що вперше сучасними системами управління базами даних розробляється повноцінна відкрита база даних українських рукописних книг з XI по XVI ст. Створення цього важливого цифрового продукту з давньої української книжкової спадщини спрямоване на протидію інформаційній та культурній складовій російської військової агресії, сучасній анексії книжкової спадщини, на деокупацію книг українського походження. У довгостроковій перспективі існування Проєкту — реєстрація всіх збережених до нашого часу українських рукописних книг.

Ключові слова: українська середньовічна рукописна книга, база даних, метадані, електронний ресурс, кодикологія, палеографічно-орфографічна методика, атрибуція.