



During my first visit to Torreon, Mexico in 2009 I was deeply impressed by an Orthodox Icon from Arocena Museum permanent exhibition. I got the feeling "being home". Intrigue of this unique and unusual iconographical representation determined the following study.

"Q. 81. How many are the fruits of the Holy Spirit?

R. The Apostle Paul numbers the fruits of the Holy Spirit or the signs of the grace of God as nine: charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, mercy, faith, gentleness and continence. ( 54) It ought also to be believed that even the other virtues may be referred to as fruits of the Holy Spirit, because they come from him, and he himself presides over the works of man that they might be perfected; Paul does not contradict this point, but "against such there is no law." [208] "

Orthodox Confession of Faith Peter Mohila, Archbishop of Kiev (1633-1647) translated by Ronald Peter Popivchak



The "Crucifixion with miracles" Icon is actually a tree of life, with the 9 flowers on it: signs of the God Mercy to this world: charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, mercy, faith, gentleness and continence. All of them are part of a long philosophy of love and patience, because just an enormous love for the humanity and

the suffers for its mistakes determined our Savior to ascend to the Crucifixion and transform the Cross into the Tree of Eternal Life.

The concept of the "Crucifixion with miracles" icon was elaborated in time by the contribution of some revolutionary theologians and philosophers of the time. Let's explore its amassing history.



Year 1632 – Archbishop of Kyev Peter Mogila is founding Kiev-Mogila Academy.

Peter Mogila was born on December 21, 1596 in Moldavia into a Moldavian boyar family, the Movilesti. The Movilesti family had given Moldavia and Wallachia several rulers and kings, including his father, Ieremia Movila. His mother, Margareta, was a Hungarian princess. Due to political turmoil in Moldavia, the family was forced to flee to Poland while Peter was young. Peter's early education was in Poland at the Orthodox school in Lvov and continued in Western Europe, including at universities in Paris and Amsterdam. He served as an officer in Poland, but he was more interested in a monastic life. He maintained his

loyalty to the Orthodox Church while living in the Latin and Protestant West.

His years as Metropolitan of Kiev were to constitute a pivotal turning point for the Orthodox Church in southwestern Russia as he provided education for the Orthodox clergy and laity in the schools based upon advanced Western European models. While the studies were mainly in Latin, and not in Slavonic or Greek, this education gave the students entrance to the secular and religious writings of the West as well as of modern science. His college in Kiev reached a standard of excellence in the seventeenth century that was unequalled in the Orthodox world. This was another half a century before Peter I introduced Western Europe in the heart of Russia.

### Symeon of Polotsk



“Western cultural influences gradually penetrated Russia in the 17th century. They entered the country through a number of channels, including the “German [foreign] quarter” in Moscow

and through Ukraine, which was united with Russia in 1654. Ukrainian and Belarusian clerics, who had received a Polish-style education at the *Kiev Academy founded by Peter Mogila*, brought Western and Latin culture with them to Moscow. By the end of the 17th century, Russian literature had changed in important ways. A key figure in producing these changes was Symeon Polotsky (1629–1680), a monk educated at the Kiev Academy of Peter Mogila. He played the leading role in introducing syllabic poetry (verse that is measured by the number of syllables in each line), based on Polish models, into Russia. Old Russian literature had been dominated entirely by prose, and so Polotsky's verse marked a decisive break. So did the introduction of drama into Russia with Polotsky's school dramas (modeled on Jesuit Counter-Reformation plays having biblical or religious themes), the establishment of a court theatre by Tsar Alexis, and the production of *Artakserksevo deystvo* (1672; "Action of Artaxerxes"), the first court play (in prose), by Johann Gottfried Gregory. The change in literary culture is also evident in the beginnings of prose fiction. Translations of foreign adventure romances appeared, along with Russian stories, parodies, and satires, including the picaresque (and erotic) *Dovest o Frole Skobeyev* ("Tale of Frol Skobeyev") and *Kalgazinskaya chelobitnaya* ("The Kalgazin Petition"). *Dovest o Gore-Zlochastii* ("Tale of Woe-Misfortune"), written in folk-epic verse, combines motifs of temptation, adventure, and salvation." (source: British Encyclopedia).

During his years in Moscow, Symeon Polotsky continued to develop an imperial style of panegyric verse, rife with protracted tirades, which were enlivened by occasional allusions to classical mythology. With Symeon Polotsky studies, a whole museum of ancient gods, muses, heroes, authors, and

philosophers entered Russian literature. His extensive collection of poetry, *The Garden of Many Flowers*, was not printed in his lifetime, but he did publish a verse translation of the Psalter, which was set to music within several years after his death.

As a theologian, Symeon Polotsky frequently quoted the Vulgate, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, and other Latin authorities, which was perceived by his detractors as a deliberate attempt to westernize Orthodox religious thought. In fact, his faithful disciple **Sylvester Medvedev** was later condemned for having succumbed to Western Church.

Applying what he had read and studied in Kyiv Academy of Peter Mogila, Symeon Polotsky and in Jesuit College from Wilno (Nowadays Vilnius, Lithuania), he wrote many works; they include the scholastic polemical tract *Zhezl' pravleniia ...* (Scepter of Rule ..., 1667), the compendium of knowledge *Venets very kafolicheskoi* (The Crown of the Catholic Faith, 1670) and other titles.

His follower **Sylvester Medvedev** will use the philosophy and poetry from the work *Venets very kafolicheskoi* (The Crown of the Catholic Faith, 1670) in order to describe the passions of Christ in the **"Crucifixion with miracles" Icon** – a result of syncretism between Western and Eastern Christian tradition.

In the second half of the XVII century in Russia are spreading spiritual, moral, didactic works of literature and the fine arts coming from Western Europe. Innovative, revolutionary theological concepts and ideas are introduced by theologians from **Rus' Minor (Malorusskiy)**, the name given to the followers of Kyev Mogila Academy. Open-minded, with a big passion for knowledge of science, art, philosophy these theologians were not really convenient for conservative theologians of Moscow.

Patriarch Joachim of Moscow decided to invite some scholars from Greece in order to keep the conservative religious attitude in schools: this is why he invites Greek scholars -brothers Leihudam to Moscow.

## Sylvester Medvedev

Born in Kursk, Sylvester Medvedev was a scribe in the Privy Office who later, urged by Simzon Polotsky, took monastic vows. After the death of his teacher, Sylvester inherited his post, that of court poet. He also inherited Simzon's library and his plans. The main plan was to found a university in Moscow. The charter drawn up for it in the tsar's name was inspired by the Kiev-Mogila Academy and stipulated that the university would have the right to guide Moscow culture. In presenting a draft charter to tsarevna Sophia in 15 January 1685, Sylvester Medvedev wrote:

Мудрости бо ти имя подадесея,

богом София мудрость наречесея.

Тебе бо слично науки начати,

яко премудрой оны совершати.

(You have been given the name of wisdom,/For Sophia was named wisdom by God.

It befits you to begin the sciences,/To pursue them, most wise one!)

His reliance on Sophia's support were in vain. The European-oriented tendency that Sylvester Medvedev represented aroused

strong opposition from the Church leaders under Patriarch Joachim himself. Sophia did not want to quarrel with the patriarch, and the Slavonic-Greek-Latin Academy founded in 1686 fell into his hands. There could be no question of university autonomy now that everything depended on the will of the patriarch. When Sophia's regency came to an end in 1689, Sylvester Medvedev was found guilty of conspiracy. "In the year 199 (1691), on the eleventh day of the month of February the monk Sylvester Medvedev departed from this life..." his brother-in-law Karion Istomin recorded in his diary. "He was beheaded ... in Red Square, opposite the Spassky Gate. His body is buried in the almshouse in a pit with vagabonds." Sylvester Medvedev's works were strictly proscribed. All lists of them were ordered to be burnt on pain of heavy punishment. This would appear to explain why so little of his verse has survived. Also, together with his martyr wonders died the scholar tradition of Polotsky and Mogila in Russian Theological tradition. Their books were banned as well.

The only testimony of theological poetry introduced by **Sylvester Medvedev** into an icon in order to make it more descriptive and educative remained the **"Crucifixion with miracles" Icon, a symbol of a cultural and religious revolution in Russian Orthodox tradition, influenced by Rus Minor Academy of Mogila from Kyev.**

Complex iconography, known as "The fruits of the sufferings of Christ" is a typical example of a composition representing the syncretism of ancient Eastern and Western art traditions in the late Middle Ages. At the heart of its iconography "Crucifixion with the wonders of Christ" was most widespread in Russian icon painting and fresco paintings of the late XVII - the first third of the XIX century. Icon is dedicated to the glorification of the



sacrifice of the Christ on the Cross, and the disclosure of its implications for the world. According to the teachings of the Holy Fathers, after the Crucifixion, the main enemies of humanity were defeated: Death and Devil. The artist which realized the original masterpiece in year 1680 was Vasily Andreev, and the fields covered by numerous inscriptions (some in verse), which date back to the text prints were done by Sylvester Medvedev, a student of Simxon of Polotsk, who used quotes from his works (in particular, from the book "The crown of the faith" in 1670.) Contents of these inscriptions reveal most clearly the didactic nature of the icon.

The Central part of the icon is dominated by the Crucifixion, but the cross is not dramatic, no blood could be seen on it. It's a cross in its way to be transformed in the Tree of Eternal Life, by having the Christ sacrifice on it.



Up into the Sky you can see painted The Jerusalem of Heaven and by the middle of it, The Lord Savaot (Господ Саваоф) and the Holy Spirit represented as a Dove.



By the both sides of Jerusalem of Heaven are represented the Sun and the Moon, and the columns with the text, with didactic meaning:

"Б(о)г Отец Пре//милосердны[й], залог людя/ /м твердый в любви посла[л] // в мир нам Христа за благост[ъ] // едину, на кресте стра//сти сведый, мир сей // нас спаси" (слева);

Or the other version

"Бог Отец Премилосердный, залог людям твердый в любви послал в мир нам Христа за благость] едину, на кресте страсти сведый, мир сей нас спаси" (слева);



Merciful Father God, did sent to this world of ours a sign (guaranty) of his strong love - Jesus Christ and put him on the Cross of Passions in order to save our world (inscription from the left side)

"Сын И(ису)с воплоти//ся Б(о)г в человек нам // явился в любви  
Его всяк с/ /пасется верны [и] в небе взнесется / / Х(ристо)с  
о(т)верз рай собою иди/ /те в он правотою" (справа).

"Сын Иисус воплотился Бог в человек нам явился в любви Его всяк спасется верны и в небе  
взнесется Христос отверз рай собою идите в он правотою" (справа)



Son of God, Jesus came to us as a human, his love will save us all and his followers will have eternal life, Christ opened the Gate of Heaven, enter in it with a clean (right) soul. (Right side of the icon on the top).

"Руки распротер всех призывает. народы верны в милость спасает" (слева).



The hands are embracing the world, (the crucified arms are calling all the people), the right believers with mercy are saved. (on the left).

"Из ран к//ровь льет//ся яко ре//ш. от грех// мыет ве//рны  
чело//веки" (справа) "Из ран кровь льется яко реш. от грех мыет верны человеки"  
(справа);



From the wounds the blood is running fast cleaning the sins of faithful people (right side)

"Издрева кре//сна венець и//зрастает т/ /ерпящимъ в // царствии  
он/ /ный подава/ /етъ икто где // острастира/ /змышляет(ъ) //  
кресней прие/ /млетъ вене/ /ць вжизни // непременно"

"Издрева кресна венець израстает терпящимъ в царствии онный подаетъ икто где острастира  
змышляетъ кресней приемлетъ венець вжизни непременно".



From the Crucifixion Tree a crown is growing, for those that are in suffer giving hope, those that are thinking in bad will be not cherish the crown that is making a men invincible.

"Благовест//вуеть цер//ков спася//ся Хр(и)стова // кровь наню //  
излияся // внеи спасош//ася премно/ /ги народы // пр[и]яша  
всю//ду блаженя(ы?) // свободы"

"Благовествуеть церков спасяся Христова кровь наню излияся внеи спасошася премноги народы  
прияша всюду блаженныя свободы"



The Church annunciation about the salvation through the blood of Christ that was paid for its (church) salvation protected many nations (people) bringing them a blessed freedom.

"Благоволил еси плотию взятти на Крест, // и смерть  
умертвибый, и воскресил // умерших, славным Воскресением //  
своим. // Воз[з]ри на образ мои и в язвах мя познай, // возри о  
человек и слез не проливай о том что // распят я измучен и  
презрен, но плачи о себе, // что миром ты прельщен греху  
работаешь спа//сепия не чаешь и сим Меня сто крат-лютее  
распинаешь".

"Благоволил еси плотию взыти на Крест, и смерть умертвибый, и воскресил умерших, славным Воскресением своим. Возри на образ мой и в язвах мя познай, возри о человек и слез не проливай о том что распят я измучен и презрен, но плачи о себе, что миром ты прельщен греху работаешь спасения не чаешь и сим Меня сто крат-лютее распинаешь".

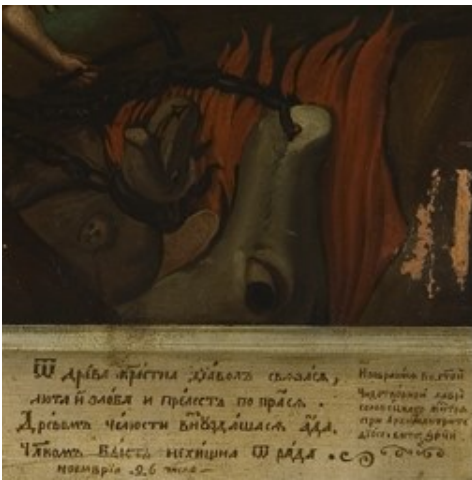


1829

Willingly I put my being on the Cross, I defeated death, I raised the dead with My Glorious Resurrection. Look at my face and ken my wounds, human being, look at me but do waste your tears because I am crucified and tormented and despised, keep sorrow for your world, that is working in sins without knowing the salvation, you know nothing about it and with your lack of knowledge you are hurting Me much more (crucifying me much more painfully). Year 1829

"Отдрева кр//гена дияво//ль связася // лютость из//лоба и преле//сть попрося // челюсти вз//нуздася ада // человеками // бысть нема//ла отрада".

"Отдрева кргена дияволъ связася лютость из лоба и прелесть попрася челюсти взнудася ада  
человеками бысть немала отрада".



From Tree of Life the devil was tied with ferocity, and wickedness  
and splendor put a halter on hell, for humans' not so small  
consolation to be.