

# National Library of the Czech Republic

## After the Jikji Prize

The National Library of the Czech Republic was awarded the UNESCO Memory of the World Jikji Prize in September 2005. The prize is given biennially by the City of Cheongju in the Republic of Korea to commemorate the *Buljo jikji simche yojeol*, the oldest known book printed with moveable metal type (section of a printing type form on the right), and is given to the winning nomination for its contribution to the preservation of the world's documentary heritage.



The winning of the award recognised the work of the National Library of the Czech Republic in the field of digital access to rare library collections, its support for similar activities abroad, its care of historical collections and the assistance given to those Czech institutions whose collections suffered during large floods in 2002.

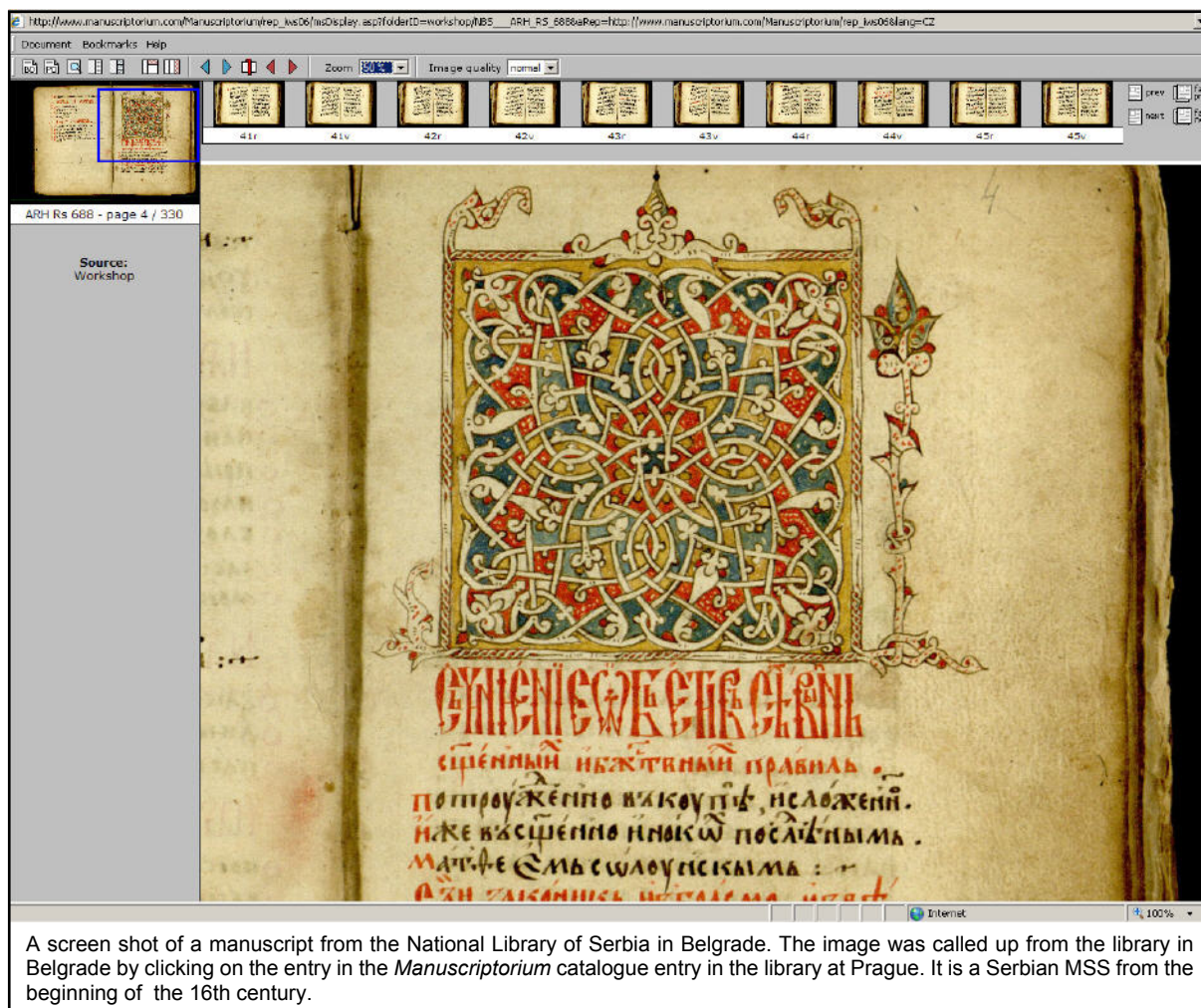
In the Czech Republic, there are two continuing national programmes of digitization and two digital libraries. Since 2005, the concepts of a National Digital Library and of national digital preservation facilities have been built up. Several important steps have been taken and considerable investments have been made in constructing buildings for the digital preservation facilities.

In recent research among the European national libraries, The **Manuscriptorium Digital Library** was been found to be the largest digital library of manuscripts operating in any national library in Europe. The vision for further enlarging the scope of the *Manuscriptorium* is to include similar content from abroad. This vision is now supported by the European Commission in a project called ENRICH that is about to start and that will bring into the *Manuscriptorium* data from dozens of foreign institutions. This activity is not limited only to EU member states; it goes far beyond their borders: there are also associated partners in Serbia, Turkey, Moldova, Kazakhstan, and other countries.

The screenshot shows the Manuscriptorium website interface. At the top, there is a logo of a figure holding a staff and a banner with the text "Manuscriptorium Building virtual research environment for the sphere of historical resources". Below the banner is a navigation menu with links: Home, About, For Users, For Partners, Licences, Download, and Connectivity. The main content area displays the breadcrumb "Open Catalogue of Historical Resources > Search Results > Detail of Record" and the title "Detail of Record 06 Mil Yz A 2312". A dropdown menu for "Select display format" is set to "Complete description". The record is titled "Gazeliyât" and is described as a "Bibliographic description". Below this, an "Identification" section contains a table with the following data:

Country	Türkiye (Turkey)
Settlement	Ankara
Repository	Millî Kütüphane (National Library of Turkey)
Shelf-mark	06 Mil Yz A 2312

Part of a Turkish catalogue entry - one of over 5,000 records entered into the *Manuscriptorium*. The catalogue entry is the first step leading to a fully digitized copy of the manuscripts.



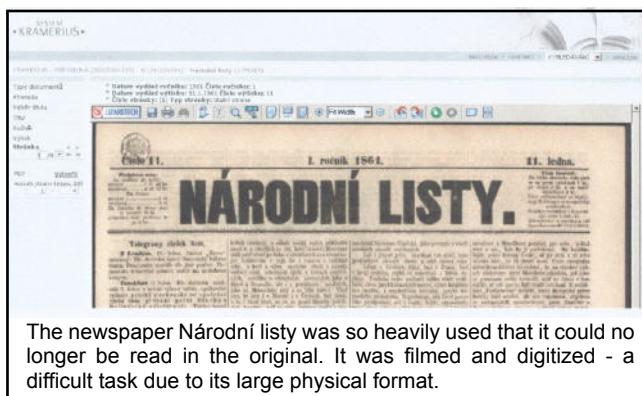
New tools supporting the structuring and integration of content have been developed and are downloadable free of charge. An interface called *Manuscriptorium for Candidates* has been successfully tested. This will offer on-line uploading and work in an environment similar to the *Manuscriptorium* and will provide strong feedback to anybody wishing to join this library. Serious work is planned to improve the personalization of the system for users, to expand the multilingual approach and ontologies and in the area of bridging the two existing TEI platforms for description of manuscripts. Not only content partners, but also prominent media and software research institutions and companies from United Kingdom, France, Italy, Denmark, Lithuania, Germany, and Czech Republic are taking part in the ENRICH project to jointly develop all the necessary tools and interfaces. These tools will be available for use by anybody wishing to participate in the building of this digital library.

In addition, a special service called *Manuscriptorium for Schools* has been developed. It reflects – in cooperation with pedagogues – the learning objectives in primary and secondary schools. It is supported by the Czech Ministry of Education.

The **Kramerius Digital Library** concerns the digitization of acid-paper materials that are also stored on microfilm. The *Kramerius* systems are running today in a number of institutions in the Czech Republic, and the XML formats for structuring digitized periodicals and monographs are considered to be *de facto* national standards. They not only include the tools of the National Library but they are also using an independent commercial product and a digitization package marketed by a software company. Thus, institutions have a choice of two different solutions. Many of them prefer the commercial one because it enables the institution to make a complex matter easy to start by means of a standardized approach.



The National Library is also about to start a large microfilming and digitization programme whose aim is to safeguard and provide on-line access to endangered (mostly acid-paper) 19<sup>th</sup> century books. By making digital copies of texts available and encouraging researchers to use the digital copies, the wear and damage caused by frequent reading can be greatly reduced thus preserving the original document.



The newspaper Národní listy was so heavily used that it could no longer be read in the original. It was filmed and digitized - a difficult task due to its large physical format.

The National Library is very active in many European activities and projects, such as The European Library, where it has been playing an important role in supporting projects, and in digital preservation, where we are one of the full partners of the Digital Preservation Europe project.

A lot of work has been done in the field of drying and restoration of documents for other Czech libraries. A new, specially designed vacuum drying chamber is in full operation. The National Library Preservation Centre dried and restored the whole collection of old books from the Municipal

Library in Prague which had been frozen to preserve them after floods. Its capacity will now be used to assist the National Technical Museum with the preservation of all the old documents of Czech architecture and aviation.



The director of the Municipal Library of Prague (left) receives the last of the restored old printed books from the hands of the Director-General of the National Library. The whole collection of old books in the Municipal Library was flooded in 2002. After having been frozen, all the books were dried and restored in the National Library, mostly in the specially built large capacity vacuum drying chamber (below).

It can be said that the award of the Jikji Prize accelerated all our work in the field of preservation of and digital access to library documents. The recognition we received through the prize helped enormously with our efforts to start many important activities and to enlarge those we had been doing. This included the assistance to others in all the countries mentioned above. It also accelerated the creation of new forms of co-operation with the National Library of the Republic of Korea in Seoul and established promising relations of cooperation with the Early Printing Museum in Cheongju.

It has also led to the enlargement of closer cooperation with a number of other institutions outside Europe, e.g. with the National Library of China in Beijing or the National Library of Kazakhstan in Almaty.



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