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**ALL ROADS LEAD TO RUS: WESTERN INFLUENCES ON
THE ELEVENTH- TO TWELFTH-CENTURY
MANUSCRIPT ILLUMINATION
OF KIEVAN RUS**

by Elina Gertsman

“Thank you, Lord, the Ruler of Heaven, for allowing me to write this Gospel. . . . And you, who can write better than I—do not judge me, the sinner. . . . I beg everyone who reads this—do not judge but read and correct me. Just as the apostle Paul says: ‘Bless, do not judge.’ Amen.” *Ostromir Gospels*, colophon, Deacon Gregory, 1057.

The art of medieval Russia has always been viewed in connection with Byzantium. In scholarly studies of Slavic culture, the term “Byzantine art” has become synonymous with “Russian art,” and “painting” has come to signify “icon painting.” Meanwhile, the art of Russian miniature illumination is scarcely mentioned. This study will attempt to place Slavic painting in the broader context of the art of the West in the Middle Ages.

Numerous books and articles have been written on this subject. Russian, as well as European, scholars have treated Slavic art as deeply dependent on the culture of Constantinople. As early as 1912, Russian art historian Leontyev referred to the “Byzantine spirit permeating the great Russian organism.”¹ George Hamilton, in his frequently cited *Art and Architecture of Russia*, first published in 1954, chose to ignore manuscript illumination altogether.² The Yugoslavian scholar Boshkovich issued an article in 1973 titled “Medieval Russian Art is European Art.” While the title seems to claim a connection between Slavic art and the Latin West, the text itself presents an argument that the only similarity between Russian and European medieval art “lies in their common usage of the religious character to mask the ideological feudal content.”³ Popova’s *Russian Illuminated Manuscripts* of 1984,

¹K. Leontyev, “East, Russia, and Slavic Culture,” *Collected Writings* (1912) 139.

²George Heard Hamilton, *The Art and Architecture of Russia* (London and Baltimore 1954).

³D. Boshkovich, “Medieval Russian Art is European Art” in *Byzantium; Southern Slavs and Ancient Russia; Western Europe* (Moscow 1973) 186.

the only book in English entirely dedicated to the discussion of Russian miniatures, describes it as “a mixture of Byzantine and local features.”⁴ In a newly published book on medieval Slavic painting, the Ukrainian scholar Milyaeva stresses the importance of the Byzantine tradition in the culture of the Eastern Slavs throughout her study, without so much as acknowledging its Western influence.⁵ The only author to call attention to connections between Western and Slavic art was the Russian art historian Lazarev.⁶ His brilliant work, published only in Russian, has never been translated and thus has been largely ignored.

The purpose of this article is to demonstrate that Slavic painting had many influences besides those coming from Byzantium. We will examine three full-page illuminations of the Trier Psalter, the Ostromir Gospels, and the Mstislav Gospels to show that the situation is much more complex than commonly presented. These manuscripts, which rank among the most important to survive the Tartar-Mongol invasion of the thirteenth century, demonstrate an unquestionable appropriation of Anglo-Norman and Ottonian elements.

* * *

The development of Slavic manuscript illumination took place against the backdrop of active international interchange. Kievan Rus participated in the European trading network from the eleventh through the thirteenth centuries, while establishing a strong dynastic relationship with the Western European and Scandinavian nobility. Novgorod, one of the largest cities of Kievan Rus, was a quite prominent trading center of Eastern Europe and a colonizer of northern lands.⁷ Merchant guilds, based on marriages and friendships, extended their activity to Kiev, Vladimir, and Constantinople, as well as to Gotland, Riga, Lübeck, and Stockholm. Gotland merchants, in their turn, also settled in Novgorod, building their own churches and marketplaces all around the city. The merchants from German towns followed, and their already powerful influence became even stronger after the Hanseatic League was founded and developed into an authoritative alliance in the fourteenth century.⁸ It is partially due to this active trade with the West that

⁴Olga Popova, *Russian Illuminated Manuscripts* (New York 1984) 6.

⁵Liudmila Milyaeva, *The Ukrainian Icon* (Bournemouth 1996).

⁶Viktor Nikitich Lazarev, *Vizantiiskoe I Drevnerusskoe Iskusstvo* (Moscow 1978).

⁷Viktor Nikitich Lazarev, *The Art of Novgorod* (Leningrad 1947) 7.

⁸Johannes Schildhauer, *The Hansa: History and Culture* (Marboro 1988) 38.

Kievan Rus acquired not only utilitarian merchandise but also Western artwork.

Dynastic ties further strengthened the Russian connection with Scandinavia and the West, especially with the Ottonian dynasty. Vladimir, the first Russian Christian ruler, was married to the granddaughter of Otto I.⁹ Vladimir was the ancestor of the Kievan prince Izyaslav, who betrothed Gertrude, a direct descendant of the Ottonian dynasty. Their son Yaropolk, while staying with Henry IV, married Cunegunde, an offspring of Duke Otto of Meisen.¹⁰ Vladimir's son Yaroslav, who divided his reign over Russia with his brother Mstislav, was married to Ingigerd of Sweden, and his daughters became queens of France, Hungary, and Norway.¹¹ Mstislav, in his turn, married the Swedish princess Christina, whose daughters wedded the Norwegian kings Sigurd the Crusader, Kanut II, and Erik-Edmund of Denmark. The Russian Orthodox Church did not oppose these international marriages. Catholic churches, in which mass was conducted only in Latin, existed both in Kiev and Novgorod.¹² There were no reservations in the Orthodox Church about using liturgical vessels manufactured in the Latin West that came to Russia in such large quantities; only much later, these vessels would be called "unclean" and would be forbidden to be handled.¹³

* * *

Russian manuscript illumination flourished between the eleventh and the thirteenth centuries, before the invasion of Batu Khan and the Mongols. The books were written in Old Church Slavonic using the Cyrillic alphabet and decorated with vivid full-page illuminations and intricate initials.¹⁴ The Trier Psalter, or, as it is sometimes called, Codex

⁹Nicolas de Baumgarten, "Le dernier mariage de Saint Vladimir," *Orientalia Christiana* 18 (Rome 1930) 165–168.

¹⁰Lazarev 1978 (n. 6 above) 268.

¹¹Lazarev 1978 (n. 6 above) 230.

¹²For Kievan churches, see A. V. Storozenko, "On the Existence of Roman-Catholic Churches in the City of Kiev," *Eranos* (1906) 242–245. Catholic churches in Novgorod are mentioned in Johannes Schildauer (n. 8 above); and in M. N. Berezkov, *On the Hansa Trade with Russia Until the End of the 5th Century* (Saint Petersburg 1879) 61.

¹³Lazarev 1947 (n. 7 above) 231.

¹⁴The manuscripts' dimensions were reaching approximately 35cm (13 3/4 in.) in height and 30 cm (11 3/4 in.) in width. Dimensions, provenance and current location for each individual manuscript can be found in the later footnotes pertaining to the examination of that particular manuscript.

Gertrudianus,¹⁵ unravels a fascinating story that embodies the meeting of East and West.

The Psalter was created for the Ottonian archbishop Egbert of Trier (977–993) by the monk Ruodprecht. Egbert, a former royal chaplain of both Otto I and Otto II, was a great patron of the arts and helped revive manuscript illumination in Germany.¹⁶ In the eleventh century the Trier Psalter ended up in the possession of Gertrude, the wife of Kievan prince Izyaslav. Around 1075–1076, five new leaves were incorporated into the manuscript by Gertrude’s order.¹⁷ When in 1068 Izyaslav lost his throne, he sent his son Yaropolk to petition Pope Gregory VII, hoping for his recognition as the ruler of Kiev. Gregory VII granted the prince the city of Kiev *jus in re* in 1075, and in 1076 Izyaslav returned to Kiev.

One of the main medieval trading routes led from the towns on Maas and Rhein into South Germany and up the Dunai. From Regensburg, the trading routes went to Poland, Hungary, and Rus. In the eleventh century, a large Irish monastic community settled in Regensburg, on the Dunai River. Sometime around the 1070s, the Irish monks went to Kiev on a diplomatic mission, accompanied by the city merchants. They returned bearing a considerable sum of money—a present from Gertrude. With this money, they built a monastery upon their return, dedicated to Saint Jacob and Saint Gertrude.¹⁸ The monastery was thus intimately connected with Izyaslav’s wife. It is likely that the Psalter leaves were executed precisely in the Regensburg monastery of Saint Jacob.¹⁹ Gertrude was a direct descendant of the Ottonian dynasty and would have played a major role in establishing and maintaining the international connections between her present kingdom of Rus and her former motherland.²⁰ It was through Gertrude that many Western manuscripts arrived at Izyaslav’s court and it is in this context that the Trier Psalter was enriched with five additional miniatures.

Stylistically and iconographically, the codex is similar to many Western manuscripts. The resemblance of the Trier Psalter to some illuminations of the Ottonian manuscripts is particularly striking. For

¹⁵MS CXXXVI, Museo Archeologico Nazionale of Cividale del Friuli.

¹⁶Henry Mayr-Harting, *Ottonian Book Illumination* (London 1991) 60–63.

¹⁷Heinrich V. Sauerland and Arthur Haseloff, *Der Psalter Erzbischof Egberts von Trier, Codex Gertrudianus in Cividale* (Trier 1901) 15–29, 173–190.

¹⁸Lazarev 1978 (n. 6 above) 268–269.

¹⁹M. Shaitan, “Germany and Kiev in the Twelfth Century,” *Letopis* 34 (1927) 22–23.

²⁰Lazarev 1978 (n. 6 above) 268.

instance, the compositional scheme of the Christ in majesty page in Codex Gertrudianus resembles many Ottonian illuminations. In the Trier leaf, Christ with cruciform halo, seated on a high throne, blesses Yaropolk, Gertrude's son, and Irene, Yaropolk's wife (fig. 1). The married couple is presented to Christ by two saints who tower over Yaropolk and Irene. Christ, his gaze directed elsewhere, gently places the crowns on the royal couple's heads. The four evangelist symbols—the overseers of the ceremony—hover in the sky.

Ottonian manuscripts provided an important series of exemplars for this kind of representation. For instance a miniature, remarkably similar to the Trier page, appears in the Gospel Lectionary of Henry II.²¹ Enthroned, Christ dominates the top half of the page. He holds two royal crowns and blesses Henry II and his wife Cunegunde by placing these crowns on their heads in the same gentle manner as we found in the Trier Psalter illumination.²² The tiny royal couple is once again being presented to Christ by two considerably taller saints, Peter and Paul;²³ The absent yet benevolent gaze of the Savior in this miniature is also similar to that found in the Codex Gertrudianus illumination. The iconographic programs of the two manuscript leaves are undeniably linked: the later Trier Psalter could well have been influenced by the earlier Ottonian Lectionary.

Another manuscript, the Gospel Book of Henry III, also depicts Christ in Majesty blessing the king and his queen, Henry III and his wife Agnes.²⁴ This is a full-page illumination similar to the one found in the Trier manuscript. Under the cruciform halo, a contemplative Christ places his hands on Henry's and Agnes's heads. The four symbols of evangelists, reverently looking at Christ, witness solemnly this divine ceremony. Likewise, they observe the scene of the blessing—just as in the Trier Psalter majesty page.

Another curious detail in the Trier folio is reminiscent of the art of the Ottonian empire: namely, its complicated meander border. The bor-

²¹Munich, Cod. Lat. MS 4452, ca. 1007–1012.

²²It is interesting to note that Irene's German name was apparently Cunegunde as well, and she was a daughter of Margrave Otto von Meissen, count of Orlamunde. After Yaropolk's death, Cunegunde returned to the west, where she married twice; see Iohannis Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* (Leiden 1976) 42–43.

²³The evangelistary was commissioned for presentation to Bamberg cathedral, and Peter and Paul are the cathedral's saints; see Robert G. Calkins, *Illuminated Books of the Middle Ages* (Ithaca 1983) 150.

²⁴Uppsala, Universitetsbibliotek Cod. C. 93, ca. 1050

der from the majesty page of the Romanesque giant Stavelot Bible is one of the first things that immediately comes to mind.²⁵ Indeed, the patterns are rather similar. It is well known that the Stavelot Bible was based on Ottonian manuscripts: the eleventh-century illuminations of Trier and Echternach provided the origin for its design and style.²⁶ One, however, needn't go that far to look for the obvious model of the Trier meander border: the Ottonian source was right at hand, a few page-turns away. In the full-page illumination on folio 20v of the Codex Gertrudianus itself, nearly a hundred years earlier, Ruodprecht surrounded King David with a very similar maze-like pattern.²⁷

While some acknowledgement of Byzantine influence must be made (the rich garments of the royal couple and the facial features of Christ are especially reminiscent of the Greek Orthodox representations), the appropriation of the Ottonian elements is undeniable. The question we must ask is whether it was a premeditated decision or an unconscious one. One can only speculate on the subject. On the one hand, a deliberate attempt on Gertrude's part to reestablish the link between her native land and her present kingdom might have had its political and ideological motivations. In view of the political turmoil that surrounded the reign of Izyaslav and Gertrude, who in the end were exiled from their own kingdom, it is possible that Gertrude might have made an attempt to restore their alliance to the Western side of the family. By inserting Slavic illuminations into a German artistic heritage, Gertrude could have made a statement of the Ottonian artistic legacy transmitted through the later generations of Slavic art. In a sense, this act of patronage may have carried a certain metaphorical value: in ordering the insertion of the five additional leaves, Gertrude has "inserted" herself on the political map of medieval Europe, acting as the fragile link uniting the established Western legacy and the neoteric Eastern values. On the other hand, the active appropriation of Ottonian elements could have simply been a desire to create a harmonious transition between the old Ottonian and new Slavic painting for the sake of continuity within the book.

In light of the established ties between the Russian royal couple and

²⁵London, BL Add. 28107.

²⁶Walter Cahn, *Romanesque Bible Illumination* (Ithaca 1982) 132. In the Stavelot Bible, the Savior is once again surrounded by the evangelist symbols, which find themselves in a silent conversation above Christ. This representation is not unusual in the West, as we have seen in the *Majestas Domini* leaf of the Gospel Book of Henry III.

²⁷Adolph Goldschmidt, *German Illumination* (Paris 1928) cat. #20.

the Ottonian dynasty, a connection between the Slavic leaves in the Codex Gertrudianus and the German miniatures becomes more than apparent. The argument, of course, can be made that the Ottonian empire modeled itself on Byzantium, and, as a consequence, so did the art of illumination. Gertrude's leaves, then, become an imitation of an imitation, a pale copy of the once majestic Byzantine original. However, this approach is unquestionably simplistic. The exchange between the Ottonian and Byzantine empires flowed not one way, but rather constantly went both directions. The German emperors, attempting the *renovatio imperii romanorum*, urged communication between local and foreign workshops via the never-static art-trade routes.²⁸ Filtered through Ottonian artistic practices, the Byzantine elements underwent a drastic transformation. Further appropriation of Ottonian art made the Codex Gertrudianus leaves a true and undeniable part of the Western heritage.

* * *

The Trier Psalter is not the only Slavic manuscript that had Western elements actively incorporated within its full-page illuminations. The earliest extant Russian manuscript, the Ostromir Gospels, was illuminated ca. 1056–1057, some twenty years before the Codex Gertrudianus. The manuscript was commissioned by Ostromir, the governor of Novgorod and a close friend of Izyaslav and Gertrude. The gospel book was created at their Kievan court, and bears a strong Western influence in its full-page illuminations.²⁹ When one considers Gertrude's extensive ties with her former motherland, these Western elements are not at all surprising even if rarely mentioned.

According to their colophon, the Ostromir Gospels were produced by Deacon Gregory around the mid-eleventh century.³⁰ Out of four evangelist portraits only three have survived. One especially interesting

²⁸George Henderson, *Early Medieval* (New York 1972) 21–23.

²⁹A. H. Vostokov, et al. *Ostromirovo Evangelie 1056–1057 Godov. Prilozenie I Kommentarii* (Moscow 1988); Lazarev 1978 (n. 6 above) 268.

³⁰*The Ostromir Lectionary of 1056–1057* (Leningrad 1988). Saltykov-Shedrin Public Library, Saint Petersburg, MS Fn I. 5. Parchment, 35 x 30 cm (13 3/4 x 11 3/4 in.). 294 fols., 3 miniatures. Provenance: Novgorod until seventeenth century; Moscow in 1650s (during Patriarch Nikon's reforms); Moscow Kremlin, Church of the Resurrection, in the early eighteenth century; St. Petersburg in 1720; St. Petersburg Public Library in 1806. For more detailed information on this and subsequent manuscripts, see Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, *Archives and Manuscript Repositories in the USSR* (Princeton 1981); and Popova 1984 (n. 4 above).

miniature depicts Saint Luke receiving divine inspiration (fig. 2). The illumination is breathtakingly beautiful. The evangelist's body twists as he extends his arms towards the symbol of a golden ox appearing above him. Saint Luke's large blue halo, finely decorated with slender golden lines, matches the ox's halo, also seemingly pierced by thin rays of light. The garments of the evangelist—red, green, and brown—are also interwoven with golden streaks delineating the drapery folds and the body underneath. Saint Luke's book lies open on the desk, almost touching the scroll that descends from heaven, held by the evangelist's symbol. The composition is enclosed by an ornate frame, which brings out the richly decorated furniture and cushion, and the arch with a curtain behind Saint Luke.

Once again, we must acknowledge visible traces of Byzantine influences in the miniature. For instance, the ornate frame and the background of gleaming gold bring to mind Byzantine illuminations such as the *Codex Purpureus Petropolitanus*³¹ and enamels such as the tenth-century Khakhuli Triptych from the Tiflis Museum.³² In addition to this, the figure of the standing evangelist recalls Byzantine illustrations of saints receiving visions.³³ However, the number of elements in this illumination strikes one as rather unorthodox for a peripheral variant of the Constantinople art sphere. Byzantine illuminated gospels never represent the evangelist's symbol along with the saint himself, as can be seen in well-known codices from the monastery of Stauronika or Mount Athos.³⁴ On the other hand, this feature is the standard type found in Carolingian, Ottonian, and Insular manuscripts.³⁵ The difference becomes apparent upon the comparison between the Byzantine illuminations and the evangelist portraits in such acclaimed Western books as the Lindisfarne and Ebo Gospels, or any other Anglo-Norman or Ottonian manuscripts.³⁶ The skies are empty above the Gospel writers in Byzantine miniatures, while in the West the man, the ox, the eagle, and the lion manifest themselves to the four evangelists. As we can

³¹London, BL Cotton MS Titus C.XV (6th c.).

³²*Byzantium*, ed. David Buckton (London 1994) 78–79; Klaus Wessel, *Byzantine Enamels* (Greenwich, CN 1967) cat. #24.

³³B.M. Add. 39626 and Jerusalem Megali Panagia I.

³⁴Lazarev 1978 (n. 6 above) 268; Vostokov 1988 (n. 29 above) 23.

³⁵André Grabar, *L'Art du Moyen Age en Europe Orientale* (Paris 1968) 150; Jean Hubert, et al. *L'Empire Carolingien* (Paris 1968 and New York 1970), figs. 64–67, 76–78, 276; Carl Nordenfalk, *Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Painting* (New York 1977), figs. 17, 22, 24–25, 36–38.

³⁶London, BL Cotton ms Nero D.IV; Epernay, BM MS I.

see, in this instance the Ostromir Lectionary conforms to Western, rather than Byzantine, book illustration standards.

The narrow scope of this paper does not permit us to provide an extensive discussion of the Ostromir initials (figs. 3a–b). They, however, must be acknowledged for their incredible resemblance to many of the Western initials. The Ostromir initials abound with zoomorphic and vegetal motifs that are clearly typical of earlier Anglo-Norman and later Romanesque manuscripts. Snarling wolves and rueful-looking griffins, two-headed bears and mythical birds undergoing fantastic transformations within a given initial came to be called a *kaleidoscopic metamorphosis* in Western scholarship, “a configurative shape-shifting, which comprehends essentially one moment in time, however unreal.”³⁷ Similar motifs of twisting animals transforming into purely decorative flower-like forms abound in such codices as the Corbie Psalter, the Worcester manuscripts, or the Winchester Bible.³⁸ Two elements in the Ostromir initials are particularly interesting: the striking array of elongated leaves growing out of the letters and the so-called “island leaf,” a fleshy-looking vegetation sprout reminiscent of a warrior’s shield. These elements deserve a special study; we will only briefly mention their similarity with Western illumination. Besides appearing in the Anglo-Saxon Junius Psalter, the elongated leaf made its way to the pages of Norman Ramsey Psalter and a variety of Avranches manuscripts.³⁹ The island leaf was common currency in the Angevin world, and besides being used in manuscript illumination, was found in sculpture as well.⁴⁰ For example, the tomb of the Chevalier Hugues at Troarn and capitals at Bernay are decorated with an array of such forms.⁴¹ The same motif would later be used, among many others, in the decoration of the Winchester Bible.

To make some final comments on the Ostromir initials, we must point out that, interestingly enough, a considerable time elapsed between the aforementioned Anglo-Norman and the Slavic illuminations. This difference of over two hundred and fifty years is extremely diffi-

³⁷Otto Pächt, *Book Illumination in the Middle Ages* (Oxford 1986) 52–53.

³⁸Amiens, BM MS 18, Gregory the Great, *Dialogues*; Cambridge, Clare College, MS 30; Winchester, Cathedral Library.

³⁹Oxford, BL MS Junius 27; BL Harley MS 2904; Avranches, BM MSS 97, 98, 211.

⁴⁰See the Corbie Psalter as well as Norman manuscripts such as Augustine’s *Contra Julianum, Retrattaciones* (BM MS 91), among many others.

⁴¹Maylis Baylé, *Les origines et les développements de la sculpture romane en Normandie* (Caen 1991) 80–81, 293, 310.

cult to account for. One can speculate that Russia was at a certain disadvantage having embraced Christianity much later than both Byzantium and the Latin West. Therefore, the newly baptized royal families must have welcomed any kind of religious writing and artwork that became available to them. Local artists could have been employed to provide the aristocracy with much needed books, copied from the imported originals and enhanced with local styles. The merchants traveling from England and Normandy through Scandinavia to Rus were probably the main source of the book trade. It is highly unlikely that the newly initiated Christians were acquainted with and/or able to afford the first-rate manuscripts that are known to us as the best of their times. However, contemporary copies based on the older, highly-revered manuscripts could have been readily available for export to the faraway Kievan Rus, which would explain a time lag between the rendition of the Norman models and Slavic miniatures.

* * *

This brief article will conclude with a discussion of the Mstislav Gospels. The codex was illuminated around 1117 and was modeled directly on the Ostromir manuscript.⁴² Created for the Novgorod prince Mstislav, the book displayed a dazzling filigree cover richly decorated with enamels. Mstislav ordered the lectionary for the Annunciation Church, built in 1103; the book was an elaborate enterprise, consisting of 217 leaves, each of the separate twenty-seven books containing approximately eight leaves.⁴³

The history of Mstislav's family is symptomatic of the active involvement into European affairs that Kievan Rus maintained in the twelfth century. The last prince of the united ancient Rus, Mstislav, had a very tight connection with the North and the West; it is thus no wonder that the Gospels show such a pronounced foreign influence.⁴⁴ Mstislav's mother Gida, a daughter of King Harold, was English. Mstislav married the Swedish princess Christina, who bore him two daughters,

⁴²Historical Museum, Moscow (transferred from the Synodal Collection), MS 1203; parchment, 35.3 x 28.6 cm (13 7/8 x 11 1/4 in.). Provenance: Historical Museum, Patriarchal Vestry; transferred to the Synodal Library in Moscow in 1917; Historical Museum, Moscow in 1920.

⁴³There are two exceptions: the ninth book had only six leaves, and the twenty-seventh book, seven leaves.

⁴⁴*Mstislavovo Evangelie XII Veka. Issledovania*, ed. Aleksii Frolov (Moscow 1997) 673.

Ingeborg and Mamfrid, both of whom married Scandinavian royalty. One wedded Sigurd of Norway, and after his death married Erik-Edmund of Denmark; another was betrothed to Kanut II.⁴⁵

The book was written and illuminated by Alexa, the son of Deacon Lazarus, who apparently used the Ostromir miniatures as exemplars for his own work.⁴⁶ The illumination of the lectionary is spectacular. The evangelist figures have changed in comparison with those of the Ostromir Gospels. Still expressive but less stylized, they display what Lazarev attested to be typical Novgorod characteristics: the evangelists become smaller, with larger heads and strong but slightly crude features.⁴⁷ On the Mstislav Luke miniature (fig. 4) the bearded evangelist with tightly curled hair turns his face towards an ox emerging from a blue starred cloud in the upper right corner of the miniature. The haloes of Luke and the ox no longer match; whereas the evangelist retains the enamel-like blue shining around his head, pierced by refined flowery spirals of gold, the halo of the ox is a mere red line around its head. This, however, is an inventive device to attract the reader's attention to the words written in thin red script beside the symbol: "The Holy Ghost appears to Saint Luke in the form of an ox."⁴⁸ The same phrase was written in Ostromir Luke's page, but the words were not underscored by such an intricate play of color and composition. We see here that Alexa not only faithfully copied the evangelist symbols so atypical for the Byzantine tradition, but also drew our attention to the words that point to the symbol. In fact, the ox becomes, in a manner of speaking, a magnet for our gaze, so strong and pronounced is its relationship to Luke. Their gazes meet and we witness a silent dialogue between the two; meanwhile Ostromir Luke's stare is directed more towards the sky and does not meet the gaze of his symbol. The Mstislav evangelist's hands, enlarged and pronounced, seem to implore his vision to give him a revelation, whereas the Ostromir saint seems to be patiently waiting for the scroll to descend into his hands. All in all, it appears that the illuminator, instead of removing the unusual, non-Byzantine, element of the miniature, copied it carefully and infused it with more meaning, placing the emphasis of the entire miniature on the symbol. Alexa preserved the green-red palette for Luke's dress, employing signature Ro-

⁴⁵Ibid. 650–670.

⁴⁶Lazarev 1947 (n. 7 above) 24.

⁴⁷Lazarev 1947 (n. 7 above) 24.

⁴⁸Transcription by Olga Popova (cat. #4).

manesque colors as found, for example, in the Saint Albans Psalter illuminations. The enamel-like quality of the image echoes the cover of the book, itself lavishly decorated with enamels.

* * *

Although many Russian manuscripts were destroyed by accidental and deliberately set fires both before and during the Tartar-Mongol attacks,⁴⁹ this lack of documentation should not impede us from venturing in search of foreign influences that permeated the art of Kievan Rus. Certainly, no doubt should be cast on the importance of Byzantium in the history of Slavic art or on the development of the local indigenous Russian style. However, to ignore the significant role that Anglo-Norman and Ottonian art played in the formation of Slavic culture would mean to rob the art of Kievan Rus of its sense of diversity and internationalism. As demonstrated in our analysis of the Trier Psalter, and the Ostromir and the Mstislav Gospels, Russian illuminated manuscripts possess an undeniable non-Byzantine influence that can no longer be neglected.

The cultural interchanges between the East and the West have had a long and rich history. Missionaries and merchants traveled across the land hoping to convert lost souls and to procure foreign goods. Already in the seventh and the eighth centuries the journeying monks from England and Ireland were traveling eastward, and only a century later the Frankish empire set forth to bring Christianity to the East. The Benedictine monk Winfrid (also called Boniface), who strongly influenced the episcopal system of the German Catholic church, was also known for his concern with the conversion of the Slavs.⁵⁰ As Christianity made its way eastward, the archbishopric of Magdeburg was established as a missionary center for the Slavs beyond the Elbe in the time of Emperor Otto I.⁵¹ Romanesque influences are apparent in architecture and sculpture of Slavic origin.⁵² We have seen the extent of the

⁴⁹Aleksei N. Suirin, *Drevnerusskaia Miniatura* (Moscow 1950) 7.

⁵⁰Ferdinand Seibt, "The Religious Problems" in *Eastern and Western Europe in the Middle Ages*, ed. Geoffrey Barraclough (London 1970) 86.

⁵¹Karl Bosl, "Political Relations Between East and West" in Barraclough (n. 50 above) 55.

⁵²For Western influences on Russian sculpture and architecture, see Samuel Cross, *Medieval Russian Churches* (Cambridge 1941) 31; George Hamilton, *Art and Architecture of Russia* (Baltimore 1954) 23, 42; Lazarev 1947 (n. 7 above) 231–232, 246; P. N. Maksimov, "Foreign Connections in the Novgorod and Pskov Architecture in the 11th–

dynastic relationships that the Russian nobility established with Western and Scandinavian royal families. The trading network in which Kievan Rus participated was vast; merchants from Germany, France, England, Ireland, Sweden, and Denmark penetrated Russian lands through Gotland and the Baltics, and descended via Novgorod further south. They brought with them various goods including manuscripts, crafted objects and jewelry that had a pronounced effect on Slavic artists.⁵³ When one carefully examines Russian manuscript illumination of the eleventh through the twelfth centuries, it becomes obvious that Western influences inexorably manifest themselves in the luxuriously decorated Russian Gospels and Psalters of the great kingdom of medieval Kievan Rus.

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14th centuries," *Architectural Heritage* 12 (1960) 25; A. Grabar (n. 35 above) 316; *Ipatyev Letopis of 1259* (Saint Petersburg 1908) vol. 2, lines 843–844.

⁵³Lazarev 1978 (n. 6 above) 229.



FIG. 1. The Trier Christ in Majesty. Reproduced with permission from *Istoriia russkogo iskusstva. Pod obshchei*, ed. I. E. Grabaria, V. N. Lazareve, and V. S. Kemenova, Institut istorii Iskusstv (Moscow 1953–1964).



FIG. 2. Luke receiving divine inspiration (The Ostromir Gospels, 1056–1057). Reproduced with permission from *Istoriia russkogo iskusstva. Pod obshchei*, ed. I. E. Grabaria, V. N. Lazareve, and V. S. Kemenova, Institut istorii Iskusstv (Moscow 1953–1964).



FIG. 3A–B. Ostromir initials. Reproduced with permission from *Istoriia russkogo iskusstva. Pod obshchei*, ed. I. E. Grabaria, V. N. Lazareve, and V. S. Kemenova, Institut istorii Iskusstv (Moscow 1953–1964).



FIG. 4. Luke the Evangelist (The Mstislav Gospels, ca. 1117). Reproduced with permission from *Istoriia russkogo iskusstva. Pod obshchei*, ed. I. E. Grabaria, V. N. Lazareve, and V. S. Kemenova, Institut istorii Iskusstv (Moscow 1953–1964).