

OLD RUSSIAN ARCHITECTURE, MUSIC AND ART

① - CHURCH

ALTHOUGH IT IS, OF COURSE, IMPOSSIBLE FOR PERSONS IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY TO UNDERSTAND FULLY THE PEOPLE OF MEDIEVAL RUSSIA, THE ARCHITECTURE, MUSIC AND ART OF THESE PEOPLE CAN GIVE US A GREAT DEAL OF INSIGHT INTO THEIR VALUES, BELIEFS, CULTURE AND OUTLOOK. LIKE THE CULTURE OF MEDIEVAL EUROPE, OLD RUSSIAN CULTURE WAS PREDOMINANTLY INFLUENCED BY RELIGION — THAT IS, BY THE THEMES AND PRACTICES OF THE GREEK ORTHODOX FAITH. OLD RUSSIAN ARCHITECTURE WAS CHURCH ARCHITECTURE; OLD RUSSIAN MUSIC WAS CHURCH MUSIC, AND OLD RUSSIAN ART WAS RELIGIOUS ART; DESIGNED MORE TO FACILITATE PRAYER THAN TO PORTRAY REALITY OR TO CREATE BEAUTY. NEVERTHELESS, AS WE SHALL SEE, A GOOD DEAL OF BEAUTY WAS CREATED.

② - CHURCH

THIS IS THE CHURCH OF HAGIA SOPHIA, OR HOLY WISDOM, IN KIEV. IT WAS BUILT DURING THE GOLDEN AGE OF KIEV, IN THE REIGN OF GRAND PRINCE IAROSLAV THE WISE, AND COMPLETED IN 1037. IT IS THE OLDEST STONE CHURCH IN RUSSIA — ALTHOUGH IT HAS BEEN ALTERED OVER THE CENTURIES, AND LOOKS QUITE DIFFERENT THAN IT DID 900 YEARS AGO. IT WAS BUILT IN THE GREEK STYLE — SHAPED LIKE A CROSS, GREEK CHURCHES OFTEN HAD 5 DOMES — ONE IN THE CENTER, AND ONE ON EACH PART OF THE CROSS. THIS CHURCH, AS YOU CAN SEE, HAS MORE DOMES — 13 IN ALL.

③ CHURCH - WHITE WITH GREEN DOMES
HAGIA SOPHIA IS NOW IN THE STYLE OF WHAT MIGHT BE CALLED 17TH CENTURY UKRAINIAN BAROQUE, WITH HELMET SHAPED DOMES, AND WALLS OF BRICK COVERED WITH STUCCO,

④ PEOPLE - CHURCH IN BACKGROUND
IT IS NEVERTHELESS AN IMPRESSIVE CHURCH, A REMINDER OF A DISTANT AGE - A GLORIOUS AGE FOR RUSSIA AND UKRAINE - AND IT ATTRACTS THOUSANDS OF VISITORS EVERY YEAR.

⑤ CHURCH - WHITE WITH BLUE & GOLD DOMES
ANOTHER FAMOUS CHURCH OF HAGIA SOPHIA DATING FROM ROUGHLY THE SAME ERA MIGHT BE FOUND IN NOVGOROD - THE CITY OF KIEV'S MOST IMPORTANT RIVAL. NOVGOROD ARCHITECTURE DREW ITS INSPIRATION FROM GREECE, LIKE KIEV, BUT ALSO FROM THE BALTIC, GERMANIC AREAS AND FROM THE WOODEN ARCHITECTURE OF THE NORTHERN RUSSIAN FORESTS. THIS CHURCH WAS BUILT FROM 1045-1052. AS YOU CAN SEE, IT IS A BIT MORE AUSTERE THAN THE KIEVAN CHURCH, WITH FIVE RAISED DOMES AND A NUMBER OF SMALL WINDOWS IN ITS WHITE, STUCCO WALLS.

⑥ WHITE CHURCH - LAKE IN BACKGROUND
OUTSIDE OF NOVGOROD IS THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. GEORGE, LOCATED IN THE IURIEV MONASTERY ON THE BANKS OF LAKE ILLMEN. IT IS CONSIDERED ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL OF ALL OLD RUSSIAN CHURCHES, WITH ITS 3 ASYMMETRICAL DOMES, SET WITHIN THE MONASTIC FORTRESS OVERLOOKING THE LAKE.

⑦ WHITE CHURCH - CLOSE-UP
HERE IS ANOTHER VIEW - YOU CAN SEE THAT THE DOMES WERE ALREADY BEGINNING TO TAKE ON THE BULBOUS, ONION SHAPED APPEARANCE THAT WAS TO BECOME SO CHARACTERISTIC OF RUSSIAN CHURCHES. THIS CHURCH WAS BUILT IN THE 12TH CENTURY, 1119-1130.

⑧ WHITE CHURCH - REFLECTED IN RIVER
RUSSIAN ARCHITECTS OFTEN SOUGHT IMPRESSIVE NATURAL LANDSCAPES ON WHICH TO BUILD THEIR CHURCHES. THIS IS THE CHURCH OF THE INTERCESSION, ON THE NEPL RIVER, NOT FAR FROM THE CITY OF SUZDAL. IT WAS BUILT ON A MAN-MADE HILL, DURING THE REIGN OF PRINCE ANDREI BOGOLIVBSKY, AND COMPLETED

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COMPLETED IN 1171 - TWO YEARS AFTER THE INFAMOUS SACK OF KIEV BY PRINCE ANDREI AND HIS TROOPS. IT IS OFTEN CONSIDERED THE GREATEST ARCHITECTURAL ACHIEVEMENT OF THE KIEVAN ERA, WITH ITS SINGLE DOME, ITS STARK SIMPLICITY AND SYMMETRY, AND ITS BEAUTIFUL SETTING, AS REFLECTED IN THE RIVER.

WOODEN CHURCH - SNOW ON ROOF

⑨ DURING THE MONGOL PERIOD, AS PART OF THE GENERAL DECLINE OF CIVILIZATION, THE RUSSIANS LOST THE ABILITY TO BUILD CHURCHES IN STONE. SO THEY CONSTRUCTED THEM OF WOOD, SO PLENTIFUL IN THE FORESTED NORTH. ALTHOUGH NO WOODEN CHURCHES SURVIVE FROM THIS ERA, THIS IS WHAT THEY MUST HAVE LOOKED LIKE. THEY WERE BUILT IN 3 SECTIONS: A SANCTUARY, ALWAYS POSITIONED ON THE EAST, A LARGE MAIN SECTION, WHERE THE CONGREGATION STOOD, AND AN ENTRANCE HALL, WHERE THE UNBAPTIZED CATECHUMENS WERE REQUIRED TO STAY. THE ROOFS WERE STEEPLY SLOPED, WITH A SMALL CUPOLA DOME TOPPED BY A CROSS. THE STEEP SLOPE ON THE ROOF WAS DONE FOR PRACTICAL, RATHER THAN RELIGIOUS REASONS - THEY GET LOTS OF SNOW DURING THE NORTHERN RUSSIAN WINTERS.

STONE CHURCH - TENT SHAPED

⑩ ANOTHER STYLE OF WOODEN CHURCH WAS THE TENT-SHAPED, OR PYRAMID-SHAPED CHURCH. DURING THE MONGOL PERIOD THESE WERE BUILT OF WOOD - THIS IS A STONE VERSION, DATING FROM A LATER ERA. IT STANDS SOME 200 FEET HIGH, DOMINATING THE LANDSCAPE WITH ITS STRICT, SEVERE AND SIMPLE LINES - TOPPED, AS ALWAYS, WITH A SMALL CUPOLA AND CROSS.

STONE CHURCH - 3 STEEPLES

⑪ HERE IS ANOTHER STONE PYRAMID CHURCH, WITH THREE TENT-SHAPED DOMES. AS TIME WENT ON, MORE AND MORE EXPERIMENTATION WAS DONE, BUT IT WAS ALL DONE IN WOOD - AT LEAST UNTIL THE REIGN OF TSAR IVAN THE GREAT IN THE 2ND HALF OF THE 15TH CENTURY.

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⑫ IN THE 1470S TSAR IVAN, ANXIOUS TO HAVE CHURCHES AS IMPRESSIVE AS THOSE IN THE WEST, ORDERED HIS ARCHITECTS TO BUILD A NEW, STONE CATHEDRAL OF THE ASSUMPTION IN THE MOSCOW KREMLIN. WHEN THEY FAILED, HE IMPORTED FOREIGNERS TO DO THE JOB. THE CATHEDRAL OF THE ASSUMPTION, NOT SHOWN HERE, WAS COMPLETED UNDER THE ITALIAN ARCHITECT ARISTOTLE FIORAVENTI IN 1479. PICTURED HERE IS THE ANNUNCIATION CATHEDRAL, ALSO IN THE KREMLIN, COMPLETED 11 YEARS LATER, IN 1490, BY ARCHITECTS FROM PSKOV AND FROM WESTERN EUROPE. ORIGINALLY IT HAD 3, BULBOUS SHAPED DOMES, LATER MORE AND MORE DOMES WERE ADDED, AND GILDED WITH GOLD. IN THE EYES OF LATE MEDIEVAL RUSSIANS, THE MORE DOMES A CHURCH HAD, THE MORE IMPRESSIVE IT WAS — AND THE MORE ORNATE & GAUDIER THE BETTER.

⑬ WHITE CHURCH WITH BLUE DOMES
THIS IS THE CATHEDRAL OF THE ARCHANGEL MICHAEL, ALSO IN THE MOSCOW KREMLIN, COMPLETED IN 1509. IT WAS ALSO BUILT BY ITALIAN ARCHITECTS, AND EXHIBITS SOME OF THE CLASSICAL FLOURISHES OF THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE. BEGINNING WITH IVAN THE GREAT, IT BECAME ALSO THE BURIAL MAUSOLEUM OF ALL THE MUSCOVITE TSARS — WITH THE EXCEPTION OF BORIS GODUNOV.

⑭ TWO BELL TOWERS
THIS IS THE BELL TOWER OF IVAN THE GREAT, WHICH TOWERS ABOVE THE OTHER THREE KREMLIN CHURCHES AND GIVES THEM A CERTAIN UNITY AND SYMMETRY. IT WAS BEGUN IN 1505 — THE YEAR OF IVAN'S DEATH, BUT NOT COMPLETED UNTIL 1600 — 95 YEARS LATER.

⑮ CHURCH - BLUE DOMES WITH STARS
THIS IS THE CHURCH OF THE ASSUMPTION IN THE HOLY TRINITY-SAINTE SERGEI MONASTERY LOCATED IN ZAGORSK, NOT FAR FROM MOSCOW. IT WAS BUILT FROM 1559-1585, AS A COPY OF THE ASSUMPTION CATHEDRAL IN THE KREMLIN. IT HAS 5 DOMES AND IT SERVES AS THE BURIAL PLACE OF BORIS GODUNOV AND HIS FAMILY. THE TRINITY-SERGEI MONASTERY IS BOTH A FUNCTIONING MONASTERY AND A STATE MUSEUM. IN FRONT OF THE CHURCH IS THE CHAPEL OF THE HOLY WELL WHERE, FOR 25 KOPECKS, VISITORS

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CAN BUY HOLY WATER TO HELP SUPPORT THE ORTHODOX MONKS WHO STILL WALK ABOUT THE MONASTERY IN THE LONG BEARDS AND FLOWING ROBES OF AN EARLIER AGE.

CHURCH - STRIPED DOMES

- ⑩ THE GAUDIEST, MOST COLORFUL AND MOST SYMBOLIC OF ALL OLD RUSSIAN CHURCHES IS, OF COURSE, ST. BASIL'S CATHEDRAL IN MOSCOW, LOCATED ON RED SQUARE, JUST OUTSIDE THE KREMLIN WALL. IT IS OFTEN SEEN IN THE BACKGROUND OF T.V. REPORTS FROM MOSCOW, OR USED AS THE COVER OF BOOKS, RECORDS AND PAMPHLETS DEALING WITH RUSSIA. IT WAS BUILT ON THE ORDERS OF TSAR IVAN THE TERRIBLE, BEGINNING IN 1552, TO COMMEMORATE HIS GREAT CONQUEST OF KAZAN. AT 1ST IT WAS CALLED THE CATHEDRAL OF THE INTERCESSION OF THE VIRGIN, BUT LATER CAME TO BE KNOWN AFTER BLESSED BASIL, THE FAMOUS HOLY FOOL OF IVAN THE TERRIBLE'S TIME. IT IS REALLY 9 SEPARATE BUILDINGS ON A COMMON FOUNDATION, BUILT IN THE SHAPE OF AN OCTAGON WITH DOMES OF DIFFERENT HEIGHTS, SHAPES AND BRIGHT, CANDY-CANE STRIPE COLORS. IT INCLUDES BOTH TENT-SHAPE AND ONION SHAPE DOMES. IT HAS BECOME A SYMBOL OF RUSSIA - POWERFUL AND IMPRESSIVE, YET MYSTERIOUS AND BIZARRE.

WOODEN CHURCH, NUMEROUS DOMES, SNOW

- ⑪ THE RUSSIAN TASTE FOR NUMEROUS DOMES REACHED ITS GREATEST EXTREME WITH THE WOODEN CHURCH OF THE TRANSFIGURATION IN KIZHI, BUILT IN 1714. THE CHURCH ITSELF IS PYRAMID SHAPED, WITH 22 CUPOLA DOMES INTRICATELY SET ON VARIOUS LEVELS AND A LARGE DOME IN THE CENTER, REPRESENTING THE REDEEMER.

ICON - VIRGIN WITH CHILD

- ⑫ LIKE RUSSIAN ARCHITECTURE, OLD RUSSIAN ART WAS ALMOST ALWAYS RELIGIOUS ART - MOSTLY ICONS AND FRESCOS. FRESCOS WERE DONE NOT TO ENTERTAIN BUT TO INSPIRE PIETY. FRESCOS WERE WALL PAINTINGS, DONE IN THE WET PLASTER TO ATTAIN PERMANENCY, IN MUCH THE SAME MANNER THAT MICHELANGELO PAINTED THE CEILING OF THE SISTINE CHAPEL. ICONS WERE RELIGIOUS PAINTINGS DONE ON LARGE WOODEN BOARDS, NAILED TOGETHER TO FORM ICONS RANGING FROM 2' X 3' TO 3' X 6'. THE BOARDS WERE

CAREFULLY SANDED, THEN PAINTED WITH NATURAL DYES AND PIGMENTS, MIXED WITH EGG WHITES TO FORM A SORT OF TEMPERA PAINT. THEY WERE THEN VARNISHED OVER TO PROVIDE BOTH GLOSS AND PRESERVATION. OVER THE YEARS, THE VARNISH WOULD TURN BLACK, AND NEW ICONS WERE THEN OFTEN PAINTED OVER THE OLD. 20TH CENTURY RESTORERS HAVE OFTEN HAD TO STRIP OFF 2, 3, OR FOUR LAYERS OF PAINT TO GET TO THE ORIGINAL.

THE ICON WAS AN ART FORM IMPORTED FROM THE GREEKS. IN FACT, MANY EARLY ICONS WERE BROUGHT FROM CONSTANTINOPLE. THIS IS THE VIRGIN OF VLADIMIR, A 12TH CENT ICON BROUGHT FROM CONSTANTINOPLE TO KIEV IN 1136. LATER, IT WAS TRANSFERRED TO VLADIMIR BY PRINCE ANDREI BOGDOLUBSY, IN 1395, FINALLY IT WAS BROUGHT MOSCOW, AND CREDITED WITH MIRACULOUSLY TURNING BACK TAMERLANE & HIS MONGOL HORDES. IT IS A GOOD EXAMPLE OF A BYZANTINE ICON.

CHURCH INTERIOR - WALL AND ARCHWAY.
⑩ THIS IS THE INTERIOR OF AN ORTHODOX CHURCH, NOTE THAT THE WALLS ARE COMPLETELY COVERED WITH FRESCOS AND PAINTINGS, BUT THAT THERE ARE NO STATUES IN ORTHODOX CHURCHES. YOU WILL ALSO NOTICE THAT THERE ARE NO PEWS - THE ORTHODOX FAITHFUL ARE THIS COMPELLED TO STAND THROUGHOUT THE LONG RUSSIAN LITURGIES. EVEN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH WE FOUND IN LENINGRAD - THE ONLY ONE IN THE CITY, HAD VERY FEW BENCHES - MOST OF THE CONGREGATION STOOD THROUGHOUT.

ORTHOX RELIGIOUS SERVICES WERE NORMALLY ACCOMPANIED BY SINGING - THE MUSIC OF OLD RUSSIA WAS LARGELY RELIGIOUS MUSIC. IT WAS VOICE MUSIC RATHER THAN INSTRUMENTAL - INSTRUMENTS WERE NOT USED IN RUSSIAN ORTHODOX LITURGIES. THE CHOIRS WERE USUALLY COMPOSED ENTIRELY OF MEN, AND THE COMBINATION OF LOW, ALL-MALE VOICES AND SLOW CADENCE OFTEN MAKES THIS MUSIC SOUND SAD AND SOMBER TO THE WESTERN EAR, EVEN WHEN IT IS JOYFUL TO THE RUSSIANS

- FOLLOWED BY 1 1/2 MINUTES OF MUSIC -

20 CHURCH INTERIOR - ICON WALL

ICONS WERE DISPLAYED EITHER IN CHURCHES OR IN PRIVATE HOMES. MANY HOMES WOULD HAVE AN ICON CORNER, WITH A SMALL ALTAR, PERHAPS A CANDLE, AND MAYBE EVEN A CURTAIN COVERING THE ICON, WHICH COULD BE PULLED BACK WHEN IT WAS TIME FOR VENERATION. BUT MOST ICONS, OF COURSE, WERE IN CHURCHES. THEY WERE USUALLY DISPLAYED IN THE FORM OF AN ICONOSTASIS, OR "ICON-WALL", WHICH SEPARATED THE CONGREGATION FROM THE ALTAR. THE ICONOSTASIS WAS OFTEN BUILT UP TO REACH NEARLY TO THE CEILING - SOMETIMES 4 OR 5 ROWS OF ICONS. IN THE CENTER OF THE WALL WAS A GATE LEADING TO THE HOLY SANCTUARY BEHIND THE WALL. HERE THE MOST SACRED PARTS OF THE MASS TOOK PLACE, LARGELY CONCEALED FROM THE CONGREGATION'S VIEW. ONLY THE PRIESTS WERE ALLOWED BEHIND THE ICON WALL

21 ICON - NUMEROUS STANDING FIGURES

THE ICONS WERE DISPLAYED IN A VARIETY OF WAYS, BUT USUALLY THE 2ND OR 3RD ROW UP WAS A SO CALLED DEESIS ROW, OR PRAYER ROW. IN THE CENTER OF THIS ROW WOULD BE A LARGE ICON OF CHRIST, THE REDEEMER, ON HIS LEFT WOULD BE THE VIRGIN MARY, MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL, AND ST PETER; ON HIS RIGHT WOULD BE ST JOHN, THE ANGEL GABRIEL, AND ST. PAUL. ALTHOUGH THIS IS A PICTURE OF ONLY ONE LARGE ICON, THE TOP ROW IN THIS ICON FOLLOWS THE TYPICAL DEESIS ROW ARRANGEMENT. IN A DEESIS ROW, EACH FIGURE WOULD BE REPRESENTED ON AN INDIVIDUAL, LIFE-SIZE ICON.

ICON - ST JOHN THE BAPTIST

22 THIS IS AN ICON FROM A DEESIS ROW. IT DEPICTS ST JOHN THE BAPTIST — OR JOHN THE FORERUNNER, AS THE RUSSIANS CALL HIM. THIS ICON IS ABOUT 6 FT HIGH. THE CLOTHES, THE POZE, THE HAIR, AND THE EXPRESSION ARE TYPICAL AND STYLIZED, SO THE FAITHFUL WOULD KNOW IMMEDIATELY WHO THIS WAS SUPPOSED TO BE.

ICON - ST GEORGE ON HORSE

23 IN OLD RUSSIA, EACH CITY OR APPANAGE AREA OFTEN HAD ITS OWN UNIQUE AND DISTINGUISHABLE ICON STYLE. BY THE 13TH & 14TH CENTURIES, THESE WERE BEGINNING TO DEVELOP INTO INDIVIDUAL ART FORMS, OR SCHOOLS, THE MOST IMPORTANT OF WHICH WERE PROBABLY NOVGOROD, TVER, AND MOSCOW. THIS IS A 14TH CENTURY NOVGOROD ICON OF ST GEORGE, WHO WAS A FAVORITE SUBJECT OF NOVGOROD ICON-PAINTERS. NOVGOROD PAINTINGS WERE USUALLY DISTINGUISHED BY ~~BE~~ LOTS OF DEEP RED AND YELLOW COLORS — THE RED, ESPECIALLY COMPOSED OF CINNABAR DYES, DERIVED FROM THE MINERAL, MERCURIC SULFIDE, WHICH IS ABUNDANT IN THE NOVGOROD REGION. THIS ICON COULD HARDLY BE CALLED SOPHISTICATED OR REALISTIC ART; THE HORSE SEEMS TO FLOAT IN MID-AIR AND GEORGE, WITH THAT DUMB LOOK ON HIS FACE, HARDLY RESEMBLES A BRAVE WARRIOR SLAYING A DRAGON.

ICON - ST GEORGE ON HORSE

24 THIS IS A 15TH CENTURY ICON OF ST. GEORGE, ALSO FROM THE NOVGOROD SCHOOL, NOTICE AGAIN THE RED AND YELLOW HUES. THE ACTION HERE IS A BIT MORE COMPLEX AND SOPHISTICATED — GEORGE LOOKS AS IF HE MIGHT ACTUALLY BE SLAYING THE DRAGON. IT IS, BY NO MEANS, ENTIRELY REALISTIC — THE HORSE'S NECK, FOR EXAMPLE, STRIKES ME AS A BIT LARGE.

ICON - BATTLE SCENES

(25) THIS COMPLEX ICON IS ENTITLED "THE BATTLE BETWEEN THE MEN OF NOVGOROD AND THE MEN OF SUZDAL". IT IS ONE OF THE FEW OLD RUSSIAN ICONS WITH A THEME THAT IS NOT EXPLICITLY RELIGIOUS. EVEN THEN, IT IS SEMI-RELIGIOUS, SHOWING A DIVINE AND SAINTLY INTERVENTION IN THE AFFAIRS AND STRUGGLES OF RUSSIAN CITY-STATES. THE SUBJECT HERE IS A TWELFTH CENTURY ATTACK ON NOVGOROD BY THE ~~THE~~ SOLDIERS FROM SUZDAL, LED BY PRINCE ANDREI BOGOLIBUSKY. BEFORE THE BATTLE, THE HOLY ICON OF THE VIRGIN IS BROUGHT TO NOVGOROD'S CHURCH OF HAGIA SOPHIA, SO WHEN SUZDAL ATTACKS, NOVGOROD IS READY. STS BORIS AND GLEB AND ST GEORGE SOMEHOW RETURN FROM HEAVEN TO LEAD THE TROOPS OF NOVGOROD, AND SUZDAL IS DEFEATED. THE PAINTER HERE USES A STYLIZED AND PRIMITIVE WAY OF DEPICTING SUZDAL'S DEFEAT - AT BOTTOM HE SHOWS THE MEN OF SUZDAL ALL HEAPED AND BURNED TOGETHER IN A MOUND. THIS ICON WAS PAINTED IN THE 15TH CENTURY, AT THE TIME WHEN IVAN THE GREAT WAS THREATENING TO ANNEX NOVGOROD TO MOSCOW. IT THUS PROBABLY REFLECTS A SORT OF POLITICAL, ANTI-MOSCOW, PROPAGANDA, RALLYING THE PEOPLE OF NOVGOROD TO DEFEAT THE ATTACKERS FROM THE EAST, AS THEY HAD 3 CENTURIES EARLIER.

ICON - TWO SAINTS

(26) HERE IS ANOTHER NOVGOROD ICON, DISPLAYING THE TYPICAL REDS AND YELLOWS. DEPICTED HERE ARE STS. BORIS AND GLEB, THE TWO BROTHERS SUPPOSEDLY KILLED BY THEIR OWN BROTHER, SVIATOPOLK THE DAMNED, DURING A SUCCESSION STRUGGLE IN KIEVAN TIMES. THE CULT OF BORIS AND GLEB WAS A POPULAR ONE IN OLD RUSSIA - THIS ICON DATES FROM THE 14TH CENTURY.

ICON - TWO SAINTS ON HORSEBACK

(27) FOR COMPARISON, HERE IS ANOTHER 14TH CENTURY ICON OF STS. BORIS AND GLEB. THIS ONE, HOWEVER, IS FROM THE SCHOOL OF MOSCOW, RATHER THAN NOVGOROD. IN THIS ONE THE REDS AND YELLOWS ARE LESS BRIGHT, AND LESS PROMINENT, AND THE SAINTS ARE SEATED ON HORSEBACK. NOTICE THE FIGURE OF CHRIST IN THE UPPER CORNER.

ICON - VIRGIN WITH CHILD

28) HERE IS ANOTHER FAMOUS MOSCOW ICON OF THE 14TH CENTURY, ENTITLED "THE VIRGIN OF THE DON," THIS WAS SUPPOSEDLY GIVEN TO GRAND PRINCE DMITRI DONSKOI BY SOLDIERS FROM THE DON RIVER REGION, AT THE TIME OF DMITRI'S GREAT VICTORY OVER THE TATARS AT KULIKOV FIELD.

ICON - SAINT WITH WHITE HAIR, BEARD

29) IN THE LATE 14TH CENTURY, MOSCOW BEGAN TO TAKE THE LEAD IN RUSSIAN ICON PAINTING, THE TURNING POINT WAS THE ARRIVAL IN MOSCOW, DURING THE 1370S, OF A MAN KNOWN AS THEOPHANES THE GREEK, OR FEOFAN GREEK. THIS WAS AN IMPORTANT EVENT IN THE HISTORY OF RUSSIAN ICONOGRAPHY, FOR FEOFAN WAS A TRUE ARTIST, OR PERHAPS AN ARTISTIC PHILOSOPHER. HIS WORK WAS LESS STYLIZED, WITH MORE OF A DRAMATIC FLAIR. THE HARSH BRUSH STROKES MAKE HIS WORK SIMULTANEOUSLY PASSIONATE, YET PHILOSOPHICAL. THIS ICON, A PAINTING OF ST MACARIUS, DATES FROM 1378. THE PAINT LOOKS AS THOUGH IT IS STILL WET, EVEN THOUGH IT HAS HAD OVER 600 YEARS TO DRY. MACARIUS SEEMS TO BE CLOTHED IN HIS OWN HAIR, WITH HIS HANDS RAISED IN AN ORTHODOX POSITION OF PRAYER,

ARCHWAY - 3 ANGELS

30) THIS IS A LATE 14TH CENTURY CHURCH WALL FRESCO, OBVIOUSLY DONE IN THE STYLE OF FEOFAN GREEK. IT DEPICTS ANOTHER FAVORITE SUBJECT - THE OLD TESTAMENT FIGURE OF THE TRINITY. THREE ANGELS WHO VISITED ABRAHAM AND SARAH IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS ARE SEEN SITTING AROUND A SACRIFICIAL ALTAR TABLE. THIS IS SEEN BY THE RUSSIANS AS A PREFIGURATION AND A SYMBOL OF THE HOLY TRINITY. FEOFAN IS IMPORTANT NOT ONLY FOR HIS OWN WORK, BUT FOR THE EFFECT HE HAD IN FREEING RUSSIAN ART FROM THE STYLIZED CONSTRAINTS OF ICONOGRAPHY. HIS ENCOURAGEMENT OF BOLD, PERSONAL ORIGINALITY HAD AN IMPORTANT INFLUENCE ON ALL FUTURE ICON PAINTERS.

ICON - TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRIST
③① THIS ICON, DATING FROM AROUND 1400, IS ONE OF MY PERSONAL FAVORITES. IT WAS DONE BY STUDENTS OF FEOFAN GREK, WORKING UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE MASTER. IT DEPICTS THE TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRIST, A NEW TESTAMENT SCENE IN WHICH JESUS WAS TRANSFIGURED ON A HILLTOP, AND VISITED BY MOSES & ELIAS. NOTE AT THE BOTTOM THE APOSTLES PETER, JAMES AND JOHN - REAL PEOPLE WHO ARE FEARFUL AND AWESTRUCK, HIDING THEIR FACES FROM THE GLORY OF GOD, THE PICTURE PORTRAYS AN ETHEREAL SENSE OF BEAUTY, COMBINED WITH TENSION AND DRAMA.

ICON - DEATH OF VIRGIN MARY
③② THIS ICON ALSO DATES FROM AROUND 1400, AND WAS ALSO DONE BY PUPILS OF FEOFAN. IT DEPICTS THE DEATH AND BURIAL OF THE VIRGIN MARY. HER BODY IS SURROUNDED BY GRIEF-STRICTEN APOSTLES, WHILE IN THE CENTER THE RISEN CHRIST, HOLDING MARY'S SOUL, PREPARES TO ASSUME HIS MOTHER INTO HEAVEN.

ICON - ST. PAUL
③③ THE MOST IMPORTANT OF FEOFAN'S PUPILS, AND PERHAPS THE GREATEST RUSSIAN ARTIST OF ALL TIME, WAS ANDREI RUBLEV, WHO FLOURISHED FROM ABOUT 1400 TO 1420. RUBLEV WAS A TRUE GENIUS. THIS IS HIS FIGURE OF ST PAUL - SERENE AND WISE, YET POWERFUL AND STRONG. IT IS A WORK OF GRANDEUR, PURITY AND RESTRAINT. NOTICE THE LOWER SECTION IS MISSING IN PART. ONE OF THE PROBLEMS FACED BY TWENTIETH CENTURY RESTORERS WHEN STRIPPING OFF LAYERS OF PAINT IS TO KNOW WHEN TO STOP - HERE THE RESTORER WENT TOO FAR, & DESTROYED PART OF THE ORIGINAL ICON.

ICON - TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRIST
③④ THIS IS RUBLEV'S VERSION OF THE TRANSFIGURATION. IT IS A WORK OF GREATER SIMPLICITY, HARMONY AND SYMMETRY THAN THE EARLIER ONE DONE BY FEOFAN'S PUPILS. RUBLEV REJECTED THE HARSHNESS AND TENSION OF FEOFAN AND DEVELOPED HIS OWN STYLE, WHICH IS WARMER, MORE ROUNDED, AND MORE GENTLE. THE APOSTLES STILL SHRINK IN TERROR, BUT HERE, INSTEAD OF THE DRAMATIC TENSION, THERE IS A WARMER & MORE JOYFUL MOOD.

ICON - 3 ANGELS AT TABLE

35) YOU ARE NOW LOOKING AT RUBLEV'S MASTERPIECE - THE TRINITY, PAINTED IN THE 1420S. IT IS GENERALLY CONSIDERED THE GREATEST OF ALL RUSSIAN ICONS - THE "MONA LISA" OF OLD RUSSIAN ART. IT IS ONE OF THE REAL TREASURES OF WORLD ART - A WORK OF SIMPLICITY, HARMONY, PIETY AND GENTLENESS. THE THREE FIGURES FORM SOMETHING OF A CIRCLE. THERE IS LITTLE DETAIL ADDED TO DISTRACT FROM THE OVERALL IMPRESSION. THE COLORS, ESPECIALLY THE BLUE, ARE ABSOLUTELY IRREDESCENT, AND CANNOT BE FULLY CAPTURED IN A PHOTO OR SLIDE. WHEN I VIEWED THIS ICON IN MOSCOW'S TRET'YAKOV GALLERY, I FOUND IT TO BE ALMOST INSPIRATIONAL - SOMETHING VERY CLOSE TO A RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

CLOSE-UP - ANGEL AT TABLE

36) THIS IS A CLOSEUP SHOT OF THE CENTRAL ANGEL IN RUBLEV'S TRINITY - THE ONE INTENDED TO REPRESENT JESUS, OR GOD THE SON. GOD THE FATHER IS SEATED AT THE LEFT, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT AT RIGHT. THERE IS IN RUBLEV'S VERSION LITTLE LEFT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT STORY - INSTEAD IT IS A PORTRAYAL OF DIVINE WARMTH AND LOVE. THIS ICON WAS DISCOVERED IN 1904 - EVENTUALLY LATER MODIFICATIONS WERE REMOVED, AND IT WAS RESTORED TO ITS PRESENT CONDITION.

ICON - BISHOP SURROUNDED BY SMALL SCENES

37) ANDREI RUBLEV REPRESENTED A PINNACLE OF RUSSIAN ICON-PAINTING. AFTER HIM THINGS WENT MORE OR LESS DOWN HILL. LATER PAINTERS WERE FASCINATED BY DETAILS, AND TENDED TO DISTRACT FROM THEIR THEMES BY CROWDING IN TOO MUCH. THE GREATEST OF THE LATE 15TH / EARLY 16TH CENTURY PAINTERS WAS A MAN NAMED DIONYSIUS. HIS PORTRAIT OF THE METROPOLITAN ALEXIS, AS YOU CAN SEE, IS SURROUNDED BY SCENES FROM HIS LIFE. HIS BIRTH AND YOUNGER YEARS ARE ACROSS THE TOP, WHILE HIS VISIT TO THE TATAR KHAN, HIS HEALING OF THE KHAN'S WIFE, HIS MEETING WITH ST. SERGEI, AND HIS OWN DEATH & BURIAL ARE DEPICTED ON THE SIDES. THIS ICON GIVES US A GOOD NOTION OF RUSSIAN CHURCH VESTMENTS OF THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD.

38) THE MOST FAMOUS WORK OF DYONISIUS IS HIS PORTRAIT OF THE CRUCIFIXION, PAINTED AROUND 1500. NOTICE THAT CHRIST'S BODY IS ELONGATED AND SYMBOLIC, AND THAT THE SAVIOR IS FLANKED BY HIS MOTHER, MARY MAGDALENE, AND ~~THE~~ ST. JOHN THE APOSTLE.

CHURCH INTERIOR - WALL PAINTING

39) THIS IS A PAINTING OF THE LAST JUDGMENT, DONE AROUND 1508 BY THEODOSIUS, THE SON OF DIONYSIUS, IN THE ANNUNCIATION CATHEDRAL OF MOSCOW'S KREMLIN. ALTHOUGH IT IS FAIRLY IMPRESSIVE, IT CERTAINLY DOES NOT BEGIN TO COMPARE WITH THE WORK ~~OF~~ THAT WAS DONE BY MICHELANGELO, ON THE CEILING OF THE SISTINE CHAPEL, DATING FROM ROUGHLY THE SAME TIME PERIOD.

ICON - 3 ANGELS AT TABLE

40) AS TIME WENT ON, MUSCOVITE ART GOT GAUDIER AND MORE ELABORATED, ARTISTS, THINKING IT A SIGN OF GREAT SKILL, BEGAN TO CLUTTER UP THEIR WORK WITH MORE DETAIL, AS YOU CAN SEE IN THIS 15TH CENTURY VERSION OF THE TRINITY

ICON - 3 ANGELS AT TABLE

41) HERE IS A NOVGOROD TRINITY ICON OF THE SAME CENTURY WHICH IS EVEN MORE CLUTTERED, AND THIS EVEN LESS EFFECTIVE, AS A PIECE OF ART OR INSPIRATION.

EMBROIDERY - STUDDED WITH JEWELS

42) THIS IS A MUSCOVITE EMBROIDERY, DONE AROUND 1600, DURING THE REIGN OF TSAR BORIS GODUNOV. IT IS, AS YOU CAN SEE, VERY DETAILED, AND IT IS STUDDED WITH PRECIOUS JEWELS AND STONES. MOSCOW BY THIS TIME WAS BECOMING A GREAT POWER, OR WAS TRYING TO BECOME ONE, AND WAS ANXIOUS TO IMPRESS THE WORLD WITH WEALTH & OSTENTATIOUSNESS

ICON COVER - STUDDED WITH JEWELS

43) THE EPITOME OF THIS, AND TO MY MIND A LOW-POINT OF RUSSIAN ART, CAME IN THE 17TH CENTURY WHEN RUSSIAN GOLDSMITHS AND SILVERSMITHS DESIGNED THIS, GOLD, SILVER AND ENAMEL COVER, STUDDED WITH PRECIOUS STONES, WHICH WAS PLACED OVER RUBLEUS TRINITY & COVERED ALL BUT THE FACES AND HANDS OF THE ANGELS. THIS IS A FLAGRANT EXAMPLE OF TERRIBLE TASTE - TRYING TO IMPROVE ON A MASTERPIECE BY COVERING IT WITH JEWELS

THIS CONCLUDES OUR PRESENTATION OF RUSSIAN
ARCHITECTURE, MUSIC AND ART. IF YOU EVER GET
TO THE SOVIET UNION, IT IS WELL WORTH THE EFFORT
TO SEEK OUT SOME OLD RUSSIAN CHURCHES, TO VIEW THE
ICONS AND FRESCOS, AND TO GET, PERHAPS, SOME
FAINT APPRECIATION FOR THE LIFE AND VALUES OF
MEDIIEVAL RUSSIA.

FOLLOWED BY MUSIC — (ABOUT 3½ MINUTES)

→ GO THROUGH SLIDES CONTINUOUSLY, IN REVERSE
AS MUSIC PLAYS - ABOUT 5 SECONDS FOR
EACH SLIDE.