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## ANDREI RUBLEV'S OLD TESTAMENT TRINITY ICON: PROBLEMS OF MEANING, INTERTEXTUALITY, AND TRANSMISSION

Andrei Rublev's masterpiece, his Holy Trinity icon [hereafter referred to as OTT] had enormous prestige in its own century.<sup>1</sup> (Figure 1) However, fifteenth-century and later transpositions of this icon show just a few of the traits which make OTT a unique expression of the composition the "Hospitality of Abraham" [hereafter HA] from Genesis 18.<sup>2</sup> Icons of the "Rublev-type" deconstruct the original context of OTT in ways that suggest that their creators may not have understood the esoteric significance and compositional unity of the original. Even the gilt frame created by Ivan IV to surround Rublev's icon in the sixteenth century superimposes a traditional schema over OTT.<sup>3</sup>

1. For a reproduction and description of this icon, see V. I. Baldin, T. N. Manushina, *Troitse-Sergieva lavra: Arkhitekturnyi ansambl' i khudozhestvennye kollektsii drevnerusskogo iskusstva XIV-XVII vv.* (Moscow: Nauka, 1996), fig. 204. Figure one is from V. I. Anton'eva and N. E. Mneva, *Katalog drevnerusskoi zhivopisi*, t. 1, *XI-nachala XVI veka* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1963), #192, and described in entry 230, pp. 285-290. David Miller, "Rublev's Old Testament Trinity and the Appearance of the Mother of God to St. Sergius: Dual Iconographic Signifiers of the Trinity-Sergius Monastery in the First Centuries of its Existence" [hereafter, "Dual Iconographic Signifiers"] in this volume offers "limited" visual evidence of this icon's role as the "primary signifier of the Trinity-Sergius monastery throughout the fifteenth century."

2. L. Ouspensky and V. Lossky, *The Meaning of Icons* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1989), p. 43, emphasize that "Icons are not copied but are painted from, which means their free creative transposition." Late fifteenth-century transpositions include an icon dated 1485 from the Uspenskii sobor of the Iosifo-Volokolamsk Monastery, an icon from the Voskresenskii sobor in Kolomna, a tablet from St. Sophia of Novgorod which is a subject of analysis here, all to be found in G. I. Vzdornov, *Troitsa Andreia Rubleva: Antologiya* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1981) [hereafter *Antologiya*], reproductions 43,44,45; one of the "Pleshcheyev" icon-tablets from the sacristy of the Trinity-Sergius Monastery, in L. M. Vorontsova, *Ikony Sergievo-posadskogo muzeia-zapovednika: Al'bom-Katalog* (Sergiev Posad: Sergievo-Posadskii gosudarstvennyi istoriko-khudozhestvennyi muzei-zapovednik, 1996), 10a and pp. 23-24; an icon possibly from Tver', in L. M. Evseeva, and V. M. Sorokaty, *Ikony Tveri, Novgoroda, Pskova, XV-XVI vv.* (Moscow: Indrik, 2000), kat. No. 9; an icon in the Trinity-Sergius monastery, in *Troitse-Sergieva lavra*, No. 222.

3. For a reproduction of the frame, see *Troitse-Sergieva Lavra*, #424. It overlays everything but the angels' hands and faces. Besides adding ornamental features, it displaces the large chalice from the center and adds other objects to the table. L. S. Retkovskaia, "O poiavlenii i razvitii kompozitsii 'otechestvo' v russkom iskusstve XIV-XVI vekov," in *Drevne-russkoe iskusstvo* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1963), p. 242 notes with surprise that the miniature portraying the 1490 Council against Trinitarian heretics in the sixteenth century *Litsevoi svod* does not portray Rublev's type of Trinity but synthesizes some features of it with a type based on another early fifteenth century icon of the Trinity-Sergius Monastery. See the reproduction on p. 241. Retkovskaia, in "O poiavlenii . . .," p.

A Rublev-type icon of particular significance is from the cathedral of St. Sophia in Novgorod from the last third of the fifteenth century (Figure 4). It demonstrates a creative approach to using motifs from Rublev's icon to suit its own specific poetic-liturgical agenda. As a result, its very marked borrowings from Rublev represent an interpretation in its own right rather than mere copying. Hermeneutic and structural analysis indicates that on the compositional level, this interpretation may involve an intertextual dialog with another icon from the Trinity-Sergius Monastery which we will call SPMZ because it is now in the Sergiev Posad museum-depository (Figure 3). This latter icon, itself creatively synthesizes motifs from OTT into a compositional schema taken from an earlier Greek icon of the 1380s from the Vatoped Monastery on Mt. Athos (Figure 2).<sup>4</sup> The defining compositional features of the Novgorod icon can be explained as a conversation with this whole lineage. The following analysis will show how the Novgorod icon's interpretation of Rublev's icon may be seen as a response to SPMZ's interpretation of Rublev's composition, and also as a response to the Greek icon influencing SPMZ.

Our goal is to demonstrate this rich intertextual dialog and use it as a key to understanding some basic parameters of icons of the Rublev type. The dating of the Novgorod icon to sometimes after 1470 is not precise enough to locate its place relative to the plethora of icons of the Rublev-type emerging from the late fifteenth century, also with their own indefinite datings. However, its intertextuality and role in the cathedral of St. Sophia marks it as an elite text that could have served as a trendsetter in its own age.

For this study I will lay out the basic features of icons of the Rublev-type; discuss the basic paradigm from the Vatoped icon in which SPMZ and the Novgorod icon creatively transpose these features; show their use of this paradigm to bring OTT down to earth to a more conventional and thus more accessible framework; and present the changes of mentality and perception that occurred over time in the process of intertextual dialog. As part of this study I will offer the following hypothesis: Although contemporary and later icons of the Rublev-type may have been inspired by the Novgorod icon, they do not express the same creative impulse: they no longer interpret OTT dialogically but deconstruct and simplify its meaning because they have lost the ability to read beyond the

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242, writes: "Evidently the philosophical conception of Rublev's masterpiece was not understood either by the sponsor, or the artist, or seemed too complicated and preference was given to that original which was evaluated as more accessible, i.e., the type of the iscephalic trinity." It is significant that in any case the miniature reflected two icons of the prestigious Trinity-Sergius Monastery.

4. Figure 4 is from V. N. Lazarev, *Stranitsy istorii Novgorodskoi zhivopisi* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1977), #XIX, and described on pp. 16, 19. The Novgorod icon is thought to have been painted after Ivan III's assimilation of Moscow, after 1478, probably under Archbishop Gennadii, 1484-1504. SPMZ is Inv. No. 2966 of the Sergiev Posad museum depository. Figure three is colored reproduction of the icon, in G. Bunge, *L'Iconographie de la Sainte Trinite des Catacombs, a Andrei Roublev* (Paris: Mediaspaul, 2000) [Hereafter *L'Iconographie*] item 16. It can also be found in *Troitse-Sergieva Lavra*, figure 203. Figure 2, the Vatoped icon, is in *L'Iconographie*, item 13. E. Ia. Ostashenko describes similarities between SPMZ and the Vatoped icon in "Ikona 'troitsa vetkhzavetnaia,'" pp. 318-21.

surface; cultural shifts have made OTT less and less accessible except to a diminishing few.

I will first introduce the four icons that are the subject of this study. I will then introduce the distinguishing features which they have in common with other icons of the Rublev type. Next I will describe two reference points which allow for comparisons between the four icons: 1) The distinction between the trinitarian HA composition created by Rublev and the christological variant in the Vatoped icon; 2) Symbolism of Pentecost reflecting their role as icons for Trinity Sunday on the feast of Pentecost. Finally, I will engage in a chronological analysis of the four icons in order to demonstrate compositional analogies, transmissions of motifs, intertextual dialog and dialectic.

Rublev's icon doubtless became well known starting from the moment of the triumphal consecration of the wooden church dedicated to the Trinity which was built in 1412 to house St. Sergius' remains.<sup>5</sup> OTT is now believed to have been originally its patronal icon.<sup>6</sup> Later, probably in the last third of the fifteenth century, it became the patronal icon of the stone church of the Holy Trinity to which St. Sergius' remains were transferred in 1422. In 1551 during the reign of Ivan IV, Rublev's icon, along with "ancient Greek models" and the work of "other famous iconographers" was canonized as an authoritative model for the "Holy Trinity" theme at the Stoglav Council.<sup>7</sup>

However, a tradition of "Holy Trinity" icons of the Rublev type emerged only towards the end of the fifteenth century when the cult of the Trinity began to receive special attention again after the initial hesychast interest.<sup>8</sup> The emergence of this tradition may also reflect OTT's transfer to the stone church of the Holy Trinity. The Novgorod icon and its predecessor, SPMZ, typify their strategy of synthesizing motifs from OTT into paradigms derived from "other famous iconographers" and "Greek models" mentioned in the Stoglav. SPMZ itself is by another "famous iconographer," presumably from the Trinity-Sergius Monastery and a contemporary of Rublev. Its principle model was the Greek Vatoped icon, not "ancient" but prestigious.

Scholars now hypothesize that SPMZ was created some seventeen years after OTT, around 1427, as the patronal icon for the new stone church of the Holy Trinity. It is likely that the creator of SPMZ and Andrei Rublev were participat-

5. B. M. Kloss, *Izbrannye trudy* (Moscow: Iazyki russkoi kul'tury, 1998), pp. 887-88 provides a list of the hierarchs present at the consecration of the wooden church in 1412.

6. See E. Ia. Ostashenko, "Ikona 'troitsa vetkhzavetnaia'," p. 314 and D. Miller, "Dual Iconographic Signifiers," in this volume.

7. See E. B. Emchenko, *Stoglav: Issledovanie i tekst* (Moscow: Indrik, 2000), p. 304.

8. Joseph of Volotsk, for ideological reasons associated with the concept of an imperial state and to fight against heresy gave renewed attention to the Trinity, setting a precedent for the Muscovite period. The late fifteenth century "Epistle to an Iconographer" believed to be authored or co-authored by him treats the representation of the Trinity in icons and was included in his *Enlightener* (*Prosvetitel*). See "Poslanie ikonopistsu i 'slova' o pochitanii ikon," in N. A. Kazakova and Ia. S. Lur'e, *Antifeodal'nye ereticheskie dvizheniia na Rusi XIV nachala XVI veka* (Moscow-Leningrad: Akademiia nauk SSSR, 1955), pp. 320-73.

ing together to decorate the stone church of the Trinity, since Rublev worked on its frescoes.<sup>9</sup> We refer to OTT and SPMZ as "sisters" not only because OTT influenced SPMZ, but because in the last third of the fifteenth century they switched places and precedence: SPMZ was moved to a new church named the "Descent of the Holy Spirit" which was built over the original Trinity Church where OTT had been, and Rublev's icon replaced SPMZ in the stone Trinity Church.<sup>10</sup> The Greek "model" from the Vatoped Monastery would have been available to iconographers from the Trinity-Sergius Monastery because of the close relations between the brothers of this monastery and Mt. Athos, beginning in the time of St. Sergius and the Metropolitan Kiprian. Dated to the 1380s, the Vatoped icon could have been well known at the Trinity Sergius Monastery even in St. Sergius' lifetime.

SPMZ and the Novgorod icon exemplify certain features that serve as important markers of debt to OTT and define an icon as a Rublev-type. Previous to Rublev's icon, these features had not been present in the HA tradition, or were very rare, and in any case, had never occurred together in one context. They include, typically, the absence of Abraham and Sarah, the presence of three background features – a mountain, a tree and a house – and a specific arrangement of the angels: a central angel behind the table regards the angel to his right towards the front of the table. This angel inclines his head in the direction of the symmetrical angel on the other side of the table who in turn inclines his head towards him.<sup>11</sup>

Icons of the Rublev-type tend to insert features from Rublev's icon into a familiar variant of the HA composition. The widespread "christological" variant is the basis for the Novgorod icon's and SPMZ's assimilation of OTT while the Vatoped icon expresses this variant in unadulterated form. On an exegetical level, it emphasizes the Trinity's manifestation in the liturgy of the historical Church through Christ-Logos, Angel of Great Counsel and two messengers. It

9. See M. Alpatov, *Andrei Rublev* (Moscow: Izobrazitel'noe Iskusstvo, 1976), p. 95.

10. E. Ia. Ostashenko, "Ikona 'troitsa vetkhzavetnaia'," pp. 313-36 has cogently argued against Vzdornov's hypothesis that SPMZ, rather than Rublev's icon was created for the wooden church of the Holy Trinity. See G. I. Vzdornov, "Novootkrytaia ikona 'Troitsa' iz Troitse-Sergievoi lavry i 'Troitsa' Andreia Rubleva," in *Drevnerusskoe iskusstvo. Khudozhestvennaia kul'tura moskvy i prilozhashchikh k nei kniazhestv. XIV-XVI vv.* (Moscow: Nauka, 1970), pp. 115-54. After its stay in the stone Trinity Church, SPMZ became the patronal icon of the stone church of the Descent of the Holy Spirit which was built in 1476 where the original wooden Trinity church had been, and moved from there to the seventeenth-century church of Zosima and Savvatii of the same monastery. On these churches and their placement on the grounds of the Trinity-Sergius Monastery, see *Troitse-Sergieva Lavra*, pp. 143-46, figs. 114-15.

11. One precedent for the three background features is the early fourteenth century Rostov icon of HA. See G. I. Vzdornov, "Novootkrytaia ikona 'Troitsy' iz Troitse-Sergievoi lavry i 'troitsa' Andreia Rubleva," p. 122. A precedent for the absence of Sarah and Abraham is the HA composition found on the inner lid of panagias. Their primarily liturgical function and shape influenced the choice just to show the three angels around the table. See Vzdornov, "Novootkrytaia ikona . . .," pp. 144-45. See A. A. Saltykov, "Ikonoграфия 'Troitsy' Andreia Rubleva," in *Drevne-russkoe iskusstvo* (Moscow: Nauka, 1984), pp. 77-78 for three different types of arrangement of angels in the HA composition.

reflects the patristic-liturgical interpretation of Genesis 18 according to the understanding of Old Testament theophanies as manifestations of the Word.<sup>12</sup>

This singling out of one angel as the manifest divinity builds from the Eucharistic symbolism of Abraham's meal. It reflects early forms of the Epiclesis prayer, the calling down of Spirit on the Eucharistic gifts. Then, instead of the Spirit, the Logos – variously named "Power of God," "Wisdom of God," "Spirit of God" – changes the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ.<sup>13</sup>

Typically in this christological variant, the central angel exhibits traditional attributes of Christ-Logos which relate to His names listed above. His figure and/or wings may be larger, he may have a cruciform halo, His clothing may shine with gold assist. He is flanked by two front angels who are messengers and often smaller in size. He is usually front-faced and if He tilts His head towards the angel on His right, His eyes are usually still oriented to the worshipper, or to His right where Abraham or Sarah may be.<sup>14</sup>

The three angels together allude typologically to the Trinity, but neither Spirit nor Father are symbolized separately.<sup>15</sup> This variant's accent on the divine presence within history makes semiotic space for the elaboration of the implements on the table, for large background features (alluding to Abraham's dwelling and to the oak of Mamre), and Abraham and Sarah.

Rublev's trinitarian variant has never been precisely repeated or recreated in its essential meaning in the HA format.<sup>16</sup> The central angel is not singled out although his clothing and placement still identify Him as Christ in His salvific power for the world. His body alone is presented frontally to the worshipper to

12. See Fr. Andrew Louth, "The Oak of Mamre, The Fathers and St. Andrei Rublev: Patristic Interpretation of the Hospitality of Abraham and Rublev's Icon of the Trinity," in *The Trinity-Sergius Lavra in Russian History and Culture*, ed., V. Tsurikov (Jordonville, NY: Holy Trinity Seminary Press, 2005), 3: 91-96 and A. A. Saltykov, "Ikongrafiia 'Troitsy,'" p. 77. When Abraham first sees the three men-angels, he addresses them as "Lord." They answer him in the plural in verse five. However, on all other occasions beginning in verse nine in the Slavonic bible, the Lord speaks to him in the singular.

13. See C. Kucharek, *The Byzantine-Slav Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom: Its Origin and Evolution* (Allendale, NJ: Alleluia Press, 1971), pp. 616-17.

14. See, for example, the late fourteenth-century Byzantine icons in *L'Iconographie*, items 13 and 14. A Georgian icon in *Antologila*, #30 is unique like Rublev's in having the three angels' gazes directed towards each other. But the central angel is marked by a cruciform halo. There are other important differences from OTT.

15. This emphasis on Christ's ability to reveal the Three can be expressed by a composition in which all three angels are wearing cruciform halos such as in the eleventh-century fresco in *L'Iconographie*, item 12. The isocephalic type where all three angels are identical and sit front-faced behind the table in a row with three cups in front of them can also be representing Christ. See *ibid.*, item 18 for a late fifteenth-century icon from Pskov of this type. Or the isocephalic type may represent Christ and His messengers as in a twelfth-century mosaic *ibid.*, item 5.

16. The 1598 transposition done for Boris Godunov in *L'Iconographie*, item 22 is unique in being the only very close copy of OTT. Besides its use of opaque color, it reveals a few subtle but indicative changes such as a small hole in the mountain above the right-hand angel's head, a more rhomboidal shape for the bowl so that its circular nature no longer defines the composition, less soft and lyrical expressions in the angels' faces. On the significance of the hole in the rock in later icons of the Rublev-type, see *ibid.*, items 99, 104, 106, 117.

signify that He manifests what we can know and see of the Divinity's shared power. Yet, the desire to symbolize the shared power of three Persons, and the intercommunion that creates and saves, takes precedence over the tradition of singling out the Christ-Angel. The resulting unique composition makes this variant of HA "trinitarian" in the true rather than just the typological sense.

Subtle features such as drapery and the use of color allude both to identities and to the ontological distinctions between the three Trinitarian persons.<sup>17</sup> In a recent article, I have argued that the angel to the Christ-Angel's left shares His tilt towards the Angel to His right to signify the dual action of Christ and the Spirit in manifesting the Father's Power. Yet, despite this evocation of the interaction of the Two and the One, the three angels have the same unmarked halo and are the same size. They mirror one another and their gestures imply an inward attunement and communion, symbolized by their circular interrelation.

Thus the angels embody the Trinity's shared counsel or ontological power. As a result, they and the composition as a whole exist on a transcendental rather than historical level, i.e., on the level of divine archetype. This motivates the absence of Sarah and Abraham and the relatively small size of the background features. The size and position of the house, tree and mountain behind the angels' heads indicate that they express the angels' Thought-Energy (*Logoi*) for the creation rather than representing aspects of historical reality in its own right.

The Vatoped icon's profound evocation of the christological variant of HA provided a framework in which SPMZ and the Novgorod icon later assimilated marked features from Rublev's icon in a dialogic way. In so doing, they brought OTT down to earth and represented the image to OTT's archetype. The Vatoped icon's importance for the later icons may relate also to its implied role as an icon for Trinity Sunday of Pentecost. Located in a cathedral dedicated to the Annunciation, it used the HA composition to symbolize the fruits of the Spirit's descent into the Mother of God to incarnate the Christ – the on-going descent of the Spirit in the Church. It found ways of evoking this spiritual action and of alluding to the Pentecost itself within the parameters of the christological variant. It thus set a rich precedent for both OTT and SPMZ – icons of the Trinity Church (whose feast day was Pentecost) and (in the case of SPMZ) of the

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17. For an interpretation of the drapery, see P. Hunt, "Andrei Rublev's Old Testament Trinity," 112-14. For the scholarly discussion on which person the angels represent, see *ibid.*, fn. 30, p. 112. A legitimate basis for the view that the middle angel embodies the power of Christ, the angel to his right – the power of the Father and the angel to his left – the power of the Spirit is that they would then reflect the order that the Persons are mentioned in the creed. See Ouspensky and Lossky, *The Meaning of Icons*, p. 202. This ordering would also respect the tradition of identifying the middle angel with Christ-Logos. Rublev's depiction of the three angels could be said to "unpack" the meaning of the central angel, Christ-Logos-Wisdom-Spirit. Fourteenth-century icons of Christ Savior from the Vatoped Monastery on Mt. Athos show Christ-Savior-Pantocrator in the same "aubergine" clothing with the tan strip on the sleeve as Rublev's central angel. See *Treasures of Mt. Athos* [exhibition catalog], A. A. Karakatsanis, ed. (Thessaloniki: Ministry of Culture, 1997), pp. 2.17, 2.21. However, the similarity of Rublev's angel to the Savior-Pantocrator does not preclude Rublev's embodying His Wisdom as a relationship between Three signifying the Godhead's unity and shared power to create and save the world.

Church of the Descent of the Spirit, and also for the Novgorod icon, a calendar icon for Pentecost.

During the hesychast period, churches began to be dedicated to the Trinity, in part due to the new awareness of our ability to commune in its ontological energies and experience its transcendental oneness. This brought the feast of Pentecost into the cultural foreground: Sunday was dedicated to the Trinity's work and the following week was named Trinity week; Monday was dedicated to the Descent of the Holy Spirit on the apostles and on the whole Church. Pentecost became the patronal feast of Trinity churches because of this celebration of the Trinity.

The HA icon symbolizing the Trinity became the icon that was singled out for Trinity Sunday. As the patronal icon of the first Trinity church in Rus' founded by St. Sergius, OTT had special status in this regard. SPMZ shared this status when it became the patronal icon of the stone Trinity church, and likely alluded to OTT to acknowledge their continuity and shared role. The Novgorod icon of HA for Pentecost also paid homage to the founding icons of the Trinity-Pentecost cult.

The Greek icon's accent on the life of the Spirit was typical of the hesychast spirituality dominating the Church in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Innovations in the later icons reflect this same accent while losing deeper dimensions related to hesychast-inspired poetic language and worldview. An understanding of the related strategies for signifying spiritual action in all four icons offers a meaningful point of comparison for tracing the intertextual dialog, similarities and differences between them and their respective contexts for synthesizing motifs from OTT.

The Hospitality of Abraham composition (HA) had the potential to assimilate symbolism of the Pentecost into its primary Eucharistic symbolism.<sup>18</sup> Christ had said that Abraham "rejoiced to see my day" (John 8:56).<sup>19</sup> Tradition interpreted this Day as both the Resurrection and the Descent of the Spirit in the new aeon of the kingdom of God.<sup>20</sup> Tradition held that the Church directly experienced

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18. Frescoes and mosaics of HA were typically depicted in historical cycles having to do with Abraham and his sacrifice of Isaac and/or in places in a church associated with the Eucharist or its prefigurations. See for example the choir of St. Sophia of Kiev where the Last Supper and the Miracle of Cana are placed next to episodes from the Abraham cycle – the Sacrifice of Isaac, the Greeting of the Angels and the Hospitality. See V. N. Lazarev, *Mozaiki Sofii Kievskoi* (Moscow: Iskustvo, 1960), p. 46.

19. On the Lord's Day, see A. Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology* (New York: the Faith Press, 1966), pp. 60-63. On the meaning of Pentecost, see L. Uspenskii, "Prazdnik i ikony Piatidesiatinitsy," *Zhurnal Moskovskoi Patriarkhii*, no. 6 (1957), pp. 51-55. On the relation between Pentecost and the liturgy, see Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, pp. 60-69. On Pentecostal hymns celebrating the fullness of divine revelation of the Trinity see Bunge, *L'Iconographie*, pp. 62-63.

20. Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, p. 69 quotes Origen: "... he who can truly say that we are risen with Christ and that 'God has glorified us ...' lives always in the time of Pentecost."

this Day for the first time at Pentecost and then in an on-going way through the Eucharist.

An interpretation of HA with reference to the descent of the Spirit on the gifts had occurred as early as the eleventh century in a liturgical scroll from Constantinople. There, a miniature of the HA composition occurred next to the final passage of the Epiclesis prayer, celebrating "the fellowship of the Holy Spirit and the fullness of the heavenly kingdom."<sup>21</sup> The miniature itself made no specific allusions either to the Spirit or to Pentecost but the middle angel bore his traditional significance as Logos-Spirit present through the Eucharist. However, by the thirteenth century, the liturgy of John Chrysostom made explicit the conception of the Eucharist as an on-going Pentecost, opening the door for new symbolism in the HA icon. It included a passage in the Epiclesis prayer that compared the descent of the Spirit on the bread and wine with the Spirit's descent on Apostles.<sup>22</sup> This liturgical association of the Epiclesis with Pentecost spoke to the hesychast sensibility: It associated Pentecost with the Spirit's immediate and on-going presence in the Church; it showed that the Providence or Wisdom manifest at Pentecost is an eternal rather than time-bound reality, an unchanging ontological truth made accessible in the new age of Christ.

Accordingly, iconographer-theologians such as the creator of the Vatoped icon and Andrei Rublev found ways to enrich HA's evocation of "the Lord's Day" in the direction of the new liturgical mysticism. In the Vatoped icon, the power of the Eucharist to offer communion in the Resurrection and Descent of the Spirit became a subject of iconographic exegesis. Rublev used the HA composition to symbolize the ontological and transcendental reality which was being manifest by this communion.

The Vatoped icon builds its layers of meaning on a traditional christocentric evocation of HA. The central angel is marked by a cruciform halo, by clothing, and by serving as a center in relation to symmetrical background features. He looks towards us while his right arm gestures to a large central bowl at the very outer front edge of the table; his two messengers on the sides of the table are turned towards each other and gesture towards two smaller bowls. However, the movement of the three arms and hands draws the worshipper's eyes to the three bowls and especially the large foregrounded, middle one.<sup>23</sup>

21. See A. Grabar, "Un Rouleau Liturgique Constantinopolitain et ses Peintures," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 8 (1954), 169, #15 and 175. See also Hans-Joachim Schulz, *The Byzantine Liturgy: Symbolic Structure and Faith Expression* (New York: Pueblo Publishing Co., 1980), p. 86. For a color reproduction of this miniature, see *L'Iconographie*, item 8.

22. Casimir Kucharek, *The Byzantine-Slav Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*, p. 613 notes that the reference to the descent of the Spirit on the apostles is a twelfth or thirteenth-century interpolation in the Epiclesis prayer. After the priest inaudibly prays: "... send down your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts set forth here," he says, "O Lord, you sent your most Holy Spirit upon your apostles. do not take him away from us. . . ."

23. This emphasis on the central bowl aligned with the Christ-Angel has ancient precedents. See *L'Iconographie*, items 6,7,8,9, 12.



There are many indicators that the bowl bears special meaning: The gestures of the three angels converge on it; it is foregrounded; the table slants forward towards it; its own front-faced attitude allows the worshipper to see directly into it; Sarah and Abraham are in the background on either side of the central angel to leave the foreground open to the worshipper and place the accent on what the bowl reveals.

The central angel gestures towards the bowl both to bless it and to prophetically witness to the revelation offered by the Eucharist – the manifestation of His own mystical body in the Church. The whole composition is a reference to this liturgical action: Sarah and Abraham incline in an attitude of reverence and prayer towards the middle angel; each holds a bowl to suggest their role as priests at a liturgy, co-participating with the side angels blessing their respective bowls. They all abide within the implied frame of a Church, signified by the cupola shape above and the columned walls jutting forward as if they embrace the foreground action.<sup>24</sup>

The central bowl's symbolism broadens to encompass the Oneness of the Many in the body of Christ. The bowl is round and slightly oblong to delineate a less than perfect circle. Five figures around the table and the implicit worshippers echo this circle to stand for the Many sanctified as One by the Christ-Angel's gesture. The circle is framed from above: The cupola is a semi-circle accented by the semi-circle of the banner linking it to the two sides of columned walls. It seems to create the upper half of a grander circle including the worshipper and the foreground figures. Another smaller semi-circle on the table faces in the opposite direction as if to echo the front of the grander circle demarcated by the implicit worshippers and the two side angels. This symbolism of the circle, resonating with the central bowl, assures that the icon's allusion to the Trinity is no longer merely typological. Its evocation of the One in the Many is a symbolic representation of the Trinity's earthly manifestation by analogy to the One in Three.

The semi-circular white shroud is a key to the manifestation of Christ's mystical body as the image of the Trinity. It extends forward from the back edge of the table to touch the central bowl. The remnants of shroud on an open table allude to the empty tomb of Christ and the Resurrection to heaven; the shroud touches the bowl to symbolize a compensating presence on earth through the sending down of the Spirit during the liturgy. The Christ-Angel points to the bowl to show that the empty tomb was a guarantee of the fullness and transfiguration of the Church. This fullness of the Lord's Day closes a mystical circle within the divine economy which manifests the Trinity: Christ's rising up leads to the Spirit's sending down which in turn brings all into a communion as Christ's

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24. This placement of the action within an architectural frame encompassing the whole space is a unique exegesis of the meaning of Abraham's tent of Genesis 18. Although the tent is frequently represented by a conventional architectural structure when it is present in the composition, it is much reduced in scope and does not open up into the foreground space. See the examples in *L'Iconographie*, items 6, 7, 8 and 12.

risen mystical body. This body is implicitly "the fellowship of the Holy Spirit" and the "fullness of the heavenly kingdom," witnessing to the Father's Oneness.

Circles echo throughout the composition as though to celebrate this accomplishment. The five figures wear gold filigree circular haloes that face the worshipper. The cross in the central angel's halo has a circle in each of the four corners. In the gold filigree frame that extends onto the icon itself seven gold circles are inscribed in the upper right and left hand spaces respectively around the inscription "Holy Trinity."<sup>25</sup> Seven circles are also on a rhomboidal filigree extension of the frame up to the lower front part of the table. The frame itself contains a series of large circles with ornaments in them that are surrounded by four smaller circles alternating with figures of the saints.

The repetition of the number seven in two sets of filigree circles and the mystical symbolism of the circle are part of the exegesis of the Lord's Day. Tradition associated the Lord's Day with both the Seventh and the Eighth Days: First with the completion of the creation on the Seventh Day, understood as the outcome of a temporal sequence of aeon time (with the resulting goodness and fullness of in-dwelling spirit); second with the completion of the Eighth Day, understood as rebirth beyond time through Resurrection. The Pentecost occurred on the seven times seventh day plus one after Easter to mark the new aeon in which the Spirit "rests" in the creation.<sup>26</sup>

The fact that there are seven rather than eight circles alludes to the icon's predominant orientation on the fruits of the Annunciation – history's role as a vehicle of indwelling Spirit. Indeed the evocation of the empty tomb is a rhetorical device for highlighting the fullness of the divine indwelling in the central bowl (by implicit analogy to the Incarnation).<sup>27</sup> Just as the circle dominates the icon's

25. This frame appears to be contemporary with the icon. For an analogous color scheme and similar framing, see an aër-epitaphios of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries from Athos in *Treasures of Mount Athos*, A. A. Karakatsanis, ed., pp. 474-75. However, the style and motifs of the frame are more similar to a silver filigree frame from the fourteenth century on an icon of St. Nicholas of the twelfth century. See A. V. Bank, *Vizantiiskoe iskusstvo v sobraniakh sovetskogo soiuza* (Leningrad, Moscow: Sovetskii khudozhnik, 1976), no. 234.

26. See Schmemann, *Liturgical Theology*, p. 60. St. Athanasius associates Pentecost both with the "rest" associated with the Seventh Day and with the heaven and "last days" associated with the Eighth. He wrote: "We celebrate also . . . the holy days of Pentecost, looking to the age to come . . . so let us add the seven holy weeks of Pentecost, rejoicing in and praising God for the fact that He has in these last days manifested to us the . . . eternal rest prepared in heaven." See Schmemann, *Liturgical Theology*, p. 69.

27. Fr. Andrew Louth discusses incarnational significance in Abraham's meeting with the angels in "The Oak of Mamre, The Fathers and St. Andrei Rublev: Patristic Interpretation of the Hospitality of Abraham and Rublev's Icon of the Trinity," pp. 90-99. On p. 90, Louth quotes the Hymn on the Theophany by Roman the Melod that interprets the appearance of the Trinity to Abraham as a revelation of the One by Christ, and a prefiguration of the Incarnation. The red banner in the Vatoped icon alludes to the iconographic rendition of the Annunciation. A fourteenth-century Novgorod icon of the Descent of the Spirit in the Church of the Holy Spirit in the monastery of the same name shows a similar composition. The figures are placed on an architectural back-drop; a red semi-circular banner on top hangs down between two turrets in a structure encompassing the semicircle of the apostles. A front-faced enthroned Virgin is under the center of the banner, suggesting that Pente-

structure (rather than expressions of verticality), so the icon's other imagery pertains to the transfigured earthly Church.<sup>28</sup> The icon alludes to the Resurrection by way of its earthly consequence – the empty tomb. It refers to the indwelling Spirit of the Logos by the color red as though to suggest theophany – revelation in historical time and space such as the Apostles first experienced as flames of fire.<sup>29</sup>

The idea of Pentecost is implied on these and other levels. The symbolism of the shroud and the bowl alludes to John 14:16-17, where Christ promises to compensate for His absence by sending a Comforter. The composition's saturation with the color red, and, less obviously, compositional features analogous to the icon of the Descent of the Spirit on the Apostles deepen the allusion to Pentecost.<sup>30</sup> Indeed the seven partitions in the cupola suggest descending flames, and, as we will show later, allude directly to indwelling Spirit. The icon's success in making Abraham's meal a prefiguration of the Eucharist as the Lord's Day implies that Pentecost is an on-going ontological Truth.

This icon's meaning underwent an even higher level of metaphorical synthesis through the introduction of a symbolic paradigm signifying "Wisdom builds her house and offers her feast" from Proverbs 9 [hereafter WBH]. This metaphor for the divine manifestation in the world went hand in hand with the HA composition as a vehicle for liturgical mysticism during the hesychast period.<sup>31</sup> HA and

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cost is the fruit of the Incarnation. See V. Gippenreiter and E. Gordienko, *Novgorod Velikii: Al'bom* (Moscow: Severnyi Palomnik, 2005), no page number. Finally, the hymn for Sunday of Pentecost (Great Vespers, Eighth Tone), refers to the "rest" originally associated with the Seventh Day (and with the seven circles in the icon) as an allusion to the action of the Spirit at the Incarnation: "Come, O ye people, let us worship the Godhead in Three Persons . . . Holy Immortal, the Comforting Spirit, Who proceedest from the Father and retest in the Son: O Holy Trinity, glory to Thee!"

28. The icon of the Descent of the Spirit symbolizes the Spirit's descent on the whole world-church, represented by the figure of Cosmos. See V. Lossky and L. Ouspensky, *The Meaning of Icons* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1989), pp. 207-08.

29. See the Pentecostal hymn for Sunday matins: "Light is the Father, Light is the Word, Light is also the Holy Spirit, Who in tongues of fire was sent to the apostles and through Whom all the world is enlightened to revere the Holy Trinity."

30. On a similar semi-circular arrangement in a twelfth-century Byzantine icon of the Descent of the Spirit on the Apostles, see *Vizantiiskoe iskusstvo*, No. 232. This symbolism may reflect the chant from the liturgy of Pentecost: "Christ illuminates us with fire to save us, giving the grace of the Spirit to all." Ostashenko in "Ikona 'troitsa vetkhzavetaia'," p. 321 cites this passage in reference to SPMZ. An example of red as a symbol of divine indwelling in the liturgy is the rose face of Christ-Logos-Wisdom seated on the Eucharistic throne in the early fifteenth-century Novgorod Sophia icon, see *Sofiia Premudrost' Bozhia* [Exhibition Catalog] (Moscow: Radunitsa, 2000), pp. 40-41. An example of the use of red as a theophanic symbol of Incarnation is the fresco of the Mother of God of the Sign (in a Wisdom star as Burning Bush) in the late fourteenth-century Trinity Chapel of the Novgorod Church of the Transfiguration, see Gippenreiter and Gordienko, *Novgorod Velikii: Al'bom*. On "Red in Old Russian Art" by T. Vilibakhova, see *Red in Russian Art*, Evgeniia Petrova, ed. (St. Petersburg: Palace Edition, 1997), p. 9.

31. Traditionally in frescoes on this theme, "Wisdom" signified the Christ-Logos, Angel of Great Counsel; Wisdom's "house" stood for the sanctified Church (or body, beginning with the incarnate Christ), and Wisdom's "feast" was seen as a prophecy of the Eucharist. Accordingly, WBH was an important metaphor in the liturgy for Maundy Thursday celebrating Christ's institution of the Eucha-

WBH compositions began to show mutual influence in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.<sup>32</sup> The Vatoped icon is the clearest case in point.

The icon alludes to Proverbs 9 by the presence of seven fluted partitions in the cupola. They refer to the seven columns of Wisdom's house, in this case, the Church. A major iconographic and written tradition associates these seven columns with the seven spirits of Wisdom descending on the rod of Jesse, meaning Christ, in Isaiah 11.<sup>33</sup> Hesychasts such as Gregory Palamas and Patriarch Philotheus saw the seven spirits as symbols of divine energies of the Trinity revealing the One in the Many.<sup>34</sup> As their fire descends on the Angel of Great Counsel and on the entire liturgical action, the seven partitions could be alluding to the role of the Church to make unity of diversity by analogy to the Trinity itself.

The icon's use of the paradigm of WHB not only adds theological depth to the preexisting symbolism. Its allusion to Wisdom's house makes a statement about the world-Church as the Trinity's image. On the one hand, tradition saw Wisdom's house as the Jerusalem temple that Solomon built; On the other hand, it was the renewal of this temple in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in the Resurrection Rotunda in Jerusalem, the prototype of the universal Church. The columns and the semi-circular cupola in the Vatoped icon allude to ancient representations of the Jerusalem temple. (Figure 5) Motifs from these conventional representations of Solomon's temple were incorporated in models of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher to show that it renewed this temple.<sup>35</sup> (See Figure 5) In the Vatoped icon, the white drapery on the table indicates that this second mean-

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rist. On WBH in the patristic exegesis and in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century art, see J. Meyendorff, "Wisdom-Sophia: Contrasting Approaches to a Complex Theme," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 41 (1987), 391-401 and L'icôographie de la Sagesse Divine," *Cahiers archéologiques*, 10, (1959), 259-68.

32. See P. Hunt, "Andrei Rublev's Old Testament Trinity," pp. 103-09.

33. Patriarch Philotheus offers more than one interpretation of these columns that resonate with the symbolism of this icon. The columns' association with indwelling Spirit in the incarnate Christ (via Isaiah 11) went hand in hand with symbolism of the Seventh Day of rest. Philotheus associates the columns with the fullness of time, i.e., with "the seven days of creation from the beginning to the end of the world . . ." and with God's subjection to time even as He contains all time. See Episkop Arsenii, *Filofeia, Patriarkha Konstantinopl'skago XIV veka, Tri rechi k Episkopu Ignatii s ob "iasneniem izrecheniia pritchei: Premudrost' sozda sebe dom i proch.: Grecheskii tekst i Russkii perevod* (Novgorod: Parovaia tip. I.I. Ignatovskago, 1898) [hereafter, *Tri rechi*], pp. 112, 113.

34. See R. E. Sinkewicz, *Saint Gregory Palamas: The One Hundred and Fifty Chapters* (Toronto, Ontario: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1988), pp. 165-67; *Tri rechi*, pp. 46-48, 113-14 and 28, where the Church is described as a representative of the diverse wisdom of God through the gift of the hidden Spirit of Truth (of John 14:15-17).

35. Figure 5 is the image above the torah shrine in the Synagogue of Dura-Europos (A.D. 244-45), central panel and scroll niche, in R. Ousterhout, "The Temple, The Sepulchre, and the Martyrion of the Savior," *Gesta*, 29 (1990), figure 5. He notes, p. 47, that the narrative scene of the sacrifice of Abraham "surely indicates that this is the Temple." Figure 6 is from *ibid*, p. 50 a fourth-century frontal model of the church of the Holy Sepulchre from Narbonne. It remains unclear by what path the iconographer from Athos would have become familiar with these ancient conventional representations.

ing was the predominant one for interpreting the architectural structures. The drapery alludes to Christ's tomb so that the walls and cupola framing the table allude to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in the Cathedral of the Resurrection in its capacity as Wisdom's house/world-church.

The icon implies that Abraham's meal is also implicitly Wisdom's feast. In the patristic and iconographic exegesis, Wisdom's feast not only symbolized the offering of Christ's mystical body. Wisdom's issuing an invitation to the feast also signified God's desire to give knowledge of Himself in a universal way to sinner and righteous alike.<sup>36</sup> The icon embodies this accessibility and inclusiveness. The columns extending towards the worshipper on either side of the table create an opening. The tilting of the table and the large bowl towards the worshippers, and the turning of the Christ angel's head to them seem to be offering an invitation. The red banner and cupola encompass all from the age of Abraham to the present worshippers who partake of the body of Christ.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, the theophanic mix of red and gold that dominate in this icon and its frame show that the invitation is for knowledge of God. This mix embodies the theophany manifesting God as light and fire within the body of the Church as celebrated in Pentecost hymnology.<sup>38</sup> Thus the Wisdom symbolism adds dimensions that highlight the providential nature of the theophany that occurs in the liturgy as an on-going Pentecost. It adds the higher perspective of the Godhead's salvific relation to His creation implicit in the Christ-Wisdom-Angel.

The poetic evidence of the Vatoped icon of the 1380s suggests that it would have been worshipped on Trinity Sunday to celebrate the fulfillment of the providence of the Annunciation.<sup>39</sup> The influence of the Vatoped icon on SPMZ

36. Thus Wisdom issues her invitation to her feast from the rooftops and the crossing of the roads and she extends it to the sons of men (Proverbs 8:2 and 9:3). Patriarch Philotheus, *Tri rechi*, pp. 126-27, 137, emphasizes that Wisdom calls out to the simple and even to the pharisees and those without faith.

37. This hesychast-inspired motif of inclusiveness is similarly expressed in Feofan Grek's contemporary HA composition in the Trinity chapel of the church of the Transfiguration by the front faced attitude of the Angel of Great Counsel, its large wings which encompass the participants in a kind of semi-circle and the large open fore grounded bowl. See *L'Iconographie*, p. 10. The emphasis on inclusion is also present in the interpretation of the Last Judgment as the Second Coming during the hesychast period: Typically, the central Christ-in-Glory issues an invitation: "Priidite blagoslovenii Otsa Moego, nasleduite Tsarstvo, ugotovannoe vam ot sozdaniia mira (Mt.25:34)." See L. M. Evseeva "Eskhatologiya 7000 goda i vozniknovenie vysokogo ikonostasa," in *Ikonostas: Proiskhozhdenie-Razvitiie-Simvolika*, A. M. Lidov, red. (Moscow: Progress-Traditsiia, 2000), p. 414.

38. See, for instance, Matins: Prosomion in the section Exapostilaria: "Light is the Father, Light is the Word, Light is also the Holy Spirit, Who in tongues of fire was sent to the apostles and through Whom all the world is enlightened to revere the Holy Trinity."

39. A. G. Bobrov, G. M. Prokhorov and S. A. Semiachko, "Imitatsiia nauki: o knigi V. M. Klossa," *Trudy otdela Drevne Russkoi Literatury*, 53 (2003): 418-45, esp. p. 437 suggest that the practice of celebrating Trinity Sunday of Pentecost was alive in the Orthodox world and Novgorod in particular in the mid-fourteenth century, since *Novgorodskaiia pervaiia letopis'* for June 7, 1340 mentions a fire "during Trinity week." A panagiia in I. A. Sterligova, L. I. Livshits, *Dekorativno-prikladnoe iskusstvo Velikogo Novgoroda, Khudozhestvennyi metal XI-XV veka* (Moscow: Nauka,

may reflect its seminal role in inspiring the Trinity/Pentecost cult at the Trinity-Sergius Monastery during and after St. Sergius' lifetime. The Vatoped icon set a precedent which reinforced HA's relevance to the mystical spirituality of St. Sergius.<sup>40</sup> It embodies what St. Sergius would have experienced as a priest in a liturgy – the fullness of the Lord's Day. By using the HA composition to convey the mystical spirituality of hesychasts such as St. Sergius, the Greek icon opened the door to the creation of OTT and SPMZ in honor of the saint.

A dialogic relation exists between OTT and the Vatoped icon that suggests conscious intention on Rublev's part. The following analysis will interpret OTT as an answer to the Vatoped icon, and as its inversion so that together the Greek and Russian icons are two halves of a whole.<sup>41</sup> There is much symmetry between the Greek and the Russian icons based on their shared immersion in hesychast spirituality. The former is theophanic and symbolizes the manifestation of the Godhead in the Church while the latter symbolizes the inner truth of this manifestation – the Godhead's ontological Being and power. The former is christological, focused on the role of the Spirit and Christ in creating the unity of the historical Church; the latter is trinitarian, focused on the shared communion and oneness of the three as creative power. The Vatoped icon foregrounds Christ-Logos-Wisdom-Spirit as the vehicle of the divine manifestation, while OTT symbolizes the interrelations that the Christ manifests. The Vatoped icon symbolizes the image, OTT – the archetype.

Both compositions make use of meanings from the patristic exegesis of WBH. As we have seen, the Vatoped icon alludes directly to the seven columns of Wisdom's house. OTT in the spirit of mystical silence exhibits no obvious marker of WBH. However the single large central bowl is a dominant symbol

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1996), item 19, from the second half of the fourteenth century bears the inscription around the Christ-Angel in the HA composition, "Father, Son and Spirit of Truth." This latter phrase refers to Christ's promise to send the "Spirit of truth" in John 14:17, which is a prophecy of Pentecost. The panagia was symbolically related to the Eucharistic meal; thus the frequent presence of the HA composition on its inner lid. See J. Yiannias, "The Elevation of the Panaghia," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 26 (1972), 227-236.

40. On St. Sergius' Pentecostal spirituality based primarily on the *Life* by Pakhomii Logofet, see Bunge, *L'Iconographie*, p. 60. Epifanii Premudryi's earliest *Life* celebrates the saint as a vehicle of the liturgical mysticism prevalent in the late fourteenth century when Epifanii began collecting data. Himself a "philosopher" immersed in hesychast culture, he celebrates the saint as a living "temple" of the Holy Spirit. See "Zhitie Sergiia Radonezhskogo," *Biblioteka literatury drevnei Rusi* (St. Petersburg: Nauka, 2000), 6: 401. When the saint himself served the liturgy, miracles occur which show that the Logos-Spirit is with him. On the one hand, the Angel of the Lord co-serves with him always (just as Abraham co-serves with the Christ-Angel in the icon). On the other hand, a witness sees a ball of fire overshadowing the altar and descending into the Eucharistic chalice when the saint drinks (just as Abraham implicitly drinks of the "fire" which saturates the composition and the table). See "Zhitie," pp. 370-72, 387. On motifs of sanctification by fire in the context of hesychast liturgical mysticism of the late fourteenth century, see L. Lifshitz, "Freski Fcofana Greka v Troitskom pridele tserkvi Spasa na Il'ine ulitse," in *Drevnerusskoe Iskusstvo* (St. Petersburg: Dmitri Bulanin, 2002), pp. 269-87.

41. The discussion of OTT here is based on my article, "Andrei Rublev's Old Testament Trinity," pp. 109-21.

that carries the theological meaning of the icon, just like the bowl in the Vatoped icon. The text that illuminates the bowl's significance and function is Dionysius the Areopagite's interpretation of Wisdom's bowl from Proverbs 9.

This patristic author, a favorite of the hesychast age, adds an ontological dimension to the traditional Eucharistic interpretation of Wisdom's bowl. For him it is a symbol of divine self-identity as a dialogic oneness. He describes the bowl as a source of Providence that both outflows into creation and remains one with the Godhead, making all in all.<sup>42</sup> The circular flow in OTT embodies this dynamic ontological energy of divine self-identity. The bowl thus signifies the ontological truth of the "all in all" hidden in Christ's mystical body and manifest through the Eucharist. Because OTT is symbolizing this ontological energy at its source rather than its manifestation to human senses, it is associated not with the Angel of Great Counsel (which the composition does not overtly distinguish) but with the intercommunion of the three, their common energy.<sup>43</sup>

In the Vatoped icon, the front-faced central bowl sets in motion the interplay of semi-circles and circles on an axis of high-low to indicate the dimensions of Christ's mystical body. This allows for a static, front-faced orientation of the composition directed towards the worshipper to signify an achieved fullness of Being. By contrast, OTT describes an eternal process. The central bowl defines a circular dynamic, the on-going creation of divine self-identity in a dialog with the "other." The circle, as it opens up to express the angels' intercommunion and creative thought, suggests also a movement of outflowing and return. The tilts of the portico opening out, and of tree and mountain returning to it embody the action of the Providence symbolized by the central bowl.

In OTT, Wisdom's feast is the icon's revelation of shared ontological energy, whereas in the Vatoped icon it is the theophany of this energy as Wisdom in the spiritualized body of Christ. Wisdom's house in OTT is the portico as an ontological idea or Logos of Wisdom's house.<sup>44</sup> Remnants of the color blue are visible on the portico's outer edges to show the divine intention that it participate in the Trinity's energy-Wisdom, reflected in the angels' blue garments. The color blue on the portico is Rublev's transcendental answer to the Vatoped icon's

42. See P. Hunt, "Andrei Rublev's Holy Trinity Icon . . .," p. 111.

43. Patriarch Philotheus, *Tri rechi*, p. 108 notes that Wisdom is common to the Trinity. This concept of Wisdom is essentially a definition of uncreated divine energy. Palamas notes that the divine names [including "Trinity" – P. II.] "derive from . . . energies (for the Superessential is nameless) . . . God . . . is called 'God' on the basis of His deifying energy, while wisdom and virtue only manifest this energy . . . the divine powers . . . called 'natural energies' . . . are without beginning . . . manifestly unoriginate and pretemporal: His foreknowledge, will, providence, contemplation of Himself." See Gregory Palamas, *The Triads* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), pp. 87-89, 98. L. Ouspensky and V. Lossky, *The Meaning of Icons*, p. 202 note that OTT "is not a representation . . . of the three Persons of the Godhead . . . [but] symbolically reveals . . . its [the Trinity's] triune action in the world," which "action" in the hesychast understanding signifies "energy."

44. Rublev's four columned portico is unique and may synthesize several motifs in its capacity as Wisdom's house. The second story overlooking the action is reminiscent of Wisdom's house according to Proverbs 8:2-3. "She standeth in the top of high places. . . She crieth at the gates, at the entry to the city, at the coming in at the doors."

saturation of the cupola and walls with the theophanic color red.<sup>45</sup> In OTT, Wisdom's invitation is suggested by the way the small portico opens out towards the angels and the worshipper. In the Vatoped icon, the columned walls that actually frame the angels as well as Sarah and Abraham and open out to include the worshipper convey the same idea.

Rublev's answer to the Vatoped icon's symbolism of Pentecost is in the same dialectical relationship. The composition itself seems to give no obvious allusions to the Pentecost. This makes sense because first of all, it is not about time and secondly, the depth of its simplicity preserves a mystical silence. However, G. Bunge argues that the very interrelationship between the angels is informed by John 14:16-17 where the historical Christ prays to the Father to send the Paraclete/Comforter after His death and Resurrection. As we noted earlier, an allusion to this text is implicit in the symbolism of the shroud and the bowl in the Vatoped icon.

Bunge imagines that in OTT the middle Christ-Angel is asking the Father Angel to His right to send out the Spirit angel on His left, who in turn tilts to the Father-Angel in agreement.<sup>46</sup> This passage would be an appropriate source of Rublev's imagery since the prophecy does not relate the Pentecost to a specific moment in time but rather to a providential divine intention. Whether or not the reader can accept John 14 as one of the icon's scriptural sources, OTT still alludes indirectly to Pentecost. OTT is the first HA composition to personify the action of the Holy Spirit separate from Christ i.e., as it was first manifest at Pentecost.<sup>47</sup> OTT is also the first and last icon to embody the intra-trinitarian life that was first accessible to humankind at Pentecost.<sup>48</sup> Like the Vatoped icon, but on a transcendental rather than theophanic level, it symbolizes an on-going Pentecost in the Divine Liturgy, in this case a celestial liturgy embodying the thought-energy of God.<sup>49</sup>

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45. In the Novgorod Sophia icon, another unique icon of WBH painted in the early fifteenth century (a contemporary of OTT), red and blue are both present in an interplay with each other. See *Softia Premudrost' Bozhia*, p. 41. These two colors interplay in the icon Christ in Glory as well. See *ibid.*, p. 47 for a sixteenth-century variant. In later tradition, the Wisdom star combined red and blue-green. See the Spas Blagoe Mochanie, *ibid.*, pp. 16, and 43 and Bogomater' Neoplaimaia Kupina, *ibid.*, p. 147. Red and blue-green are the principle colors surrounding the Savior in a twelfth century Transfiguration composition from Byzantium. See *Vizantiiskoe iskusstvo*, item 233.

46. See Bunge, *L'Iconographie*, pp. 104-16.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 112. G. Bunge argues that St. Sergius was one of the first to "have implanted . . . trinitarian mysticism of the Spirit into Slavic Christianity. See *ibid.*, p. 60 [My translation - P. H.]. The newness and freshness of this perception led to OTT's innovations

48. *Ibid.*, p. 63

49. The building of a church dedicated to the Descent of the Holy Spirit over the original wooden Trinity church in 1476 may have been inspired by the cult that existed around OTT. In the sixteenth century and earlier, the Muscovite royal family made public pilgrimages to the Trinity-Sergius Monastery specifically on the feast of Pentecost, the patronal feast day of the Trinity church. See Boris Mikhailovich Kloss, *Izbrannye trudy*, 1: 72. David Miller, "Dual Signifiers," speculates that Ivan IV brought the lavish frame for the OTT icon during a public procession from June 21-28, 1548 coinciding with the feast of Pentecost. Indirect evidence that OTT was associated with Pentecost can be found in a set of panagias from the mid- to late-fifteenth century in which the HA composition bor-



The Vatoped icon opened the door to making HA a testimony to the life of the Spirit; it used the poetic devices of the circle, the bowl and WBH to symbolize a revealed Oneness in the body of Christ; it set a precedent for symbolizing the type of spirituality characterizing St. Sergius; Rublev used these same devices in a different way to produce an icon which revealed the ontological truth behind the Greek icon's revelation. In so doing, his icon fathomed the depths of St. Sergius' liturgical mysticism.<sup>50</sup>

The dialectical opposition between the Vatoped icon and OTT is grounded on their basic similarity as products of a common spirituality. We cannot know whether Rublev's icon consciously speaks to the Greek one. We have shown that Rublev's new trinitarian and the Vatoped icon's christological variant of HA are complementary. The creator of SPMZ may have recognized this when he decided to synthesize features from both icons into his own interpretation of HA.

SPMZ, OTT's sister icon, seems to be a commentary on the relation between OTT and the Vatoped icon. Analysis suggests that the unknown iconographer from the Trinity-Sergius Monastery constructed his own unique version of HA to bridge the gap between them, i.e., the gap between the earthly and transcendental Church (existing in the shared mind of God). As if to mark its dialogic relation with OTT, SPMZ repeats OTT's three background figures in reverse: Their tilts are changed so that they point upward and away from the foreground figures rather than reflecting their intercommunion.

The foreground consists of a basic christological composition taken from the Vatoped icon – five figures and three bowls suffused with red – but now the background features taken from OTT open towards the heavens. As in the Vatoped icon, they are large and define the compositional structure on a high-low axis. However, as in OTT, their structure expresses movement, albeit a different one. The peripheral mountain and church represent the endpoints of two spirals that begin with the side angels respectively and cross the Christ-Angel on a central axis (shared with the bowl in the foreground and the tree in the background). (See Figure 3a).

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rows from OTT. The earliest, a 1435 panagia from St. Sophia in Novgorod can be found in I. A. Sterligova, L. I. Livshits, *Dekorativno-prikladnoe iskusstvo Velikogo Novgoroda*, item 22. The inscription reads: "... blagosloven est Khriste bozhe nash izhe premudria lovtza iaviv nizposlav dukh sviaty." The authors fail to note that the reference is to the troparion for Pentecost Sunday: "Blessed art Thou, O Christ our God, Who hast shown forth the fishermen as supremely wise, by sending down upon them the Holy Spirit, and through them didst draw the world into Thy net." The inscriptions in the two later panagias from the Trinity-Sergius Monastery harkens back to the Novgorod one. See T. V. Nikolaevna, *Proizvedeniia mel'koi plastiki XIII-XVII vekov v. sobranii Zagorskogo muzeia. Katalog* (Zagorsk, 1960), items 97 and 98. Our analysis of the Novgorod calendar icon is a further demonstration of communication between the Novgorod ecclesiastical establishment at St. Sophia and the Trinity Sergius Monastery outside of Moscow.

50. The icon's special tribute to St. Sergius would have been especially meaningful in its own time. The year 1412 saw the restoration of the monastery and of St. Sergius' Trinity church after Edigei's raid of 1408. At that time, during the patronal feast of Pentecost, OTT would have served as a ritual focal point for renewal of faith and hope in the spiritual path that St. Sergius exemplified.

The spirals are marked by color: the one starting on the viewer's left moves through the red of the left-hand angel's garment through the red of the middle angel's garment to Sarah and around out the mountain on an axis with the tilt of the central angel's head. The other spiral starts with the right-hand angel's blue-green outer garment and moves through the central angel's blue-green outer garment to Abraham and back around to the church with blue balustrades and a blue roof. Their crossing paths create a circle that frames the upper torso of the Christ-Angel and mirrors the circle of the central bowl. A larger circle enclosing all five figures mirrors the smaller one and embodies a broader revolution of the same spiral. These spirals take the circle associated with the bowl into upward movement and reveal the power of the Eucharist.

This spiral movement defines SPMZ's place in relation to its predecessors. The spirals signify the path of Resurrection rather than to self-identity as in OTT. The hand gestures of the three angels point towards the three bowls which face upwards and echo the background features, suggesting that the liturgy offers participation in the body of the risen Christ. The spirals of SPMZ show the liturgical path between the spiritual indwelling in the Church celebrated in the Greek icon and the Trinity's transcendental intercommunion celebrated in OTT. The semi-circular shroud in front of the central angel is part of the Resurrection symbolism. It does not touch the central bowl but as evidence of the Resurrection enhances the meaning of the bowl's upward direction.

In setting up SPMZ's composition, the iconographer has taken more from the Vatoped icon than from OTT, especially the Greek icon's focus on the earthly Church. The central angel is singled out not by his halo, however, but by larger size, a raised central position, the gold in His undergarment and His position at the center of the circle created by the intersecting spirals. References to His presence in the earthly church are the largeness of the background features and Abraham and Sarah.

The three angels' relations repeat the basic situation in the Vatoped icon despite allusions to OTT: As in OTT, the central angel looks to his right rather than to the worshipper and all three have similar haloes and similar hairstyles to the angels in OTT. However, a relation of center to periphery, Christ to messenger angels, divides them. They lack a sense of intercommunion that was present in OTT. Subtle changes undercut the rhythm linking the three in the former icon. The tilts shared by the right-hand and central angel are no longer symmetrical with each other and no longer express a shared relationship to the left-hand angel. Since the interrelation between the three is broken, the tilt to the two front angels towards each other (as in OTT) serves simply to pair them in opposition to the central angel. Finally, their expressions suggest a detachment that differs from the mutual inner attunement of OTT's angels and the inner awareness of the angels in the Vatoped icon.

This icon offers a new interpretation of the Pentecostal mystery on-going through the Eucharist. SPMZ implies that it fulfills the Easter promise of Resurrection. For those in a state of ascetic detachment and contemplation, i.e., for those sharing in the somber and sorrowful mood expressed by Sarah and Abra-

ham's faces, there is a way of participation in the risen Christ. In this case, the red mountain bears the icon's dominant meaning, and seems to allude to the Pentecostal hymn: "Without dreading the fearful fire and like those treading up the untouchable mountain, come, let us stand upon Mount Zion, in the city of the living God."<sup>51</sup> The icon's use of the color red here has three layers of meaning which reflect three stages of redemption; it implies the joy of escape from the fire of judgment (1) through immersion in the fire of martyrdom-suffering (2) to experience the fire of spiritual participation in the risen Christ (3). Facial expressions reflect communion in Christ's cleansing martyrdom, the prerequisite for rising. SPMZ's ascetic yet triumphal interpretation of Pentecost may have offered hope to monks who were undergoing ascetic practice to place themselves on the path to the theophany and ontological-energetic knowledge manifest in the earlier icons.

The borrowings from Rublev suggest that the ascent in question is towards the archetypal reality embodied in OTT. This ascetic icon points upward to the source of the energy-Spirit lifting the world to God. The use of color suggests a path between the SPMZ's large earthly Church pointing upwards with its blue roof and blue banisters and OTT's portico with the blue trim (the divine Idea-Energy of the Church). OTT's bright evocation of ontological truth fills out the somber exultation of SPMZ and represents the latter icon's implied endpoint. By contrast, the Vatoped's evocation of divine immanence is the starting point of SPMZ.

Through borrowings that activate meanings from the two earlier icons, SPMZ creates a context in which to emphasize the Path. In so doing, it offers a human dimension missing from the other icons by suggesting that the price of redemption from judgment is suffering. The icon's interlocking spirals trace the directions of a cross. The cross missing in the central angel's halo has come alive in a dual interlocking movement that connects the bowl with Christ as Door and Mountain leading outward. This message precludes the possibility that this icon would draw imagery from WBH as do the earlier icons to highlight the divine indwelling, universality and an open invitation to knowledge of God. SPMZ does not include us in the action. Nothing there opens out to the viewer. The upward-facing bowls together with the background features delineate an ascetic path away instead of an inward movement towards the greater fullness and inclusion manifesting the Father's Oneness.<sup>52</sup>

51. See Matins for Pentecost Sunday. Ode VIII. Ostashenko in "Ikona 'Troitsa vetkhzavetnaia'," p. 321 suggests instead that the red mountain alludes to the following Pentecostal hymn: "From unbegotten Light doth proceed the All-effecting, never-failing Brightness, Who now shineth forth the radiance one in nature of the Father's power, through the Son unto the nations in the fiery voice on Zion." This hymn, however, does not conform as well as the one cited above to the icon's emphasis on ascent and its somber nature, an allusion to the dread fire as well as to the price of redemption.

52. The outward spiral in SPMZ could be compared with the meaning of the stylites in Feofan Grek's fresco in the Trinity chapel of the Transfiguration Church that L. Lifshitz interprets as an expression of Lenten spirituality, emphasizing ascent and fire. See "Freski Feofana Greka v Troitskom pridele tserkvi Spasa na Il'ine ulitse," pp. 269-87.

SPMZ represents a transitional phenomenon in relation to the hesychasm that inspired its two models. On the one hand, it exhibits considerable poetic sophistication in its dialogic relation to the earlier icons. The reversal of OTT's background features is unique in the tradition of Rublev-type icons that emerged later. It may function within the hesychast realm of esoteric language and serve as a symbolic sign of SPMZ's interlocking meanings with OTT. SPMZ cleverly uses a language of allusion to bring meanings from the other icons into play and to locate itself in relation to them. Through poetic dialog the icon expands its own boundaries to include realities that precede and follow from its own truth. This dialog with two "others" and the resulting intercommunion express a hesychast sensibility. The icon's evocation of spiral motion upward resonates with OTT's circular evocation of intercommunion and with the Greek icon's circle signifying the integration of the Many as One.

At the same time, the icon begins to undermine the hesychast sense of fullness and simultaneity and points to the poetics of the future. Its verticality and detachment express a sense of departure or distance rather than communion. It heralds the breakdown of a symbolic nexus of interrelationships modeling reciprocity and wholeness that was present in the earlier icons. It tends to a spiritual separation between the worshipper and the icon's theophanic content. In later tradition this separation evolves into an emphasis on appearances – an esthetic perfectionism and/or ornamentalism – and an intellectualizing abstractness that are already exhibited by the Novgorod icon.<sup>53</sup>

The Novgorod iconographer of the later fifteenth century produced a calendar icon for Pentecost that exemplified the generic features of icons of the Rublev-type. While taking a step away from its more recent model – SPMZ, and moving an even greater distance from its earlier model – OTT, it approaches the earliest model, the Vatoped icon but with an interpretative difference. Even though the patronal feast day of the Cathedral of St. Sophia in Novgorod was not Pentecost, the iconographer took great care to invest his icon-tablet for this feast with the sanctity of a tradition centered on the Trinity-Sergius Monastery and Mt. Athos. His action may have been part of a general tendency under Patriarch Gennadii to strengthen cultural ties and continuities between Moscow and Novgorod after Ivan III's conquest of that city.<sup>54</sup>

53. The hesychast-inspired icons embody the action of energies described by Palamas in *The Triads*, p. 102: "This light and this knowledge, then, are not, strictly speaking, an intellection, even though one may in a loose sense use such a term, for it is mind above all that receives them...For it is a divinizing energy which is in no way separate from the energizing Spirit." For an investigation of the poetics of the pre-modern and the popular native icon, examined primarily on the basis of Old Believer tradition, see Oleg Tarasov, *Icon and Devotion: Sacred Spaces in Imperial Russia*, Robin Milner-Gulland, ed. and trans. (London: Reaktion Books, 2002).

54. E. A. Gordienko, *Novgorod v XVI veke i ego Dukhovnaia Zhizn'* (St.-Peterburg: Izd. Dmitri Bulanin, 2001) offers a full-scale study of these ties and interchanges. For a hypothesis on how Rublev's icon became known in Novgorod's St. Sophia, see Kloss, *Izbrannye trudy*, 1: 887-88. For V. A. Plugin's not entirely convincing disagreement with Kloss, see *Master Sviatoi Troitsy* (Moscow: Mosgorarkhiv, 2001), pp. 270-71. There were doubtless many visits to the Holy Trinity monastery and opportunities to pray before this icon by Novgorodian clergy after 1412.

In choosing to draw from OTT, SPMZ and the Vatoped icon, he was acknowledging their interrelationship and putting his own icon in a dialog with them. The iconographer knew Rublev's icon well and transposed key features in both the background and the foreground. The background features are the same and they are not reversed as in SPMZ but are in similar order and relation to the three angels as in Rublev's icon. However, as in SPMZ, they are large and play a major role. The red mountain on the right can be interpreted as a pictorial allusion to the large red mountain pointing to the worshipper's left in SPMZ.

The mountain, tree and church allude not only to OTT, but also to SPMZ in an inverted way just as the background features in SPMZ invert those in OTT. The Novgorod icon's background features are not only in reverse order but reverse direction in relation to SPMZ. Since SPMZ had reversed the direction of the Vatoped icon, the Novgorod icon's reversal of the direction of SPMZ brought it around full circle to the Vatoped icon's emphasis on spiritual indwelling in the earthly Church. The mountain's tilt to the left implies that it overshadows the central angel and focuses the worshipper's attention on the table below. The tree overshadows the foreground in a similar way. The architectural structure is foreshortened towards the table. Thus their direction towards the central bowl echoes the downward dynamic of the Greek icon.

The architectural structure borrows from all three icons. As in SPMZ, it contains a central door towards which the central angel now tilts his head in reverse of SPMZ. Like OTT's portico, it has more than one level. (Here the three levels as compared to the portico's two reflect a dominant motif – three bowls, three angels, three background features.) In a playful allusion to the Vatoped icon, the structure has a cupola on top underneath a platform with Corinthian columns. The tree is similarly synthetic (although there is none to borrow from in the Vatoped icon.) Its placement and relation to the mountain are similar to Rublev's while its relative size and shape are suggestive of SPMZ with some differences. Thus its own unique forms and composition may be a result of the same synthesis characteristic of the icon as a whole.

The foreground blends motifs from OTT in the representation of the angels with a basic christological configuration similar to SPMZ; Motifs from OTT include the absence of Sara and Abraham, the tilt of the angels' heads and their hand gestures. As in SPMZ, the central angel is marked as the Christ-Logos, three cups are on an elongated table (but, as in OTT, there is no shroud). As in the Vatoped icon, the central angel wears a cruciform halo, there are implements on the table and the central bowl faces the viewer.<sup>55</sup>

Dialectically, this icon has come full circle back to the Vatoped icon by way of reversing SPMZ's direction upward and bringing OTT down to earth. As in the Vatoped icon and OTT, the shape of the central bowl announces the compositional scheme. Its rhomboidal shape has no precedent and indicates an original

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55. The tree expresses a similar dynamic. Its placement and relation to the mountain are similar to Rublev's, while its relative size and shape are suggestive of SPMZ with some differences. Like the mountain it overshadows the central foreground composition around the table.

composition. It together with the cross in the central angel's halo trace parallel diagonals. (See figure 4a). These are a one-dimensional version of SPMZ's spirals and they move in the opposite direction. They also pass through the central angel but they enclose His torso and face in a rhomboid instead of a circle.<sup>56</sup>

The symmetry between the cross and the bowl and the convergence of the background features on them suggest that the resulting rhomboid symbolizes the power of the cross communicated by the Eucharistic chalice. Thus it reflects the symbolism of SPMZ but in a reverse way that is closer to the Vatoped icon. Rather than a path, the rhomboid implies theophany, presence, fullness and dynamic stasis.

As in SPMZ, the diagonals are associated with colors. Here these colors represent the iconographer's interpretation of Rublev's color scheme. At the same time, the colors add an overlay of Pentecostal symbolism to the icon's liturgical mysticism that is absent in OTT. The bright opaque color red is on an axis defined by the illuminated mountain looming across the table, the illuminated right shoulder of the Christ-Angel and the deep scarlet robes of the right-hand angel.<sup>57</sup> As in the Vatoped icon, red in this context is associated with theophany of indwelling light, like tongues of fire at Pentecost.<sup>58</sup> The perpendicular diagonal is green, also a color of Pentecost in the ritual of the Church that refers to the creation's renewal.<sup>59</sup> It runs from the church-temple to the green outer garment of the right-hand angel (which imitates OTT's) through the darker blue-green outer garment of the central angel (which, although highlighted, reflects the darkness of the church door).

The intersections of the two axes refer to the presence of the Lord's Day in the historical Church through the renewing power of the cross communicated

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56. The rhomboid encompassing the face and torso of the central angel is implicitly in a circle that connects the words "Isus Khristos" above the middle angel's head with the haloes of the other two. The resulting configuration of a rhomboid in a circle may allude to yet another icon, the Savior in Glory, where the Christ enthroned is contained in a rhomboid in a circle itself backgrounded by a larger rhomboid (and the two overlapping rhomboids together signify the Wisdom star). This icon typically occupies the center of the deisis row of the iconostasis and symbolizes the theophany of Christ, the full Wisdom manifest during the liturgy. See L. M. Evseeva, "Eskhatologiya 7000 goda i vozniknovenie vysokogo ikonostasa," p. 412. The function of the central angel in the Novgorod icon is comparable to Rublev's central angel whose clothing likens Him to icons of the Savior-Pantocrator. See fn. 16 in this article.

57. This bright scarlet may be an allusion to OTT where the left-hand angel's garments are arranged in the same way. However, in OTT the corresponding garment is a transparent rose color with blue shining from underneath.

58. The model for this may have been SPMZ where the red church on the right is on a diagonal with the red and gold inner garment of the central angel and also with the red outer garment of the left hand front angel (which flows over one shoulder as in the Vatoped icon rather than two as in OTT and the Novgorod icon). However, the poor state of the color in SPMZ makes any conclusions impossible.

59. The symbolism of green, reflecting the ancient practice of decorating the church with boughs of trees, relates to the original role of Pentecost as an agricultural feast in the Jewish calendar. See Schmemann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, p. 69 and Ouspensky, "Prazdnik i ikony Piatidesiatitsy," pp. 51-55.

during the Eucharist. Thus the icon synthesizes pictorial motifs and meanings from all three icons into yet another vision of Pentecost. This vision is closest to the Vatoped icon but represents a different aesthetic, distanced from hesychast inspiration: The background in the Vatoped icon opens to include the worshipper. In the Novgorod icon it moves down and in to reverse SPMZ's direction up and away. Thus like SPMZ, the Novgorod icon no longer expresses the hesychast sense of an invitation that unifies the One and the Many by analogy to the Trinity.

The icon pays homage to OTT's mysticism of intercommunion by the similarity of the color blue-green in the clothing of all the angels. This similarity suggests opaquely the angels' oneness, but integral Oneness is not symbolically expressed by the composition. Its structure on diagonals suggests a flatness and one-dimensionality that makes the icon abstract and intellectual. The precision of color and line point to an emphasis on formal perfection and theological clarity which contrasts with the resonant obscurity of OTT and the Vatoped icon and their intimations of ineffable wholeness. The icon reverses the somber exultation of SPMZ by a cheerful assuredness that is also distinct from the inner brightness of the Vatoped icon or OTT. Thus the Novgorod icon reflects a mentality distinct from its predecessors and further away from hesychast spirituality than SPMZ.

Poetic analysis suggests that the iconographer of the Novgorod tablet was aware of the poetic construction and the basic meaning of SPMZ and used it as a key to his reworking of motifs from OTT and the Vatoped icon. On a visual level, his own icon is closer to Rublev's than SPMZ but on a compositional level, it arrives there through a conscious reversal of SPMZ that ends in bringing OTT down to earth.

The Novgorod iconographer appears to have made a conscious choice to make OTT's Pentecostal significance more concrete and accessible. The dialogic way he did this – replacing the divine circle with a central theophanic rhomboid – implies that he may have been aware of OTT's transcendental significance even if he had lost access to its mystical depths. In any case, his own icon was not a substitute for OTT, but an answer to it. The unique lineage of icons culminating in the Novgorod tablet suggests how OTT became part of a cultural conversation aimed at relating OTT's insight to the historical Church.

Analysis of the composition and motifs of the Novgorod icon suggest that it testifies to a living tradition and is in a conversation with three earlier icons and not just with OTT. However, there is no way of verifying whether the red mountain pointing to the left is in fact an allusion to a very similar mountain pointing to the left in SPMZ, or whether the reversal of this mountain's position relative to SPMZ is an indication of the iconographer's dialectical conversation with SPMZ. We can assume that the Novgorod iconographer knew SPMZ since he shows direct knowledge of OTT and the two icons were neighbors in the Trinity-Sergius Monastery. But we cannot verify his creative process. Nor can it be proved that the architectural structure and the bowl allude to the Vatoped icon. The Novgorod icon's possible dialog with the Greek icon is premised on the

iconographer's knowledge of the Vatoped Monastery on Mt. Athos. Further study of contacts between the clergy of St. Sophia in Novgorod and Mt. Athos at the end of the fifteenth century will help clarify this question.

Only a systematic exploration of the way motifs and compositional structures are transposed in icons can establish whether the intertextuality I have found here reflects normative cultural processes. Such an exploration could establish whether the semantic and perspectival conventions that convey meaning in individual icons or groupings of icons are relevant to understanding larger intertextual process.<sup>60</sup> In the meantime, this analysis is a preliminary study. It puts forth possibilities requiring further investigation and draws conclusions that are necessarily hypothetical.

If contemporary or later iconographers read the Novgorod icon at face value and did not understand its dialogic nature, they would have found a model for what became characteristic features of icons of the Rublev-type by the late fifteenth century. The Novgorod icon does homage to OTT even as it deconstructs the original context and meaning of Rublev's icon.<sup>61</sup> It "defaults" to a more familiar accessible, historically oriented meaning by adopting marked features from OTT to a christological variant of HA. This emphasis on the earthly Church outside the context of both hesychast mysticism and dialogicity opened the door to a descent into mere conventionality. Further investigation of other icons of the Rublev-type will determine whether they engaged in an intertextual dialog with tradition and expressed their own interpretations or turned familiar motifs from Rublev's icon into conventional signs for conveying a conventional theology.

This study has used hermeneutic and structural analysis to hypothesize the existence of a lineage of elite icons from Athos of the 1380s, from the Holy Trinity Monastery between 1412 and 1427 and from Novgorod sometimes after 1470. Their meaning derives not only from their own inner coherence but from an intertextual dialog. The result is a living tradition within the larger context of icons of HA. The nature of this dialog as it takes place over time suggests a gradual departure from the hesychast spirituality which informs OTT. It offers clues to the emergence of icons of the Rublev-type beginning in the late fifteenth century in which the import of OTT appears to have faded from cultural memory.

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60. For a study of the intertextual dynamic based on a theological conception of wholeness in the Muscovite "four-part icon," see P. Hunt, "Ivan IV's Personal Mythology of Kingship," *Slavic Review*, 54, no. 2 (Winter 1993), 779-82.

61. Since icons of the Rublev-type typically portray three bowls instead of Rublev's one, and the central bowl is a different shape, its perimeter no longer introduces the composition's overall circular movement of self-identity. The three background features no longer recreate the circle's flow by their tilt and orientation. They have different shapes and even positions relative to each other and to the three angels. Furthermore, the colors are opaque. (In the Novgorod icon, the opaque color was clearly a stylistic choice. In other cases, the dark coloration may reflect the darkening of Rublev's icon over time.) Therefore the three angels are no longer mutually transparent mirrors of one another. The circle defined by the bowl no longer functions as the icon's dominant metaphor, bearing its esoteric theological significance. On this significance, see P. Hunt, "Andrei Rublev's Old Testament Trinity Icon," pp. 110-11.





192. Андрей Рублев. Троица ветхозаветная. 1422—1427 гг. (230)















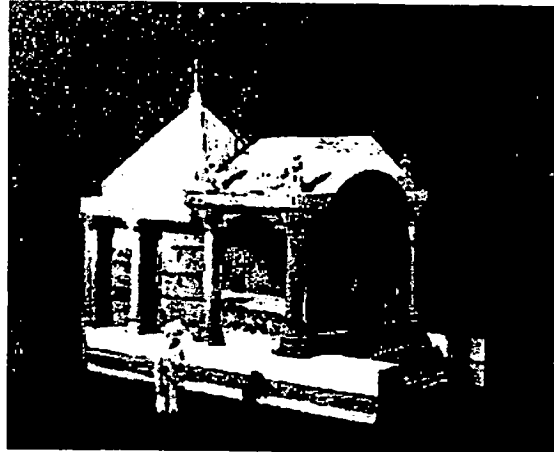








Fig. 5



**Fig. 6**