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The Renaissance as a Process¹: the Transformation in Orthodox Church Painting in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth

The Ruthenian Orthodox art in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the sixteenth century opened itself to the influences of Western European culture. The article is devoted to a description and analysis of this phenomenon. Although for most of the seventeenth century no work emerged that was pure enough in terms of its style that it could be termed a fully Renaissance work, this fact does not mean that there wasn't any Renaissance at all. Here the Renaissance was not a style, an epoch, or a period, but a process that unfolded over two centuries, without a strictly defined beginning and end.

Keywords: Renaissance, Orthodox Church art, Ukrainian art, Ruthenian Art, Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, 16th century, 17th century

Introduction

The Orthodox church art of the Ruthenians was an inseparable and important part of the culture of the multi-ethnic society of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth². For centuries it developed without any

¹ The phrase «Renaissance as Progress» was used by Ernst Hans Gombrich: Ernst Hans Gombrich, «The Renaissance — Period or Movement?», in *Background to the English Renaissance*, ed. J. B. Trapp (London: Gray-Mills Publishing, 1974), 9–30.

² Although the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was established only by the Union of Lublin in July 1569, the Crown of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania had been in a personal union since 1386 with the marriage of the Polish queen Jadwiga and Lithuania's Grand Duke Jogaila.

hindrance, drawing inspiration from the artistic world surrounding it. Associated institutionally, spiritually and culturally with the Byzantine civilisation in the Middle Ages, after the fall of the Empire it did not break its ties with the artistic and religious circles from Moldavia, Wallachia, the Balkans and Muscovy. Yet this did not stop it from becoming increasingly influenced by Western Europe. At that time artists working for the Orthodox Church began to gradually abandon old, well-tested painting techniques, traditional compositional patterns and iconographic models, ways of placing various themes within churches — ways practised in medieval Byzantine culture — in favour of new models from Western European art.

Every synthesis should be based on analytical research and every general assertion should be substantiated by concrete examples. Thus, if a general study features terms to define styles which often overlap with historical periods with clear temporal and territorial boundaries, it seems that the author should also indicate political, cultural and artistic phenomena, specific works even, which prompt and justify this intellectual exercise. The transformations in Orthodox church art in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth referred to above unfolded gradually from the end of the fifteenth century. Although they occurred at the height of the Renaissance in Europe, this does not mean that they characterised this particular style in Ruthenia. An analysis of the new formal features of works emerging as a result of these changes should provide an answer to the question of their stylistic provenance and thus make it possible to introduce a clear dividing line between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance other than the year 1453, which separates Byzantine from post-Byzantine art in a slightly artificial manner. The aim of the present article is to demonstrate whether this is possible at all³.

³ The analysis consciously focuses only on the formal features of Orthodox church painting in former Poland, omitting the greater twentieth-century discussion about the beginning, diversity and nature of cultural changes in Europe, which are called Renaissance; see: Johan Huizinga «The Problem of the Renaissance,» in Idem, *Men and Ideas: History, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance*, intr. by Bert F. Hoselitz (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 243–87 (first published under the title «Renaissancestudië, 1: Het problem» in *De Gids* 84, vol. 4 (1920): 107–133, 231–255); Michele De Filippis, «The Renaissance Problem Again,» *Italica* 20, no. 2 (1943): 65–80.

The phenomenon of the Occidentalising of Ruthenian art in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was observed by the so-called Ancients already in the nineteenth century. The end of that century was also marked by the beginning of art history as a scholarly discipline in Poland. Already at that time Marian Sokołowski, the first Chair of Art History at the Jagiellonian University, when preparing the first Polish-Ruthenian Archaeological Exhibition in Lviv in 1885, recognised a style «of the Renaissance close to the *Baroko*» in Orthodox art exhibited there and described the changes he observed, including the stylistic impurity characteristic of these works⁴. When in 1914 Ilarion Svientsitsky published for the first time the icons kept in the National Museum in Lviv, he noticed in some of them a similarity to Dürer's and Wolgemut's prints⁵. Although in this case the source of inspiration was different, the novel and bold suggestion — that a Ruthenian painter may have used German prints — proved correct 80 years later⁶.

Middle Ages

The Occidentalising of Ruthenian art in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth did not begin with its adaptation of early modern artistic forms. It was an earlier phenomenon, not limited to the territory of just one country. In the Middle Ages European Orthodox culture was not particularly isolated; solutions inspired by Western Christian art did find their way into it, as is evidenced by works scattered across Europe.

A completely separate chapter in the history of Byzantine art is that of Cretan painting, which from the moment the island of Crete came under Venice's jurisdiction in 1210 was constantly influenced by northern Italian culture, only to develop in the fifteenth century

⁴ Marian Sokołowski, «Obrazy,» w *Wystawa Archeologiczna polsko-ruska urządzona we Lwowie w roku 1885*, ed. Wojciech Dzieduszycki, Ludwik Wierzbicki, Marian Sokołowski (Lwów: Edward Trzemeski 1886), 13–24.

⁵ Іларіон Свенціцький, «Галицько-руське церковне малярство XV–XVI ст. Матеріали і замітки,» *Записки Наукового Товариства імені Шевченка* 121 (1914): 86.

⁶ Agnieszka Gronek, «On the Dependence of Western Ruthenian Passion Presentations on Western Graphics in the 16th to 18th centuries,» in *Series Byzantina*, ed. Waldemar Deluga, Michał Janocha (Warszawa: Neriton 2003), 1: 159–173.

a characteristic style referred to by scholars as Italo-Cretan⁷. Mass production of icons in Candia and its location on the main trade routes contributed to the great spread of this type of painting both among the Catholics and the Orthodox monks on Mount Athos, Sinai, Patmos etc.

Leaving aside all political and social differences, we can see that the processes unfolding in the art of the Ruthenians (today's Belarusians and Ukrainians) living in the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth were similar. Icon painting in the region as well as graphic arts and architecture changed slowly, gradually, but also permanently, leading to the emergence of an original, outstanding artistic language. It is hard to say with certainty in which sphere of art the process began. Fifteenth-century painting features very few motifs of Western provenance. Among the dozens of representations of Eastern provenance created by Ruthenian painters commissioned by King Władysław Jagiełło to decorate the walls of the chapel at the Lublin Castle, there was a scene depicting the *Communion of the Apostles*, the iconography and style of which suggest inspiration by German-Austrian art of circa 1400⁸. The stylistic features of international Gothic are to be found in the shape of the folds of Peter's himation in the icon *Deesis* from Lysiatychi dated very generally to the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth century⁹. Linking this particular style to Western art may be correct, taking into consideration also other motifs found in the icon, motifs like the long elaborate rotuli and lettering in the names of the saints, modelled on Gothic script. Placing

⁷ This topic is well represented in literature, see: *The Origins of El Greco. Icon painting in Venetian Crete*, ed. Anastasia Drandaki (New York: Onassis Foundation USA, 2009); Nano Chatzidakis, *From Candia to Venice. Greek Icons in Italy. 15th-16th Centuries* (Athens 1993); Nano Chatzidakis, *Icons of the Cretan School (15th-16th century)* (Athens: Benaki Museum, 1983); *Греческие иконы XV-XVII вв. из музейных и частных собраний*, ред. Лилия Евсеева (Москва, 2010); Waldemar Deluga, «Między Kandią a Wenecją. Rola grafiki europejskiej w przemianach ikonograficznych malarstwa postbizantyńskiego,» w Idem, *Panagiotafitika. Greckie ikony i grafiki cerkiewne* (Kraków: Collegium Columbinum, 2008), 13-25.

⁸ Anna Różycka-Bryzek, *Bizantyńsko-ruskie malowidła w kaplicy zamku lubelskiego* (Warszawa: PWN, 1983), 84-84, 318.

⁹ National Museum in Lviv (later as NML), inventory no. Кв-2861/І-1270; Григорій Логвин, Лада Міляєва, Віра Свенціцька, *Український середньовічний живопис* (Київ: Мистецтво, 1976), no. 58.

inscriptions made up of letters resembling the medieval Fraktur in icons was by no means unique, but more frequent in the region in sixteenth-century icons. Christ depicted in the fifteenth-century *Crucifixion* from Owczary is covered by a white mesh of the perizoma (fig. 1), which has its analogy in a miniature from the thirteenth-century Bohemian manuscript of *Mater Verborum*¹⁰. In the Korczyn icon St. George wears chain mail imitated by a mesh of white rings¹¹. A fancifully wavy flag and Gothic lettering suggest — despite the traditional iconography next to St. Praskeva — that the artist was inspired by Western paintings. Isolated motifs from this cultural milieu also found their way into book painting in the fifteenth century¹². The most frequent ornament in Cyrillic liturgical books at the time was the Balkan plaited ornament. It filled headpieces and initials. Larger and richer scriptoria produced books in the so-called new Byzantine style, historicising, consciously drawing on early medieval decorative forms. Yet in addition to these motifs, characteristic of Eastern Christian books, there were more and more initials in the form of straight vermilion capitals from which extended ornamental flourishes as well as sprigs with leaves and flowers. These are flat, monochromatic forms, often moresques. They are a new element, probably inspired by plant-based initials of medieval Western books, especially from Italy. The popularity of this motif in books from both cultures stemmed from a rare symbiosis of stunning effect and ease of production: such initials could be made by a scribe of average skill and there was no need to hire a miniaturist. This made the work more effective and less expensive.

¹⁰ Historical Museum in Sanok (later as MHS), inventory no. 943; Mirosław Piotr Kruk, *Ikony Matki Boskiej z Dzieciątkiem w zachodnioruskim malarstwie wieków XV-XVI* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 1999), 57, fig. 1–2; a monograph on the icon was written by Romuald Biskupski: Romuald Biskupski, *Ukrzyżowanie z Owczar. Ikona z 2 połowy XV wieku. Katalog zbiorów* (Sanok: Muzeum Historyczne, 2000).

¹¹ NML, inventory no. Кв-36510/І-2178; Логвин, Міляєва, Свенціцька, no. 71; Віра Свенціцька, Олег Сидор, *Спадщина віків. Українське малярство XIV–XVIII століть у музейних колекціях Львова* (Львів: Каменяр, 1990), fig. 28.

¹² Andrzej Kaszlej, «Iluminacja książki cerkiewnej,» w *Sztuka iluminacji i grafiki cerkiewnej. Katalog wystawy październik-listopad 1996*, red. Andrzej Kaszlej, Waldemar Deluga (Warszawa: Biblioteka Narodowa, 1998), 7–19.

Sixteenth century

The research material from the following century is much richer, which makes it possible to carry out a more complete analysis and formulate more credible general conclusions. At that time Ruthenian art in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth experienced a considerable boom caused by a rise in the demand for Orthodox church furnishings and by the greater number of painting workshops in operation. Their output often stands out by virtue of such clear and characteristic stylistic formulas that they can be distinguished and described in detail. Most of the works created at the time still fell within the framework of traditional aesthetics and iconography, and in spite of their considerably varied technical and artistic quality many were characterised by dynamism, freshness and experiments with formal and visual means. These new motifs found their way into Orthodox church painting mainly by means of prints — a new medium providing an inexhaustive pool of models for artists working in all areas of art across the early modern world.

An analysis of sixteenth-century Ruthenian icons makes it possible to conclude that the earliest motifs to be adopted were those that were the easiest to copy. They included small architectural details like Gothic gargoyles in the *Annunciation of Anna* from Lubyni¹³, an ancient astragal from the Kostarowce *Crucifixion*¹⁴ (fig.2), an Ionic cymatium in the *King of Glory* icon from Staryi Sambir¹⁵ (fig.3) and the Iwanowice *Annunciation* by Fedusko of Sambir¹⁶, the Renaissance spangled ornament

¹³ NML, Кв-4356/І-3189; Логвин, Міляєва, Свенціцька, no. 97; Liudmilla Milyaeva, *The Ukrainian Icon 11th–18th centuries. From Byzantine sources to the Baroque* (New York: Parkstone Press 1996), 133, 234, no. 125; Michał Janocha, *Ukraińskie i białoruskie ikony świąteczne w dawnej Rzeczypospolitej* (Warszawa: Neriton, 2001), 197.

¹⁴ MHS/S/3418; Katarzyna Winnicka, *Ikony z XVI wieku w Muzeum Historycznym w Sanoku. Katalog zbiorów* (Sanok: Muzeum Historyczne, 2013), 2: 70–73, 124–125, includes the earlier literature on the subject.

¹⁵ NML, Кв-15483, І-1570; Іларіон Свенціцький, *Ікони Галицької України XV–XVII віків* (Львів: Національний Музей, 1929), 109; Марія Гелитович, *Ікони Старосамбірщини XIV–XVI століть зі збірки Національного музею у Львові імені Андрея Шептицького* (Львів: Свічадо, 2010), no. 46.

¹⁶ Kharkiv Art Museum, inventory no.zrhu-8; Milyaeva, *The Ukrainian Icon*, nos. 136, 144–145, 235.

in the *St. Nicholas* icon kept in the Historical Museum in Sanok¹⁷ as well as its arcade balustrades, but also those with two-vase balusters in works by the «Master of the Yabluniv Transfiguration»¹⁸ (fig.4). The hitherto smooth frames and backgrounds began to be decorated with geometric and plant ornaments, with engraved or high relief patterns usually varnished golden¹⁹.

It is worth stressing that analogous changes in the finishing of painting backgrounds occurred in church painting in Lesser Poland in the fifteenth century and were characteristic of Gothic art all over Western Europe. This is precisely the stylistic provenance of patterns in sixteenth-century Western Ruthenian icons: square or rhomboid mesh, dry acanthus leaves and ribbons wrapped around a rod or dry branch²⁰. All these isolated elements did not change the style of icons. However, at that time there also emerged works which took over entire compositional patterns from Western art. Examples include two icons of the *Passion* from Trushevici and Mikhova²¹ (fig.5), which, in addition to traditional

¹⁷ MHS/S/3716; Winnicka, *Ikony*, 34–35, 108–109.

¹⁸ The term was coined by Vira Svientsitska: Свенціцька, Сидор, *Спадщина віків*, 19; Віра Свенціцька, Володимир Откович, *Українське народне малярство XIII–XX століть* (Київ: Митецтво, 1991), 13, fig. 33–36; Agnieszka Gronek, «Prace kręgu “Mistrza Deesis z Bartnego”. Charakterystyka stylu,» w *Drogi i bezdroża ochrony zabytków w Polsce południowo-wschodniej po 1945 roku. Księga poświęcona pamięci Barbary Tondos i Jerzego Tura*, red. Agnieszka Gronek, Joanna Daranowska-Łukaszewska (Kraków, Stowarzyszenie Historyków Sztuki, 2019), 457–474.

¹⁹ The most complete analysis of the carved decorations of Ruthenian icons so far has been provided by Michał Drahan: Михайло Драган, *Українська декоративна різьба* (Київ: Наукова думка, 1970).

²⁰ Драган, *Українська декоративна*, 14–15, 26; Piotr Krasny, Mirosław Piotr Kruk, «Kilka uwag o okcydentalizacji sztuki cerkiewnej w monarchii jagiellońskiej,» w *Przywrócona pamięci. Ikona Matki Boskiej Chełmskiej: ikonografia — kult — kontekst społeczny*, red. Andrzej Gil, Mirosław Kalinowski, Ihor Skoczylas (Lublin–Lwów: Wydawnictwo KUL 2016), 144.

²¹ NML, Кв-15813/І-1601 (from Trushevici), NML, no. Кв-42407, І-2983 (from Mikhova); Agnieszka Gronek, *Ikony Męki Pańskiej. O przemianach w malarstwie cerkiewnym ukraińsko-polskiego pogranicza* (Kraków: Collegium Columbinum 2007), no. 4, 5, with detailed bibliography; Гелитович, *Ikoni Старосамбірщини*, pos. 8, 9; Марія Гелитович, *Українські ікони XIII — початку XVI століть зі збірки Національного музею у Львові імені Андрія Шептицького* (Київ: Майстер книг, 2014), no. 81, 82.

scenes, include representations inspired by Martin Schongauer's prints²². The creators of the icons copied the general compositional pattern, poses of the figures and even considerably simplified architectural motifs in the background, preserving traditional stylistic features in the draping of robes, presentation of space as well as landscape and architectural background. This preserved the stylistic uniformity of their works despite the introduction of many new features in the iconographic layer. Thus, the motifs borrowed from the German artist's prints did not make the icons Renaissance in their style. The German master's successful attempts to create an illusion of space by means of architectural motifs presented in accordance with linear perspective and to convey the three-dimensionality of objects and figures by means of colour hues were ignored by the painter of the icons, as if he had failed to notice them or to appreciate them. But even if he had attempted to render space on a flat surface, would such an attempt been enough for his work to be considered a Renaissance work, bearing in mind that this is a feature of not just the Italian Quattrocento, but also of the international Gothic style?²³

In the second half of the sixteenth century some workshops active in Ruthenia made attempts to render three-dimensionality on a flat surface using early modern methods. These included realistic depictions of individual motifs, for example some books in the hands of saints in the *Deesis* from Rivne²⁴ (fig.6) and Chrewt²⁵, trees in the *Anna and Joachim* icon by an unknown author from the National Museum in Lviv²⁶ (fig.7) or the vessels and weapons in the *Passion* icon from

²² Groniek, «On the Dependence,» 159–178; Eadem, *Wokół Ukrzyżowanego. Studia nad tematem Pasji w ukraińskim malarstwie ikonowym* (Warszawa: Neriton, 2009), 50–75.

²³ A wonderful analysis of main artistic topics in fifteenth-century painting was created by Jan Białostocki: Jan Białostocki, *Il Quattrocento nell'Europa settentrionale* (Torino: UTET, 1989) (1. ed; fr. ed. 1993, esp. ed. 1998, pol. ed. 2010).

²⁴ The Šariš Museum in Bardejov, inventory no. H 1011; Vladislav Grešlik. *Ikony Šarišského muzea v Bardejove* (Bratislava: Ars Monument, 1994), no. 3.

²⁵ Museum of the Przemysł Region in Przemysł, inventory no. 1392; Bronisława Kiwała, Janina Burzyńska. *Ikony ze zbiorów Muzeum Okręgowego w Przemysłu* (Kraków: Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza, 1981), no. 11; Димитрій (Ярема), *Іконопис Західної України XVI — поч. XVII ст.* (Львів: Друкарські куншти, 2017), fig. 32, 34.

²⁶ Lev Skop attributed this icon to Fedusko of Sambir, and linked it to the Orthodox Church of SS. Anna and Joachim in Stanila; cf. Лев Скоп, *Майстер мініатюр*

Bahnuvate²⁷ (fig. 8). In addition, there were also attempts to convey the depth of landscape or architecture in the various representations. For example, in some sections of the *Passion* icon from Bahnuvate, dated to the mid-sixteenth century, we can see attempts to abandon the custom of placing human figures on a narrow strip of greenery at the bottom of the composition, a feature characteristic of medieval icons. Although most figures are still to be found in the foreground, the strip of land marking it has been extended. In the *Terror of the Guards* section the greenery in the background is brighter than in the foreground. In addition, architectural motifs in the background are only sketched with no chromatic colours, which could suggest that the painter was familiar with the principles of aerial perspective. The light brown elevations do not have steplike tops and the gently sloping ridges seem to resemble the surrounding hills. An even more novel composition is to be found in the central scene, of the *Crucifixion*, which completely does away with a shallow foreground where all figures are placed (fig.9). Here the strip of ground is much broader and varied in terms of colour and shape, and on it we find the protagonists of separate episodes unfolding on several planes. In addition, most figures in the background are smaller than those in the foreground. These principles, characteristic of early modern painting, are not observed consistently — they are followed only in the case of less important individuals: Longinus, the thieves and soldiers. Christ and the saints (with the exception of the Good Thief) are larger than the others and their size does not change the deeper they are in the composition. The author of the icon did not know the rules of creating a perspective grid — no edges of three-dimensional objects and architectural details match it. The whole scene is enclosed by a wall

Пересопницького Євангелія Федуско, маляр зі Самбора (Дрогобич: Коло, 2011), 22; Димитрій (Ярема), *Іконопис*, no. 45.

²⁷ NML, Кв 36508/1-2176; Віра Свенціцька, «Живопис XIV–XVI століть», *Ін Історія українського мистецтва: у 6-х томах*, т. 2: *Мистецтво XIV — першої половини XVII століття*, відп. ред. Юрій Нельговський, Лука Калениченко, Михайло Марченко (Київ, 1967), 254-257; Sviatoslav Hordynsky, *The Ukrainian Icon of the XIIth to XVIIIth Centuries*, transl. Walter Dushnyck (Philadelphia, Providence Association, 1973), 157, fig. 139; Sviatoslav Hordynsky, *Die Ukrainische Ikone 12. bis 18. Jahrhundert* (München: Ukrainische Freie Universität 1980), no. 139; Марія Гелитович, «Ікони “Страсті Христові” XV — 1-ї половини XVI століття», *Літопис* 2(7) (2001): 109–110.

of Jerusalem buildings — although they are not flat, they were not made by means of geometric perspective either. Thus, the works do not seek, in line with the rules of early modern painting, to create a faithful illusion of real space on a flat surface.

The second half of the sixteenth century was the period in which a painter known as the «Master of the Bartne *Deesis*» or «Master of the Yabluniv Transfiguration»²⁸ was active in the Przemyśl region. The appellations describing him come from three panels making up the *Deesis* row from the iconostasis in the Orthodox Church of SS. Cosmas and Damian from Bartne kept in two museums in Sanok: the Historical Museum and the Folk Architecture Museum²⁹ as well as the *Transfiguration* icon from the Orthodox Church of Archangel Michael in Yabluniv near Vysotsko and Turka³⁰ (fig. 10). The oeuvre of this outstanding painter marked the beginning of a characteristic style discernible in many surviving works by other painters. The biggest novelty in comparison with works of the period is to be found in the way of depicting landscape. Mountains are no longer presented as elongated cones built of rock slates rising stepwise, but as hills with gentle, undulating outlines. What makes them more realistic is not just the slopes covered by grass and trees, but also colour variety. It seems that in this way artists from this circle tried — as if using the rules of aerial perspective — to create an illusion of depth, although not very convincingly yet. These novel solutions, probably borrowed

²⁸ Свенціцька, Сидор, *Спадщина віків*, 19, fig. 54; Свенціцька, Откович, *Українське народне*, 13, fig. 33–36.

²⁹ MHS, inventory no. 929, 930, Museum of Folk Architecture in Sanok (later as MBL), inventory no. 622; currently MHS/S/4461; Romuald Biskupski, «Wybrane warsztaty malarstwa ikonowego szkoły halickiej XV i XVI wieku,» *Folia Historia Artium* 18 (1982): 30–31, fig. 5–5c; Janina Kłosińska, *Icons from Poland* (Warsaw: Arkady, 1989), no. 11–12; Michał Janocha, *Ikony w Polsce od średniowiecza do współczesności* (Warszawa: Arkady, 2008), no. 201; Winnicka, *Ikony*, no. 22. Biskupski formulated a hypothesis that despite all the close stylistic similarities, the works may have been created by two painters collaborating with each other (Biskupski, «Wybrane,» 30–42. Today all three panels are displayed in the Historical Museum in Sanok (the MBL icon as a deposit).

³⁰ National Museum in Lviv, inventory no. Кв-3598/І-1281; often reproduced: cf. Свенціцький, *Ikoni*, fig. 83; Свенціцька, Сидор, *Спадщина віків*, fig. 54; Дмитро. Степовик, *Історія української ікони Х–ХХ століть* (Київ: Либідь, 1996), 235, fig. 93; Milyaeva, *The Ukrainian Icon*, fig. 134; Janocha, *Українське*, fig. 13.

from Western paintings, are usually combined with traditional means, like the iconographic model, the gilded and engraved background, and the graphic and schematic shape of robes.

One thing is certain: in the sixteenth century no icon created in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth could be classified as a Renaissance work.

Western European artistic influences could also be discerned in the oeuvres of manuscript illuminators, who gradually expanded their repertoire of decorative patterns that were part of the Byzantine, teratological and Balkan styles to include Gothic and Renaissance motifs. Already in the fifteenth-century Borszowice Gospels (in the collection of the National Library in Warsaw) headpieces are filled with acanthus leaves (fig.11). A similar motif was placed in the margins of pages beginning successive parts of the book³¹. Such a combination of traditional and western motifs in one codex or even on one page is characteristic of the illuminations of sixteenth-century Ruthenian books from the entire territory of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. An analogous co-existence of late Gothic and Renaissance motifs can also be observed in miniatures from Lesser Poland from the previous century³² as well as in miniatures from across Europe³³. The difference is, however, that in Cyrillic books the pioneering and novel motifs were both those in the Gothic style and those in the Renaissance style. Among the latter the most popular was the arabesque, often in the form of a candelabrum, and the columned arcade, as in the Hyshevychi or Peresopnytsia Evangeliaries, in the Andrychyna's miniatures in the sixteenth-century *Sluzhebnyk* from Volhynia and in the Chełmno Evangeliary³⁴. The whole composition is surrounded on three sides by a border with a plant

³¹ Biblioteka Narodowa, Akc 2527; *Rękopisy cerkiewnosłowiańskie w Polsce. Katalog*, opr. Aleksander Naumow, Andrzej Kaszlej (Kraków: Scriptum, 2007), no. 196; *Inwentarz rękopisów Biblioteki Kapituły Greckokatolickiej w Przemyślu*, red. Andrzej Kaszlej (Warszawa: Biblioteka Narodowa, 2011), 41, no. 11802 III, fig. 4–5.

³² Barbara Miodońska, *Małopolskie malarstwo książkowe* (Warszawa: PWN, 1993), passim.

³³ Jonathan J. G. Alexander, *The Painted book in Renaissance Italy 1450–1600* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2016), passim.

³⁴ Яким Запаско, *Пам'ятки книжкового мистецтва. Українська рукописна книга* (Львів: Світ, 1995), nos. 82, 94, 85, 88; with rich bibliography collected there.

ornament³⁵. A whole range of late Gothic and Renaissance ornaments was used by the illustrator of the Peresopnytsia Evangeliary around the representations of the Evangelists³⁶ (fig. 12). Figural scenes in sixteenth-century manuscripts were presented in accordance with the Byzantine iconography and painting style characteristic of the domestic Orthodox artistic milieu.

Very interesting conclusions can be drawn from an analysis of the decorations of sixteenth-century printed books³⁷. It is no secret that the first print shops in Poland were set up by printers arriving from the West. They brought with them not only a new craft, but also an entire set of formal models, mainly German. The stylistic values of the layout of sixteenth-century Cyrillic books are determined mostly by ornamental motifs, as there are few figural representations.

Western was also the provenance of a majority of ornaments in sixteenth-century Cyrillic books. Only the world's oldest Cyrillic books, printed in Schweipolt Fiol's shop, feature motifs in the Balkan and Byzantine styles of Orthodox manuscripts³⁸ (fig. 13). Embellishments from Cyrillic manuscripts were still used in Vilnius by the Mamonicz, who in their *Sluzhebnyk* (1583, 1617) copied the plaited vignettes from Božidar Vuković's *Sluzhebnyk* (Venice, 1518, 1554)³⁹, repeated also in other books printed in Venice, for example the 1538 *Psalter*⁴⁰ or

³⁵ Ibidem, no. 102, fig. on page 392.

³⁶ V. I. Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine, Institute of Manuscripts, inventory no. 15512; Запаско, *Пам'ятки*, no. 88, 354–360; Скоп, fig. on pages 10–12, 14, 16.

³⁷ *Drukarze dawnej Polski od XV do XVIII wieku*, z. 5: *Wielkie Księstwo Litewskie*, z. 6: *Małopolska — Ziemie Ruskie*; red. Aldona Kawecka-Gryczowa, et al. (Wrocław-Kraków: Ossolineum, 1959–1960).

³⁸ A rich literature on the printing work of Schwaipolt Fiol has been collected by Евгений Немировский, *Славянские издания кирилловского (церковно-славянского) шрифта. Инвентарь сохранившихся экземпляров и указатель литературы* (Москва: Знак, 2009), 1: 191–214.

³⁹ Немировский, *Славянские* (Москва: Знак, 2011), 2: 90; Zoja Jaroszewicz-Pieresławcew, *Druki cyrylickie z oficyn Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego w XVI–XVIII wieku* (Olsztyn: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Warmińsko-Mazurskiego, 2003), 68, 213.

⁴⁰ Accessed online on 13 March 2016 on the website of the Digital National Library of Serbia: http://digitalna.nb.rs/wb/NBS/Stara_stampana_knjiga/I_028#page/0/mode/1up.

the 1570 *Sluzhebnyk*⁴¹. However, these were isolated and unique examples; in most cases sixteenth-century Cyrillic books printed in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth contained motifs of Western provenance with Gothic and Renaissance stylistic features, like in the books printed by Francysk Skaryna and Ivan Fyodorov.

In early books by Skaryna the former ornaments included fragments of frames with a thistle branch meandering up, the latter — narrow rectangular headpieces filled with flowery and leafy sprigs held together in the axis and twisting symmetrically sideways⁴². His Vilnius editions testify to a greater knowledge of Renaissance ornaments and ways of using them in printing. In his earlier books, from Prague, we can find, for example, candelabra ornaments or bellflowers placed horizontally, which reveals a lack of knowledge of their origin and of the way they were used in ornamenting practice. In his books printed in Vilnius Skaryna no longer made such errors and used ornaments in better ways.

Ivan Fyodorov owed his fame and respect to the fact that he printed beautiful books with a layout that was rich and neat for its day⁴³. He had at least 80 different woodcut patterns of headpieces in the *en tête* type, the so-called *zastavka*, from which he made 271 prints in his books⁴⁴ (fig. 14). The biggest number of them were composed in the *staropechati* style, although it is possible to find among them also those with Renaissance or Mannerist features. The Lviv *Apostle* contained, for example, a vignette with a palmette and antithetically placed cornucopias from which extended spiralling sprigs with acanthus leaves. The vignette was inspired by Hans Sebald Beham's print⁴⁵.

⁴¹ Немировский, *Славянские*, 2: 262, no. 135.

⁴² Немировский, *Славянские*, 1: 90–97; Waldemar Deluga, «Źródła i inspiracje ilustracji drzeworytniczych do wydań Franciszka Skoryny,» v *480 let Běloruského knihtisku. Materiály z konference v pražském Klementinu* 5. 9. 1997, ed. Františka Sokolová (Praha: Národní knihovna 1997), 15–19; *Сусветная спадчына Францыска Скарыны = Всемирное наследие Франциска Скорины = World Heritage of Francysk Skaryna*, ред. А. А. Суша и др. (Мінск: Энциклопедия имени Петруся Бровки, 2017), *passim*.

⁴³ Ivan Fyodorov's printing activities have already been discussed in detail in the literature on the subject; for the most complete analysis, see Немировский, *Славянские*, т. 2.

⁴⁴ Запаско, *Пам'ятки*, 46.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, 47–48.

In the vignettes of the Ostroh books the main motif, in addition to a delicate sprig, is made up of ferrule and scroll ornaments⁴⁶. In his books Fyodorov also began to use embellishments at the end of the text, the so-called tailpieces, either in the form of rectangular vignettes or small graphic, geometric or plant designs. The tailpieces in both *Apostles* (Moscow 1564, Lviv 1574) repeated the motif of a geometric plaited ornament inside a rectangle or polygon, which embellished many books printed in the sixteenth century by Western European print shops, also those from Kraków⁴⁷ (fig. 15).

In his Ostroh books Fyodorov introduced for the first time a title page framed by an arcade. In his first printed books Fyodorov left out the title page, including it only in the New Testament with the Psalter printed in Ostroh in 1580. This rich decoration made up of Renaissance architectural motifs repeated a motif from the Book of Sirach published in Wittenberg in 1533⁴⁸. Another frame of German provenance is the frame placed on the title page of the 1581 Ostroh Bible (fig. 16), of the 1564 Moscow *Apostle*, based on a print by Erhard Schoen (Schön), published in *Das Alte Testament mit fleys verteutsch* in Nuremberg in 1524, and also in the Czech Bible (Linhart Milchtaler 1540)⁴⁹. Thus the graphic layout of the books printed by Fyodorov can be regarded as fully in the Renaissance style and of Western European (German) provenance.

An analysis of decorative motifs of Cyrillic books printed in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth makes it possible to say that nearly all those used in the sixteenth century have Renaissance stylistic features. Figural representations, title pages, founders' coats of arms and printers' marks, frames, initials, headpieces and tailpieces were copied from compositions known from German codices⁵⁰. What may have acted as

⁴⁶ Ibidem, 197, 199, fig. 125–127, 141.

⁴⁷ Ibidem, 47, 200, fig. 147–152.

⁴⁸ Ibidem, 177, 69, 43.

⁴⁹ Ibidem, 68, including further literature on the subject. Reprinted in: *The Illustrated Bartsch*, ed. Walter L. Strauss (New York: Abaris Books, 1981), 13: 138, no. 33 (480) and *The Illustrated Bartsch. Commentary*, ed. Walter L. Strauss (New York: Abaris Books, 1984), 13: 124, no. 1301.034(i).

⁵⁰ Agnieszka Groniek, «Szata graficzna wczesnych ruskich druków cyrylickich. Źródła i inspiracje,» w *Starodruki cyrylickie w zasobach parafialnych pogranicza polsko-słowackiego*, red. Jarosław Grycz (Gorlice: Elpis, 2014), 50–71; Eadem,

intermediaries in their dissemination were books printed in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, especially in Kraków.

Thus, while sixteenth-century paintings were dominated by medieval solutions and only gradually absorbed early modern motifs, which did not destroy the overall nature of the style, the art of the Renaissance at the time was the main influence on the graphic layout of Cyrillic books printed in Ruthenia. In the sixteenth century the «black art» of Ruthenian printing shops was dominated by German models, to which in the seventeenth century were added models originating in the Netherlands⁵¹. Over the following decades the layout of Cyrillic books evolved, following the changes occurring in Western European art and acquiring first Baroque and then Classical stylistic features.

Seventeenth century

Modern stylistic solutions can be spotted in icon painting from the early seventeenth century. Artists active in that period continued the attempts — made already in the second half of the previous century — to create an early modern illusion of space in the composition and three-dimensionality of figures. When imitating architectural landscape they often used Western prints from which they copied ceiling coffers, floors, cornices, ledges, lintels — that is motifs with horizontal edges the lines of which converged in accordance with the rules of linear perspective. In composing landscape the artists raised the line of the horizon considerably in order to obtain a broader strip of ground where they could place elements getting increasingly small as they moved away from the foreground. Sometimes they abandoned a horizontal division of the scene into three strips in favour of a composition with wings on the one side near the foreground and depth elaborated along a diagonal line on the opposite side⁵².

«Finalik w starodrukach cyrylickich. Manifestacja nowożytnej estetyki,» *Akademia Supraska* 7 (2016): 137–148.

⁵¹ Eadem, «Grafika jako źródło nowych przedstawień w sztuce Kościoła wschodniego pierwszej Rzeczypospolitej,» w *Metodologia, metoda i terminologia grafiki i rysunku. Teoria i praktyka*, red. Joanna Talbierska (Warszawa: Semper, 2014), 309–314.

⁵² Eadem, «Okno na świat rzeczywisty czy transcendentny? O cechach

Such a pattern appeared already in the late fifteenth century, for example in works by Martin Schongauer and Albrecht Dürer, but was a complete novelty in icon painting in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Western painting was also the source of the three-colour division of the surface of paintings, with warm browns in the foreground, subdued greens farther away and pale blues in the background; sometimes artists would limit themselves to the first two colours and marked depth by an engraved golden background. The three-dimensionality of human figures was conveyed by means of delicate colour modelling; only in exceptional cases did shadow extend beyond the contours of the form, for example in icons made by Teodor Senkovich from the iconostasis from the Wallachian church in Lviv. When painting, for example, the *Entry to Jerusalem*, he quite accurately copied motifs from at least three different prints by Hieronymus Wierix⁵³, from which he borrowed shadows on the ground and, consequently, introduced an external source of light, unknown until that point in Orthodox painting⁵⁴.

The Lviv milieu, with Senkovich as its most characteristic representative, is regarded as pioneering when it comes to the introduction of new painting techniques and formal means into Orthodox painting. This is where icons began to be painted with the so-called greasy tempera, which made it possible to cover a wooden support with thin layers of paint letting light through. That is why transitions between shadows and highlights became soft and delicate, which create an almost complete illusion of three-dimensionality and space. Consequently, the appearance of painted figures changed completely. Their facial features became gentler, closer to the classical ideal of beauty; the robes became lighter, and draping less conventional and more natural with colour grading in half-light.

The oldest known icon made by means of the new technique is the *Virgin Hodegetria* from Repniv. On it we find a surviving

nowożytnych w malarstwie ikonowym środowiska wysznieńskiego,» w *Bizancjum a renesansy*, red. Michał Janocha, Aleksandra Sulikowska, Irina Tatjanowa (Warszawa: Campidoglio, 2012), 307–317, fig. 116–123.

⁵³ These prints are signed by Hieronimus Wierix and Bernardo Passeri, and were included in Hieronimo Natali's *Evangelicae Historiae Imagines...* published in Antwerp in 1593 (Mauquoy-Hendrickx Marie, *Les estampes des Wierix* (Bruksela: Bibliothèque Royale Albert Ier, 1978), 3, part 1: no. 2059, 2060, 2061.

⁵⁴ Groniek, «Okno na świat,» 359–368, fig. 153–170.

inscription telling us that it was painted in Lviv in 1599 by Teodor⁵⁵. These data made it possible to attribute it to Senkovych, but this attribution has recently been challenged⁵⁶. The oldest works by the Lviv painter documented by sources are connected with the preparation of the already mentioned iconostasis for the Orthodox Church of Dormition in Lviv. The features in question can be seen especially in the icons depicting John Chrysostom and Basil the Great⁵⁷, Emmanuel (fig. 17) and Mandyliion (fig. 18) as well as other icons, which were not part of the iconostasis in question but which are attributed hypothetically to Senkovych: for example the Virgin Hodegetria (fig. 19) and St. Theodore in the Orthodox Church of St. Nicholas in Lviv⁵⁸. This painter and his pupil Mykola Petrakhnovych represented a new trend, called by Ukrainian art historians «Lviv school of icon painting»⁵⁹ (fig. 20). This easily recognisable style was characterised by, in addition to the features mentioned above, a dichotomy combining, on the one hand, softness in the flesh tints, and on the other — a certain

⁵⁵ Collection of the Lviv Art Gallery, Olesko Castle Branch; Володимир Вуйцик, «Доля ікони “Похвала Богоматері” з Ріпнева,» *Родовід. Наукові записки до історії культури* 8 (1994): 26; photograph of the inscription published in: Володимир Александрович, «Федір Сенькович. Житєвий і творчий шлях львівського маляра першої третини XVII ст.», *Вісник Львівського університету. Спеціальний випуск: Львів: місто, суспільство* 3 (1999): 83. In 1988 a considerable part of the icon was burned, cf. Софія Откович, Тарас Откович. «Реставрація і реконструкція ікони “Богородица з Похвалою” 1599 р. з села Ріпнів Буського району (збірка Львівської картинної галереї),» в *Волинська ікона: питання історії вивчення, дослідження та реставрації. Матеріали V наукової конференції, м. Луцьк, 27–28 серпня 1998 року* (Луцьк: ДП «Волинські старожитності», 1998), 146–151.

⁵⁶ Александрович, «Федір,» 81–84, with a detailed bibliography concerning the work and its attribution.

⁵⁷ Володимир Вуйцик, «Федір Сенькович в контексті стильової еволюції живопису східнослов'янських народів на переломі XVI–XVII ст.,» в *Прогресивна суспільно-політична думка в боротьбі проти феодалної реакції та католицько-уніатської експансії на Україні: тези республіканської науково-теоретичної конференції, 20–22 квітня 1988 р.* (Львів: Академія наук УРСР, 1988), 142. The icons are kept in the National Museum in Lviv, inventory nos. Кв-33646-1/І-997, Кв-33646-2/І-998.

⁵⁸ On these icons as Senkovych's works, see Свенціцька, Сидор, *Спадщина віків*, 28.

⁵⁹ Milyaeva, *The Ukrainian Icon*, 43.

graphicness, flatness and symbolism in the shaping of robes and hieratic presentation of figures.

The traditional iconographic patterns in representations were combined with novel ones, copied from Western prints, in narrative scenes. It is impossible to list here all works considered part of this strand. Suffice it to mention the most beautiful among them, kept in the National Museum in Lviv: the Virgin Hodegetria and Christ Pantocrator (fig. 21) from the Church of the Holy Spirit in Rohatyn⁶⁰, the Virgin Mary with the Prophets from Povergov⁶¹ (fig. 22), Andrew the Apostle with scenes from the life of unknown origin (fig. 23), and John the Evangelist from Verbizh⁶². To this list we can add whole sets of icons from altar screens in the Churches: St. Paraskeva in Lviv, the Holy Spirit in Rohatyn, St. Nicholas in Kamianka-Buzka⁶³, St. Nicholas in Zamość⁶⁴ and even those to be found in the Neamt Monastery Museum, Romania (fig. 24).

However, the new artistic solutions also found their way into painting workshops in smaller towns around Lviv (Sudova Vyshnia, Medyka, Zhovkva), whose icons can be found in numerous Orthodox churches, mainly of the Przemyśl, Lviv and even Mukachevo Eparchies. Both large and provincial workshops of icon painting came into contact with compositions by Western masters used as models. The local artists were familiar with prints by German artists of the late Gothic and Renaissance: Michael Wolgemut, Wendel Scharffenberg, Israhel van Maeckenem, Erhard Schoen, Martin Schongauer, Hans Holbein the Younger, Hans Sebald Behem, Albert Dürer, Hans Schäuffelein, Crispin Scharffenberg; and mature Renaissance works by representatives of the so-called Antwerp school, mainly the famous families of the Wierixes, Collaerts, Sadeliers, as

⁶⁰ NML, Кв-33618/І-970; Свенціцька, Сидор, *Спадщина віків*, fig. 94.

⁶¹ NML, Кв-33673/І-1025; Марія Гелитович, *Богородиця з Дитям і похвалою* (Ікони колекції Національного музею у Львові) (Львів: Свічадо, 2005), 148, fig. 55.

⁶² NML, Кв-51661/І-3949; Свенціцька, Сидор, *Спадщина віків*, fig. 74.

⁶³ Павло Жолтовський, *Український живопис XVII–XVIII ст.* (Київ: Наукова думка, 1978), 109; Михайло Станкевич, *Українське художнє дерево XVI–XX ст.* (Львів: Інститут народознавства НАН, 2002), 67.

⁶⁴ Zofia Szanter, «Rola wzorów zachodnich w ukształtowaniu ikonostasu w XVII wieku na południowo-wschodnim obszarze Rzeczypospolitej,» w *Teka Konserwatorska. Polska Południowo-Wschodnia* (Rzeszów, 1985), 3: 93–135, fig. 3, 22.

well as Cornelis Cort, Philips Gale and others⁶⁵. The popularity of these models completely changed the way religious themes were depicted in seventeenth-century Orthodox painting, but this does not mean that the works emerging as a result were wholly Renaissance in style. Often easily recognisable Western iconography was rendered by means of early modern stylistic solutions as well as traditional motifs, like the so-called hierarchic tic and reverse perspectives, *asistka*, golden engraved nimbi and backgrounds.

The first painter who fully adopted the Renaissance principles of depicting three-dimensional reality on a flat surface was a Baroque painter from Zhovkva, Ivan Rutkovych (about 1650 — after 1708)⁶⁶. His works from Stara Skvariava, Krekhiv, Volitsia Derevljanska and, above all, Nova Skvariava convincingly imitate reality, successfully copying compositions from the so-called Piscator's Bible⁶⁷. Rutkovych's oeuvre marks the end of the adaptation of Renaissance stylistic features in Orthodox church painting in the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, beginning at the same time a new style.

Conclusion

As we create chronological divisions of the history of Ukrainian and Belarusian Orthodox painting, we need to bear in mind that the description of artistic phenomena occurring in the region at the beginning of the early modern period cannot be static. Here the Renaissance is not a style, an epoch or a period, but a process. To put it in simpler terms: here the Renaissance unfolds over time. The process encompasses almost two centuries, the sixteenth and the seventeenth.

In fact, the Renaissance emerged as a style only in the art of printed books. This is where it appeared first and lasted, acquiring increasingly perfect forms. The magnificent examples of Renaissance illuminations

⁶⁵ See also: Waldemar Deluga, «The Influence of Dutch Graphic Archetypes on Icons in the Ukraine, 1600–1750,» *Revue des études sud-est européennes* XXXIV, no. 1–2 (1996): 5–26.

⁶⁶ Свенціцька, «Живопис XIV–XVI століть»; Володимир Овсійчук, *Майстри українського бароко* (Київ: Наукова думка, 1991), 134–271.

⁶⁷ Віра Свенціцька, *Іван Руткович і становлення реалізму в українському малярстві XVII ст.* (Київ: Наукова думка, 1966).

in manuscripts did not matter much to the establishment of the style, as this form of art soon became marginal. A decisive and dominant role in this respect was played by icon painting. And here for decades in the seventeenth century no work emerged that was pure enough in terms of its style that it could be termed a fully Renaissance work. What emerged instead were works-bridges between the Middle Ages and the early modern period, works that were transitional in nature and had traditional, late Gothic and Renaissance features. The full development or Renaissance stylistic features was not always hindered by a lack of talent or understanding of new forms proposed by Western artists — even very skilled painters did not adopt them completely. Often this was a conscious choice stemming from a different attitude to art, which did not have to faithfully imitate the real world.

The early modern method of depicting space was one of the available possibilities, treated on a par with divergent or hierarchical perspective. Attachment to golden nimbi, backgrounds and inscriptions never, in fact, faded and has lasted almost continually to this day. Thus, if Orthodox painters active in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the sixteenth and almost entire seventeenth century did not fully adopt the paradigms of Renaissance artists, they themselves can hardly be regarded as Renaissance artists. But nor did they draw on the tradition of medieval art; they abandoned it in search of new ideals of beauty. Thus, they were artists of a transitional period, which, however, did not lead to the emergence of the mature Renaissance style, but the next, Baroque style.

Yet we cannot say that the Renaissance did not happen. The most honest — because closest to the truth — conclusion is that the Renaissance was a process which unfolded. Here the Renaissance unfolded over a period of two centuries, without a strictly defined beginning and end. The Renaissance was a time of gradual transformations, not within early modern stylistic solutions, but outside, between the traditional ones, with Byzantine roots, and those originating in Western Europe.

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Figure № 1

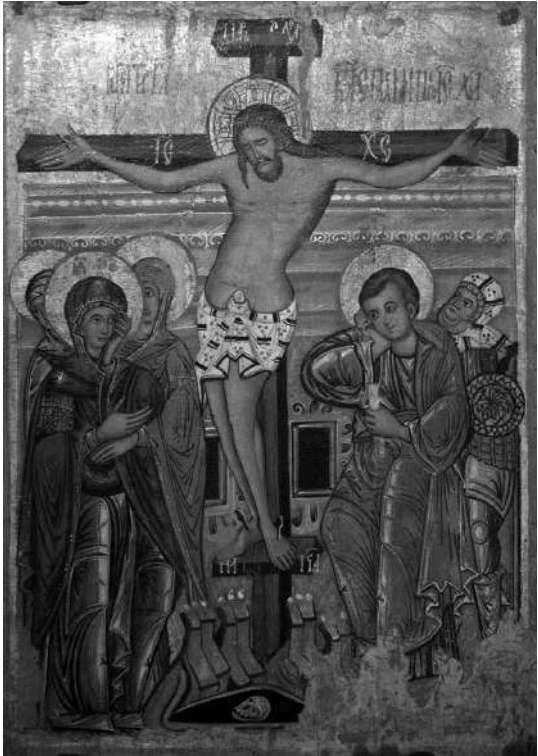


Figure № 2

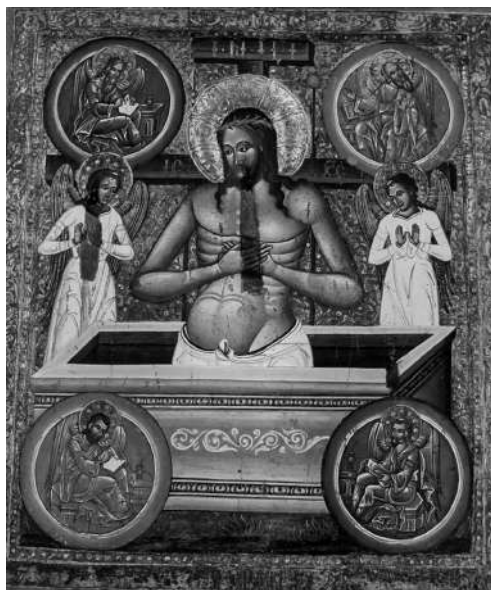


Figure № 3



Figure № 4

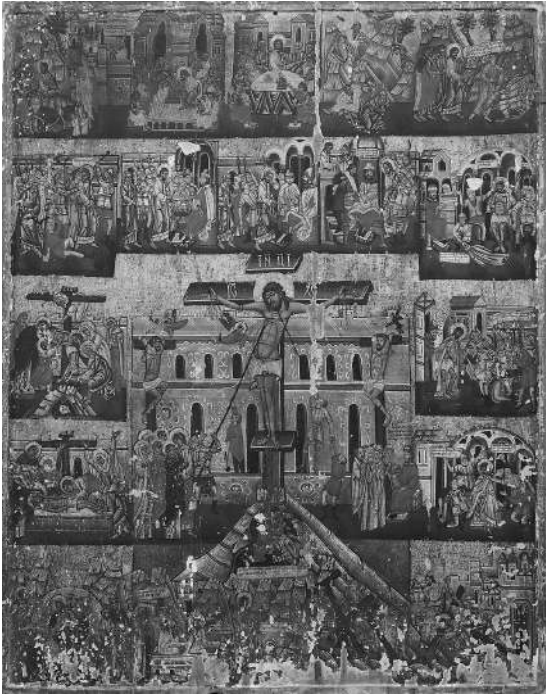


Figure № 5



Figure № 6



Figure № 7



Figure № 8



Figure № 9

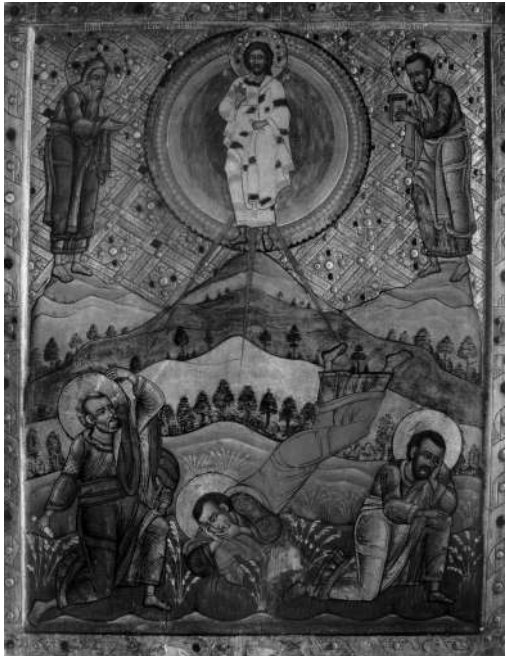


Figure № 10



Figure № 11



Figure № 12



Figure № 13

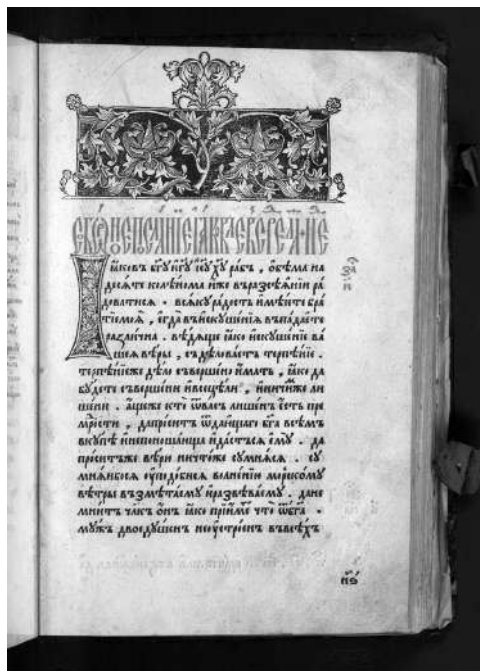


Figure № 14



Figure № 17



Figure № 18



Figure № 19



Figure № 20



Figure № 21



Figure № 22

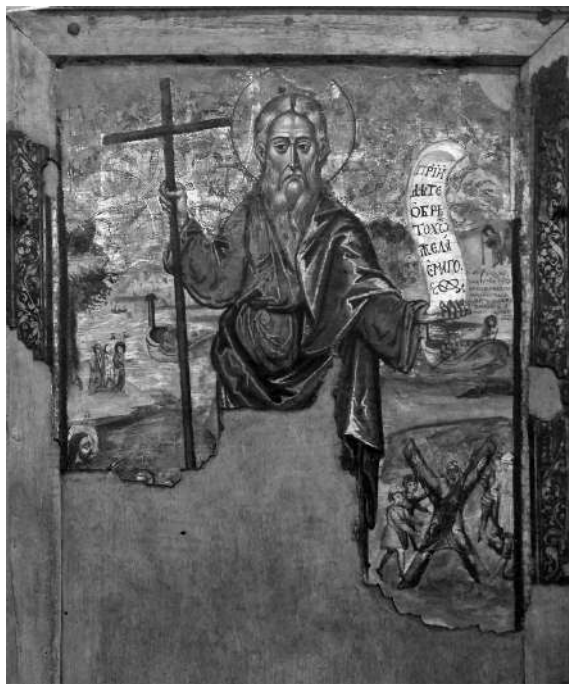


Figure № 23



Figure № 24

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