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THE ARCHITECTURAL ICON:  
PICTURING SOLOVETSKI MONASTERY

Between the sixteenth century and the 1917 Revolution, the famous monastery of Solovetski on the White Sea generated a very large number of icons bearing representations of it and its saintly founders. There was not one single iconographical model or prototype, with the result that the icons exhibit considerable variety not only in detail but also in subject-matter. This paper analyses the Solovetski icons and in particular explores the ways in which they blend hierotopic space, site-specific references and even evoke the celestial Jerusalem. The focus is on the icons of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The genre of Russian icon-painting which (anachronistically) can be labelled as the ‘architectural icon’ has its origins in Byzantium. Representations of architecture featured on Russian icons from the fourteenth century and were borrowed from contemporary Byzantine art<sup>1</sup>. The kinds of buildings or segments of buildings shown on these icons are fanciful and derived from antique prototypes. Such motifs were circulated in Russia by Greek artists, as is shown by the well-known (and problematic) letter written in c. 1415 by Epifaniy the Wise concerning the painter Theofan<sup>2</sup>. By the late

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<sup>1</sup> For example, compare the late fifteenth-century Russian icon of the Deposition of the Virgin’s girdle and veil from Borodava in the Vologda region (Moscow, The Andrei Rublev Museum of Early Russian Art, Inv. No. 057 VL, 68×55.5 cm) with a Palaeologue miniature mosaic icon of the Annunciation in the Victoria & Albert Museum, London Inv. No. 7231–1860. See *Guseva V. A.* The Andrei Rublev Museum of Early Russian Art. Leningrad, 1981, p. 40–41, 244–245, No. 57, Pl. 46; *Buckton D.* (ed.). Byzantium. Treasures of Byzantine Art and Culture from British Collections (British Museum exhibition catalogue). London, 1994, Cat. No. 220.

<sup>2</sup> This letter has been discussed extensively. Inter alia, see *Bortnes J.* Visions of Glory: Studies in Early Russian Hagiography. Oslo and Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey, 1988, especially p. 177; *Lazarev V. N.* Studies in Early Russian Art. London, 2000, p. 163–172, 205–248 (reprinted from *Vizantiiskii Vremennik* vols VII, 1953, VIII, 1954); *idem.* Theophanes

seventeenth century, leading Muscovite painters were depicting architecture with some degree of accuracy and using the kind of 'realistic' perspective long familiar in western art. The much-discussed icon known as *The Tree of the State of Muscovy (in Praise of the Mother of God of Vladimir)* painted by Simon Ushakov in 1668 for the church of the Holy Trinity in Nikitniki, Moscow exhibits both of these features in the rendering of the Moscow, Kremlin walls and the Cathedral of the Dormition of the Mother of God (Pl. 1)<sup>3</sup>. It would be misleading to say that the picturing of recognizable buildings replaced non-specific representations; rather the two modes co-existed, sometimes on the same icon.

This is much in evidence on the numerous icons from the late sixteenth century onwards depicting Russian monasteries and their saintly founders<sup>4</sup>; and none more so than those portraying the monastery of the Transfiguration on the Solovetski islands, the northernmost and one of the most prestigious foundations in Russia, established in the fifteenth century by SS Savvatii and Zosima<sup>5</sup>. The monastery reached its apogee in the middle of the sixteenth century, when Filipp was its hegumen (1548–1566) and Makarii, previously archbishop of Novgorod, became Metropolitan of All-Russia (1542–1563). The coincidence of these two powerful and well-connected men resulted in the monastery attracting large donations of land and rents from the Moscow elite, notably Tsar Ivan IV. Filipp initiated the replacement of the existing wooden monastic structures by much more ambitious and monumental buildings in stone and brick, a programme which

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der Grieche und Seine Schule. Vienna and Munich, 1968, p. 7–13; Cormack R. *Painting the Soul. Icons Death Masks and Shrouds*. London, 1997, p. 187–189.

<sup>3</sup> Антонова В. И., Мнева Н. Е. (Antonova V. I., Mneva N. E.) Каталог древнерусской живописи XI — начала XVIII века / Собрание Государственной Третьяковской галереи. Опыт историко-художественной классификации. Vol. 2. Moscow, 1963, Cat. No. 912, Pls 142–143; Smirnova E. *Moscow Icons 14<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries*. Leningrad, 1989, Nos 199–200; Гусева Э. К. и др. (Guseva et al.) Богоматерь Владимирская: К 600-летию Сретенья иконы Богоматери Владимирской в Москве (Tretyakov Gallery exhibition catalogue). Moscow, 1995, Cat. No. 26; Smirnova E. S. 'Simon Ushakov — "Historicism" and "Byzantinism". On the Interpretation of Russian Painting from the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century' // *Religion and Culture in Early Modern Russia and Ukraine* / Ed. Baron S. H., Kollmann N. S. 1997, p. 169–183, esp. p. 171–172, 179.

<sup>4</sup> For studies of Russian 'monastic' icons, see: Косцова А. С., Побединская А. Г. (Kostsova A. S., Pobedinskaya A. G.). Русские иконы XVI — начала XX века с изображением монастырей и их основателей / Exhibition catalogue. State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, 1996, p. 5–6, 13, 63–76, Cat. Nos. 59–85; Полякова О. А. (Polyakova O. A.) Архитектура России в ее иконе. Города, монастыри и церкви в иконописи XVI–XIX веков из собрания Музея-заповедника «Коломенское» (in Rus., Engl.). Moscow, 2006. Professor Leonid Beliaev kindly drew the second of these publications to my attention.

<sup>5</sup> Much has been written on Solovetski. For a recent summary account in English, see Robson R. R. *Solovki*. New Haven and London, 2004.

continued for over half a century. It is these reconstructions which provide the *terminus post quem* for the 'architectural' icons<sup>6</sup>.

The chronology is as follows:

1552–1557 Refectory church of the Dormition of the Virgin

1558–1566 Cathedral of the Transfiguration

1577–1584 Church of St Nicholas (rebuilt 1830–1834)

1582–1596 Construction of the granite walls (completed in 1621)

1596–1601 Church of the Annunciation over the main west gate

1602 Enclosed stone gallery linking the three main churches.

Alterations and additions were made at various times subsequently, but the complex as a whole as shown in an etching made in 1827 or 1837 was not substantially different to its appearance in 1602 (and indeed today) (Pl. 2)<sup>7</sup>.

The earliest securely dated Solovetski icons are the pair of very large panels both now in the Kremlin Museums, Moscow and bearing the date 7053 (1545); the inscription on the frame to the main scene also mentions Hegumen Filipp and it can be assumed that he commissioned them, either from a Muscovite painter, or possibly an artist from Novgorod influenced by the art of the capital (Pl. 3)<sup>8</sup>. Described in the 1549 monastery inventory as the *Acts of the Miracle-Workers of Solovetski*, they were originally displayed separately above the graves of Savvatii and Zosima in their chapel attached to the Transfiguration Cathedral. Although the two icons are identical in neither size nor imagery, they are very similar. They are 'vita' icons concerned with the foundation and establishment of the monastery by the two saints and with miracles performed by them which are taken from their Lives compiled at the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; these frame scenes enclose the Mother of God Bogoliubsky interceding with Christ for SS Zosima and Savvatii with the other monks of the monas-

<sup>6</sup> For recent publications on the architecture and art of Solovetski see Скопин В. В., Щенникова Л. А. Архитектурно-художественный ансамбль Соловецкого монастыря / The Architectural Ensemble of the Solovetsky Monastery. Moscow, 1982; Скопин В. В., Тумова Т. А., Щенникова Л. А. и др. (Skopin et al.) Соловецкий монастырь. St Petersburg, 2000; Brumfield W. C. 'Tradition and Innovation in the Sixteenth-Century Architecture of Solovetski Transfiguration Monastery' // The Russian Review vol. 62, no. 3 (2003), p. 333–365.

<sup>7</sup> The buildings with their decoration and furnishings were severely damaged after 1917. For the monastery's appearance, including interiors, in 1888, see Лейцингер Я. И. (Leitsinger Y. I.) Соловки. 1888 г. Фотоальбом. Архангельск, 2005.

<sup>8</sup> State Museums of the Moscow Kremlin Inv. Nos 789 and 799 cob. See Smirnova. Moscow Icons, Nos 171–172; The Art of Holy Russia. Icons from Moscow 1400–1660 (Royal Academy exhibition catalogue). London, 1998, Cat. No. 23; Skopin et al. (2000), Icons chapter Pl. 42, 43, p. 244–246. The (probable) attribution to a Muscovite painter is made by Smirnova, whereas the catalogue entry in The Art of Holy Russia introduces the hypothesis of a Novgorod painter; the latter also states that they were probably painted at Solovetski itself.

tery kneeling in prayer at her feet<sup>9</sup>. The two saints are shown with haloes and interestingly, these icons pre-date their formal canonisation by Metropolitan Makarii in 1547. The founders and monks occupy the island, which is represented as mainly barren and rocky. The monastery itself is represented by two tall white churches separated by a domed bell-frame. As in the frame scenes these structures are entirely schematised and can have borne no relationship to the actual monastic buildings which in 1545 were still all wooden and, presumably, modest in size and architectural ambition. The absence of any attempt at architectural verisimilitude is not of any significance; what is important is the sense of a distinctive sacred landscape — and a Russian *locus* at that — imparted by the inclusion of the island itself. This feature distinguishes the Solovetski 1545 pair from earlier depictions of monasteries and their founders, as for example the mid fourteenth-century fresco of Archbishop Danilo II in the Mother of God church he added to the patriarchal complex at Peć in Kosovo and the double-sided icon of the Emperor Alexios III Comnenos with the patronal saint, John the Baptist, at Dionysiou monastery, Mount Athos, of c.1375 (Pl. 6)<sup>10</sup>. In these and other examples, whilst the representations of the buildings might bear a resemblance to the actual structures, they are, as it were, suspended in space with no attempt to locate them topographically: a foundation is a foundation and evidently its location was not considered sufficiently significant to render pictorially. Two centuries later this was still the case in the Orthodox lands under Ottoman rule<sup>11</sup>.

‘Vita’ icons of the two founders continued to be painted in subsequent centuries for iconostases of monasteries and churches, especially in north Russia<sup>12</sup>. On these standing figures of Zosima and Savvatii replace the Mother of God Bogoliubsky and the kneeling monastic community. As with the 1545 pair, there are variations on the theme rather than rigid conformity to one model. For example, on a seventeenth-century icon in the Archangel

<sup>9</sup> The respective dimensions are: 160×120 cm (Inv. 799); 214×138 cm (Inv. 789). The latter has three larger additional scenes concerned with monastic life in the lower frame. For ‘vita’ icons see Ševčenko N. P. ‘The *Vita* Icon and the Painter as Hagiographer’ // DOP, vol. 53 (1999), p. 149–165.

<sup>10</sup> Đurić V. J. *Byzantinische Fresken in Jugoslawien*. Belgrade, 1974, Pl. 55; for the Dionysiou icon see *Treasures of Mount Athos* (Museum of Byzantine Culture, exhibition catalogue), Thessaloniki, 1997. Cat. No. 2.29.

<sup>11</sup> For example, frescoes at Varlaam monastery, Meteora and Megisti Lavra, Mount Athos; also in the monasteries of the Bukovina region in Romania. For a recent study of depictions of churches in Serbia, see Marinković Ć. ‘Founder’s Model — Representation of a Maquette or the Church?’ // *Recueil des travaux de l’Institut d’études byzantines*, vol. 44 (2007), p. 145–153.

<sup>12</sup> For example, a late sixteenth-century icon from Belozersk (The State Russian Museum. *Russian Monasteries Art and Traditions*. St Petersburg, 1997, p.109).

Fine Arts Museum the two saints stand on a knoll signifying the island and gesture towards the diminutive Mother of God of the Sign at the top; although the monastery is depicted in the frame scenes, it does not appear in the central one<sup>13</sup>. However, in most 'vita' examples that I have seen the monastic buildings are represented in the centre. On another large seventeenth-century icon now at Girton College, University of Cambridge, Zosima offers a small 'model' of the monastery, while Savvatii raises his right hand in blessing; both hold scrolls (Pl. 4)<sup>14</sup>. The principal scene of an icon in the Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, dating from the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century, is devoted to the monastic complex<sup>15</sup>.

SS Savvatii and Zosima are the dominant feature of many seventeenth-century prayer icons. One variant emphasizes their emulation of the Desert Fathers by placing them against a backdrop of a rocky and barren island terrain, but with plants growing under their feet, suggesting perhaps that their holiness enriches the ground that they tread (Pl. 5)<sup>16</sup>. The monastery itself is absent, but in numerous versions of this type it is held by the two saints who act as supporting columns — literally the pillars of Solovetski (Pls 7, 8). The complex resembles an architectural model and is tipped forward in birds-eye perspective to depict the principal buildings with some degree of accuracy and relative scale. This particular representation of Solovetski and its founders is a common iconographic type derived ultimately from Byzantine or Serbian founder images in fresco and mosaic (Pl. 6) and remained popular into the twentieth century. One important difference is that Zosima and Savvatii are not offering a representation of the monastery as it existed in their time, but as it was in the seventeenth century; some later Solovetski icons of this type include subsequent additions and alterations to the churches in schematised form. Usually SS Zosima and Savvatii are offering their monastery to the Mother of God of the Sign (*Znamenie*), who in return is bestowing her protection on it. An icon of this type was considered to be miracle-working at Solovetski. The Mother of God of the Sign was also the protecting icon of Novgorod and its pictorial association with the founders represented Solovetski's long ties with this city and support of its citizens<sup>17</sup>. The scroll held by St Zosima on these icons has variations of wording around the text 'Do not be sorrowful, my

<sup>13</sup> Skopin et al., ill. on p. 28.

<sup>14</sup> Sotheby's Catalogue of Icons (18 October 1982), lot 85. 99×65 cm. This is one of sixteen icons depicting SS Zosima and Savvatii (as well as other Russian icons) bequeathed to Girton College by Diana Lorch.

<sup>15</sup> Косцова, Побединская, p. 6, Cat. No. 68.

<sup>16</sup> Sotheby's Catalogue of Icons (5 October 1981), lot 65. 31×26.5 cm.

<sup>17</sup> The State Russian Museum. Russian Monasteries Art and Traditions, p.108; Косцова, Побединская, p. 5–6.

brethren, but be understanding about this [my death] and it may be through you that I will find grace before God’.

Leonid Ouspenskii suggested that icons like these (he was referring specifically to an icon of St Macarius and his monastery on the Unsha) function too as visual metaphors, opposing the external to the more important work of internalised spiritual construction of the soul:

‘Glorified by the gift of miracles, the saint — an animate temple not made with human hands — is as it were opposed here in his significance to the monastery with its inanimate temple made with human hands, which is only a way to the aim which the saint has achieved by his strivings within its walls. St Macarius, in monk’s habit, stands outside the walls of the monastery he founded, no longer as its inmate and prior, but as its heavenly protector who prays for it. His guardianship and care do not cease with his death — they only pass to another plane’<sup>18</sup>.

The representation of churches with a degree of veracity was commonplace in Byzantine times (Pl. 6) and from the late sixteenth century Russian icon-painters (and their patrons?) showed an interest in depicting elements of real, as opposed to, imaginary topography<sup>19</sup>. Nevertheless, verisimilitude was not the purpose of these icons; it was sufficient to render certain features such as the walls and the great churches in order to make Solovetski distinguishable from icons representing other Russian monastic establishments<sup>20</sup>. A wood-engraved icon in the Russian Museum, St Petersburg, has been considered to have been produced prior to the erection in 1688 of the church of Metropolitan Filipp, on the grounds that this is not depicted (Pl. 8)<sup>21</sup>. This deduction is questionable as the inclusion of this church is not central to the imagery of Solovetski, focussed as it is on the veneration of SS Zosima and Savvatii. Equally problematic are the attempts by architectural historians to look to the earlier icons as evidence of lost or changed design features in the actual buildings of the monastery, notably the argument as to whether the central cupola of the Transfiguration Cathedral as depicted in Plate 14 was originally in the

<sup>18</sup> Ouspenskii L. and Losskii V. *The Meaning of Icons*. New York, 1999, p.132.

<sup>19</sup> A notable example is the late sixteenth or early seventeenth-century icon of the Vision of Sexton Tarasius with its representation of Novgorod (*Likhachev D. et al. Novgorod Icons 12<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> Century*. Leningrad and Oxford, 1980, No. 239).

<sup>20</sup> For example, a fine sixteenth-century icon in the Tretyakov Gallery depicting a miracle of St Alexander of Svir’, which depicts the log perimeter walls of his monastery (*Antonova and Mneva*. Vol. 2. Cat. No. 675, Pl. 93; *Fondation Pierre Gianadda. Icones russes. Les Saints* (exhibition catalogue), Martigny (Switzerland) 2000. Cat. No. 18).

<sup>21</sup> Inv. No. 3516; *The State Russian Museum. Russian Monasteries Art and Traditions*, p.144.

form of a tent-dome in the manner of the church of the Ascension at Kolomenskoe, Moscow<sup>22</sup>.

Another category encompassing both prayer and larger icons has Solovetski monastery and its island setting, rather than the founder saints, as their primary subject. Amongst the most attractive examples is an icon in the Tretyakov Gallery, probably executed soon after the completion of the great rebuilding programme in the early seventeenth century (Pl. 9)<sup>23</sup>. This shows the monastery on its rocky island and with the White Sea framing the composition; SS Zosima and Savvatii flank the walls at the base of the composition and address each other. The icon combines the general with the specific. As with the icons illustrated in Plates 7 and 8, the composition is unhistorical in the sense that the two saints are associated with a representation of the monastery complex as it existed long after their deaths. Moreover, the actual island while rocky, is nothing like as barren as it is depicted. The inhospitable terrain of the icon (as on the 1545 icons, Pl. 3) is a topos emphasizing the desert-like nature of the foundation and the asceticism of its founders. The monastery itself, however, is more than just a schematised rendering, despite the absence of perspective and its flattened-out appearance. This is a Byzantine way of organizing space which, like the layout on a written page, allows every detail of the most important features of the monastery to be shown. Reading from left to right, there is the church of the Dormition, with its prominent low and wide refectory; in the centre is the tall church of St Nicholas and on the right the even taller five-domed cathedral of the Transfiguration. Above the main gate is the small single-domed church of the Annunciation. The gate itself forms part of the monastic enclosure, of which a notable feature is the large boulders from which the wall is constructed. Despite the absence of the prominent turrets which in reality punctuate the perimeter wall (Pl. 2), the painter (or the patron) of the icon clearly intended this wall to be identifiable as that of Solovetski monastery. The absence of the mini-icons which serve as iconographical identifiers for the churches on some Solovetski icons (Pls 10, 11, 13–16) may indicate that this icon was intended for use by the community itself. The schematic architectural features notwithstanding, they have features recognizable in the complex as it exists today: the whitewashed stone and brick buildings, the attempt to dif-

<sup>22</sup> Косцова, *Побединская*, p. 5 incline to this view; See *Brumfield*, p. 350–352 for a more sceptical evaluation (with further bibliography in n. 28). Later icons do appear to represent the complex with a greater degree of veracity, probably under the influence of prints and engravings; see for example an icon dated 1828 in a church in the Onega River region: Кольцова Т. М. (*Koltsova T. M.*) Иконы Северного Поонежья. Moscow, 2005, Cat. No. 133, ills on p. 185, 186.

<sup>23</sup> *Talbot Rice T.* Icons. London, 1960, No. 55; *Antonova and Mneva*. Vol. 2. Cat. No. 642.

ferentiate between the principal churches by depicting their salient features however summarily (eg the size and five domes of the Transfiguration Cathedral) and the massive boulders of the walls. Although this hypothesis has its drawbacks, the wooden stairway in front of the refectory may point to a date for the painting of the icon *before* it was replaced by the stone gallery in 1602, but *after* the construction of the gatehouse church of the Annunciation the previous year<sup>24</sup>. Could it have been painted as a thanksgiving for the completion of the major works?

For the most part, these Solovetski icons are distinguished less by accuracy of representation of the site than by the rendering of a sacred landscape, or more precisely, monasteryscape in which key events of Solovetski's past and more recent history are played out in a simultaneous narrative. Solovetski itself, its churches, relics and miraculous icons, had become an iconic *sanctus locus* and these representations of its most sacred features are in essence icons of an icon. There is no single blueprint; the considerable variation in details amongst these 'architectural icons' stems from the fact that, although Solovetski had its own painting studio from at least 1615, icons of the monastery and its founders were also painted in the villages bordering the White Sea and centres far removed from Solovetski; even within the ranks of the monastic icon-painters housed in the monastery there were masters from other Russian centres with their own pictorial traditions and models<sup>25</sup>. As a result uniformity is not a characteristic of the icons on which the monastery is the primary subject. Moreover, the differences between them in the representations and locations of the monastery's churches presumably reflect the particular devotional priorities of painter and/or commissioner and the intended beholders of the icons. On these icons the complex in all its architectural splendour acts like a film or stage-set in which the identities of the principal churches are signalled not so much by verisimilitude as by mini-icons. On the late seventeenth-century icon in Plate 10 St Savvatii is seen arriving by boat, then, flanking the entrance gate, he and Zosima are labouring and on the left are conversing. They appear again above their graves under domed structures<sup>26</sup>. The imagery of a slightly earlier icon is similar, but with both saints arriving

<sup>24</sup> The Annunciation church and a wooden connecting gallery are also represented on the title-page of an early seventeenth-century manuscript of the lives of SS Zosima and Savvatii in the State Historical Museum, Moscow ((*Skopin and Shchennikova*, Pl. 36). The composition looks as if it is modelled on contemporary icons.

<sup>25</sup> *Косцова, Побединская*, p. 5–6. For example, one of the large 'vita' icons in the Hermitage mentioned above was obtained from a church in the Yaroslavl oblast and has been attributed to a painter from Kostroma (*ibid.*, p. 5, 6, Cat. No. 77). See also *Kleimola A.* 'Regulating Icon Painters in the Era of the *Ulozhenie*: Evidence from the Russian North' // *Russian History* 34 nos 1–4 (2007), p. 341–363, esp. 343, 345–347.

<sup>26</sup> The Temple Gallery Christmas 2004 Catalogue. London, 2004, No. 8. 31×27.5 cm.



by separate boats and they are not shown labouring (Pl. 11)<sup>27</sup>. The treatment of the architecture is broadly similar on both icons. As is the case in reality, the church of St Nicholas is in the centre, but the Transfiguration Cathedral is shown on the left and the Dormition on the right, i.e. a reversal of the actual monastic topography. The dedications of the two flanking churches are not represented by icons of the Transfiguration and the Dormition, but by the head of Christ (on the mid seventeenth-century icon only) and well-known Mother of God icon types (*Umilenie* on the late seventeenth-century icon and the *Kazanskaya* on the earlier one)<sup>28</sup>. Although Zosima and Savvatii are conversing in the Transfiguration Cathedral, their tombs flank the St Nicholas church whereas in fact their shrine-chapel was at the east end of the Transfiguration Cathedral before its incorporation in the mid-nineteenth-century Holy Trinity Cathedral<sup>29</sup>. The purpose behind the manipulation of the topography seems to be to emphasize the holiest places in the monastery, i.e. the shrines of the saintly founders. On an icon design of the end of the seventeenth century in the State Historical Museum, Moscow, the Transfiguration Cathedral is the subject and the tombs of the two saints are depicted in two separate flanking chapels; laymen venerate the two shrines and are being read to by monks (presumably the texts are the lives and miracles of the founder saints) (Pl. 12)<sup>30</sup>. The architectural vocabulary is up-dated: the cupolas (five for the Transfiguration as in reality) are onion-shaped and the scallop-shell *zakomary* and columns with capitals form a proscenium arch to the figures of Zosima and Savvatii witnessing the Transfiguration; the saints are placed within the cathedral with the Transfiguration depicted as a large framed icon above the altar. The flamboyant framing to the entrance gate represents seventeenth-century Russian architecture and would have been taken from the painter's repertoire of motifs and designs. The association of the two saints with the Transfiguration is connected with the fact that their bodies were translated in 1566 to their current locations on this festival (6 August); subsequently the feast day of the Translation (the major celebration of the two saints) was moved to 8 August in order to avoid a coincidence of celebrations<sup>31</sup>. Despite the lack of interest in architectural veracity, the turrets which punctuate the perimeter walls and the boulder construction are delineated as a hagiographical sign of Solovetski.

<sup>27</sup> The Temple Gallery Christmas 2003 Catalogue. London, 2003, No. 12. 31.4×27.3 cm.

<sup>28</sup> The same icons appear on the title-page of the early seventeenth-century manuscript in the State Historical Museum, Moscow ((*Skopin and Shchennikova*, Pl. 36).

<sup>29</sup> For a photograph of the two saints' shrines in the Holy Trinity Cathedral, see *Лейцингер*.

<sup>30</sup> Иконные образцы XVII — начала XIX вв. Иконография русских святых / Предисл. и сост. З. П. Морозовой (Introd. and compos. by Z. P. Morozova). Moscow, 1994, Cat. No. 21 (Inv. No. ИХИИ-14923). 28.5×24 cm.

<sup>31</sup> *Brumfield*, p. 348.

Slight changes are rung again in a large early eighteenth-century icon (Pl. 13), which again has the Transfiguration Cathedral with the founders and their shrines in the middle. Here, though, the churches of St Nicholas and of the Dormition of the Virgin are present. The saints appear as standing figures in the cathedral (without the Transfiguration) as well as recumbent on their tombs. They are depicted a third time in two boats welcoming lay pilgrims (all male) who are also shown within the monastic complex where they venerate the founders' relics and are blessed by the monks. The presentation of Solovetski as a sacred site and the inclusion of laymen may indicate that the icon, like Plate 12, was located in a village or town church rather than a monastery where it could serve as an encouragement to undertake pilgrimage to the monastery<sup>32</sup>.

The Transfiguration Cathedral also occupies the centre of the composition on three prayer icons all dating from the seventeenth century (Pls 14, 15, 16)<sup>33</sup>. In all of them the founders' tombs are displaced to the left and the icon of the Mother of God is of the *Umilenie* type. The Transfiguration is prominent on the attractive Tretyakov Galley icon (Pl. 14); SS Zosima and Savvatii not only witness this event, but by standing in front of the lower slopes of Mount Tabor appear to be present at it<sup>34</sup>. On the Berlin and Recklinghausen icons (Pls 15, 16), SS Zosima and Savvatii venerate the icon of the Mandylion (the image of Christ not made by human hands), which may represent the much-venerated icon of Christ painted by St Eleazar, a very ascetic monk of Solovetski in the early seventeenth century<sup>35</sup>. On the Berlin icon, the signifying images of St Nicholas and the Mother of God are shown as icons with *podea* below.

These 'icons within an icon' do not I think function merely as identifying labels for the three principal churches of Solovetski. In the Russian Orthodox calendar Savvatii is celebrated on 27 September and Zosima on 17 April. The Feast of the Translation of their relics (8 August) falls between two major Orthodox feasts: the Transfiguration (6 August) and the Dormition of the Mother of God (15 August), the last followed the next day by the Feast of the Image of Christ not made by Human Hands (the Mandylion).

<sup>32</sup> Sotheby's Catalogue of Icons (18 October 1982), lot 97. 81×55 cm.

<sup>33</sup> Tretyakov Gallery Inv. No. 24859 (beginning of seventeenth century, 31.2×27.5 cm) *Fondation Pierre Gianadda*. Cat. No. 22; Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz Inv. No. 9635 (late seventeenth century, 31.3×27.5 cm): *Elbern V. H.* Das Ikonenkabinett. Bilderhefte der Staatlichen Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz Berlin Vol. 34/35. Berlin 1979, No. 32; Recklinghausen, Ikonen-Museum Inv. No. 413 (mid-seventeenth century, 31×27 cm): *Haustein-Bartsch E.* Ikonen-Museum Recklinghausen. Munich 1995, p. 124–125.

<sup>34</sup> The Tretyakov Gallery has another, very similar, icon of about the same date, attributed to the Stroganov School (Inv. No. 12106, 31×27cm; *Antonova and Mneva*. Vol. 2. Cat. No. 834, Pl. 125).

<sup>35</sup> *Robson*, p. 180.

Conveniently, all these feast-days fall in the most clement time of the year for the archipelago, when it is accessible from the mainland.

The icons of Solovetski bear overlapping, sometimes complex meanings. The most straightforward are those with SS Zosima and Savvatii offering their monastery to the Mother of God (Pls 7, 8), which fall into the category of Byzantine ‘founder-images’ (Pl. 6). The focus is on the founders themselves and the monastery with its distinguishing features is their hagiographical sign or attribute. Nonetheless their replication and dissemination as prayer and church icons beyond as well as within the walls of Solovetski meant that they functioned differently from the site-specific founder images: they were portable disseminators of the cult of the Solovetski founders and brought the cult to the viewer. The same is true of the icons in which Solovetski monastery itself, with its three principal churches, the graves of the founders and the miracle-working or much-venerated icons, is the subject. These particular Solovetski icons picture a place, a *sanctus locus*. But places are neither neutral nor objective: how they are experienced by the individual viewer depends either on his/her presence in that place or through an image of it. To use a Kantian formulation, ‘Human beings are not placed, they bring place into being’<sup>36</sup>. And as the viewer / beholder / venerator is an elusive entity in any era (let alone one as remote as late sixteenth and seventeenth-century Russia), reception and meaning are neither fixed nor stable<sup>37</sup>. Images do not function in a vacuum, but are framed by current ideologies and local power structures, whether clerical or lay (or both), their environment and the particular historical moment they occupied. An icon is multivalent and its reception by its venerator depends upon a whole range of cultural determinants affecting both the icon (location, display, appearance, embellishment) and the viewer (age, social status, gender, occupation, health, wealth or poverty, literacy or illiteracy, personal history).

It would be reductive therefore to impart a single interpretation to the Solovetski icons and empirically impossible to reconstruct their reception by contemporaries. Nonetheless, it is conceivable that for those who had a grasp of eschatology, the iconic depictions of Solovetski did not merely evoke a specifically Russian *locus sanctus*, but the Holy Land itself and the New Jerusalem of the Revelation of St John the Divine, as the monastery was to become for the Old Believers<sup>38</sup>. Of course any monastery or place in which the

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<sup>36</sup> Smith J. Z. *To Take Place. Toward a Theory in Ritual*. Chicago and London, 1987, p. 28.

<sup>37</sup> As pointed out by Glenn Peers in his review in *Medieval Reviews*. Summer 2006 of Pentcheva B. V. *Icons and Power: The Mother of God in Byzantium*. Pennsylvania, 2006.

<sup>38</sup> See the paper by Olga Chumicheva in this volume.

liturgy is celebrated can be perceived as New Jerusalem<sup>39</sup>. Solovetski does not fall into the same category as Patriarch Nikon's foundation of the New Jerusalem monastery at Istra and other literal evocations in that neither its actual architecture nor its representation on these icons attempts to replicate buildings in the Holy Land. Bianca Kühnel has observed that 'The great majority of artistic expressions connected to Jerusalem are... based on a mutual influence between the history, location, shape, architecture or decoration of the real city, and the qualities and expectations of the ideal one'; in this instance the 'city' is Solovetski and its representation not merely Russian but distinctive within Russia<sup>40</sup>.

Svetlana Popović has described monasteries as a hierarchy of sacred structures, with the principal church at the apex, together with the tombs of the saints. The monastic precinct wall was also of significance, separating the sacred from the external, profane world and its principal entrance acted as a place of transition between the two realms<sup>41</sup>. The icons of Solovetski picture these concepts very clearly. In East Christian visual culture the heavenly Jerusalem was represented as a church, or a collection of churches<sup>42</sup>. The presentation of the complex on the icons as a concentration of churches, of holy places within walls, recalls Isaiah 60: 18: 'Thou shalt call thy walls Salvation and thy gates Praise'. The gleaming white walls and golden domes could be associated with the canticle in the Liturgy of St John Chrysostom after communion: 'Shine, shine, O new Jerusalem, for the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee' (Isaiah 60: 1)<sup>43</sup>. Through the dedications of churches to the Mother of God and the Transfiguration on Mount Tabor, the monastic complex could be said to offer a simulacrum of the sacred sites of Israel. The Annunciation church over the entrance combined symbolically gate, church and tower, all key symbols of the Heavenly Jerusalem<sup>44</sup>. The importance of the gate is emphasized on the icons illustrated in Plates 9–14 by its size and prominence; the monastic entrance on the Recklinghausen icon (Pl. 16) is suggestive of the Royal Doors in an iconostasis, presumably designed to evoke in the venerator a sense of the monastery beyond as the Holy of Ho-

<sup>39</sup> The literature on this subject is extensive. See Kühnel B. (ed.). *The Real and Ideal Jerusalem in Jewish, Christian and Islamic Art*, Jewish Art vols 23/24 (1997–1998), notably Lidov A. *Heavenly Jerusalem: The Byzantine Approach*, p. 341–353.

<sup>40</sup> Kühnel B. 'The Use and Abuse of Jerusalem' in Kühnel (ed.). p. xxii; see also Lidov. 'Heavenly Jerusalem' in *idem* and the papers by Elena Erdeljan and Elka Bakalova, Anna Lazarova in this volume.

<sup>41</sup> Popović S. 'The Byzantine Monastery: Its Spatial Iconography and Sacredness', in Lidov A. (ed.). *Hierotopy. The Creation of Sacred Spaces in Byzantium and Medieval Russia*. Moscow, 2006, p. 150–185, especially 159, 174, 177.

<sup>42</sup> Lidov. 'Heavenly Jerusalem', p. 342–343.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 346.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 344; see also the paper by Vladimir Sedov in this volume.

lies. The icons in Plates 12 and 13 show that the abode of the founder saints was accessible to the laity who therefore replicated the blessed of the Book of Revelation, permitted to enter through the gates into the heavenly city. Even the icons on which Zosima and Savvatii hold a diminutive representation of their monastery recall Revelation 3:12: 'Him that overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall no more go out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem...' (Pls 7, 8).

The Solovetski icons have a hierotopic dualism. They picture sacred space as a panorama (especially those illustrated in Plates 12 and 13, where actions such as veneration and blessing take place); they also in Alexei Lidov's words create 'a spatial vision emanating from the depiction into the environment in front of it and existing between the picture and its beholder'<sup>45</sup>. The Solovetski icons thus enabled viewers to embark on a metaphorical pilgrimage to the *locus sanctus* of the great monastery itself. For some venerators perhaps that meant the heavenly city, made concrete and manifest on the soil of Holy Russia. Within Solovetski's multiple churches the Heavenly Kingdom could be experienced through the Divine Liturgy, where reality and symbolism became fused when the bread and wine became the body and blood of Christ. The *locus* sanctified by the relics of the founders offered a vision of life eternal, at once distant and inviting. Distant in that the Kingdom of Heaven remained a vision to be contemplated, inviting in that the icons on the iconostases and the frescoed saints and prophets on the walls bore witness to the fact that the vision of the Church Triumphant was both alive and attainable and supported by the prayers of those who were 'angels here on earth', the living monastic community of Solovetski<sup>46</sup>.

Sacred space is created by a dialogue between viewer and viewed and by engagement of all the senses — sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch — all of which plus movement at some moment are brought to bear in icon veneration and are invoked on the Solovetski icons. This concept of hierotopy, if not the label, was perceived by the scientist and theologian Pavel Florenskii as long ago as 1919; it is not the least of history's awful ironies that he was imprisoned and executed in the 'real' space of Solovetski itself<sup>47</sup>.

<sup>45</sup> Lidov A. 'Hierotopy. The creation of sacred spaces' in Lidov. Hierotopy, p. 40.

<sup>46</sup> The phrase 'angels here on earth' occurs in the twelfth-century Typicon for the Kellion of St Savvatii at Karyes, Mount Athos: see Thomas J. and Hero A. C. (eds.). Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents vol. 4 // Dumbarton Oaks 2000, p. 1333.

<sup>47</sup> Misler N. 'The Religious Ritual as Social Event' in Foster, C. N. (ed.). "Event" Arts and Art Events (Ann Arbor and London, 1998), p. 159–174.

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АРХИТЕКТУРНАЯ ИКОНА:  
ИЗОБРАЖАЯ СОЛОВЕЦКИЙ МОНАСТЫРЬ

С XVI в. и вплоть до революции 1917 г. знаменитый Соловецкий монастырь на Белом море и его святые основатели становились предметом множества икон, на которых святые основатели изображались с образом обители. Существовала далеко не один иконографический образец или прообраз, так что иконы демонстрируют чрезвычайное разнообразие не только в деталях, но и в самом сюжете. Данная публикация посвящена исследованию соловецких икон конца XVI и начала XVII в., в частности, способов их вторжения в иеротопическое пространство, для чего подробно анализируются конкретные детали и намеки на Небесный Иерусалим.

К концу XVII в. ведущие московские иконописцы изображали архитектуру с определенной степенью точности и с использованием некоторой «реалистической» перспективы, давно известной западному искусству. Было бы неверным сказать, что изображение узнаваемых зданий заменило неконкретные рисунки; зачастую два образца сосуществовали, иногда даже в рамках одной иконы. Это очевидно на многих иконах с конца XVI в. и позже, на которых представлены русские монастыри и их святые основатели; видно это и на изображениях Преображенского монастыря на Соловецких островах — самой северной и наиболее почитаемой обители в России, созданной в XV в. свв. Савватием и Зосимой. Монастырь достиг пика своего расцвета в середине XVI в., при игуменах Филиппе (1548–1566) и Макарии, бывшем архиепископе Новгородском, который стал митрополитом всея Руси (1542–1563). Филипп начал замену существовавших деревянных строений монастыря более амбициозными и монументальными зданиями из камня и кирпича, и реализация этой программы заняла свыше полувека. Самые ранние соловецкие иконы — это пара очень крупных досок, датированных 7053 (1545) годом; обе они на-

ходятся сейчас в музеях Московского Кремля. Основатели обители и монахи представлены стоящими на острове, а монастырские строения изображены схематично и не имеют отношения к реальным зданиям того времени. Таким образом, перед нами встает яркий образ сакрального пространства, со всеми его русскими реалиями, к числу которых относится и включение в композицию острова. Житийные иконы двух основателей создавались на протяжении последующих веков для иконостасов монастырей и церквей, особенно на севере России. На них фигуры стоящих в полный рост Зосимы и Савватия уступают место Богоматери Боголюбской, перед которой стоит на коленях вся братия. Как и в случае с парой икон 1545 г., существуют разные вариации этой темы, которая не сводится к жесткому образцу. Святые Савватий и Зосима доминируют на многих молитвенных образах XVII в. Один из вариантов подчеркивает их сходство с отцами-пустынниками, поскольку они помещены на фоне скалистого безжизненного острова. Сам монастырь на этой иконе не изображен, но во многих версиях данного типа образ обители держат в руках сами святые, словно два столпа Соловецкого монастыря. Это особое представление Соловков и святых основателей — наиболее распространенный иконографический тип, восходящий к византийским и сербским образам основателей на фресках и в мозаике. Важное отличие состоит в том, что монастырь в руках святых на этой иконе выглядит не таким, каким он был в их время, а таким, каким он стал к XVII в. Однако абсолютная историческая достоверность не была целью данных икон; достаточно было показать некоторые знаковые объекты — стены, главные церкви, — чтобы Соловецкий монастырь стал узнаваемым на иконах, отличаясь от других подобных русских обителей. Таким образом, попытки историков архитектуры обращаться к самым ранним иконам как к источникам, в которых можно найти утраченные или измененные впоследствии детали реальных монастырских строений, весьма спорны.

Другая категория как моленных, так и крупных икон включает изображение Соловецкого монастыря и его островное окружение. По большей части, эти соловецкие иконы отличаются меньшей точностью изображения конкретного места, поскольку основное внимание уделено созданию сакрального пейзажа как такового, или, точнее говоря, монастырского пейзажа, в котором разворачивались ключевые события прошлого и недавней истории Соловков. Сами Соловки, их церкви, реликвии и чудотворные иконы становятся *sanctus locus* и составляют квинтэссенцию иконы икон. Различие между изображенным на иконах и реальным расположением монастырских церквей скорее всего отражает особые приоритеты в почитании, свойственные иконописцу и/или заказчику, а также предназначение икон. Соловецкие иконы имеют дополнительные, порой сложные смыслы. Наиболее очевидны те, где присутствуют св. Зосима и

Савватий, подносящие монастырь Богоматери; этот тип икон может быть отнесен к категории византийских образов основателей. Внимание сосредоточено на самих основателях и на монастыре с его характерными чертами, которые выступают в качестве агиографических признаков или атрибутов. Их воспроизведение и распространение как моленных и церковных икон за пределами Соловецкого монастыря привело к тому, что они стали служить для продвижения культа соловецких основателей. То же верно в отношении икон самого Соловецкого монастыря с тремя главными церквями, могилами основателей и чудотворными и особо почитаемыми иконами. Эти оригинальные соловецкие иконы изображают само святое место, *sanctus locus*, но это изображение не нейтральное и не отнюдь не объективное: их восприятие зависит от прямого или опосредованного (через икону) взгляда зрителя. Используя формулировку последователей Канта, можно сказать, что люди не могут быть размещены в пространстве — они сами создают пространство вокруг себя. А поскольку зритель или поклоняющийся представляет собой изменчивую реальность в любую эпоху (далеко не только россиянин XVI и XVII вв.), восприятие и смысл никогда не бывают фиксированными или стабильными.

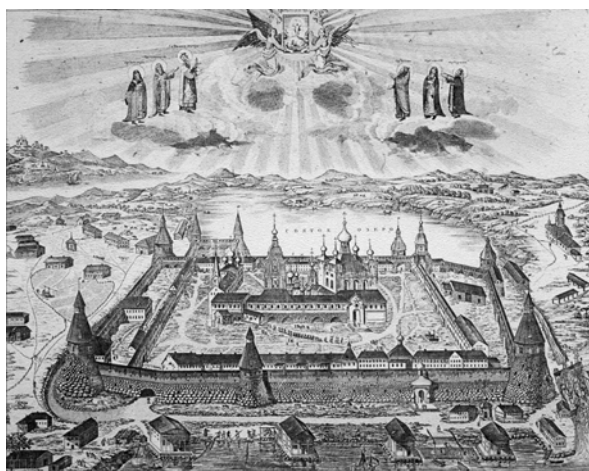
Будет безусловным упрощением искать единственно верную интерпретацию соловецких икон, и уж вовсе невозможно реконструировать их восприятие современниками. Тем не менее, изображения Соловецкого монастыря являют нам не только конкретное российское сакральное пространство, но саму Святую Землю и Новый Иерусалим из Откровения Иоанна Богослова. Конечно, любой монастырь или место совершения литургии может восприниматься как Новый Иерусалим. Но Соловецкая обитель не относится к типу, создававшемуся патриархом Никоном на берегах Истры, в нем нет архитектурных подражаний Иерусалиму, а иконы с его изображениями не свидетельствуют о попытках копировать здания Святой Земли. И все же соловецкие иконы вызывают в памяти слова пророка Исаи: «Воссияй, Новый Иерусалим, ибо слава Господня возшла над тобою», а сами названия — церковь Благовещения и Преображенский собор — напоминают о сакральных центрах Израиля. То обстоятельство, что на иконах врата обители изображались особенно крупно, должно говорить, что жилище основателей открыто для мирян, как и врата небесного града.

Соловецкие иконы обладают иеротопическим дуализмом. Они изображают сакральное пространство как панораму; но при этом, по словам Алексея Лидова, «образ в иконе реализуется не внутри картинной плоскости, а в пространстве перед ней, возникающем между молящимся и изображением». Таким образом, соловецкие иконы позволяют зрителям отправиться в метафорическое паломничество к *locus sanctus* великого монастыря. Вероятно, для верующих эти иконы олицетворяют Небесный град, представленный в конкретном облике на земле Святой Руси.

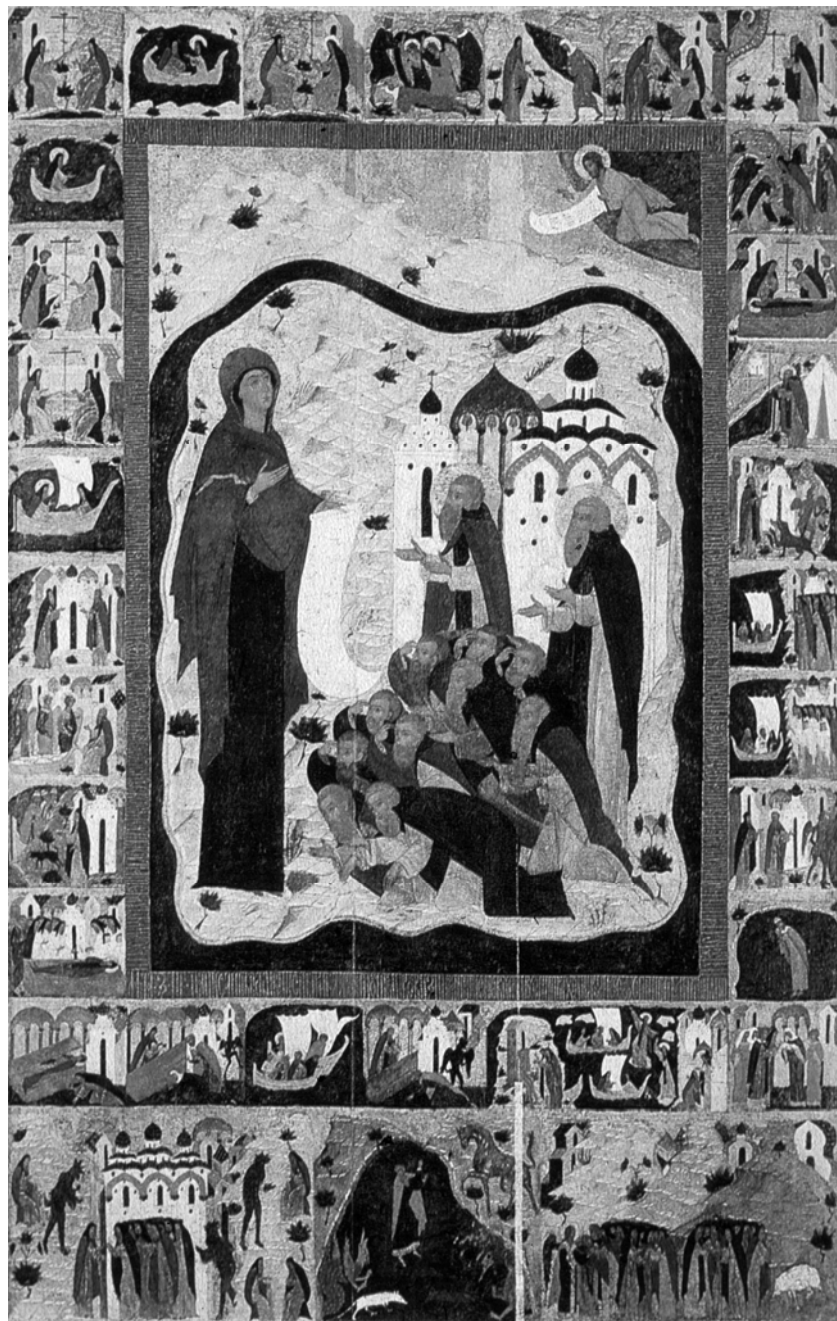




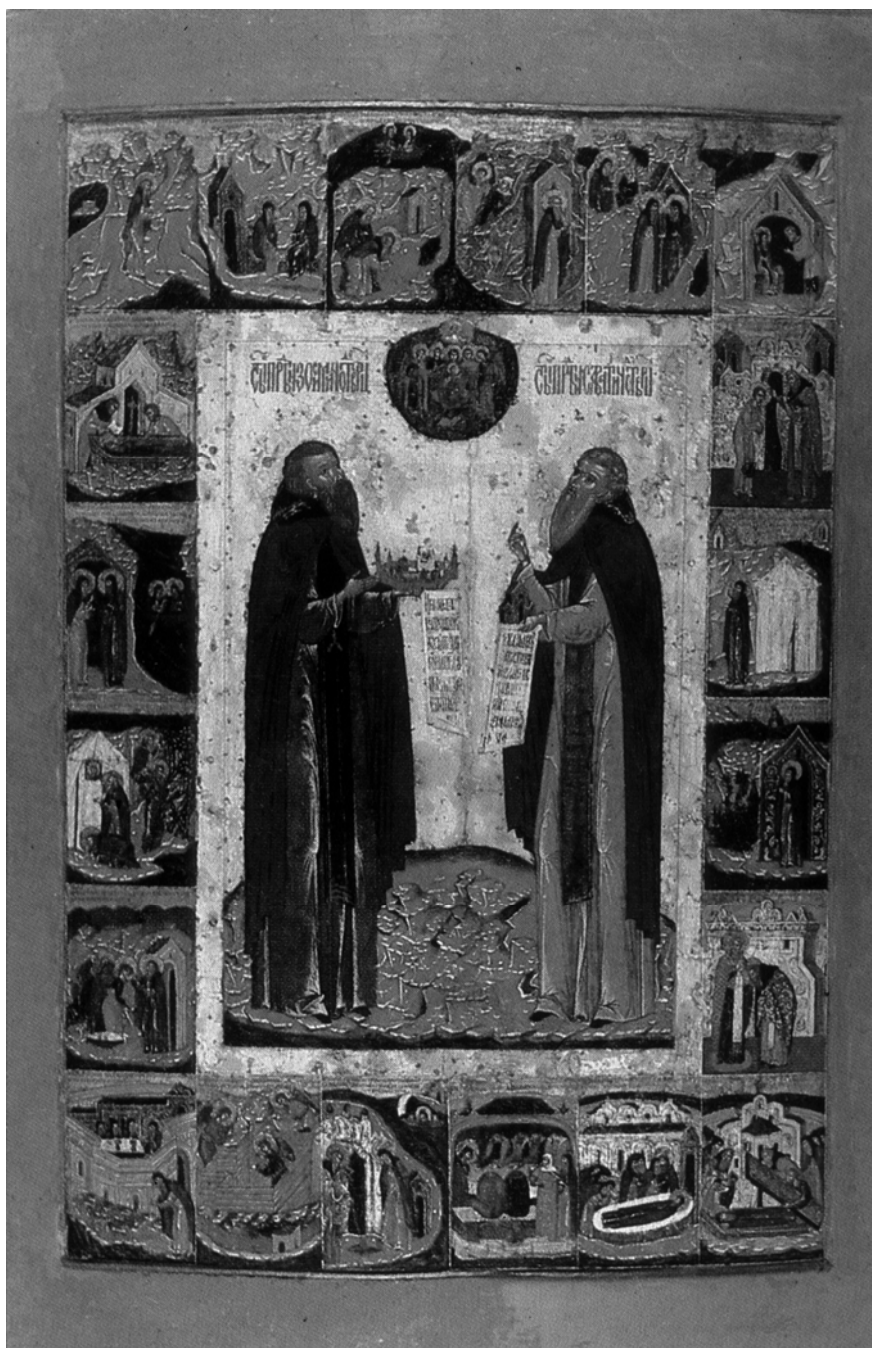
1. *Simon Ushakov*: icon of The Tree of the State of Muscovy (in praise of the Mother of God of Vladimir), from the church of the Holy Trinity in Nikitniki, Moscow, 1668; 105×62 cm (Moscow, State Tretyakov Gallery, Inv. No. 28598)



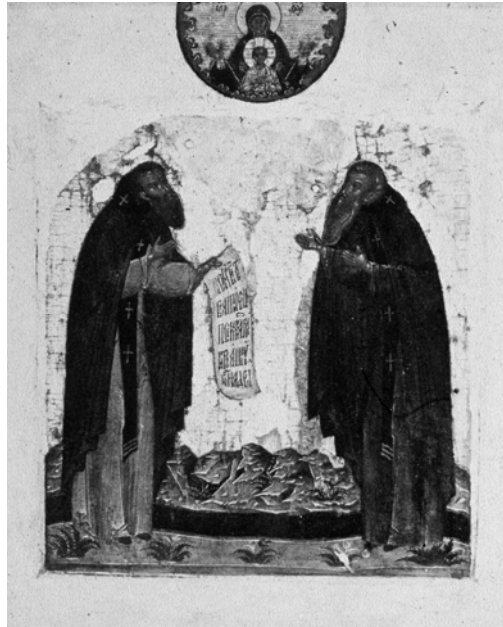
2. *Andrei Shelkovnikov*: etching of Solovetski Monastery, 1827/37; 47.2×54.5 cm (St Petersburg, State Russian Museum, Inv. No. 777)



3. Icon of the Acts of the Miracle-Workers of Solovetski, 1545, in the Dormition Cathedral, Moscow Kremlin; 214×138 cm (Moscow, Kremlin Museums, Inv. No. 789)



4. Icon of SS Zosima and Savvatii, 17<sup>th</sup> century; 99×65 cm (Cambridge, Girton College, Diana Lorch Bequest)



5. Icon of SS Zosima and Savvatii, 17<sup>th</sup> century; 31×26.5 cm (London, Sotheby's sale catalogue, 5 October 1981, lot 65)



6. Wall-painting in the church of the Mother of God at Peć of Archbishop Danilo II and the Prophet Daniel with a representation of the patriarchal church at Peć, Kossovo; mid-14<sup>th</sup> century



7. Icon of SS Zosima and Savvatii, 17<sup>th</sup> century; 30.5×26.5 cm (Sweden, Egon Sommers Collection, No. 52)

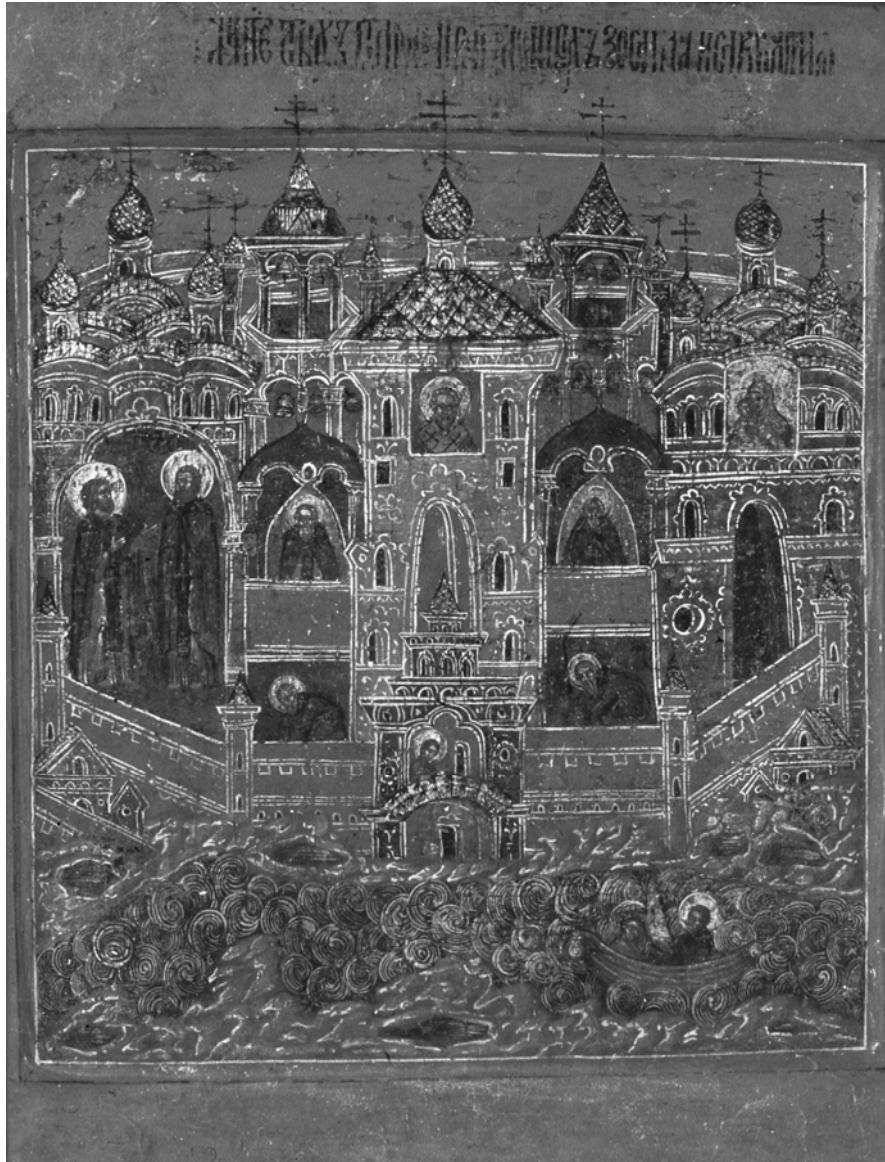


8. Engraved icon of SS Zosima and Savvatii, second half of 17<sup>th</sup> century; 37.5×28.3 cm (St Petersburg, State Russian Museum, Inv. No. 3516)



9. Icon of SS Zosima and Savvatii and Solovetski Monastery, early 17<sup>th</sup> century; 104×78 cm (Moscow, State Tretyakov Gallery, Inv. No. 12068)

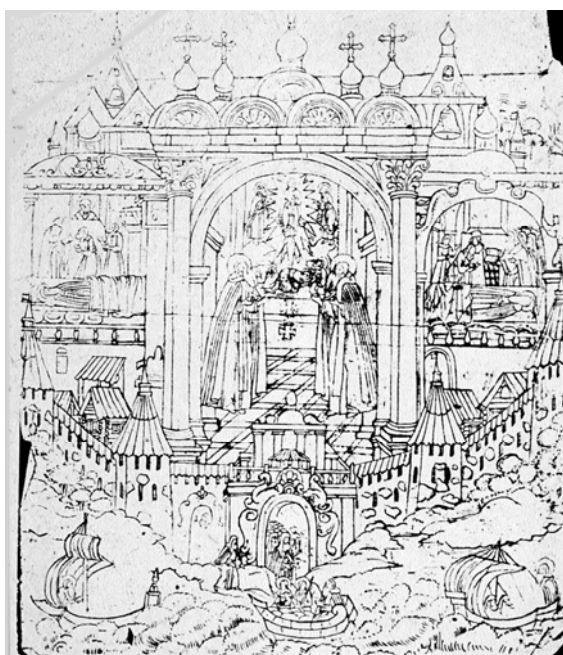




10. Icon of SS Zosima and Savvatii and Solovetski Monastery, late 17<sup>th</sup> century;  
31×27.5 cm (formerly London, Temple Gallery)



11. Icon of SS Zosima and Savvatii and Solovetski Monastery, mid-17<sup>th</sup> century; 31.4×27.3 cm (formerly London, Temple Gallery)

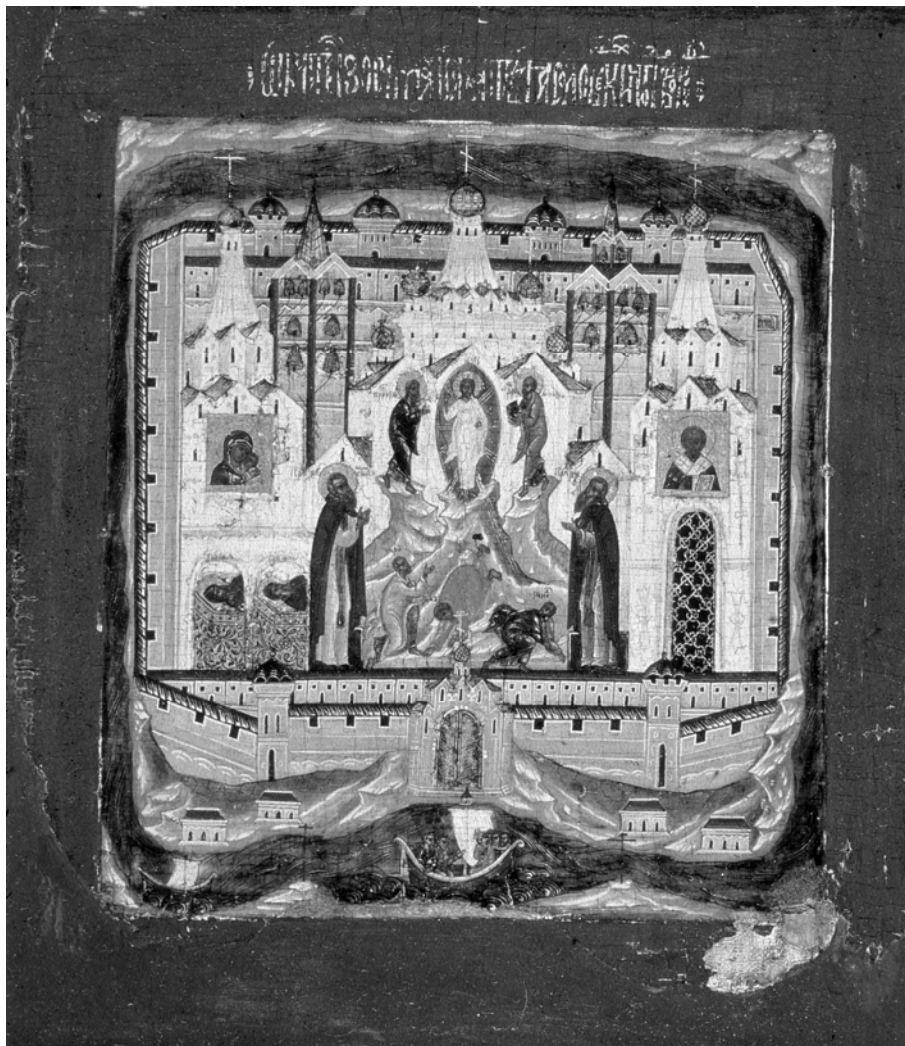


12. Design for an icon of SS Zosima and Savvatii and Solovetski Monastery, end of 17<sup>th</sup> century; 28.5×24 cm (Moscow, State Historical Museum, Inv. No. ИХІІІ-14923)





13. Icon of SS Zosima and Savvatii and Solovetski Monastery, early 18<sup>th</sup> century; 81×55 cm (London, Sotheby's sale catalogue, 18 October 1982, lot 97)



14. Icon of SS Zosima and Savvatii and Solovetski Monastery, beginning of 17<sup>th</sup> century; 31.2×27.5 cm (Moscow, State Tretyakov Gallery, Inv. No. 24859)



15. Icon of SS Zosima and Savvatii and Solovetski Monastery, late 17<sup>th</sup> century; 31.3×27.5 cm (Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Inv. No. 9635)



16. Icon of SS Zosima and Savvatii and Solovetski Monastery, mid-17<sup>th</sup> century;  
31×27 cm (Recklinghausen, Ikonen-Museum, Inv. No. 413)