

The Icon of the Pochayiv Mother of God: A Sacred Relic between East and West

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Figure 1: *Pochayiv Mother Of God in Dormition Cathedral, Pochayiv Lavra.*

Introduction

There are myriad icons of the Mother of God that are designated as “miracle-working” (chudotvornyi in Ukrainian and Russian) in the Orthodox and Catholic lands of Eastern Europe. Thaumaturgic powers are often ascribed to the icon itself and therefore such panels are venerated with particular devotion. Pilgrims seek physical contact with these objects. From the lands of medieval Kievan Rus’, there are four surviving icons with Byzantine pedigree that achieved “miracle-working” status as early as the 11th c.: The Vladimir icon (known in Ukrainian tradition as Vyshhorod, after the location of the convent north of Kiev where it was originally kept); the Kiev-Pechersk icon of the Dormition; the Kholm icon (attributed to Evangelist Luke); and the so-called Black Madonna of Częstochowa (originally housed in Belz, and for the last 600 years in the Jasna Gora monastery in Poland). All of them are surrounded by complex folkloric legends of origin and accounts of miraculous interventions. In later centuries, numerous other wonder-working icons appeared in Ukrainian, Belarusian, Russian, Polish, Balkan lands,

among which is a relative late-comer (known from the late 16th c.)--The icon of the Mother and Child that was venerated at the Pochayiv monastery in Western Ukraine. This small, originally domestic, icon achieved significant cult status throughout Eastern Europe, both in Orthodox and Catholic milieus. This article seeks to examine the origin of the icon in the context of the development of the monastery whose reputation was built as its repository.

A Brief History of the Pochayiv Lavra

The monastery at Pochayiv¹, dedicated to the Dormition of the Mother of God, was founded--according to legends attested only from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries--by monks who fled from the Kiev Pechersk Monastery at the time of the Tatar invasion of 1240. The site of the monastic cloister is a majestic cliff on the Volyn' upland, nearly equidistant between Kiev and L'viv. Into the 17th century, well after the collapse of the Volhynian-Galician principality and the incorporation of these East Slavic lands into the Lithuanian, and then Polish Commonwealth, the territory functioned within the Kievan cultural and religious sphere, albeit with strong influences of its Western Catholic neighbors. The monastery had begun to gain prominence at the end of the sixteenth century, when it became an influential bastion of Orthodoxy at the time of the Polish attempts to convert the region to the Union, or Eastern [Byzantine]-rite Catholicism. The cloister flourished during the tenure of Hegumen St. Iov [Job] Zalizo (in Slavonic, Zhelezo)² in the early 17th century, who introduced the strict Studite monastic order at Pochayiv, the same rule Feodosii had introduced at the Pechersk monastery circa 1070, and which was the most widespread rule in the monasteries of Kievan Rus'. The cultural and spiritual alignment of the Pochayiv monastery with old Rus' is best demonstrated by Iov's journey to Kiev in 1628 to participate in the Anti-Uniate synod that condemned Meletii Smotryts'ky's attempts to extend the church union. Iov and other hierarchs swore on the relics of the Pechersk saints "to adhere strongly and unfailingly to the Orthodox faith of our forefathers and never contemplate deviation from it."³ Kiev looked to Pochayiv as the western defense of the ancient faith, and it is apparent that the canonization of Iov, who died in 1651, was instigated by the highest ecclesiastical circles of Kiev.

1 The icon of the Pochayiv Mother of God that is venerated in the Dormition Cathedral, Pochayiv Lavra. The gold riza, studded with precious stones, is the work of St. Petersburg goldsmith S. F. Verkhovtsev. It was installed in 1866 at the behest of Archimandrite Antonii, who served as head of the Lavra from 1860-1866.

2 Ukrainian and Russian spelling varies: in Ukrainian, Почаїв/Pochayiv, in Russian, Почаев/Pochaev. Use of the one form over the other is often fraught with nationalistic and political overtones (which mimics the contentious pull of the monastery and its shrines between east and west, Orthodox and Catholic, Russia and Ukraine, Moscow and Kyiv/Kiev). I choose to use the Ukrainian form as the usual default in the text, except in cases where this would yield unfortunate anomalies (for example, when referring to the Brotherhood of St. Job of Pochaev typography founded by the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia in Jordanville). For citations in the text and bibliographic data in endnotes, the original form used in the publication is maintained. Given that Kiev is the more commonly encountered form in English, that, rather than Kyiv, will be the default spelling in the text.

3 For details on Iov's life and canonization, see *Saint Job of Pochaev. Life, Liturgical Service, and Akathist Hymn* (Liberty, TN: St. John of Kronstadt Press, 1997) and *Zhitie i poucheniia prepodobnago i bogonosnago Ottsa nashego Iova, igumena i chudotvortsia Pochaevskago* (Pochaev: Sviato-Uspenskaia Pochaevskaia Lavra, 1999).

According to his Life, Iov appeared repeatedly to Kiev Metropolitan Dmitrii Balaban and instructed the hierarch to have his crypt opened and relics inspected.⁴ This was accomplished in 1659, shortly after the Cossack wars that liberated Left-Bank Ukraine from Polish domination, and precisely at the time of the Union of Lublin, which formally united the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, in which territory Pochayiv was situated, with Poland.

In 1649, Fedir and Yavdokha Domashevskii, local magnates who had not, as so many other members of the Ukrainian nobility, converted to Catholicism or Lutheranism, donated funds to construct a substantial stone church in honor of the Holy Trinity on Pochayiv cliff, over the shrine of the footprint of the Mother of God. The church, a bulky mass of domed drums⁵ built in the style typical of Ukrainian Orthodox churches, was tangible proclamation of the monastery's Eastern orientation. As late as 1700, King Augustus II of Poland granted a charter to the monastery, confirming it as Orthodox, but by 1720, without any dramatic confrontation, the brotherhood had accepted the Uniate church,⁶ and the Eastern-rite monastic rule of the Basilian Fathers was instituted. The wealthy and influential Mikola Potots'kyi, son of the voevoda of Belz, who shunned the Orthodoxy of his ancestors and accepted Eastern-rite Catholicism, became the great benefactor of the Basilians in the late 18th century and sought to mark the now Catholic orientation of Pochayiv. He funded the construction of the great Dormition Cathedral (1771-83), designed by a German architect, Gottfried Hoffmann, in the transitional style between rococo and neoclassicism

4 "The relics of Blessed Iov lay in the grave for seven years, and at certain times a great brightness could be seen issuing from his grave, and whoever saw it was at a loss to comprehend from where or to what purpose this ray shone forth; and when the eighth year came, one night the Blessed Iov appeared in a vision to the Metropolitan of Kiev and All Rossiya, Dionisii Balaban, while he was asleep, admonishing him with the following words, 'I inform your holiness that God desires that you reveal my bones.' Now after a while he repeated this a second time, but the Metropolitan, wise and talented theologian though he was,... disregarded this... But again, for a third time, [Iov] appeared to the Metropolitan, giving him no peace and threatening him with vengeance if he did not fulfill quickly that which he had been commanded. Then a trembling like severe thunder overcame him, and he awoke from the dream all in a sweat from fear, and from that moment he comprehended that this sign was the will of God." *Sluzhba s akafistom Prepodobnomy i Bogonosimomu Otsu nashemu Iovu, igumenu i chudotvortsu pochaevskomu* (Jordanville, N. Y.: Sviato-Troitskii Monastyr', 1950), pp. 46-7.

5 An image of the church is preserved in a donor portrait of the Domashevskii that is preserved in the Lavra. See Savchenko, p. 48.

6 The process serves as evidence of Schmemmann's contention that educated Orthodox elites had ceased discerning any real difference in their faith and Catholicism. Alexander Schmemmann, *The Historical Road of Eastern Orthodoxy* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963), p. 324-7.

typical of Central European Latin-rite edifices of the period.⁷ The construction was planned to incorporate the miracle-working shrine of the footprint of the Mother of God, so the destruction of the Orthodox church of the Trinity was required. The replacement of one building by another was intended as a cultural and aesthetic statement, physical claim of possession by the Unia of the sacred Pochayiv hill--and it was built to impress. It can hold 6000 worshippers. A short time after the consecration, however, the section of Volyn' in which Pochayiv was situated was incorporated into the Russian Empire as a result of the second partition of Poland (1793). In 1831, Tsar Nicholas I ordered the monastery restored to the Orthodox, claiming that the Basilian monks had supported the Polish insurrection of 1830-1. Thus the monastery shifted jurisdiction once again, now falling under the administrative rule of the St. Petersburg-based Holy Synod of Bishops. In other words, it became "Russian." Simultaneously, the status of the monastery was officially raised to that of a Lavra, only the fourth monastery of that rank in the Russian Empire.⁸ In the implementation of Tsar Nicholas I's ideology of Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationality, the Eastern Slavs of Volyn' were to be restored to "Russian" ethnicity and "Russian" religion, and the Lavra, with the Tsar's personal support, would oversee this national rebirth. In the decades just prior to the revolution, under the Volyn' Archbishop Khrapovitsky, Pochayiv became a strategic center of Russification, reactionaryism and anti-Ukrainianism. Pochayiv Archimandrite Maksymenko was an influential supporter of the Russophile and anti-Semitic Black Hundreds movement. Thus it was that, imbued with this conservative, ultra-nationalistic mentality, some of the Pochayiv monks fled to Czechoslovakia in the 1920s, and helped found the strongly monarchist and ultra-nationalist Synod of Bishops in Exile, with its new monastic center, Trinity Monastery, eventually relocated to Jordanville, in upstate New York, USA. Among them was Archimandrite Vitalii who had headed the Pochaev typography until the revolution and who became the superior of New York's Trinity Monastery, whose own typography, dedicated to St. Iov of Pochaev, for decades published pro-Monarchist, anti-Soviet,

7 On the German rococo style in architecture, see Hans Werner Hegemann. *Deutsches Rokoko* (Königstein im Taunus, K.R. Langewiesche Nachfolger, H. Köster, 1958). For a full analysis of Hoffmann's architectural plans for the cathedral, see P. A. Richkov and V. D. Luts, *Pochayivs'ka Sviato-Uspens'ka lavra* (Kyiv: "Tekhnika," 2000), pp. 49-75. One should note that this Western European style was becoming popular in Russian secular and ecclesiastical architecture as well, in particular in the ornate neo-classicism of much of the architecture of St. Petersburg. Closer to Pochayiv, this transitional style is attested in Rastrelli's St. Andrew's Church in Kiev (constructed 1748-1767).

8 The designation of the monastery as a lavra is, however, attested throughout the second half of the eighteenth century, when the monastery was under Uniate control. By 1757, the productive typography established by the Basilian Fathers most frequently identified the place of publication as "chudotvornaia Lavra Pochaevskaia" in its Slavonic editions, although Polish- and Latin-language texts continued to refer to it as a "monastery." See Maksym Boiko, *Knyhodrukuvaniia v Pochayivi i Kremiansi ta mandrivni drukarni* [Typography in Pochayiv and Kremianets' and Wandering Printers] (Bloomington, Indiana: Tovarystvo "Volyn'" v Toronti, 1980), p. 101 passim.

anti-Moscow Patriarchate polemical writings. Meanwhile, the Pochayiv Lavra suffered during the anti-religious persecutions of the Soviets. In particular during the Khrushchev years, the monks were hounded-- some expelled or executed, others sent to psychiatric hospitals--to the point that by 1962 there were only 36 monks left (compared with a population of over 1000 monks before the revolution). Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the situation has grown complicated. The ownership of the Lavra and its shrines has been contested by no fewer than three Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox jurisdictions, as well as the revived and legalized Ukrainian Catholic Church. It currently is obedient to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Moscow Patriarchate. In 1990, Moscow Patriarch Aleksy II urged the monastic community to “continue to hold a firm stand in the Orthodox faith, and guard it against schisms and disarrangements.”

Foundation of the Monastery: Footprint of the Mother of God on Mount Pochayiv

The oldest extant texts describing the origin of the footprint of the Mother of God are a passage in a book by Monk Ioanikii Haliatovs'kyi (Rector of the Kiev-Mohyla Academy), “Novoe nebo s novymi zvezdami [A New Heaven with New Stars],” printed in L'viv in 1665,⁹ and a description inserted in the opening pages of the compilation of Pochayiv miracles published in several eighteenth century editions of *Gora Pochaevskaia stopoiu chudesne iz neia istekaiushchuiu chudodeistvennuiu vodu imushcheiu, i ikonoiu chudotvornoiu Prstyia Dvy Matere Bzhiia Marii pochtena, vsemu miru iasna i iavna*,” “Mount Pochaev, [which is] Honored, Revealed to the Whole World and Renowned, [because of] the Miraculous Footprint from which miracle-effecting water flows forth, and by the Miracle working Icon of the Most Holy Virgin, Mother of God, Mary.” The anonymous text was apparently published first in 1742 (Ilarion claims in Polish, Boiko, in Church Slavonic),¹⁰ reprinted in Polish in 1757, and in Slavonic in 1772, in the reign of and with the blessing of “Silvester Lubienietskii Rudnetskii, Exarch of the Metropolitanate of Kiev, Galicia and All

9 A collection of tales and apocryphal legends of miracle working icons of the Mother of God in Ukraine.

10 Metropolitan Ilarion, *Fortetsia pravoslaviia na Volyni. Sviata Pochayivs'ka Lavra. Tserkovno-istorychna monohrafiia* (Vinnipeg: Tovarystvo “Volyn’,” 1961), p. 375; Boiko, p. 45.

Rossii, Bishop of Lutsk and Ostroh.”¹¹ Afterwards it was reprinted numerous times in Polish and Slavonic. The brief legend concerning the origin of the footprint relates that a certain inhabitant of Pochayiv, Ioann Bosyi, saw the Most Pure Mother of God standing on a rocky cliff in the midst of a fiery pillar. Before her stood a monk, who dwelt on this cliff. The monk informed Ioann and some young shepherds who were tending their flocks on the hill and also witnessed the apparition, that the Mother of God had left a trace of her right footprint on the outcrop where she had stood, and that the print would be always filled with pure water, which could heal various ailments.¹² The earliest known depiction of this scene appears in eighteenth century engravings produced in the Pochayiv typography (for example in a Triodion of 1747¹³). The crowned Mother of God, holding a scepter in her right hand, appears in an aureole of flames. At her feet, embedded on the top of a small plateau, is the imprint of her right footprint from which a stream of water flows. A monk, shepherd and angels bear witness.



Figure 2: Engraving of Pochayiv Mother Of God. Late XVII century.

Further study will elucidate the Eastern and Western iconographic source of the composition. Its literary origin is ultimately the enigmatic reference in the book of Revelation to “a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars” (Rev. 12: 1). The apparition at Pochayiv bears a remarkable graphic similarity to (among others) the image of the apparition of the Virgin of Guadalupe (Mexico), first widely printed and disseminated in 1649, in which the standing figure is crowned and set within a

11 There is a notice in the 1772 edition that the text is based upon an “already printed book [prezhde uzhe pechatann[aia],” although it is not clear if earlier Basilian-period editions are referred to, or, as Orthodox scholars suggest, a non-extant seventeenth century imprint produced at Pochayiv under Orthodox control. There is no evidence for the latter. In fact, contrary to Orthodox apologists, there is only one text that can be definitively attributed to the pre-Uniate monastery: Kyrilo Trankvilion Stavrovets’kyi’s *Zertsalo bohoslavii* [“The Mirror of Theology”], a portion of which was printed by a wandering typographer in residence at Pochayiv Monastery [“v monastyru pochaevskom”] in 1618.

12 A. F. Khoynatskii, *Pochaevskaia Uspenskaia Lavra. Istoricheskoe opisanie* (Pochaev, 1897), pp. 40-41;

13 V. H. Bochkovs’ka, L. V. Khaukha, Va. A Adamovych, *Kataloh vydan’ Pochayivs’koho ta Univ’skoho monastyriv XVIII-XX st. z kolektsiyi Muzeiu knyhy i drukarstva Ukrayiny* (Kyiv: Vyd. Dom Kievo-Mohylians’ka akademiia, 2008), pl. 59 on p. 164. Plate 93 on p. 179 depicts a variant in which the Theotokos is not crowned, from a 1759 Apostol.

fiery sunburst¹⁴ (although the Guadalupe Virgin stands on the crescent moon, a motif absent in Pochayiv). But the significance of the legend that resonates in the Pochayiv iconography is to be found in the rich imagery of the liturgical poetry of the Orthodox Church. The apparition

is certainly literary in origin, constructed out of the epithets and allegories applied to the Mother of God in the ancient akathistos dedicated to her, in particular the phrase allegorizing the Theotokos as “the fiery chariot of the Word” (Irmos of Ode 5). “We see the Holy Virgin as a flaming torch appearing to those in darkness. For having kindled the Immaterial Light, she leads all to divine knowledge; she illumines our minds with radiance and is honored by our shouting these praises: Rejoice, ray of the spiritual Sun! Rejoice, flash of unfading splendor!... Rejoice, for thou didst cause the river of many streams to gush forth!...” (Ikos 11) In Ikos 6 “Hail, the Rock quenching the thirst that craves for life! Hail, the Pillar of fire directing those in darkness!”



Figure 3: Icon of the apparition of the Mother of God. From Pochayiv. Second half of XIX century.

Thus we unravel the elements of the legend – the pillar of fire, the rock that is associated with water, a life-giving spring – in the poetry of the Church. Everywhere in liturgical poetry is the Mother of God extolled using water imagery. “Hail, for Thou pourest forth the stream’s abundant waters! ... Hail, for Thou wastest white the filthiness of sin! Hail, the Fountain that cleanseth pure the conscience!” (Ikos 11).¹⁵ As Bogolepov points out,¹⁶

the image of fire associated with the Mother of God speaks of her “perpetual virginity.” Old Testament imagery is invoked, in particular the fiery furnace of Babylon that did not burn the young men who were covered in flames. The Christmas canon (Canticle Eight, irmos) proclaims, “The furnace moist with dew was the image and figure of a wonder past nature. For it burnt not the Children whom it had received, even as the fire of the Godhead consumed not the Virgin’s womb into which

¹⁴ For a brief account of the Guadalupe Virgin see Joan Carroll Cruz, *Miraculous Images of Our Lady* (Rockford, Ill.: Tan Books, 1993), pp. 290-298.

¹⁵ The visualization of the epithet of Mother of God as the “fountain of the life-bearing spring” is the subject of numerous icons. See, for example, Konrad Onasch and Annemarie Schreiber, *Icons. The Fascination and the Reality* (New York: Riverside Book Company, Inc., 1997), pp. 174-5.

¹⁶ Alexander Bogolepov, *Orthodox Hymns of Christmas, Holy Week and Easter* (New York: Russian Orthodox Theological Fund, Inc., 1965), pp. 21-6.

it had descended.” Likewise, despite the acts of conception and giving birth, Mary was preserved a virgin, previsited by the Burning Bush on Mt. Sinai that could not be consumed, but remained green in the flames. From the Nativity Matins (Canticle One, Second canon): “Plainly foreshadowed by the burning bush that was not consumed, a hallowed womb has borne the Word.”¹⁷ Reference is made to Exodus 3:2, which reemphasizes that the Pochayiv image relates to the sacred fire that is indication of the presence of the Divine. In the Exodus passage, Moses goes up to “Horeb, the mountain of God. There the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in the flame of a burning bush.” When Moses approaches to take a closer look, he is warned by the voice of God to “take off your sandals; the place where you are standing is holy ground.” The latter detail explains the telling name given the seer of the Pochayiv vision, Ivan Bosyi, “the Barefoot-one.” The legend thus serves as the creation myth of the monastery. It demonstrates that Pochayiv hill, like Horeb in Sinai, is holy ground, made sacred by the visitation of the Mother of God and of the sacred fire that is the symbol of Jehovah’s presence.

The inclusion of shepherds in the Pochayiv legend makes reference to the Gospel accounts of the Nativity of Jesus, in which “shepherds out in the fields” (Luke 2: 8) are visited by angels who announce the birth of the Messiah. “All who heard were astonished at what the shepherds said” (Luke 2: 18). They function as mystical witnesses to the Divine incarnation. The Synaxis of the Most Holy Mother of God (Great Vespers) expands the Gospel references to the presence of shepherds at the Nativity and provides a deeper symbolic logic, “The shepherds hasten to Bethlehem, revealing the true Shepherd, seated upon the cherubim and lying in a manger.” It is curious to note in this context that in his study of the psychological origins of the cult of the Virgin Mary, Michael Carroll identified a recurrent motif in Catholic accounts of Marian apparitions-- that Mary tends to appear to young shepherds. One of the most recent was the 1917



Figure 4: *Icon of the apparition of the Mother Of God.*

¹⁷ In Orthodox iconography, a logical source of inspiration is the depiction of the Mother of God “Unburnt Bush” (the “Virgin of the Burning Bush”) which undoubtedly arose in the Byzantine St. Catherine Monastery in Sinai, the ostensible site of Moses’ encounter with God’s “uncreated energies” in the form of the burning bush (Ex. 3: 1-2). In the typical Sinai iconography, an image of the enthroned Mother of God with the Child resting against her bosom appears in the midst of the burning bush. The merging of the Old Testament image with the Theotokos derives from the commentaries of the Byzantine Theologian John of Damascus. For example, see Robert S. Nelson and Kristen M. Collins (eds.), *Holy Image, Hallowed Ground. Icons from Sinai* (Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2006), plates 58 and 59, pp. 270-275. For additional information on the theological implications of the iconography, see Ouspensky’s essay, “Our Lady of the Sign,” in Leonid Ouspensky and Vladimir Lossky, *The Meaning of Icons* (St. Vladimir Seminary Press, 1999), pp. 77-80.



Figure 5: A contemporary pilgrim souvenir. A relic from Lavra.

apparition to three young children who were tending their sheep near Fatima, Portugal-- of interest to us in passing because contemporary devotional accounts emphasize the central message of Fatima as the Virgin's request to pray the rosary for the conversion of Russia.

The shrine "relic" itself, of which the legend was an origin myth, is the right footprint of the Mother of God. Here is the physical evidence of the miraculous apparition, the "proof" that the Divine Mother stood here.

According to the motif-index categorization of the folklorist Stith Thompson a footprint is a mythological motif, falling under the rubric of cosmogony and cosmology, in other words, attached broadly to the folk notion of the creation of earth, and specifically to the origins of rocks and stones. These are marks of creation, "the form impressed on the universe by the presence or passage of a deity... as a guide to the follower or devotee."¹⁸ These "indentations on rocks from the imprint of gods and saints" are attested in Irish, Indian, Jewish, Greek, Buddhist, even Native American folklores. "Local legend everywhere in the world identifies marks on rocks, cliffs, mountains as the footprints of gods, demons, and other supernaturals."¹⁹ "When a revered person has touched or come into contact with something, that object reverberates with a residue; the object becomes a relic. As relics, handprints and footprints represent important loci for worship because they establish an earthly presence of their maker."²⁰ Nineteenth-century ethnographic expeditions in Western Russian provinces recorded numerous such footprints, many of them attached in the local mind to apparitions of the Mother of God.

Perhaps the most famous cross-cultural mark of this sort is on the so-called Adam's Peak, a mountain site in Sri Lanka with a rock bearing a depression resembling an enormous footprint. Such is the impact that this formation has worked on the religious imagination, that this mount is the goal of continuous Muslim, Hindu, as well as Buddhist and Christian pilgrimage. In Muslim legend it bears the footprint of Adam, in Hindu the footprint of Siva, to Christian the mark

18 Stith Thompson, *Motif-index of Folk-literature; a Classification of Narrative Elements in Folktales, Ballads, Myths, Fables, Mediaeval Romances, Exempla, Fabliaux, Jest-books, and Local Legends* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955-58), motifs A972, A901, D1294.

19 "Footprint," in *Funk & Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co., 1949-1950), pp 410-1.

20 Kathryn Selig Brown, *Eternal Presence: Handprints and Footprints in Buddhist Art* (Katonah, N.Y.: Katonah Museum of Art, 2004), p. 13. This volume contains a wealth of Buddhist footprint images that serve us well for comparative purposes. See in particular the footprint in a rock in fig. 11 on p. 20.

of the Apostle Thomas, and in Buddhist legend it is the site of the Sacred Footstep of Buddha, the imprint of Buddha's last contact with this world. Ludowyk describes the shrine in a travel log: "Over the footprint is a little roofed enclosure sufficient to admit four or five persons at a time. On the slab of rock is the rough indentation of the outline of a foot, somewhat sunk in the stone... Its length has been computed at five feet seven inches, and its breadth at two feet seven inches... The eye of faith does not gauge proportions with the same accuracy as the logical eye."²¹ Rational discourse cannot countenance such spiritual explanations of natural phenomena. These rather serve as myths of creation, and in the case of the Pochayiv footstep, the myth of the origin of the monastery itself, for it is the location of the footprint which explains the location of the hermitage, and suggests that the monastic brotherhood was under the divine protection of the Mother of God, nourished by the spring that emerges from the earth at his point. From an early period the monks gathered on the hill, with the footprint as lodestone. In 1649 the first stone church, the gift of the Domashevskiis, was erected over this footprint, the whole intended as a canopy over the sacred shrine. This stood until Count Mikola Potots'kyi sought to physically and ideologically proclaim Uniate possession. The Orthodox church was razed around 1771, and in its place was erected the immense stone cathedral, again surrounding the footprint, more or less serving as a grand sanctuary for this sacred ground.



Figure 6: A contemporary reproduction of a nineteenth-century academic painting of the Pochayiv icon.

The Cathedral was positioned so that the footprint shrine was close to the entrance, on the right side. In 1881 (in preparation for the 50th anniversary of the "restoration" of the Lavra to Orthodoxy) the Orthodox sought to reclaim the shrine physically without rebuilding the cathedral, and they did so by erecting an imposing monument, with a cast bronze image of the legend of apparition designed by a St. Petersburg silversmith, Sergei Verkhovtsev. The footprint and stream were enclosed in a glass-covered sarcophagus, into which pilgrims could peer and see at the bottom of

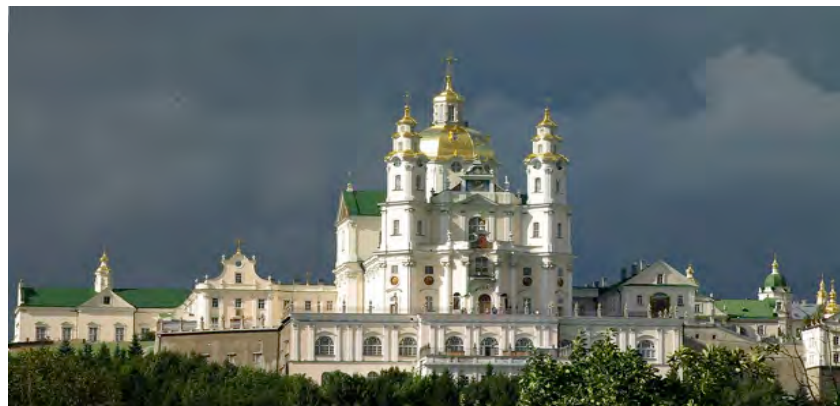


Figure 7: The Pochayiv Lavra cathedral.

21 E. F. C. Ludowyk, *The Footprint of the Buddha* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1958), p. 21.



Figure 8: *The shrine within the Pochayiv Lavra cathedral.*



Figure 9: *Water from the “sacred footprint.”*



Figure 10: *The Pochayiv Icon without the embossed riza*

the clear pond the stopa, or footprint. There is a silver cup with a long handle to permit pilgrims to drink the water, which is ladled out by a monk called the “stopochnik” “footprint guardian.” The water from the impression of the footprint is one of most regarded pilgrim mementos.

The Miracle-Working Icon

In contrast to the folkloric and literary-inspired account of the shrine of the footprint, the origin of the miracle-working Pochayiv icon of the Mother of God is presented in the documents in a decidedly historical tone. In 1559 a Greek metropolitan, Neofit, who came from Constantinople to Ukraine, presented the icon, supposedly brought with him from Constantinople, to Anna Hoiska, a wealthy landowner of Pochayiv village, widow of a Luts’k judge, in thanks for her hospitality. But the simple chronicle-like account with the icon itself.

The historical record of the presence of the Pochayiv icon of the Mother of God on Ukrainian territory is remarkably well documented from the mid-sixteenth century. The precise origin and state of preservation of the icon panel remain conjectural. The uncovered panel was photographed ca. 1886 by the noted art historian Adrian Prakhov for a presentation album prepared for Tsar Alexander III.

The photograph shows a darkened background, a result of age and perhaps the impact of a fire that damaged the icon in 1869. That damage no doubt caused the kiot in which the icon was held to be removed. A schematic rendering of the uncovered icon appeared in an 1883 edition of *The Akafist in Honor of the Miracle-working Icon of the Pochayiv Mother of God*, printed at the lavra.²²

The icon seems to have been painted without background detail, which suggests it was covered with a revetment at the time of its creation. The icon measures, according to Khoinatskii, “6 and a quarter vershki in height and 5 and an eighth vershki in width,”²³

22 Bochkovs’ka, et al., plate 141 on p. 219. This 1883 edition, printed at Pochayiv, is unusual in that it includes special prayers dedicated to Tsar Alexander, indication of the pronounced Imperial orientation of the monastery by the end of the nineteenth century.

23 N. P. Kondakov, *Ikonoграфиa Bogomateri* (St. Petersburg, 1910), p. 77.

in other words about 27.5 cm. by 22.5 cm. The small size alone suggests this is a portable or domestic icon commissioned for private devotion. The panel is lipa, linden (also known as common lime, *Tilia europaea*; native to Southern Europe), reinforced on the reverse with two oak struts to prevent warping.²⁴

The central image of the Mother and Child is surrounded by seven miniatures of saints in the frame. They are identified by inscriptions in Slavonic on their halos that form part of the embossed riza installed over the icon in 1866 (there are no visible inscriptions in the 1886 photograph of the panel, although inscriptions are inserted in the 1883 etched rendering).²⁵

There are known cases of Greek icons that were later transferred to Russia and were covered with an oklad or frame on which are embossed Slavonic, rather than Greek inscriptions.²⁶ Earlier scholars, Kondakov among them, use the presence of Slavonic inscriptions to identify the national origin of the icon. Kondakov draws the following conclusion. “The inscriptions for these names are given in Slavic [po-slavianski], which reflects the custom among the South Slavs to commission such icons, therefore it is surmised that Metropolitan Neofit himself was a Slav, a Serb or a Bulgarian, although it is possible that a Greek Metropolitan would have an icon



Figure 11: Detailed engraving of the Pochayiv icon.

24 Vladimir Zelinskii, *Ob"iatiiia Otcha Ocherki po istorii Pochaevskoi lavry* (Pochaev, 2000), p. 27. For an extensive compendium of Ukrainian and Russian icons of the Pochayiv Mother of God. see <http://icon.org.ua/gallery/bogoroditsya-pochyivska/>.

25 There were rumors that at the time of the expulsion of the Basilian monks from the monastery, the original icon was taken away to a Dominican monastery in Podkaman'e. Some suggest that the original is kept in the Vatican. See K. Korchagin, *Pochayivs'ka Bohorodytsia* (Winnipeg: Central Jubilee Committee of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, 1982), pp. 24-5. Orthodox believers vehemently reject the veracity of this. See Mytropolyt Ilarion, p. 208-9 and Khoinatskii, p. 156. The photograph by Prakhov in the 1889 presentation album would seem to prove its authenticity.

26 For example, a seventeenth-century Greek icon of the Holy Martyrs Barbara, Paraskeva and Catherine was set in a silver frame with incised inscriptions in Slavonic, not Greek. See Yuri Piatnitsky, Oriana Baddeley, Earleen Brunner and Marlia Mundell Mango (eds.), *Sinai, Byzantium, Russia. Orthodox Art from the Sixth to the Twentieth Century* (The Saint Catherine Foundation and The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, 2000), plate S21, pp. 206-7.

of Slavic workmanship.”²⁷ It is not clear why Kondakov attributes such icons uniquely to the South Slavs. Icons with selections of saints depicted in the borders are known from at least the late tenth early eleventh century, for example, a Constantinopolitan icon of St. Nicholas with half-length busts of ten saints.²⁸ The logic of the selection of the saints is not always clear. They could be patron saints of a ruling dynasty, of an individual or family, related to a particular profession, or chosen according to some other criteria. “The combinations of saints could change according to the wishes of the person commissioning the work.”²⁹ In the case of the Byzantine St. Nicholas, four of the frame-saints are military martyrs and three are healer-saints. “The juxtaposition in this icon of St. Nicholas and the warrior saints is unlikely to have been by chance,”³⁰ although without further research it would be difficult to surmise the original intention. The convention of depicting convoys of saints on the borders (“na poliakh”) in commissioned icons is also attested from pre-Tatar Kievan Rus’. Most significant is the panel assigned to the twelfth-thirteenth century of St. Nicholas with ten border saints—four of them princely/military (including the then recently canonized Boris and Gleb, the first native saints in Rus’) and four female martyrs.³¹ In the Pochayiv Mother of God icon, on the left border³² are full-length figures of the Prophet Elijah (“S. Prorok Iliia”) and St. Mina (“S. Mina”), on the right border, Archdeacon Stephen (“Arkhid. Stepan”) and Blessed Avraamii (“Prepod. Avraamii), on the lower border, the Martyr Paraskeva (“Much. Paraskeva”), the Martyr Catherine (“Muchen. Ekateri”), and the Martyr Irene (“Muchen. Irina”). The typical theological hierarchy is observed, with female saints in subordinate position. The convoy of saints is a typically Slavic one. In particular the appearance of Paraskeva points to her widespread Slavic cult; while the Avraamii perhaps makes reference to one of numerous Slavic saints of that name. Further genealogical investigation may reveal the family that commissioned the icon.

27 Kondakov, pp. 78-9. In a cursory examination of the 1886 photograph, the Byzantine specialist at the Metropolitan Museum of Art Helen C. Evans conjectured the icon was late Byzantine, provincial work probably from the Balkans. This corroborates Kondakov’s South Slavic attribution to the panel. (Verbal communication during an NEH Seminar visit to the Watson Library at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, June 25, 2008.)

28 Piatnitsky et al., plate S54, p. 235. See also Figure 8 in the same volume. Here is a diptych of the thirteenth century from Mt. Sinai. The central figures of St. Prokopios and the Mother of God are each surrounded by twelve full- and half-length saints. Robin Cormack identifies them as conveying “special references to Sinai, including... St. Catherine and Moses, and others.” (Piatnitsky et al., Figure 8, pp. 44-5.).

29 Piatnitsky et al., plate S54, p. 235.

30 Ibid.

31 H.Lohvyn, Lada Miliaeva and Vira Svetsits’ka, *Ukrains’kyi seredn’ovichnyi zhyvopys* (Kyiv, 1976), plate XI.

32 The inscriptions are taken from a careful rendering of the icon with its new oklad (installed in 1866) in an engraving of 1892 printed by “Obshchestvennaia pol’za.”

The possibility that the icon was over-painted in the nineteenth century, particularly after the fire in 1869 that destroyed the Basilian altarpiece and damaged the kiot that held the icon, should not be discounted. Kryzhanovskii reports on his examination of an icon of the Dormition of Mother of God, ostensibly Byzantine, with an inscription on the reverse that it was presented to the monastery by Hoiska in 1590, along with the note, “Obnovlenaciia ikona 1839 goda [This icon was restored in 1839]”³³ —that is, soon after the expulsion of the Basilians. It is likely that many ancient icons of the monastery were restored or repainted by the Orthodox at the same time that the churches were reconfigured to conform to Orthodox rather than Uniate ritual needs. Surface examination in contemporary photographs of the Pochayiv icon does seem to suggest that the painting is more modern than sixteenth century. While there cannot be a conclusive determination pending scientific evaluation of the panel, examination of the photograph suggests the painted surface of the faces and hands is original as of the time the photograph was taken, although comparison with more recent photographs of the icon intimates that in the interim some overpainting may have occurred.



Figure 12: *The Pochayiv icon painted for the iconostasis of Trinity Cathedral in the Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville, New York.*

The earliest depictions of the icon surface without the riza are found in numerous engravings in various Pochayiv publications of the eighteenth century (all the work of the Basilian typography), for example I. Gochemskii’s engravings in *Liturgikon* (1745),³⁴ *Oktoikh* (1758 and 1774), *Evanhelie* (1768)³⁵, and *Irmolohion* (1794), as well as the printed sheet of the icon by “Master T.” (late eighteenth century)³⁶. The Gochemskii engravings represent an anachronism, since they depict either St. Luke painting the Pochayiv icon of the Mother

33 G. Kryzhanovskii, *Istoricheskoe i obshchestvennoe znachenie Pochaevskoi Lavry* (Pochaev, 1899), p. 19.

34 G. N. Lohvyn, Z hlybyn. *Hravyury ukrains’kykh starodrukov XVI-XVIII st.* (Kyiv, 1990), plate 432. Curiously the heads of both Christ and the Mother of God are depicted with crowns, even though the crowning of the icon did not occur until 1773.

35 Lohvyn, plate 486.

36 Iurii Ivanchenko (Main editor, et al.), *Skarby Kyevo-Pechers’koi Lavry* (Kyiv, 1998), plate 129.

and Child or St. John Damascene (who lived in the late-seventh through mid-eighth century) composing the “Octoëchos [Oktoikh]” (a collection of liturgical hymns) in the presence of the Pochayiv icon. The composition with St. Luke makes reference to the medieval legend that claims that the first icons of the Theotokos were painted by the Gospel writer. The earliest known allusion to Luke as a painter is found in an eleventh-century Constantinopolitan manuscript. Ouspensky best clarifies the significance of this attribution. “Orthodox tradition attributes the first icon of the Virgin to St. Luke the Evangelist who, it is said, painted three of them after Pentecost... A score of icons attributed to St Luke are found in the Russian church alone. Besides



Figure 13: Engraving of Saint Luke painting the Pochayiv Mother of God.

these, there are twenty-one on Mount Athos and in the West, of which eight are in Rome. Obviously, it cannot be maintained that these icons are themselves made by the hand of the Evangelist, since nothing which he painted has survived. But the so-called ‘St. Luke icons’ have their place in a tradition for which he furnished the prototype. They were painted according to reproductions of St Luke’s originals. Here the apostolic tradition should be understood as it is understood when one speaks of the ‘apostolic liturgy’ or ‘apostolic canons.’ These date back to the apostles not because they were written by their hand, but because they have an apostolic character and are covered by apostolic authority. The same is true for the so-called ‘St Luke icons.’”³⁷ Thus the Gochemskii engravings make a serious claim of the sanctity of the Pochayiv icon. The placement of such engravings (for example, in the Pochayiv-imprinted *Evanhelie* from 1768) facing the opening page of the Gospel according to Luke further magnifies its significance. The saint is depicted composing the Gospel text. The finished Pochayiv icon rests on an easel, while the artist’s palette, hooked on the horn of an ox (the symbolic representation of Luke) is still within reach. In other engravings, Luke is holding the palette and is portrayed in the act of painting.³⁸

37 Leonid Ouspensky, *Theology of the Icon Vol. I* (Crestwood, N. Y.: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1978), pp. 60, 62. See also Maria Vassilaki (ed.), *Mother of God. Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art* (Benaki Museum/Skira, 2000), p. 390-1.

38 A Gochemskii engraving from a Pochayiv imprint. Lohvyn, plate 484



Figure 14: *Engraving of Saint Luke with completed painting of Pochayiv icon.*

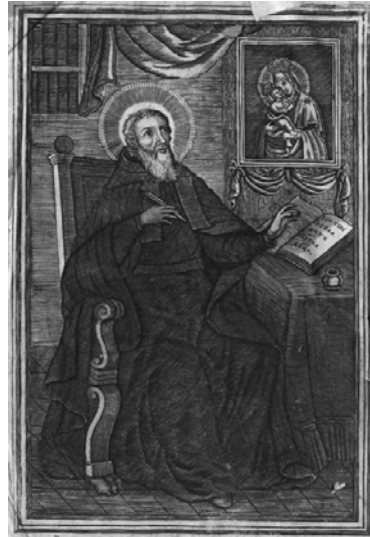


Figure 15: *Engraving of Saint John of Damascus seated before the Pochayiv icon. c. 1774.*

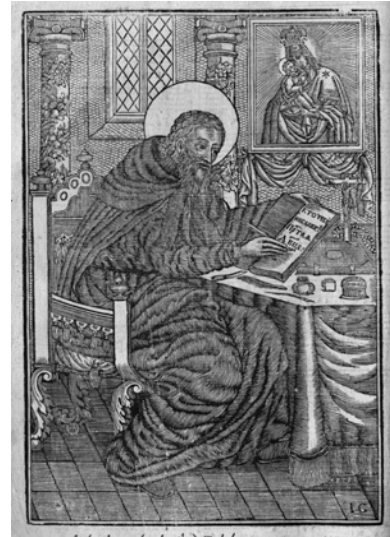


Figure 16: *Engraving of Saint John of Damascus composing liturgical poetry in front of Pochayiv icon. c. 1794.*

Needless to say, reconstructing the original image from the engravings is potentially problematic, since copies, particularly those rendered in a different medium, contain variations and discrepancies in details, and reflect eighteenth-century Western stylistic peculiarities, while at the same time faithfully preserving the overall contours of the Byzantine *typos*. In all cases of these early Uniate engravings, the icon is reduced to the Mother and Child alone—the side saints are uniformly omitted. In none of the Gochemskii engravings are the usual abbreviations for “Mother of God” and “Jesus Christ” included, in contravention of Byzantine tradition.

The iconographic prototype is the *Eleousa* (in Byzantine nomenclature), in Slavonic *Umilenie*, “Merciful,” “Tenderness,” “Lovingkindness,” or “Compassion.”³⁹ The *typos* is again a “visual counterpart” to the poetry of the hymns and sermons dedicated to the Mother of God, in particular the *akathist*, that dramatize the maternal love for the Son commingled with prescient sorrow and compassion for His fate.⁴⁰ There are a

39 For a discussion of the translation of the term *Umilenie* into English, see Ouspensky and Lossky, p. 93.

40 *Glory of Byzantium*, p. 124; Henry Maguire, *Art and Eloquence in Byzantium* (Princeton, 1981), p.p. 102-3.



Figure 17: *The Don Mother of God, late fifteenth century.*

large number of Byzantine and Slavic variants of the type. Two that the Pochayiv type most closely resemble are the Vyshhorod (Vladimir) icon (of Constantinopolitan origin, twelfth century) and the Don icon (attributed to Feofan Grek).⁴¹

In the Pochayiv iconography the Child, depicted as the “Boy Emmanuel,”⁴² rests on the crook of Mary’s right arm, with his bare feet resting on her left wrist. He extends his right arm to offer a blessing, while his left elbow is draped over his Mother’s shoulder, permitting his hand to dangle on her chest. The Child’s head is arched back and he gazes directly into Mary’s eyes. This is particularly highlighted in the Gochemskii engravings. Their faces touch closely. In the icon itself Christ’s cheek overlaps that of his mother (as in the Vladimir [Vyshhorod] icon)—emphasizing by the intense physical embrace the emotional bond between son and mother, God and his creation. Precisely what garments the two figures are wearing is to some degree difficult to determine, but they seem to be rendered according to correct Byzantine tradition.

Mary is cloaked in the maphorion (the cloak that covers head and shoulders) decorated with stars (above the forehead and on the shoulders, although here the right shoulder is obscured by the child) the symbol of perpetual virginity.⁴³ Christ is clothed in a chiton (tunic). The significant variation from traditional prototypes is the depiction of a cloth held by the Theotokos in her left hand. In some engravings—and in the embossed outline of the garments on the nineteenth-century riza of the icon, this is a small detached towel. In others, it is the end of a longer cloth that extends from underneath her maphorion (see Gochemskii’s etchings of the icon from the Oktoikh and Irmolohion). Earlier evidence of a Byzantine tradition to depict the mother of God clutching a small towel is offered by a mosaic of the Crucifixion in the monastery church of Daphni, Greece (11th c.), and the fresco of the Crucifixion (dated 1259) in the Boyana Church in Sofia, Bulgaria. Further study might suggest that the towel represents an attribute of mourning.

41 *Vizantiia, Balkany, Rus*, no. 64

42 “The infant ‘pre-eternal God,’ full of wisdom despite His tender years.” Ouspensky and Lossky, pp. 81, 92.

43 Ouspensky and Lossky, p. 81.



Figure 18: *Fresco of the Crucifixion in the Boyana Church in Sofia, Bulgaria.*



Figure 19: *Close-up of the icon in the 1774 engraving.*



Figure 20: *Close-up of the icon in 1794 engraving*

Its end only is clutched in her hand. And in yet others, it is a portion of the child's chiton. The most significant parallel image is ascribed to Feofan Grek, in his late fourteenth century panel of the Don Mother of God. Here the Mother of God gathers the voluminous end of Christ's garment in folds in her hand. Both the Pochayiv and Don icons no doubt derive from an as-yet unidentified Byzantine prototype.⁴⁴ That the cloth was understood to be a ritual rushnyk (polotentse) is made abundantly clear in nineteenth-century Ukrainian folk icons produced by bohomazi, itinerant village painters, in which the embroidered edges of the cloth are often precisely delineated.

Russian copies of the icon sometimes omit the rushnyk, from which we can surmise that its appearance in the Ukrainian panels is a reflection of specific local ritual understanding of such cloths.

⁴⁴ A fresco of the Mother of God Glykophilusa in the Chora Church (Kariye Djami, Constantinople), before 1335, reveals a similar "dangling" edge of Christ's chiton, but Mary does not grasp it. See also an icon dated 1422 of the Mother of God Pelagonitissa, in which Mary holds a large draped cloth in both hands, which is entwined around the Child's left leg. See Onasch and Schneiper, pp. 167-9. A Byzantine mosaic icon from the late 13th century depicts the Mother of God taking hold of the Christ Child's mantle between her thumb and index finger. See Vassilaki, Plate 74, pp. 464-5.



Figure 21: *Pochayiv Mother of God from Zhytomyr region, Volyn Ukraine. First half of nineteenth Century*



Figure 22: *Painting of Pochayiv Mother of God from Kumeiki Village, Cherkas'kii region, Ukraine. XIX century*



Figure 23: *Pochayiv Mother of God with Saints Boris and Gleb in the border. Russian ca. 1900.*



Figure 24: *Pochayiv Mother of God with two bordering Saints. (St. Nicholas and a female saint). Russian, second half XIX century.*

Significant work has recently been undertaken to delineate and interpret the function of such ritual fabrics.⁴⁵ “The rushnyk was closely linked with the so-called rites of passage that accompanied births, weddings, and funerals, and with the calendrical rites associated with the change of seasons... Rushnyky were also made for the church, and here their sacred character becomes evident; in terms of symbolic function, they are parallel to the Byzantine mandylion, a holy relic-piece made of fabric, depicting an image of Christ’s face, and generally designated as being produced ‘not by human hands.’”⁴⁶ The use of ritual cloths in conjunction with icon veneration is attested in Byzantine practice as early as the eleventh century and was transferred to Rus’⁴⁷. The tradition to handle icons and other sacred vessels with embroidered cloths is still widely practiced. For example,

45 See for example Tetiana Kara-Vasyleva, *Ukrayins’ka vyshyvka* (Kyiv, Lybyd’, 2008); Mariia Chumarna, *Kod ukrayinskyi vyshyvky* (L’viv: Vyd. “Apriori,” 2008); Yevhen Prychepiy and Tetiana Prichepiy, *Embroidery of Eastern Podillia. Its Ornamental Structure and an Attempt at its Interpretation* (Kyiv: Rodovid Press, 2007); Lidiia Orel, *Ukrayins’ki rushnyky* (L’viv: “Kal’variia,” 2003); and O. V. Lysenko and S. V. Komarova, *Tkan’, Ritual, Chelovek. Traditsii tkachestva slavian vostochnoi Evropy* (SPb: “Astur,” 1992); Franklin Sciacca, “Ukrainian Rushnyky: Binding Amulets and Magical Talismans in the Modern Period,” *Folklorica. Journal of the Slavic, East European and Eurasian Folklore Society*, 2013, Vol. XVII, 1-35.

46 Oksana Grabowicz, “A Comparative Note on Ritual Cloths,” in *Rushnyky: Ukrainian Ritual Cloths* (New York: The Ukrainian Museum, 1981), p. 6.

47 I. A. Sterlingova, *Dragotsennyi ubor drevnerusskikh ikon XI-XIV vekov* (Moscow: Progress-Traditsiia, 2000), pp. 47-53.

in processions and presentations the hands of icon-bearers are typically draped with a rushnyk or towel on which the icon is held.⁴⁸

The significance of the Pochayiv icon's rushnyk requires further study, but it must be related to other ritual cloths associated with the Theotokos venerated as relics or depicted on icons. Among these are the veil of protection that she holds over her arms in the icon of the Pokrov [Intercession],⁴⁹ the small decorated towel tucked in her belt in the apse mosaic in St. Sofia (Kyiv), as well as the robe and mantle that were reputed to have repeatedly protected Constantinople from conquest and were preserved in the Byzantine Imperial shrine of the Blachernitissa. Likewise, the sacred significance of the cloth held by the Mother under the "sacred Child" might well reflect the east Slavic rituals by which "the transitional state of a new-born [was marked]... A piece of linen was the necessary ritual object [used] while baptizing a child who was put on it. Here [the] cloth symbolizes the world of the culture in[to] which the child entered from the world of nature."⁵⁰ Ultimately, the origins of the ritual function of fabrics must derive from the association of weaving, spinning and twisting with the cult of the Goddess-Creator in Neolithic Europe.⁵¹

48 The use of towels to hold icons thus prohibits the direct contact between bare hands and holy objects. For example, see the photograph taken in 1902 of a group of representatives of the merchants of Kursk waiting to present an icon and a richly embroidered rushnyk to Tsar Nicholas II in Elizaveta Shelaeva, *Pravoslavnyi mir Rossii v fotografiakh kontsa XIX-nachala XX veka* (SPb.: "Liki Rossii," 2001), plate on p. 262.

49 On the Pokrova [Intercession] icon, see Serhii Plokhly, *Tsars and Cossacks. A Study in Iconography* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 2002). Both the Eastern and Western Churches venerated as relics many other pieces of cloth associated with Christ, the Mother of God, and the saints. In the West, for example, we can enumerate the Shroud of Turin and the so-called "four great relics" preserved at Aix La Chapelle in Aachen: "the cloak of the Blessed Virgin, the swaddling cloth of the Infant Jesus, the loin cloth worn by Our Lord on the Cross and the cloth on which lay the head of St. John the Baptist following his beheading," Zsolt Aradi, *Shrines to Our Lady around the World* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Young, 1954), pp. 49-51. The Byzantine rendering of the "mantle of protection" as a capacious cloak worn by the Virgin (which she holds wide open to envelop a cluster of humans kneeling at her feet) was widespread in the West. See for example the fifteenth-century sculptures of the "Madonna of the Protecting Mantle" in Caroline Ebertshauser et al., *Mary. Art, Culture, and Religion through the Ages* (NY: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1997), plates on p. 6 and 101.

Mention should be made of the tradition at Pochayiv (and elsewhere in Ukraine) of placing scarves and rushnyky on the ground so that processions with relics can cross over them. "The relics of St. Iov are carried around the church and people place scarves [platki] in the path of the procession so that the priests carrying the coffin step on them. These scarves are preserved in families as precious relics and are tied on the head of those suffering from various ailments," Savchenko, photo on p. 61.

50 See Oleg Lysenko and Svetlana Komarova, *Fabric. Ritual. Man. Weaving Traditions of the East Europe Slavs* (St. Petersburg: Fortis/State Museum of Ethnography, 1992), no pagination.

51 See the fascinating, if still controversial, study by Marija Gimbutas, *The Language of the Goddess* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 1989), in particular pp. 67-8. Gimbutas sees the survival of the Neolithic Goddess in the East Slavic cult of Mokosh/Paraskeva-Piatnitsa. By what coincidence is Paraskeva one of the saints depicted in the border of the Pochayiv icon?

The Historical Record of the Pochayiv Icon

The primary documentation on the icon is to be found in chronicle-like compilations produced at the Pochayiv monastery in the eighteenth century by the Basilians. Most significant of which is Gora Pochaevskaia. From the Gora text itself we learn that much of the earliest evidence was derived from oral legends and manuscript sources (none of which appear to have survived⁵²) from the pre-Uniate period of the monastery, that is from before circa 1721. Metropolitan Ilarion conjectures that upon the removal of the Basilian monks from the Lavra in 1831, the archive was in “total chaos” (“polnyi neporiadok”⁵³) Archimandrite Amvrosii charges that the Uniates destroyed some seventeenth-century Orthodox manuscripts, in particular Pamiatnik monasteryia Pochaevskago [“Memorial of Pochaev Monastery”], “[which] was either lost or, as some suspect, was deliberately destroyed by the Basilians... as a dangerous monument of primordial Orthodoxy on Pochaev mount.”⁵⁴

Gora Pochaevskaia provides precise information concerning the arrival of the icon on Ukrainian territory. Gora reports that in 1559 Neofit, a “Greek Metropolitan from Constantinople [Mitropolit Grecheskii iz Konstantinopolia],” traveled through Volyn’. A Metropolitan with the name Neofit is nowhere attested in written records, and there is some speculation that he was not of Greek nationality, but rather of “Greek” (that is Orthodox) faith. Such usage is known from Ukrainian records of the period. He might well have been from the Balkans--perhaps a Serb or Bulgarian.⁵⁵ Neofit’s presence in Volyn’ is easy to explain. He was no doubt on his way to Moscow seeking financial support. Gudziak has established that the “approximate trajectory of the 16th-century travel route usually taken by Greek clerics journeying to the East Slavic lands” commenced in Constantinople, moved through Wallachia and Moldova, entered Polish Crown territories (Ruthenia) at Kam’ianets’-Podil’skyi, then in an arc through Halych, L’viv, Lublin, into the Grand Duchy of Lithuania territories (through Hrodna and Vilnius), crossed the border of Muscovy at Orsha, then through Smolensk to Moscow.⁵⁶ The Muscovite Tsar in 1559 was Ivan IV, famous for his generosity to Greek prelates. What is more significant than Neofit’s nationality, is his high rank and the identification of him—and subsequently of the icon he left as a gift in Volyn’—as coming from Constantinople. The claim is significant. The icon carries the dignity, reputation, and charisma of origin

52 Amvrosii mentions a “manuscript of the monastery’s legal proceedings and documents” compiled in 1661 preserved in the archive in the 1880s. Amvrosii, pp. 10-11.

53 Mytropolyt Ilarion, p. 374.

54 “[Kniga] utralilas’ ili, kak dumaiut, narochiyo unichtozhena bazilianami, kak opasnyi pamiatnik iskonsnago pravoslaviia na gore Pochaevskoi.” Khoiatskii, p. 35.

55 Kondakov, p. 78

56 Borys Gudziak, *Crisis and Reform. The Kyivan Metropolitanate, the Patriarchate of Constantinople, and the Genesis of the Union of Brest* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1998), pp. 91-103.

in the Byzantine capital (even 100 years after its fall to the Ottomans). It thus shares the Constantinopolitan heritage of the Vyshhorod-Vladimir icon. The myth of the charismatic genesis of the Pochayiv icon posits its origin in the highest ecclesiastical circles of the ancient Byzantine capital.

According to Gora Pochaevskaia, Neofit traversed the properties of Anna Hoiska (nee Kozin'ska), the Orthodox widow of a Judge of the Luts'k region.⁵⁷ Upon learning of the presence of the Metropolitan, Hoiska invited him to rest at her estate. As a gesture of thanks for her hospitality, "he presented her with an icon of the Most Holy Virgin Mother of God, which he had brought from Constantinople [ikonu Prestyia Dvy matere Bzhiia, iuzhe iz Konstantinopolia izvezl be, ei darova]."⁵⁸ She placed the icon in a chapel (khramina) in her castle in Orlia (which by the eighteenth century had been destroyed: "You can see only the ruined walls now."⁵⁹)

Monastic accounts of the miracles worked by the icon attest that while in the possession of Hoiska, she and members of her household, noticed that "every so often an unexplainable glow shone forth from the icon, and it began to appear in her dreams." The first miracle attributed was the restoration of sight (an archetypal Christian miracle attested in the Gospels and Acts; see in particular Mark 8 and Acts 9) to Filip Kozinskyi, the brother of Hoiska who was blind since birth, at which point she considered it too sacred to remain in her hands, and transferred it, in a dramatic and grand procession, to the Pochayiv monks. The icon performed this miracle in 1597, in which year it was presented to Pochayiv and placed in a small stone chapel. It quickly became famous for its thaumaturgic properties and was soon widely known and venerated. The small icon started to work miracles precisely the year after the signing of the Union of Brest, no doubt an ideological proclamation intended to bolster the Orthodox reaction of resistance to the proposed Union with Rome. In that same year Hoiska had granted a charter to the monastery in which she confirmed her gifts of lands and income to the Pochayiv monks with the specific requirement that they be "only of the Greek faith of the Eastern Church." "In this the finger of God is clearly revealed, that the icon began to dispense miracles just before the very Council of Brest in 1596, at which the Unia was created." Thus claims one of the emigre Russian monks of Jordanville, himself having observed the remarkable coincidence of history and miracle.

57 On a portrait of Anna Hoiska preserved in Pochayiv Lavra she is identified as "Sud'ina Zemstva Lutskago" (see S. Savchenko, plate on p. 43). The town of Pochayiv had been confirmed in royal charters of 1527 and 1557 as belonging to the Hoiskii family. See Khoynatskii, pp. 494-5.

58 Gora Pochaevskaia, p. 3 v.

59 Ibid.

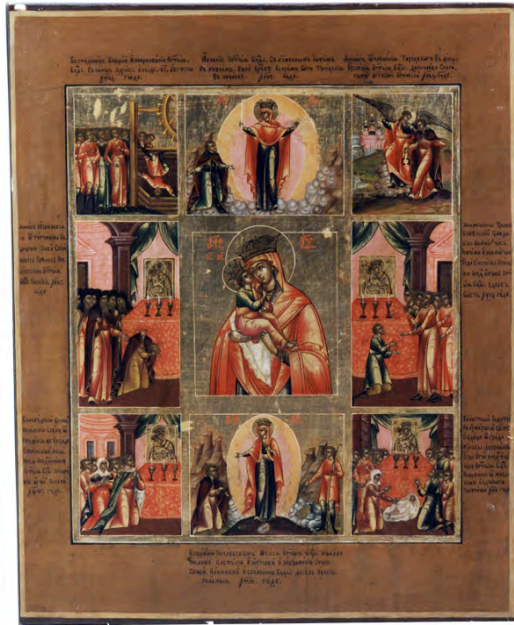


Figure 25: *The Pochayiv Mother of God. Central Russia, probably mid nineteenth century*



Figure 26: *Engraving of Pochayiv Mother of God, the Footprint, a fanciful depiction of the hill-top monastery and four scenes of miracles associated with the icon. Printed in Pochaiv, 1745.*

After Anna Hoiska's death in 1617, her possessions were inherited by her nephew, Andrei Ferley, the kasztelan of Belz, a Lutheran, who took back the lands donated to the monastery, attacked it, harassed the monks, and stole the icon and other church vestments and liturgical objects. According to Gora Pochaevskaia, in 1641 Ferley's wife, during a social gathering in their house, dressed up in confiscated church vestments, took a chalice in her hands and made fun of the icon. She was punished by madness--an instructive miracle that warns the pious against blasphemy, not to mention of the evils of "heretical" Lutheranism.⁶⁰ Civil courts ordered restoration of the icon to the monastery in 1647, and it was this event that undoubtedly inspired the Domashevskiis to erect the Trinity Church in 1649. This construction sought to bring the two Pochayiv shrines together. The new cathedral was erected over the miraculous spring and footprint, which had until this time remained exposed to the elements. The floor plan was oriented such that the foot shrine of the footprint stood just in front of the iconostasis on the right side, in close proximity to the Holy Doors. The restored icon was transferred from a small church (dedicated to the Dormition) and hung directly over the Holy Doors, a place of honor in full concert with the prestige that it held among the Orthodox.

When the Basilian Fathers obtained control of the monastery around 1721, they continued to compile data on the numerous miracles that the icon worked—evidence that the Union of Brest was legitimate and had in no way diminished the efficacy of the miracle-working properties of the icon. Gora Pochaevskaia is, in fact, nearly entirely a compilation of these miracle texts. Over 100 pages of miracles, mostly thaumaturgic, are described in precise detail. These include a number of miracle texts derived from manuscripts maintained in the pre-Uniate monastery in the second half of the seventeenth through early eighteenth centuries.⁶¹ In keeping with the spirit of the Union, there is no distinction indicated in Gora between

⁶⁰ Gora Pochaevskaia, pp. 5-6.

⁶¹ "O chudesezh takozhde i blgodatekh pri sei s[via]shchennoi ikone darstvovannykh, ot letopisanii drevnikh monastyrskikh, tazhe ot pisem aifentichnikh v grammatofilakii ili v pismenokhranilishchi svoem monastirskom do nyne obretaiushchikhsia, verno iziatuii I sobrannuii na sredu proiznesosha i predlozhisha..." Gora Pochaevskaia, p. 65 v.

Orthodox control of the monastery and the shift to Uniate rule, in fact, no overt mention is made of the transition to Basilian control. Instead, the history of the Lavra is presented as a seamless thread, acknowledging the legitimacy of both Latin and Greek rites that were now united. The beneficiaries of the benefaction of the icon are indicated as “people faithful in Christ of both sexes, and rites, Roman and Greek united to Rome.”⁶²

In 1770 the Uniate Exarch of Ukraine, the Bishop of Luts’k, Sylvestr Rudnytskyi, was commissioned by Pope Clement XIV to investigate the authenticity of the miracles attributed to the Pochayiv icon-- this at the instigation of Count Potots’kyi, who sought to have the images crowned. In part Potots’kyi must have been influenced by the coronation of the Czestochowa icon of the Mother of God in 1717, the Luts’k Virgin in 1749, the Berdichev icon of the Mother of God in 1756, and at least seven others in Unia-controlled Ukrainian lands in the early-to-mid 18th c. Gora Pochaevskaia, the chronicle of the history of the Lavra and the numerous miracles attributed both to the icon and the water from the footprint of the Mother of God, was certainly the evidentiary documentation compiled in order to argue the case before the Vatican. For this reason all the miracle texts are specific as to name and place of origin of the recipients of the miraculous cures, as well as details concerning the identity of witnesses to the miracles. In 1773 the Apostolic See granted permission to crown the icon of Pochayiv as acknowledgement that it was miracle-working. Two gold crowns, adorned with rubies and pearls, were sent from Rome by Pope Clement, and the coronation staged on the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (September 8, 1773). The event was orchestrated as an ideological demonstration. Certainly at its heart was the loud proclamation of the successful conversion of the local population to the Unia, and the dissociation of the Pochayiv shrines from Orthodoxy. In commemoration of the crowning festival, in 1775 Count Potots’kyi sponsored publication of a documentary text in Latin, “*Epitomo historica de origine, antiquitate ac praesertim de celebratissimo opera coronationis thaumaturgae in Poczajoviensi monte imagines B. V. Maria Sanctiss...*”, printed in the Pochayiv typography.⁶³

The icon was removed from Trinity Cathedral and its “coronation” took place in a makeshift altar in a field. Subsequently it was displayed in the Refectory Church until the completion of the Potots’kyi cathedral in 1791, when it was transferred and placed in an ornate Baroque sunburst in the highest tier of the Latin-style altarpiece. There is only one known illustration (not completely decipherable) of the Uniate altar that provides evidence of how the icon was displayed-- painted by none other than Taras Shevchenko in 1846.⁶⁴ Another somewhat fanciful engraving of the late- eighteenth century (it depicts the footprint of the Theotokos on a raised hill in front of the altar, although the footprint shrine was located

62 “Rimskago zhe i Grecheskago Rimskomu soedinennago.” Gora Pochaevskaia, p.

63 A translation of the text was printed in Polish as well. See Boiko, p. 114. In 1773, the Pochayiv press issued a celebratory edition in Polish to commemorate the coronation, “Opisanie fajerwerku w czasie Koronacyi cudownego Obrazu Najsw. Maryi w Poczajowie” (Boiko, p. 113). The absence of Slavonic translations of these texts indicates that the administrative languages of the Lavra were Latin and Polish, with Slavonic reserved for liturgical use.

64 “Sobor Pochayivs’koi lavry (vnutrishnii vihliad)”, in Taras Shevchenko. *Mystets’ka spadshchyna*, t. I, kn. 1 (Kiev: ANUkrSSR, 1961), Plate 150.



Figure 27: *Painting that was probably commissioned to commemorate the coronation of the Pochayiv icon in 1773. Late XVIII century, from Volyn’.*



Figure 28: *Taras Shevchenko’s watercolor of the Cathedral in Pochayiv.*

elsewhere in the cathedral) depicts the three-tiered altarpiece with more clarity.⁶⁵ On an architectural platform mounted by columns stand sculptures of Saints Peter and Paul and two other apostles that surround an enlarged icon of the Pochayiv Mother of God. In the tier above is an icon of Christ “Great Hierarch” and surmounting this in the upper tier is a starburst that must have functioned as a background for the original miracle-working icon. From a distance it would have been difficult to discern, but it was clearly intended to be placed in the place of primacy, overlooking from the greatest height the entire interior of the cathedral. The icon was attached to a pulley system so that it could be lowered for veneration.

Over the course of the decades following the abolition of the Uniate Church in Volyn’, starting in the reign of Tsar Nicholas I, changes were made to make the interior of the Potots’kyi cathedral conform to the liturgical and aesthetic needs of the Orthodox church. The Latin-style confessionals and organ were removed, and all the shrines were re-adorned to re-mark them as Orthodox and Russian. A new and ornate silver sarcophagus was prepared for the relics of St. Iov. Pope Clement’s gold crowns were removed from the Pochayiv icon, which was redecorated in 1866, and 1869 in a new riza and crowns, as well as a sunburst kiot, commissioned from Moscow and St. Petersburg goldsmiths, all made of gold, gilded silver, and covered in precious stones. A multi-tiered Russian-style iconostasis was donated by Tsar Alexander II in 1861,

⁶⁵ P. A. Richkov and V. D. Luts, fig., 33 on p. 105.

which concealed the altar in the Orthodox tradition. The Pochayiv Mother of God was removed from the Basilian wall case and suspended over the Holy Doors of the new icon screen as in the old Trinity Church. A new church was erected on the monastery grounds dedicated to Antonii and Feodosii of the Kiev Pechersk Lavra--thereby manifesting the spiritual restoration of the Lavra to the ancient religion of Rus'. When the arch-conservative Antonii Khrapovitsky became Archbishop of Volhynia in 1902, he announced he would not serve liturgy in a "Catholic church" (referring to the Potots'kyi cathedral), and at his demand in 1906 through 1911 a stone cathedral, built in the massive Novgorod-Pskov style, was erected in honor of the Trinity-- to replace the Domashevskii cathedral destroyed by the Basilians. The iconostasis was painted in sixteenth-century Moscow style and the frescoes were copied from the seventeenth-century Yaroslavl' churches. Thus, on the eve of the revolution, Pochayiv was architecturally transformed yet again, this time into a mythic Great Russian hermitage. "Its strategic position on the edge of the Romanov/Habsburg border made Pochaev a vital center for proselytizing the Orthodox message westwards in the nineteenth century, when, like Pechersk, it became famous as a stronghold of Russian nationalism."⁶⁶

From the mid-nineteenth century, copies of the Pochayiv Miracle-Working icon began to appear in Orthodox churches throughout the Russian Empire--the spread of the icon cult intended to reinforce and celebrate the "restoration" of the south-western provinces to Orthodoxy. Copies in academic style of the second half of the nineteenth century can be found in many Kiev, Moscow, and St. Petersburg churches, as well as throughout the former territories of the Russian Empire.

66 Andrew Wilson, *The Ukrainians. Unexpected Nation* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), p. 245. Wilson adds in a footnote on p. 362, "Although Pochaiv was traditionally a part of Volhynia, the surrounding Kremianets' district was transferred to Galicia in 1939, so that the monastery could serve as a Trojan horse for dismantling the Greek Catholic Church. During World War II, when the Autocephalous Church was briefly revived in Ukraine, Pochaiv was the site of the rival, more pro-Moscow Ukrainian Autonomous Church."

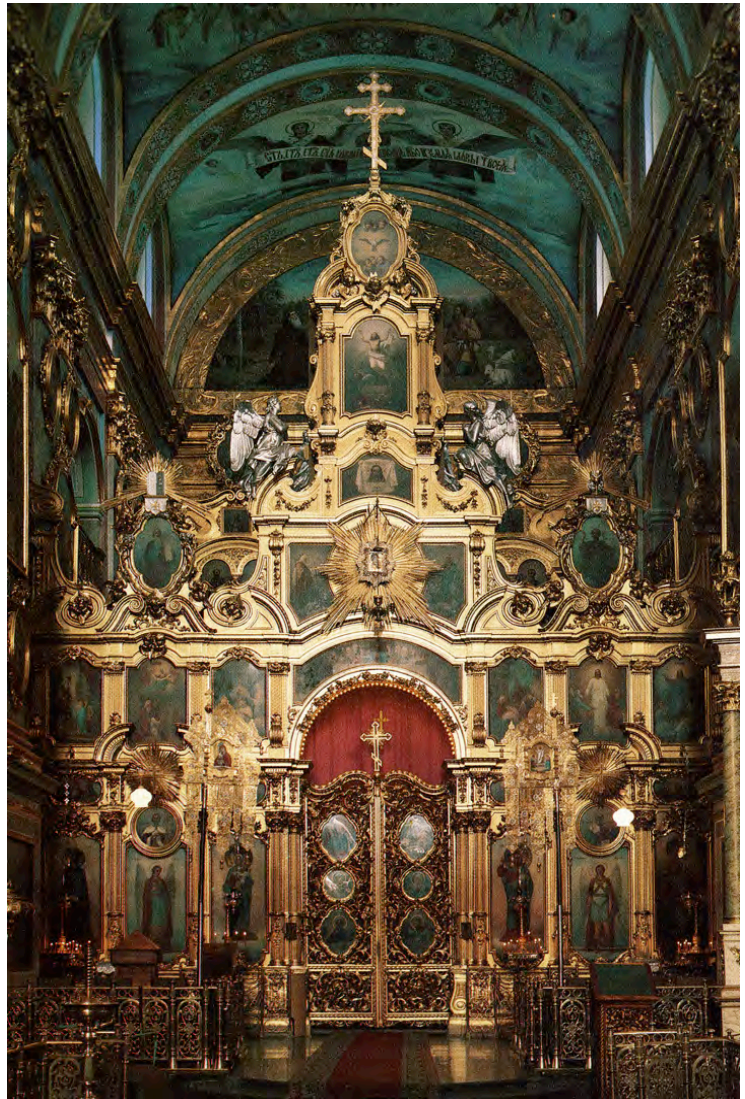


Figure 29: *The Iconostasis of Dormition Cathedral, Late nineteenth century.*



Figure 30: *The Pochayiv icon depicted in the iconographic composition of the Kiev- Pecherskskaia- Nerukotvorenniaia Mother of God.*



Figure 31: *Copy of the Pochayiv Mother of God. Late XIX- early XX century.*

At the request of Tsar Nicholas II, the Pochayiv icon was brought to Tsarskoe Selo and St. Petersburg for the celebration of the 300th anniversary of the Romanov dynasty in 1913,⁶⁷ with a route designed to permit the veneration of the icon in a number of cities—Kiev, Mohylev, and Vitebsk. At the request of Empress Alexandra, the Pochayiv monks who escorted the icon to the Tsarskoe Selo palace served the moleben. The imperial spokesman asked the monks to “serve just as you do when visiting private homes.” The icon was carried to St. Petersburg in the Imperial train car. The day of celebration of the tercentenary, February 21, witnessed 25 processions of the cross through the streets of the capital, and three “principal” processions with the palladium icons of the Russian Empire: Pochayiv, an icon of Saint-Prince Alexander Nevskii, and the icon of the Savior that had been carried by Peter the Great into battle. The processions bearing these icons converged on Kazan Cathedral on Nevskii Prospekt, where they joined the icon of the Kazan Mother of God (which accompanied Russian troops against the Poles in 1612 and against Napoleon in 1812), in the presence of which the memorial service was held. The Pochayiv icon remained in the capital for seven weeks.⁶⁸

Following the transition of authority over the Lavra to the Russian Synod, miracles attributed to the icon continued to be collected and recorded. Many of the copies of the Pochayiv icon are regarded as miracle-working in their own right. “In Siberia, not far from Tobolsk, in the Convent of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin, a copy of the Pochaev icon of the Mother of God was glorified through miraculous healings during the cholera epidemic in 1845.”⁶⁹ A copy sent from Pochayiv to the Russian Orthodox Cathedral of the Transfiguration in Brooklyn, New York, “is reputed to have inherited the original’s miraculous powers.”⁷⁰ Exact copies of the icon

67 There were fears that a forthcoming war with Austria placed the icon in danger. Archbishop Khrapovitsky ordered the icon removed to Zhytomyr, based on an old decree issued by Nicholas I, that in the case of hostilities with Austria, the icon should be transferred from Pochayiv to Zhytomyr, and in the case of war, beyond Kursk. When Tsar Nicholas II was asked for permission to transfer the icon to Kursk, he asked, “Why not to St. Petersburg... for the jubilee celebrations?” “On the 400th Anniversary of the Pochaev Icon of the Mother of God,” *Orthodox Life*, Vol. 47, No. 5, September-October, 1997, pp. 6-7.

68 “On the 400th Anniversary,” pp. 9-13; Richard S. Wortman, *Scenarios of Power. Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy, Vol. Two* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 458-461.

69 “In the Pochaev Lavra of the Dormition,” *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, No. 12, 1975, p.11.

70 Russian Orthodox Cathedral of the Transfiguration, Brooklyn, New York, website: www.wburg.com/0102/arts/cathedral.html

kept at the Pochayiv Lavra are sent to Orthodox parishes for veneration. In Spring 2001, the icon (in reality there seems to be little distinction made between the “pilgrim icon” and the original) was “greeted” in Moscow (at Danilovskii Monastery), Ekaterinburg, Orenburg, Perm’, and Nizhnii Novgorod, where it reputedly worked many miracles.⁷¹ The icon traveled to the United States in May, 2002, where it was greeted by Metropolitan Theodosius of the Orthodox Church of America. Father Michael Dahulich, administrative dean of St. Tikhon’s Seminary (South Canaan, Pennsylvania), insisted that the icon received in America was the “original,” approval for the icon to travel to the United States given by the Russian Orthodox Church and the Ukrainian government.

The veneration of the icon is ceremoniously integrated into the daily rituals of the Lavra. Every morning the celebration of Polunochnitsa [Matins] in the Dormition Cathedral commences at 5 AM. During the chanting of the troparion “Neprokhodimaia Vrata [Impassible Gates],” the icon, in its star-burst-shaped kiot, is slowly lowered from its position above the Holy Doors by two silk ribbons. The Akathist to the Icon of Pochayiv Mother of God is chanted in the presence of the icon. Two specially designated monks, the “kiotnye,” take positions on each side of the icon, as first the monks and then the congregation approach to reverence the relic.⁷² The icon is venerated on Saturdays, Sundays and Feast days as well. Processions on the territory of the Lavra with the icon are made on the Feasts of the Dormition (August 28, O.S.) and the Nativity of the Mother of God (September 21 O. S.).⁷³

Conclusion: Contemplating the nature of sacred space

One of the curious phenomena witnessed in the shift of the Pochayiv Lavra between East and West is the preservation of the concept of sacredness. Study of the Pochayiv shrines permits study of the rules of transference, as it were, that permit the preservation of the recognition of sacred space in the reality of changing ecclesiastical allegiance. As we have seen, when church jurisdiction shifted--in the case of Pochayiv from the Kievan Metropolitanate, to Eastern Rite Catholicism, to the St. Petersburg-based Synod, to the restored-by-the-Soviets Moscow Patriarchate--there were, on the one hand, minimal requirements for marking this ideological or jurisdictional change, and on the other, exaggerated efforts that elites would undertake to mark that change.

71 “Blagodatnaia pomoshch’ Tsaritsy Nebesnoi. Nekotorye chudesa sovershivshiesia ot Pochaevskoi chudotvornoi ikony vo vremia krestnogo khoda po Rossii 2001-2002 g.” (Pochaev: Izdatel’stvo Pochaevskoi lavry, 2003)

72 Savchenko, pp. 64, 72-4.

73 “Sviato-Uspenskaia Pochaevskaia Lavra” (Pochaev, 2000), pp. 47-8.



Figure 32: The Pochayiv icon shown in its contemporary sun-burst kiot.



Figure 33: Pilgrim medal of icon with the footprint. ca 1900.

Under what circumstances were these deemed necessary? The identification of Pochayiv hill as a sacred locus was never questioned in these transitions of power. In principle there were few variations in Orthodox and Eastern Rite Catholic ritual requirements that demanded external reorganization or re-identification of Pochayiv shrine sites. An interesting analogy (and there are many others) is offered by Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. When the Muslim Ottoman Turks conquered and replaced the Christian Byzantine State, the great cathedral, the cultic center of an antagonistic religion, was not destroyed, rather its prestige as an Imperial and sacred locus was acknowledged and preserved. The church became a mosque. Liturgical requirements of Islam required the removal of icons and other human imagery, the erection of minarets (which gives the Byzantine Christian domed structure its so very Moslem look), and the symbolic reorientation of the structure, away from due east. (The altar pedestal was turned about 5 degrees so that the mihrab was properly aligned with Mecca.) The transfer from Christianity to Islam insisted on a dramatic cosmetic alteration to mark it visibly, tangibly and functionally as a mosque--yet the structure and its site remained untouched.



Figure 34: *Chromolithograph of the icon from Pochayiv Lavra, ca. 1900*

How dramatically different was the marking of transfer of State ideology from Autocratic Orthodoxy of the Russian Empire to Socialism in the Soviet Union. Here the possibility of preservation was in essence untenable, since the process involved replacement of a God-centered ideology, with its antithesis, an anthropocentric atheism. The very concept of “the sacred” had been upended --a religious vision replaced by a scientific one. Although different churches suffered diverse fates, here a useful model is Moscow’s Cathedral of Christ the Savior, the monolithic Tsarist memorial to the victory over Napoleon. Stalin’s “solution” to mark transference was destruction of the Christian shrine, and its site re-claimed by the proposed construction of a yet more monumental Soviet Palace of Congresses, surmounted by an image of the new cult leader, Lenin. Is it any wonder that after the collapse of the USSR, many religious and secular Russians enthusiastically embraced the plan to recover that same site, in a frenzied need to proclaim repudiation of the Leninist ideology and celebrate its demise, by re-erecting the same cathedral as an act of national atonement?

Illustration Endnotes

Figure 1: The icon of the Pochayiv Mother of God that is venerated in the Dormition Cathedral, Pochayiv Lavra. The gold riza, studded with precious stones, is the work of St. Petersburg goldsmith S. F. Verkhovtsev. It was installed in 1866 at the behest of Archimandrite Antonii, who served as head of the Lavra from 1860-1866.

Figure 2: Engraving by “Master T.” of the Pochayiv Mother of God, late XVIII century. Below, in a cartouche, is the scene of the apparition of the Mother of God to a monk and shepherd, with the footprint in the foreground. The tradition of depicting the Pochayiv icon with the footprint serves to conflate the two miraculous manifestations of the Mother of God in one image. (Illustration from Ivanchenko, plate 129)

Figure 3: Icon of the apparition of the Mother of God in a fiery pillar to a monk and shepherd. The trace of her right footprint is faintly visible on the hill. Icon on cypress board, perhaps from Pochayiv, second half of XIX century. (Author’s collection).

Figure 4: Icon of the apparition of the Mother of God in a fiery aureole on Pochayiv hill to a monk and shepherd, as well as three attendant sheep. Mary, who appears to stand on a cloud, holds a scepter. The silver riza is dated 1896, with Moscow hallmarks. (Author’s collection)

Figure 5: A contemporary pilgrim souvenir-relic from the Lavra—a cloth depicting the footprint of the Mother of God. Ardent believers consider it a realistic and accurate portrayal of Mary’s right foot. When I purchased this cloth at Pochayiv, an elderly woman admired it, caressed it and noted, “Look how small She was!” The footprint is 18 cm. The attached label (in Russian) reads in part, “Blessed on Pochaev mount at the [shrine] of the footprint of the Pochaev Mother of God, placed in contact to the relics of St. Iov of Pochaev and Blessed Amfilokhii of Pochaev.”

Figure 6: Contemporary reproduction of a nineteenth-century academic painting of the Pochayiv icon with prominent depiction of the footprint by A. A. Vasil’ev.

Figure 7: <http://www.bigfoto.in.ua/en/pochayiv-lavra.html>

Figure 8: <http://www.pochaev.org.ua/?pid=1388>

Figure 9: Pilgrims to the monastery can purchase water from the “sacred footprint.” Such holy water is used in various domestic rituals. A label on the bottles warns that the empty container should be burned, not casually thrown out, since contact with the sacred water makes the plastic itself sacred. (Author’s collection)

Figure 10: The Pochayiv Icon without riza.

Figure 11: A detailed engraving of the Pochayiv icon in its 1866 riza, from a text published in 1892 by “Obshchestvennaia pol’za.”

Figure 12: The Pochayiv icon painted for the iconostasis of Trinity Cathedral in the Holy Trinity Mon-

astery in Jordanville, New York (Russian Orthodox Church Abroad--Holy Synod jurisdiction), where it hangs on the iconostasis over the Holy Doors. In reproductions of this icon, it is noted, “Nastoiashchee izobrazhenie Pochaevskoi ikony Bozhiei Materi vosproizvodit drevniuiu ikonu v eia pervonachal’nom vide, kakoi imela ona do eia ‘koronovaniia’ rimskim papoi. [The true depiction of the Pochaev icon of the Mother of God reproduces the ancient icon in its original form, which it had before its ‘coronation’ by the Roman Pope.]” The goal was to restore the icon to its pure Byzantine form, cleansed of Catholic “innovations.” The border saints, typically omitted in copies, have also been restored.

Figure 13: Engraving by I. Gochemskii from an Evanhelie of 1768 (Pochayiv typography) of St. Luke painting the Pochayiv Mother of God—a reflection of the tradition that Luke painted the first icons. (Illustration from Lohvyn, plate 484)

Figure 14: I. Gochemskii, from a New Testament of 1768 (Pochayiv typography). Here the Evangelist Luke has completed the painting of the Pochayiv icon, in which the Mother of God holds a rushnyk that emanates from under her maphorion. (Illustration from Lohvyn, plate 486)

Figure 15: St John of Damascus (Ioann Damaskin) seated before the Pochayiv icon. An engraving by I. Gochemskii from Oktoikh of 1774—printed a year after the crowning of the icon.

Figure 16: St. John of Damascus composing liturgical poetry in front of the Pochayiv icon. I. Gochemskii engraving from Irmolohion of 1794 (Pochayiv imprint).

Figure 17: The Don Mother of God, attributed to Feofan Grek. Late fifteenth century. Striking similarities in composition (the position of the faces and Christ’s feet, and the cloth held in the hand of the Mother of God) between the Don and Pochayiv icons suggest they both relate to a common Byzantine prototype.

Figure 18: Fresco painting of the Crucifixion in the Boyana Church in Sofia, Bulgaria. Dated 1259.

Figure 19: Close-up of the icon in the 1774 engraving. Here is probably the best indication of what the crowns sent by Pope Clement for the coronation ceremony looked like. A rushnyk held by the Mother of God is depicted emerging from under her maphorion.

Figure 20: Close-up of the icon in the 1794 engraving. Curiously, the crown on Christ’s head is omitted.

Figure 21: Pochayiv Mother of God from Zhytomyr region, Volyn’, Ukraine. First half of the nineteenth century. Note the embroidered edges on the rushnyk and the Virgin’s maphorion. (Author’s collection)

Figure 22: Pochayiv Mother of God from Kumeiki village, Cherkas’kii region, Ukraine. Bohomaz painting. XIX century. (Author’s collection)

Figure 23: Pochayiv Mother of God with Sts. Boris and Gleb in the border. Painted on gold ornamented ground. Russian, ca. 1900. Several anomalies, typical of Russian copies of the icon, should be noted. The rushnyk and Christ’s crown are missing. The positions of the hands of both figures do not conform precisely to the original. (Author’s collection)

Figure 24: Pochayiv Mother of God with two border saints (St. Nicholas and a female saint). Russian, second half XIX century. Christ's garments and left hand have been crudely repainted by a "restorer." The rushnyk in Mary's hand is missing. Silver-ground halos. (Author's collection)

Figure 25: The Pochayiv Mother of God painted against a gold ground circumscribed by eight miracle scenes, identified by Slavonic inscriptions. Central Russia, probably mid-nineteenth century (certainly after the Lavra reverted to the Russian Orthodox Church in 1831). (Author's collection)

The scenes include (starting from center above and moving clockwise):

1. The 1675 apparition of the Mother of God in a radiate mandorla along with Blessed Iov at the time of the Turkish siege (the so-called Zbarazh War). The rout of the Turkish troops by the Mother of God and the Heavenly Host was the subject of a number of engravings, notably those by I. Gochemskii and N. Zubryts'kyi.
2. A Pochayiv monk is miraculously released from Turkish captivity and is led back to the monastery by an angel (1674).
3. A crippled man from Trembovl' is healed before the icon in 1739 (see Gora Pochaevskaia, p. 21 v. It is curious that a miracle from the Basilian period would be depicted on a Russian icon.)
4. A dead child from the town of Zholkva is placed before the icon and restored to life (1701, although documents date the miracle to 1710).
5. The apparition, dated 1340, of the Mother of God on Pochayiv mount to the Monk Ioann and a shepherd. "She leaves the image of her footprint on the stone, which flows with inexhaustible water to our days."
6. Filip Kozins'kii, blind from birth, prays before the icon in the town of Orlia and his sight is restored (1593). Depicted kneeling behind her brother is Anna Hoiska, the donor of the icon to the Pochayiv monastery.
7. A monk who is beheaded by a Turkish warrior carries his head into the monastery and places it before the icon (dated 1673, although documents date the miracle to 1607).
8. A man who falls into a well calls on the Mother of God for assistance and is miraculously rescued. (Another Basilian-period miracle text, dated 1774).

Figure 26: Engraving from the Liturhion (printed in Pochayiv, 1745) showing the image of the Pochayiv Mother of God, the footprint, a fanciful depiction of the hill-top monastery and four scenes of miracles associated with the icon. The miracles include (lower right) the liberation of a Pochayiv monk from Turkish captivity, who, on the feast of the Dormition, prayed to the Mother of God for freedom and miraculously found himself at the walls of the monastery (1674). In the lower left is depicted the 1607 miracle of an elderly monk who, while praying outside the walls of the monastery, was beheaded by a Tatar. The monk picked up his head, returned to the monastery, placed his head before the icon, and then died. Curiously, the Mother and God and Christ are crowned, no doubt an indication of acknowledgement of the icon as miracle-working. The crowns were not installed on the icon until 1773, 28 years after the printing of this engraving. (Illustration from Lohvyn, plate 431).

Figure 27: Painting on canvas, probably commissioned to commemorate the coronation of the Pochayiv icon in 1773. Late XVIII century, from Volyn'. The painting depicts the icon as it appeared before the installation of the crowns and riza, although it omits the border saints. The icon is held aloft over the footprint on Pochayiv hill by four cherubs. They carry ribbons with quotations from the Akathist to the Mother of God, "Raduisia Pokrove Miru, Shire oblaka [Rejoice, O Protection of the World, Broader than the Clouds]" (from Ikos 6) and "Raduisia Tserkvi Nepokolebimy stolp [Rejoice, Unshakeable Pillar of the Church]" (from Ikos 12). A fifth cherub, proffering a crown, hovers over the icon. (Author's collection).

Figure 28: Taras Shevchenko's watercolor painting of the Cathedral in Pochayiv.

Figure 29: The iconostasis of Dormition Cathedral, showing the position of the Pochayiv icon in its kiot suspended in the third row, over the Holy Doors. The mechanism to permit the lowering of the icon for veneration was devised in 1861 in conjunction with the installation of a new icon screen donated by Tsar Alexander II. The device was created in imitation of a similar apparatus used in the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra for an icon of the Dormition of the Mother of God. The current iconostasis is a late nineteenth century work, installed after a fire in 1869 destroyed the earlier screen.

Figure 30: The Pochayiv icon depicted in the iconographic composition of the Kievo-Pecherskskaia-Nerukotvorenniaia Mother of God. The Pechersk icon is said to have miraculously appeared in the Dormition Cathedral of the Kiev Lavra in 1085. It depicts the Theotokos enthroned, with Christ seated on her lap. Saints Antonii and Feodosii, the founders of Pechersk Monastery, kneel before her, and two angels surround the throne. Here, the enthroned Mother is replaced by the Pochayiv icon, which is held aloft by the angels. Antonii and Feodosii kneel before the icon and the footprint of the Mother of God on Pochayiv hill. This panel was probably commissioned to celebrate the "restoration" of Pochayiv Lavra to the Orthodox by reasserting the ancient ties between the two monasteries. According to a legend recounted in Gora Pochaevskaia, Pochayiv hill was first inhabited by monks who fled the Kyiv Pechersk Monastery during the Tatar invasion at the beginning of the XIII century. The monastic rule introduced by St. Iov to Pochayiv in the late XVI century was the Pechersk Studite rule established at Pechersk by Feodosii in the XI century. At an Anti-Uniate synod held in Kyiv in 1628, St. Iov vowed fidelity to the Orthodox Church by swearing on the relics of the Pechersk saints. The merging of the Kiev and Pochayiv iconographies reaffirms the Orthodoxy of both lavras. Ukraine, mid-XIX century. (Author's collection)

Figure 31: Copy of the Pochayiv Mother of God in a silver riza and with enameled crowns, preserved in the riznitsa of the Lavra. Late XIX-early XX century.

Figure 32: The Pochayiv icon shown in its contemporary sun-burst kiot. The Basilian period icon-case, judging from the watercolor by Taras Shevchenko painted in 1846, was a similar frame in the form of a radiate sun-burst that hung high over the altar in typical Latin style. It was replaced in 1850 with a gilded silver kiot (the gift of Anna Alekseevna Orlova-Chesmenskaia). When this case was damaged in the 1869 fire, a frame similar in design, set with pearls and precious stones, was created.

Figure 33: Pilgrim medal of the icon with the footprint. Ca. 1900. On the reverse is depicted St. Iov. (Author's collection)

Figure 34: Ca. 1900 chromolithograph of the icon from Pochayiv Lavra (but no doubt printed in Kiev or St. Petersburg). This well-worn paper reproduction was carried to the United States by my grandmother, Oliana Pavlova Onyshchuk (1888-1975), when she emigrated in 1912 from the town Bazaliia, Starokonstantynivs'kii uezd (now Khmel'nyts'ka oblast'). My interest in the history of Pochayiv stems from her stories of pilgrimage to the Lavra when she was young.