Delegation of the Hungarian National Library at the Austrian National Library

2025/06/24



On 2nd June 2025 the management of the Hungarian National Library visited the Austrian National Library (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, ÖNB) on a professional trip.



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David Rózsa, Director-General of the National Széchényi Library (MNMKK OSZK), and Judit Gerencsér, Deputy Director-General of the institution, visited Vienna to strengthen the professional relationship between the two national libraries and explore cooperation opportunities. The guests were welcomed

by Johanna Rachinger, Director-General of ÖNB, who has been leading the library since 2001.



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A significant focus of the meeting was the ongoing joint project between ÖNB, the Austrian Academy of Sciences (ÖAW), and the MNMKK OSZK, which aims to conduct a comprehensive scientific analysis of the forty corvinas held at ÖNB. The project involves Edina Zsupán, scientific staff member of the HUN-REN–OSZK Fragmenta et Codices Research Group, Marianne Rozsondai, a book historian and retired director of the MTA KIK Manuscript Department, Katharina Kaska, Director of the Manuscript Department of ÖNB, along with her colleagues Veronika Drescher and Friedrich Simader, as well as Maria Theisen, art historian and head of the Medieval Library History Department at ÖAW, and Christian Gastgeber, Byzantine expert.

As part of this cooperation, the MNMKK OSZK has recently received the full digital collection of the forty corvinas from the ÖNB, expanding the number of corvinas available on the National Library's corvina website (corvina.hu). [5]

The Vienna project is the next stage of a research program initiated by MNMKK OSZK in the 2000s, which has already led to the detailed exploration of corvinas stored in Munich and Wolfenbüttel. The results of the project are published in the MNMKK OSZK Supplementum Corvinianum series (National Széchényi Library). Additionally, the Vienna codex descriptions will be available electronically both on the ÖNB website (Wiener Corvinen) [6] and on the MNMKK OSZK corvina website.

Following the official meeting, the Hungarian delegation also met Michaela Mayr, Deputy Director-General of ÖNB, and was then guided through the ÖNB's ceremonial hall, the Prunksaal, by Katharina Kaska, Director of the Manuscripts and Early Printed Books Archive Department.



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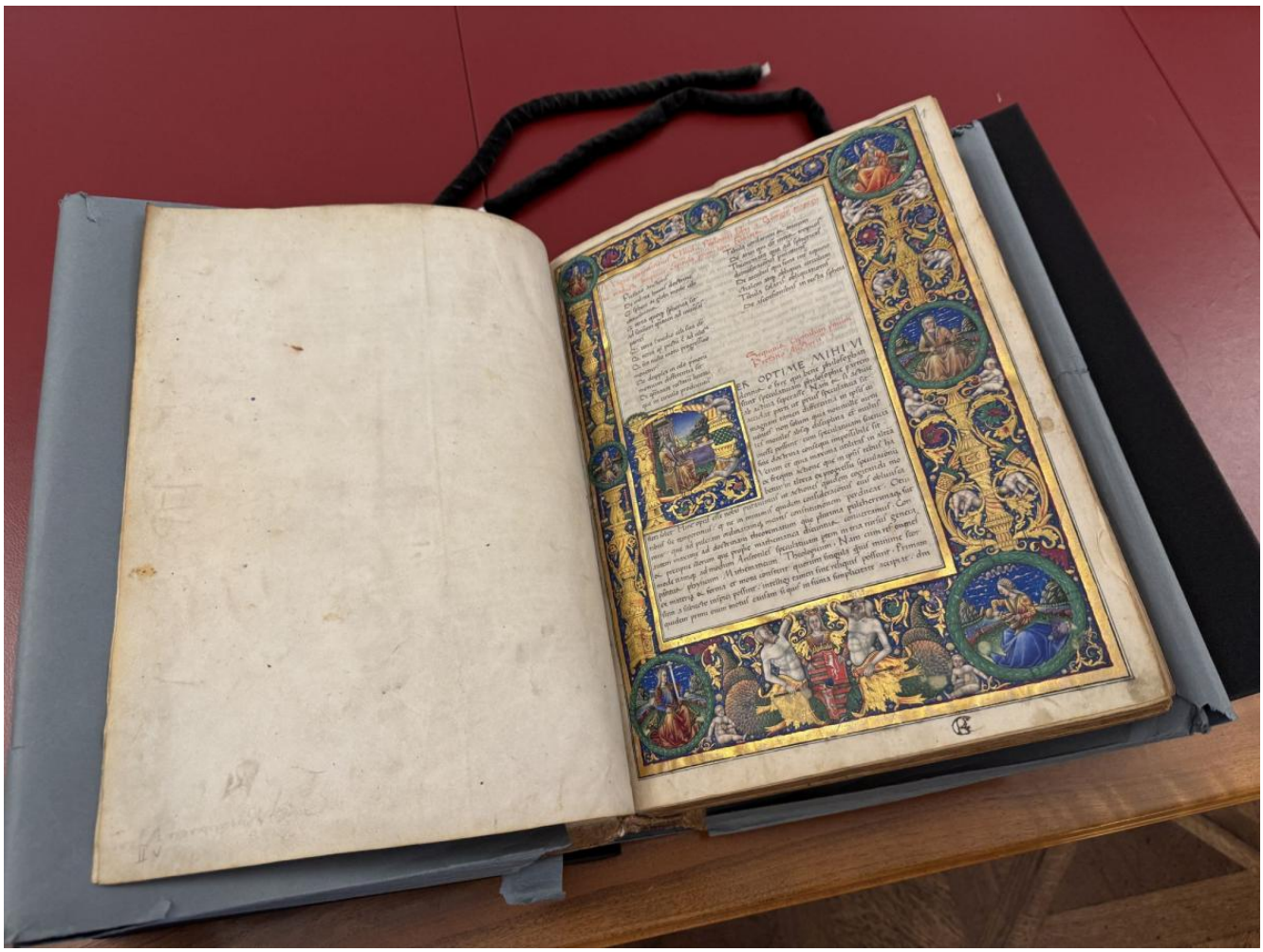

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The Prunksaal, located in the Neue Burg wing of the Hofburg Palace in the heart of Vienna, is Europe’s largest baroque library, built between 1723 and 1726 on the initiative of Emperor Charles VI. The nearly 80-meter-long, 30-meter-tall, oval-shaped room features a marble statue of the emperor at its centre, with the ceiling adorned with spectacular frescoes painted by court artist Daniel Gran. The library’s ceremonial hall houses over two hundred thousand historical volumes, including Prince Eugene of Savoy's 15000-volume collection and one of Europe’s richest collections of Martin Luther’s Reformation writings.



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During the visit, the Hungarian delegation had the opportunity to view five codices – including three corvinas – which Katharina Kaska presented in detail. These special manuscripts are significant not only to the Hungarian, but to the global cultural heritage.

As the next part of the program, the delegation visited one of the library's modern storage facilities that also serves digitalization purposes, where Christa Müller, Head of the Acquisitions and Processing Department, provided information on the digitalization activities of the institution and contemporary library technology developments.

The meeting served not only to strengthen the professional relationship between the two libraries, which share common historical roots, but also opened up new possibilities for future joint projects and research. The dialogue between MNMKK OSZK and ÖNB is a notable example of European-level cooperation in the preservation and presentation of cultural heritage, contributing to the international role of national libraries.

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