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**ARCHITECTURE AND ICON:  
THE ORIGIN OF THE STEPPED GABLES IN  
THE ICON ‘THE VISION OF THE SEXTON  
TARASIY OF KHUTYN’**

**INTRODUCTION**

The phenomenon of an icon is closely cohered with architectural image, for the majority of icons were intended for certain churches, while a church could be designed to enclose a venerated miraculous icon (e.g. the Dormition Cathedral of Tikhvin monastery, 1515). Furthermore architecture is present both in the Byzantine and Old Russian icons as sketchy images of various buildings that complement the main scene with space and background. For centuries the architectural representations in icons were far from true to life, and the search for the exact prototypes is nearly fruitless (with the exception of the rotundal Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem).<sup>1</sup>

However, the 16<sup>th</sup> century saw significant changes in the architectural background of the Russian icons. The icons of the saint founders of the monasteries introduced a new type of the architectural

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1 Slobodan Ćurčić, Evangelia Hadjistryphonos, *Architecture as Icon: Perception and Representation of Architecture in Byzantine Art* (Princeton and New Haven: Princeton University Art Museum, distributed by Yale University Press, 2010).

background with a rather detailed rendition of monastic buildings (the multiple icons of 'Saints Zosima and Savvatiy of Solovetski monastery', 'St Anthony the Roman' and others). Analysis of these icons provided the scholars with the data to reconstruct the original forms of the Transfiguration cathedral in the Solovetski monastery and the layout of the lost edifices.<sup>2</sup>

The icon 'The Vision of the Sexton Tarasiy of Khutyn' (stored at the Novgorod State United Museum) has long attracted the attention with a panoramic view of Novgorod. The Khutyn' icon illustrates the 16<sup>th</sup> century legend of the three grievances that befell Novgorod, the narrative added to the 'Life of St Varlaam of Khutyn'. On three occasions the sexton Tarasiy climbed the roof of the Saviour's Transfiguration cathedral in the Khutyn' Monastery, and this plot evidently inspired the panoramic landscape of the city in the icon.<sup>3</sup> As early as 1900 Petr Gusev conducted a comprehensive research of the architecture in the icon and the existing church buildings of Novgorod. Making ample use of the late medieval sources and 18<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> century plans of the city, the scholar verified the likeness in the appearance of the churches, while other buildings were part of fantastic architectural background.<sup>4</sup>

The icons of the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century saw emersion of another kind of background, different from the detailed representation of the church architecture, but reminiscent of the landscapes of the European Gothic towns. Thus, the buildings with pitched roofs and gables, tall spires and towers sometimes are depicted next to the traditional schematic forms. Given the fact that Gothic has never matured into a consistent style in the Old Russian architecture,

2 Mikhail Mil'chik, *Drevnerusskaia ikonografiia monastyrei, khramov i gorodov XVI–XVIII vv.* [Old Russian Iconography of the Monasteries, Churches and Cities in the XVI–XVIII cc.] (Saint-Petersburg: Kolo, 2017).

3 When the sins of Novgorod citizens were about to give rise to a disastrous flood from the Lake Ilmen, a devastative fire and pestilence, by virtue of St Varlaam's prayer and by protection of Mother of God the city was not destroyed by flood, but the plague and fire did strike Novgorod in 1508. According to Dmitrii Likhachov, the legend responding to these events was created after the second Transfiguration cathedral had been built in the Khytun monastery in 1515 with a staircase leading to the roof, where one was bestowed with a panoramic view of Novgorod and the Lake Ilmen hovering above the city. Dmitrii Likhachev, *Novgorod Velikii. Ocherk istorii kul'tury Novgoroda XI–XVII vv.* [Novgorod the Great. Study of the History of Novgorod Culture in XI–XVII cc.] (Moscow: Sovetskaia Rossiia, 1959), 90.

4 Petr Gusev, *Novgorod XVI v. po izobrazheniiu na khutynskoi ikone 'Videnie ponomaria Tarasiia'* [The XVI century Novgorod in the Icon 'The Vision of the Sexton Tarasiy'] (Saint-Petersburg, 1900), 7–66.



FIG. 1. THE FACETED PALACE. NOVGOROD THE GREAT, 1433. 1.1 THE NORTHERN AND THE WESTERN FACADES. 1.2 THE EASTERN FACADE. 1.3 THE NORTHERN FACADE. PHOTO AND RECONSTRUCTIONS BY DMITRY YAKOVLEV.

such architectural landscape strikes one as extraneous element in the icon-painting tradition. Though it has long been suggested that these features had been adopted from the European fine art, only several examples and ways of transmission have been researched by Iurii Nevolin.<sup>5</sup>

There is a unique building in Novgorod the Great that bears witness to the presence of the Gothic architectural principles in one of the most important Old Russian cities. The Faceted Palace was erected in

5 Iurii Nevolin, 'Tri litsevye rukopisi XVI v., oformlennye kremlevskim masterom, znatokom i interpretatorom zapadnoevropeiskoi graviury' ['Three Illuminated Manuscripts of the XVI c., executed by the Kremlin Master, the Connoisseur and Interpretator of European Engraving'], *Konferentsiia po istorii srednevekovoi pis'mennosti i knigi. Tezisy dokladov* (Erevan, 1977), 67–68. Iurii Nevolin, 'Novoe o kremlevskikh khudozhnikakh-miniaturistakh XVI v. i sostave biblioteki Ivana Groznogo' ['New Information about the XVI c. Kremlin Miniature-painters and the Collection of Library of Ivan the Terrible'], *Sovetskie arkhivy*, 1 (1982), 68–70. Iurii Nevolin, 'Vliianie idei "Moskva - tretii Rim" na traditsii drevnerusskogo izobrazitel'nogo iskusstva' ['The Influence of the Idea "Moscow - the Third Rome" on the Tradition of Old Russian Art'], *Iskusstvo hristianskogo mira*, 1 (1996), 71–84. Anatolii Turilov, 'O vozmozhnosti nadezhnoi khudozhestvennoi (ikonograficheskoi) datirovki nachala raboty nad Litsevym letopisnym svodom. Predsmertnoe otkrytie Iu.A. Nevolina' ['About the Trustworthy Artistic (Iconographic) Dating of the Beginning of Execution of the Illustrated Chronicle. The Near-Death Finding of Iu.A. Nevolin'], *Russkoe iskusstvo v kontekste mirovoi khudozhestvennoi kul'tury. Nauchnaia konferentsiia k 70-letiiu Muzeia imeni Andreia Rubleva. Tezisy dokladov* (Moscow, 2017), 80–81. Also worth to mention the study of the 1531 miniatures with evident European influence: Rozanova, 'Pamiatniki miniatiury moskovskogo kruga pervoi poloviny XVI veka' ['The Miniatures of Moscow Circle in the First Half of the XVI Century'], *Drevnerusskoe iskusstvo. Khudozhestvennaia kul'tura Moskvyy i prilozhashchikh k nei kniazhestv. XIV–XVI vv.* (Moscow: Nauka, 1970), 258–274.



FIG. 2.1 ICON OF 'THE VISION OF THE KHUTYN SEXTON TARASIY'. THE NOVGOROD STATE UNITED MUSEUM, 1580s–1590s. 2.2 FRAGMENT OF THE ICON OF 'THE VISION OF THE KHUTYN SEXTON TARASIY': DETINETS. AUTHOR'S PHOTO. 2.3 FRAGMENT OF THE ICON OF 'THE VISION OF THE KHUTYN SEXTON TARASIY'. AUTHOR'S PHOTO.

1433 by German master builders and craftsmen of Novgorod in the archbishop's residence,<sup>6</sup> and became a gothic edifice in the city with strong Byzantine architectural legacy. Multiple features make this still existing and recently restored<sup>7</sup> building an exceptional architectural monument, singular in its combination of the constructive and decorative details. Both the complicated layout of the Faceted Palace with the living rooms and representative halls, heated by stoves, and the latrines and lavabo as niches recessed into the walls, were unprecedented in the Old Russian architecture.

6 *Novgorodskaja Pervaia Letopis' starshogo i mladshogo izvodov [The Novgorod First Chronicle]* (Moscow and Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1950), 416.

7 Ilya Antipov, Dmitriy Yakovlev, 'The Faceted Palace in Novgorod the Great. The Main Problems of Restoration', *Architectural Conservation and Restoration in Norway and Russia* (London: Routledge, 2018), 82–98.

As we have mentioned above the plot of the Khutyn' icon enabled the painter to render the Novgorod churches, bell towers, monasteries and fortification with unprecedented degree of detail. Particular interest is evoked by a pair of buildings with stepped gables that appear in this icon. Grigorii Shtender suggested that one of the building with stepped gables, depicted west of St Sophia Cathedral, is the Faceted Palace, built in 1433 by German craftsmen.<sup>8</sup> Regrettably, its upper parts were rebuilt in the 17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> centuries and their forms can be reconstructed only tentatively.<sup>9</sup> Despite the absence of cogent remnants of the steps the graphic reconstructions present the Faceted Palace with the stepped gable based on the image of the Khutyn' icon.

Admittedly the stepped gables are one of the representative elements of the Brick Gothic architecture, and their presence in the Novgorod icon could support the Shtender's hypothesis. However, this assumption is undermined both by another building with a fanciful pair of stepped gables in the icon of 'The Vision of the Sexton Tarasiy' and numerous examples in Russian icons, dating from the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The study of the late medieval Russian icons defined the European prints as the source of certain new architectural motives.<sup>10</sup> Could the case of the Khutyn' icon be the same? Could the building with the stepped gables be rather an element of the fantastic background than a true to life depiction of the Faceted Palace? To answer this question we have explored more than hundred Russian icons and miniatures of the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup>–early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries and the European prints of the 15<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The main goal of this article is to ascertain whether the icon 'The Vision of the Sexton Tarasiy' is a trustworthy source for reconstruction of the Faceted Palace. Another aim is to trace the origins of the European landscape motives and their integration into the Russian icons of the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup>–first third of the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

8 Elisa Gordienko, 'Izobrazheniia Novgoroda na ikonakh XVI–XVII vv. i sviaz' ikh s obshchestvenno-politicheskoi situatsiei svoego vremeni' ['Images of Novgorod in the XVI–XVII cc. Icons and their Connection with Social and Political Situation of this Time'], *Novgorodskii istoricheskii sbornik*, 3 (13) (1989), 98–109, footnote 10.

9 Irina Kalugina, Dmitriy Yakovlev, and Ekaterina Ruzayeva, 'Arkhitektura Vladychnoy palaty Novgorodskogo Kremlya po materialam issledovaniy 2006–2008 godov' ['The Architectural Peculiarities of the Faceted Palace in Novgorod Kremlin (Investigations of 2006–2008)'], *Novgorod i Novgorodskaya zemlya. Iskusstvo i restavratsiya*, 3 (2008), 140–178.

10 Nevolin, 'Vliianie idei "Moskva – tretii Rim" na traditsii drevnerusskogo izobrazitel'nogo iskusstva', 71–84.

The article deals with the following problems: 1) analysis of the architectural background in icons with main focus on the images of the buildings with stepped gable; 2) survey of the analogies in the contemporary Russian illuminated manuscripts; 3) comparison of the observed elements with the European prints of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries and search for the sources of the image with the stepped gable; 4) conclusion whether a pre-existing edifice – the Faceted Palace could give rise to appearance of the building with the stepped gables on the Khutyn' icon.

This article ventures to study only one of the aspects of the vast theme 'Architecture and Icon', and to comprehend how the European traits merged into the architectural background of the late medieval Russian icon-painting.

### THE STEPPED GABLE IN THE ARCHITECTURAL BACKGROUND OF RUSSIAN ICONS

The late medieval Russian icons had a compound architectural landscape, assembled of the Late Palaiologan forms and some new elements, that enriched previously laconic scenery. Several recent articles explore the cultural dialog of the orthodox post-Byzantine Rus' and Renaissance post-Reformation Europe, and register Gothic elements in the architectural background of Pskov icons since 1530s.<sup>11</sup> In accordance with the general complication of the icon-painting in the 16<sup>th</sup> century the range of architectural forms extended: new symbolic compositions and narrative cycles required advanced kind of scenery – majestic, fascinating and sophisticated.<sup>12</sup>

Among the architectural motives of the evident European origin are the following building types: a castle, a palazzo, a cross-gabled building, an edifice with hip roof and balustrade. Besides the late

11 Engelina Smirnova, 'Kontakty i protivostoianie russkoi i zapadno-evropeiskoi khudozhestvennoi kul'tury v XVI stoletii. Nekotorye nabliudeniia' ['Contacts and Opposition between Russian and European Art in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century: Some Observations'], *Actual Problems of Theory and History of Art*, VI (2016), 242–251. Aleksandr Preobrazhenskii, 'Zapadnye motivy i formy v postvizantiiskoi zhivopisi Moskovii. Predvaritel'nye razmyshleniia' ['Western Motifs and Forms in Post-Byzantine Painting of Muscovy. Preliminary Thoughts'], *Actual Problems of Theory and History of Art*, VI (2016), 252–266.

12 Preobrazenskij, 'La Sapienza si è costruita una casa. Rappresentazioni architettoniche nell'iconografia russa', *Il tempio, il palazzo, la città nell'icona russa* (Vicenza: Terra ferma, 2006), 9–47. The range of new details also included elements of the wooden architecture: the tall church is flanked by two wooden belfries in the icon 'The Vision of Evlogii' of the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century from Solvychevodsk (State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow).



FIG. 3. TYPES OF IMAGES OF BUILDING WITH THE STEPPED GABLE IN RUSSIAN ICONS OF THE SECOND HALF OF THE 16<sup>TH</sup> – FIRST THIRD OF THE 17<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY.

3.1 IMAGE 1 – FRAGMENT OF THE ICON OF PETER AND FEVRONIA OF MUROM WITH HAGIOGRAPHICAL SCENES. MUROM ART AND HISTORY MUSEUM, 1618.

3.2 IMAGE 2 – ISTOMA SAVIN, FRAGMENT OF THE ICON OF SAINT METROPOLITAN PETER WITH HAGIOGRAPHICAL SCENES. STATE TRETYAKOV GALLERY (MOSCOW), THE EARLY 17<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY.

3.3 IMAGE 3 – FRAGMENT OF THE ICON OF THE CONCEPTION OF THE VIRGIN MARY. CENTRAL ANDREY RUBLEV MUSEUM (MOSCOW), THE LATE 16<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY.

3.4 IMAGE 3 – NAZARY ISTOMIN SAVIN, FRAGMENT OF THE ICON OF THE DORMITION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD. MOSCOW STATE INTEGRATED ART AND HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURAL AND NATURAL LANDSCAPE MUSEUM-RESERVE, 1621.

3.5 IMAGE 4 – NIKIFOROS SAVIN, FRAGMENT OF THE ICON OF SAINT THEODORE OF AMASEA (TYRON) AS DRAGON-SLAYER. STATE RUSSIAN MUSEUM (ST PETERSBURG), THE FIRST QUARTER OF THE 17<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY.

medieval icons are distinguished by abundance of details: spires, turrets, dormers, chimneys and flapping flags are among the novelties. It was the cityscapes with such impressive buildings that fuelled imagination of the icon-painters. Generally the cities arise surrounded by the fortification walls with towers of various shapes

(rectangular, circular or octagonal) and detailed rendition of merlons, machicolations and several spires.

The buildings with the stepped gable can be found among these manifold architectural motives of the icons at least since the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and survive as a recurring element in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Depending on the angle or point of view chosen by an icon-painter there are four kinds of images:

*Image 1* — frontal view of a building with a stepped gable;

*Image 2* — frontal view of the facade and side view of the stepped gable;

*Image 3* — foreshortened view of the building: front elevation, lateral facade and slope of the roof, occasionally one can see the rear step pattern (e.g. the building in Detinets in 'The Vision of the Sexton Tarasiy');

*Image 4* — the slopes of roof are visible on either side of the stepped gable, if both lateral facades are shown, the building seems to broaden with distance.

To determine the origin of the architectural motive one has to take into consideration the chronology of its appearance in the icons, but it is a challenging task due to the lack of certain dates. However, some icons might precede 'The Vision of the Sexton Tarasiy' that belongs to the 1580–1590s.<sup>13</sup> The icon of Saint Nicholas from the third quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> century displays the stepped gables in a hagiographical scene (Rostov Kremlin State Museum, Figure 4.1), where St Nicholas brought a young boy Basil back to his parents after a year of slavery. It is the house with a pair of stepped gables that the parents exit to meet their son welcomed by the dogs on the foreground. The stepped gable is used both on top of the façade and on the slanted part above the stairs that Basil's parents descend. The gables differ in color from the walls and stand out as ornament in otherwise traditional architectural background.

The next examples with vague date belong to the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. A number of buildings with stepped gables appear in the scenery of the icon of Crucifixion with the New Testament scenes (Novgorod State United Museum) both as an element of the cityscape and in a unique variation of the church image. Thus the

<sup>13</sup> The attached chapel 'pridelets' in St Anthony's monastery appeared between 1580 and 1594, and its presence on the detailed rendition of the monastery provides the date for the Khutyn icon. Mil'chik, *Drevnerusskaia ikonografiia monastyrei, khramov i gorodov XVI–XVIII vv.*, 135.



FIG. 4. THE BUILDINGS WITH THE STEPPED GABLE IN RUSSIAN ICONS. 4.2 AUTHOR'S PHOTO; 4.1 AND 4.3–4.5 DRAWINGS BY ANASTASIA VOEVODA.

4.1 FRAGMENT OF THE ICON OF SAINT NICHOLAS. ROSTOV KREMLIN STATE MUSEUM, THE THIRD QUARTER OF THE 16<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY.

4.2 FRAGMENT OF THE ICON OF CRUCIFIXION WITH THE NEW TESTAMENT SCENES. NOVGOROD STATE UNITED MUSEUM, THE SECOND HALF OF THE 16<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY.

4.3 FRAGMENT OF THE ICON OF SAINT VARLAAM OF KHUTYN'. YAROSLAVL ART MUSEUM, THE SECOND HALF OF THE 16<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY.

4.4 ISTOMA SAVIN, FRAGMENT OF THE ICON OF THE VIRGIN OF VLADIMIR WITH 18 SCENES OF ITS MIRACLES. PERM ART GALLERY, 1580s.

4.5 ISTOMA SAVIN, FRAGMENT OF THE ICON OF SAINT METROPOLITAN PETER WITH HAGIOGRAPHICAL SCENES. STATE TRETYAKOV GALLERY (MOSCOW), THE EARLY 17<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY.

Jerusalem Temple (marked by the torn red veil) is decorated with a pyramid of 5 stepped gables that resemble *zakomara* or keeled gables (*kokoshnik*) typical for the church buildings on icons (Figure 4.2). A tall house with both front and rear step pattern (*Image 3*, Figure 4.3) akin to the building in Detinets is depicted in one of the miraculous scenes of the icon of Saint Varlaam of Khutyn' with hagiographical scenes (Yaroslavl Art Museum).

The 1580s saw another icon with the motive of interest to us. Istoma Savin painted the icon of the Virgin of Vladimir with 18 scenes of its miracles (Perm Art Gallery). He depicted the building with stepped gable and red spire above the ridge (*Image 3*, Figure 4.4) adjoining the Dormition cathedral in Moscow Kremlin twice. Coincidentally, the fantastic landscape of Jerusalem in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century icon of the Conception of the Virgin Mary (The Central Andrey Rublev Museum, Moscow) includes the foreshortened view of the building with the stepped gable (*Image 3*, Figure 3.3). Therefore, the images of an edifice similar to the one in the Detinets in Khutyn' icon are discovered at least in four icons of the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Obviously the European elements make the buildings with the stepped gables, such as in the icon of Nativity of the Virgin Mary from the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries (The Central Andrey Rublev Museum, Moscow) rather imposing. The edifice in the upper part of the icon has elaborate details such as triple arcade on the lateral facade, round windows and three towers above the ridge, the one in the lower part has a two-toned lateral facade with lobed arch to render its interior (*Image 3*, Figure 5.1; 5.2).

The icons of the so-called Stroganov School were known for their finesse and refined architectural background. In the early 17<sup>th</sup> century icon of Saint metropolitan Peter with hagiographical scenes (State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow) the aforementioned Istoma Savin depicted the stepped gable at least in 7 scenes. Among them there are the front elevations in the cityscape (*Image 2*, Figure 3.2), the edifice in the middle ground with conflicting views on the roof slope and steps (*Image 3*), the stepped gable is included twice in the multi-gable roof (Figure 4.5; 5.3). The icon of Saint Theodore of Amasea (Tyron) as dragon-slayer of the first quarter of the 17<sup>th</sup> century by Nikiforos Savin (State Russian Museum, St Petersburg) provides a rare example of the *Image 4* (Figure 3.5). The building rising above the fortification wall has the stepped gable in the central part and several descending steps of triangular gables to the right. While the lateral facade is depicted in foreshortened view, both slopes of the roof are shown (with a tower above one).<sup>14</sup>

14 Another icon by Nikiforos Savin – ‘Angel guarding the sleeping’ (State Russian Museum, St Petersburg) has a simple front elevation *Image 1*.

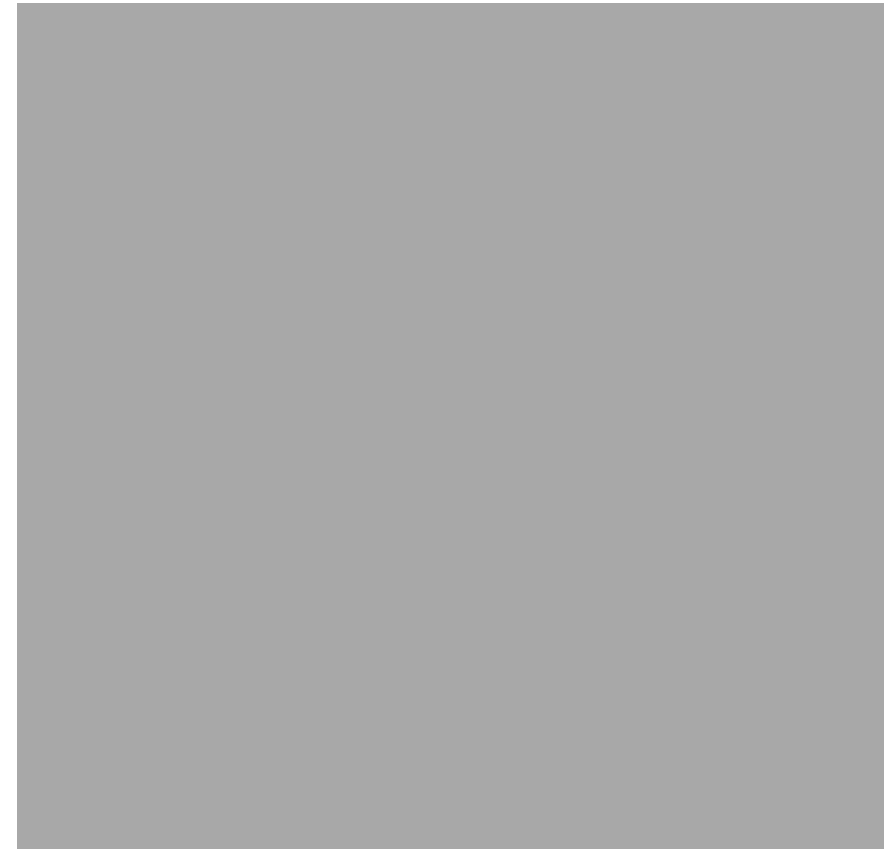


FIG. 5. THE BUILDINGS WITH THE STEPPED GABLE IN RUSSIAN ICONS RICH IN DETAILS.

5.1–5.2 FRAGMENTS OF THE ICON OF NATIVITY OF THE VIRGIN MARY. CENTRAL ANDREY RUBLEV MUSEUM (MOSCOW), THE TURN OF THE 16<sup>TH</sup>–17<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES.

5.3 ISTOMA SAVIN, FRAGMENT OF THE ICON OF SAINT METROPOLITAN PETER WITH HAGIOGRAPHICAL SCENES. STATE TRETYAKOV GALLERY (MOSCOW), THE EARLY 17<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY.

5.4 FRAGMENT OF THE ROYAL DOOR WITH THE EVANGELIST MATHEW. YAROSLAVL STATE HISTORICAL-ARCHITECTURAL AND ART MUSEUM-RESERVE, THE FIRST THIRD OF THE 17<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY.

Thus the building with stepped gable could make several appearances in an icon, and by and large was an alternative for the triangular gable, ogee and lobed gables in the multi-gable roof. Image of a building with an elevated stepped gable and deferred

gables was common in icons of the late 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> century. Architectural background of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century icon by Istoma Savin includes the edifice with central triple bochka-roof and diverse side gables – stepped and triangular (Figure 4.5). The Khutyn' icon itself gives another example of this architectural motive: the central tower-like part of the building (probably St Luke church on Lukina street) is flanked by a pair of stepped gables (Figure 2.3). Novgorod icon-painter of the 'The Vision of the Sexton Tarasiy' assembled the St Luke's church in a manner akin to Istoma Savin, both used wide arches on facades and colored their edifices in two tones to locate the scenes in the interior.

It is worth to mention that once assimilated, the buildings with stepped gables share the details and ornaments with other motives of the architectural background. The facades are painted in bright colors, while the outline and floral ornaments are traced in white. The upper part of the facade below the gable of any shape often is wider and has a kind of an architrave cornice. In accordance with the traditional icon-painting methods the windows and portals are depicted from several points of view, wide doorframes and veils indicate the indoor scenes.

Various images of buildings with the stepped gables appear in the cityscape of the icons from the first third of the 17<sup>th</sup> century on regular basis. The front elevation of one of them (*Image 1*) is present in the landscape of the scene 'Departure of a peccant soul' on the deacons' door, painted in 1607 by elder Tryphon (Kirillo-Belozersky Museum). The Feast icons for the Dormition church at Paromenie in Pskov ca 1613 (The Pskov State United Museum) witness the buildings with stepped gables in typical architectural scenery (*Image 3*) of Annunciation and Presentation of Jesus Christ at the Temple. In 1621 Nazary Istomin Savin depicted the house with front and rear stepped gable along with the long-lived late Byzantine forms (*Image 3*) in the icon of Dormition of the Mother of God (The Moscow State Integrated Art and Historical Architectural and Natural Landscape Museum-Reserve, Figure 3.4). Even the evangelist Mathew on the royal door (Yaroslavl State Historical-Architectural and Art Museum-Reserve) is shown in front of the tall house with stepped gable (*Image 3*). The elaborate architectural background of this royal door strikes with a number of details like roof tiles and chimney (Figure 5.4). To conclude this survey one might mention the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century canopy

of the royal doors with the Last Supper (Yaroslavl State Historical-Architectural and Art Museum-Reserve) where the building with stepped gable outlooks the group of apostles on the right side of Christ

In summary the stepped gable was commonly used in the icons of the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> – the first third of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, made in several cities and illustrating a variety of scenes. Therefore, it is worth to look for the element that became widespread in the icon-painting in the last third of the 16<sup>th</sup> century in the contemporary illuminated manuscripts.

### THE BUILDINGS WITH THE STEPPED GABLE IN THE RUSSIAN ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

It is important to note that the 16<sup>th</sup> century saw the growing interest to the Russian history, and the development of new narratives from hagiography, panegyric and legends called forth the representations of certain places and scenes following chronological sequence. In effect, Russian cities were the scenes of action in hundreds of miniatures of the Illustrated Chronicle of Ivan the Terrible (1568–1576), and individual features of some prominent church buildings were introduced to otherwise usual architectural background<sup>15</sup>.

The rapidly expanding assortment of books required new iconography for thousands of compositions from the scratch. Iurii Nevolin has traced a number of novelties in the illuminated books of Ivan the Terrible back to the printed books and prints of the prominent Northern European masters. The European books and engravings from the libraries of the first Russian Tsar and the metropolitan bishop were taken as models for improved Russian books fit for the new Holy Realm – the Third Rome – the Moscow Rus'.<sup>16</sup> As a result, the Russian miniaturists cited details of the European architectural landscape. The exotic buildings of Venice, Nuremberg, Erfurt and Damascus were included into the views of Jerusalem and Constantinople.

<sup>15</sup> Podobedova, *Miniatiury russkikh istoricheskikh rukopisei. K istorii russkogo litsevoogo letopisaniia*, 172, 192–194, 317–319. Gordienko, *Novgorod v XVI v. i ego dukhovnaia zhizn'*, 400.

<sup>16</sup> Nevolin, 'Vliianie idei "Moskva - tretii Rim" na traditsii drevnerusskogo izobrazitel'nogo iskusstva', 72–83.



FIG. 6. FRAGMENTS OF THE MINIATURES IN THE ILLUSTRATED CHRONICLE OF IVAN THE TERRIBLE, 1568–1576.

The stepped gables can be found in abundance in the scenery of the Illustrated Chronicle of Ivan the Terrible (1568–1576) and in the 1560s–1570s Hagiography of St Nicholas (The Russian State Library). The architectural and landscape background of the miniatures was arranged to divide the scenes that happened either in diverse locations or at different time. To achieve multiformity the illustrators took

advantage of all the architectural images at hand: the late Byzantine elements, the motives of the cityscape from European prints and recognizable details of the late 15<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> century cathedrals in Moscow Kremlin.<sup>17</sup> Plenty of the sketchy buildings with stepped gables appear in the miniatures, and one can find all the four abovementioned types of *Images* (Figure 6). Either the upper part of the stepped gable is visible between the neighbouring houses or the full-length edifice functions as a background of a separate scene, while next to the vertical edge of the page the facade can be half cropped. Alike other forms of gable, the stepped one is often shown with roof slopes and a spire. Also the Illustrated Chronicle of Ivan the Terrible appears to contain the earliest variations of the multi-gabled buildings with the motive of interest: the stepped gable is accompanied by two bochka-like roofs, or a pair of stepped gables flanks an elaborate edifice. Thus the illuminated manuscripts executed in 1568–1576 antecedes both images of the Khutyn' icon: the building in Detinets and the fantastic building with doubled stepped gable.

Part of the miniatures of the Hagiography of St Nicholas and three illuminated manuscripts of the Chudov monastery collection (the 1560s–1570s, stored at the Russian State Library) are rich in forms of the evident European provenance.<sup>18</sup> The most striking cityscapes of the Hagiography of St Nicholas and the 'Tale of the Dormition of the Virgin' by Pseudo-John the Theologian exhibit variegated towers and buildings with balconies, spires and stepped gables (*Image 2 and 3*, Figure 7, 8.1). The latter include houses with front and rear stepped gables similar to the edifice in the Detinets in the Khutyn' icon. These examples along with the Godunov's Psalter 1591 (The Moscow Kremlin Museums, Figure 8.2) testify that the illuminated manuscripts contemporaneous to the icon 'The Vision of the Sexton Tarasiy' made ample use of images of this kind.

17 Curiously the shell-shaped ornaments are present in the tympana of the Archangel cathedral even in illustrations of some events that had happened before Aloisio the New rebuilt this church.

18 Nina Kvlividze, 'Egorovskii sbornik (RGB f.98 Sobr. E.E. Egorova. № 1844): K voprosu ob ikonograficheskikh istochnikakh miniatiur' ['Egorov's Manuscript Collection: to the Problem of Iconographic Origins of the Miniatures'], *Paleografiia, kodikologiia, diplomatika: sovremennyi opyt issledovaniia grecheskikh, latinskikh i slavianskikh rukopisei i dokumentov* (Moscow, 2013), 167–169. Nina Kvlividze, 'Tsikl Uspeniia Bogoroditsy v russkoi monumental'noi zhivopisi i miniatiure vtoroi poloviny XVI v.' [The Cycle of the Dormition in Russian Frescoes and Miniatures in the second half of the XVI c.], *Trudy Otdela drevnerusskoi literatury*, LXIV (2016), 704–731.





FIG. 7. FRAGMENTS OF THE MINIATURES IN THE ILLUMINATED HAGIOGRAPHY OF ST NICHOLAS. RUSSIAN STATE LIBRARY (RGB F.37. SOBR. T.F. BOLSHAKOVA №15), THE 1560s–1570s.

The subject of punishment for the people's sins is common for the Khutyn' icon and the illuminated Apocalypse. The illustration of the vision of Babylon's destruction from the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries Apocalypse from Kholmogory (The Russian National Library: RNB. Q.I.1138, l. 61) presents a panoramic view of the city on fire with a harbour, where the ships perish after the angel has thrown a grindstone into the sea.<sup>19</sup> Accidentally, one can spot a building with stepped gable in this miniature (*Image 3*). The resemblance of the narrative and aerial view of the city makes one wonder whether

19 Galina P. Chiniakova, 'K voprosu o slozhenii ikonografii russkogo litsevogo Apokalipsisa' ['On the Composition of the Iconography of Russian Illuminated Apocalypse'], *Germenevtika drevnerusskoi literatury*, 16–17 (2014), 1036, 1052.



FIG. 8.1. FRAGMENTS OF THE MINIATURES IN THE ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS OF THE CHUDOV MONASTERY COLLECTION. RUSSIAN STATE LIBRARY (RGB F. 98. SOBR. E.E. EGOROVA № 1844), THE 1560s–1570s.

8.2. FRAGMENT OF A MINIATURE IN THE GODUNOV'S PSALTER. MOSCOW KREMLIN MUSEUMS (KN-136, L. 336 OB.), 1591.

a similar manuscript could inspire the icon-painter to depict the Vision of the Sexton Tarasiy as a panorama of Novgorod.

Consequently, the buildings with stepped gables emerge in the background of the Old Russian illuminated manuscripts since the late 1560s–1570s, and have no real architectural prototype. To determine the origin of the motive we suggest to review the stepped gables in the European 15<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> century prints.

#### THE STEPPED GABLE IN THE ARCHITECTURAL BACKGROUND OF THE EUROPEAN PRINTS

Discovery of the real world and emergence of landscape at first as background of the genre painting and later as a freestanding genre was one of the most prominent Renaissance achievements. The Renaissance concept of landscape was based on a gradual surrender



FIG. 9. FRAGMENT OF THE ILLUSTRATION TO 'CANTICUM CANTICORUM', PRINTED IN THE NETHERLANDS, CA 1460–1465 (WOODCUT).

of the medieval symbolic scheme of the world, it developed both realistic and fantasy-idealistic representation of nature.

The scenery of the 15<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> century European prints contributed greatly to the evolvement of the landscape as genre. This process was most intensive in the northern Europe – Germany and the Netherlands. According to the abovementioned concept the landscape relied on the ideal representation of the world, but still included some elements of the reality. Therefore, the image of a city often comprised the real forms of the sacral and civil medieval architecture.

There are several types of architectural background in the European prints. Firstly, the image of either real or mythological city (e.g. Troy) is enclosed in the fortification walls. The densely placed houses, palaces and temples mirror medieval walled city plan. A castle large enough to be a town fortress belongs to the same type.

Secondly, the inner part of the city was frequently pictured as a place of the action for the scenes happened on the streets or squares. The urban environment usually was represented by the full-length images of the buildings.

Thirdly, one can point out the image of a free-standing edifice: a house, castle or church. As a rule, these buildings were depicted close to the edges and formed a kind of the scene-wings.

The houses with triangular and stepped gables can be found in all three types of the cityscape, and are either depicted full-length or display only the gable. The front elevation and foreshortened views of the buildings with stepped gables appear in the architectural background, sometimes along with the rear step pattern. Occasionally the gables have complicated shape or are decorated with crocket, cornices and other details.

The earliest images of the buildings with stepped gables in the European prints emerged in the 1460s. As was stated above, this kind of gables made appearance in the Russian icons about a century later. Comparison of the European and the Old Russian artworks gave the following results.

The *Image 1* of the Russian illuminated manuscripts and icons might have been inspired by the woodcut illustrations to 'The Song of Songs' ('Canticum Canticorum'), printed in the Netherlands in 1460–1465 (Figure 9).<sup>20</sup> Yet the Nuremberg Chronicle by Hartmann Schedel, printed by Anton Koberger in 1493, can be considered the likeliest source.<sup>21</sup> Michael Wolgemut and Wilhelm Pleydenwurff composed several hundred woodcut illustrations that depicted various cities and lands. Plenty of the buildings with stepped gables are present in the views of such cities as Nuremberg, Magdeburg, Bamberg, Lübeck, Strassburg, Buda (Figure 10). Remarkably, some of these buildings turn up in the Northern Peloponnese landscape and even in a fantastic scenery of Troy.

Albrecht Dürer, the ingenious master of the Northern Renaissance was an apprentice in the Wolgemut' workshop, and the stepped gables frequently appeared in his early woodcut illustrations for

20 Kseniia Egorova, *Ocherki po istorii i tekhnike graviury. Ch. 3. Niderlandskaja graviura 15–16 vekov [Essays on the History and Technique of Engraving. Part 3. The Dutch Engravings 15–16 c.]* (Moscow: Izobrazitel'noe iskusstvo, 1987), 101–103; Peter Parshall, Rainer Schoch, *Origins of European Printmaking: Fifteenth-Century Woodcuts and Their Public* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005); Peter Parshall, *The Woodcut in Fifteenth-Century Europe* (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 2009).

21 Galina Kislykh, *Ocherki po istorii i tekhnike graviury. Ch. 2. Nemetskaia graviura 15–16 vekov [Essays on the History and Technique of Engraving. Part 2. The German Engravings 15–16 c.]* (Moscow: Izobrazitel'noe iskusstvo, 1987), 79–81; Daniel De Simone, Lilian Armstrong, Daniela Laube, *A Heavenly Craft: The Woodcut in Early Printed Books* (New York: George Braziller, 2004); *Medieval Woodcut Illustrations: City Views and Decorations from the Nuremberg Chronicle*, ed. by Carol Belanger Grafton (New York: Dover, 2013).



FIG. 10. ILLUSTRATION TO 'THE NUREMBERG CHRONICLE' BY HARTMANN SCHEDEL. VIEW OF BAMBERG, 1493 (WOODCUT).

Basel editions. Among the examples there are the illustrations to 'The Book of the Knight in the Tower' by Chevalier de La Tour Landry (1493)<sup>22</sup> and to the famous 'Ship of Fools' by Sebastian Brant (1494, satire 6, 10, 27, 31, 40, 42, 44, 54, 58, 62, 68, 71, 93, 96, 106, 110).<sup>23</sup> The early copper engravings of Dürer were no exception, for instance, 'The Ill-Assorted Couple' also depicts the houses with stepped gables (ca 1494–1495, Figure 11.1).<sup>24</sup>

It is worth to emphasize that the frontal view of the building with stepped gable (*Image 1*) was not pervasive in the European prints. Typically, this architectural motive is a part of a more complicated background and corresponds to the other three *Images*, that were observed in Old Russian icons.

The *Image 2* with the frontal view of the facade and side view of the stepped gable can be seen in the aforementioned woodcut illustrations to 'The Song of Songs'. Meanwhile, Master I.A.M. of Zwolle in the

22 Alen Bore, *Al'brekht Diurer. Graviury [Albrecht Dürer. The Engravings]* (Moscow: Magma, 2008), 63, 67, 85.

23 *Ibid.*, 107, 110, 117, 119, 131, 139, 150, 166, 169, 175; *Albrecht Dürer*, ed. by Christof Metzger (Munich, London, New York: Prestel, 2019), 86, 92.

24 *The Complete Engravings, Etchings and Drypoints of Albrecht Dürer*, ed. by Walter L. Strauss (New York: Dover, 1973), 10, Cat. 5; Bore, *Al'brekht Diurer. Graviury*, 518.



FIG. 11.1 ALBRECHT DÜRER, FRAGMENT OF THE ENGRAVING 'THE ILL-ASSORTED COUPLE', CA 1494–1495.

11.2. MASTER I.A.M. OF ZWOLLE, FRAGMENT OF THE ENGRAVING 'LAMENTATION OF CHRIST', CA 1475–1490.

engraving 'Lamentation of Christ' (ca 1475–1490) rendered both the front and the rear stepped gables spatially (Figure 11.2).<sup>25</sup>

The largest number of the European sources can be proposed for the rather complex and fairly interesting *Image 3*, that displayed the foreshortened view of the building: front elevation, lateral facade and slope of the roof, occasionally with the rear stepped gable. These images in the European prints generally present spatial view of the front and the rear stepped gables.

Most of the already mentioned prints have this kind of image: the woodcut illustrations to 'The Song of Songs' and to the Nuremberg Chronicle by Hartmann Schedel, the engraving by Master I.A.M. of Zwolle. The list of examples can be complemented with the illustrations to Terence's 'Eunuchus', printed in 1486 by Conrad Dinkmut in Ulm (Figure 12).<sup>26</sup>

25 Egorova, *Ocherki po istorii i tekhnike graviury. Ch. 3. Niderlandskaja graviura 15–16 vekov*, 107–108; David Landau, Peter Parshall, *The Renaissance Print 1470–1550* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994).

26 Kislykh, *Ocherki po istorii i tekhnike graviury. Ch. 2. Nemetskaia graviura 15–16 vekov*, 78–79; Parshall, Schoch, *Origins of European Printmaking: Fifteenth-Century Woodcuts and Their Public*; Parshall, *The Woodcut in Fifteenth-Century Europe*.



FIG. 12. ILLUSTRATION TO TERENCE'S 'EUNUCHUS', 1486 (WOODCUT).

The 16<sup>th</sup> century works of two prominent Northern Renaissance masters display the buildings with stepped gable. The woodcut by Hans Holbein the Younger 'The Table of Cebes' or 'The Picture of Human Life' (1522) contains five images of the stepped gable



FIG. 13. HANS HOLBEIN THE YOUNGER, FRAGMENT OF THE ENGRAVING 'THE TABLE OF CEBES', 1522 (WOODCUT).

including the rear one (Figure 13).<sup>27</sup> In the 1550s–1560s Pieter Bruegel the Elder composed seven drawings for the prints: 'Wooded Region' (from the series 'Large Landscapes'), 'Hope' (from the series 'The Virtues'), 'The Fair of Hoboken', 'The Wedding of Mopsus and Nisa' (Figure 14), 'Spring', 'Summer' and 'The Triumph of Time'.<sup>28</sup> These drawings depict the houses with stepped gables as free-standing buildings, and sometimes show the roof and rear gable.

Extra architectural elements often make appearance upon the roofs of the buildings. Dormers are widespread and can be found in the early examples (illustrations to 'The Song of Songs'), as well as in the later works ('The Table of Cebes' by Hans Holbein the Younger and engravings after the drawings by Pieter Bruegel the

27 Vasilisa Pakhomova, *Grafika Gansa Gol'beina Mladshogo [The Graphic Art of Hans Holbein the Younger]* (Leningrad: Iskusstvo, 1989), 33, 153; Giulia Bartrum, *German Renaissance Prints 1490–1550* (London: British Museum Press, 1995).

28 Sellink, *Bruegel: Complete Paintings, Drawings and Prints* (Ghent: Ludion, 2007), Cat. 31, 75, 88, 148, 150, 156, 175; Pieter Bruegel. *Drawing the World*, ed. by Eva Michel (Munich: Hirmer, 2017), 81, 92, 93, 152.



FIG. 14. 'THE WEDDING OF MOPSUS AND NISA', ENGRAVING AFTER A DRAWING BY PIETER BRUEGEL THE ELDER, 1570.

Elder: 'Wooded Region' and 'The Wedding of Mopsus and Nisa'). The range of examples also includes the engraving 'Hercules at the Crossroads' by Albrecht Dürer (ca 1498–1499).<sup>29</sup> Occasionally the stepped gable appears above the tower as in the woodcut illustration to 'Chevalier délibéré' by Olivier de la Marche (printed in Schiedam in 1498).<sup>30</sup>

The *Image 4*, when the slopes of the roof are visible on either side of the stepped gable, is seldom encountered in the European prints. We managed to find only a couple of cases: the illustration to Terence's 'Eunuchus' (1486) and the engraving after drawing by Pieter Bruegel the Elder 'The Wedding of Mopsus and Nisa' (1570).

29 *The Complete Engravings, Etchings and Drypoints of Albrecht Dürer*, 48–49; *Albrecht Dürer*, 198, 207.

30 Egorova, *Ocherki po istorii i tekhnike graviury. Ch. 3. Niderlandskaja graviura 15–16 vekov*, 104–105; De Simone, Armstrong, Laube, *A Heavenly Craft: The Woodcut in Early Printed Books*; Parshall, *The Woodcut in Fifteenth-Century Europe*.

Therefore by the 1560s the images of the buildings with the stepped gables had been common for the Northern European prints for a century. It is highly likely that the Russian miniature and icon artists, who worked in the third quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, were familiar with some of these prints.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The observed examples and comparison prove the suggested European provenance of the architectural motive. The printed books and prints imported from Europe were the likeliest source of this 'exotic' architecture for the Old Russian icon-painting. Evidently the artists of Ivan the Terrible were attracted by unusual forms of European fine art. The stepped gables were alien for Old Rus' and their image along with other elements of the cityscape from the European prints drew attention of the Russian painters as curiosities belonging to unfamiliar world.

At the same time the 16<sup>th</sup> century saw emergence of the realistic representation of church types in the Russian icon-painting: a church with subsidiary chapels, a church 'under the bell' affiliated with a bell tower, a gate church. However, even these cases display different degree of accuracy that vary between generalized interpretation and portrayal of the most prominent features.<sup>31</sup> The realistic image of the Faceted Palace with the stepped gables in the Khutyn' icon seems highly unlikely, for even the late medieval icon-painters depicted true to life church rather than secular edifices<sup>32</sup>. In the light of the evidence the exceptional case of the archbishop's residence raises doubt.

Since the last third of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the cityscape of the Russian illuminated manuscripts and icons presents an enclosure with the

31 Mil'chik, *Drevnerusskaia ikonografiia monastyrei, khramov i gorodov XVI–XVIII vv.*

32 The sole example of a realistic non church image from the 16<sup>th</sup> century is the Column of Justinian. Two icons (the Intersession of the Mother of God from State Russian Museum and the Exaltation of the Cross from the State Tretyakov Gallery) display the column with the equestrian statue of Justinian that stood next to Hagia Sophia. The miniatures made after the drawing of Hagia Sophia and the column by Theophanes the Greek are the likely prototype for these two icons and four 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> century icon patterns. Justinian became a revered emperor in the 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> century Rus and his stature indicated that the scenes took place in Constantinople (the inscription on the icon of Intersession leaves no doubt of the emperor's identity). Ol'ga Belobrova, 'Statua vizantiiskogo imperatora Iustiniana v drevnerusskikh pis'mennykh istochnikakh i ikonografii' ['The Statue of Byzantine Emperor Justinian in Old Russian Sources and Iconography'], *Vizantiiskii vremennik*, XVII (1960), 114–123.

churches and houses, that frequently have the stepped gables. This motive of interest appears persistently in the Illustrated Chronicle of Ivan the Terrible and the illuminated Hagiography of St Nicholas next to the churches in different cities. For instance, the stepped gables turn up in Moscow Kremlin next to the cathedrals, and even upon the clock tower that Lazar the Serb had built in 1404. Likewise, the Dormition cathedral is adjoined by a building with the stepped gable in Istoma Savin's icon (1580s). The late 16<sup>th</sup> century icon of the Conception of the Virgin Mary and the illustration of the Psalm 86 in Godunov's Psalter (1591) place a house with the stepped gables next to a temple. The same combination can be traced in the 17<sup>th</sup> century icons. From this perspective the building in the Detinets next to Novgorod St Sophia cathedral in the Khutyn' icon is another example of this pattern.

Unfortunately, the observations made during restoration of the Faceted Palace failed to determine the shape of the gables. The edifice obviously had a cross gabled roof: one of the ridges was constructed along the North-South axis and the other ridge was lined along the East-West axis. While the eastern facade used to have 1 or 2 gables, the northern and southern facades were also likely to have gables. The data for reconstruction of the original forms of the Faceted Palace is insufficient, and according to the analysis, the icon 'The Vision of the Sexton Tarasiy' can't fill the lacuna. Ch. Herrmann has observed that since mid-14<sup>th</sup> century the stepped gable appears in 77% of edifices in the architecture of the Teutonic lands, but the high-pitched triangular gable was still in use till the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>33</sup> At the same time, the restoration of the church of St Sergius of Radonezh (1459) in Novgorod disclosed the remnants of the high-pitched roof gable. This gate church is located in a close proximity to the Faceted Palace (1433), and both buildings could have the same kind of gable.

It proved impossible to rely on the icon 'The Vision of the Sexton Tarasiy' in reconstruction of the Faceted Palace, but the stepped gables in the background of Russian icons and illuminated manuscripts exhibit connections between Old Russian and European art. The stepped gable was one of the several European architectural forms introduced into Russian painting in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

33 Christofer Herrmann, *Mittelalterliche Architektur im Preussenland. Untersuchungen zur Frage der Kunstlandschaft und -Geographie* (Petersburg: Michael Imhof Verlag, 2007), 88–91.

Among the elements typical for the European prints are tall A-frame houses, towers, elongated edifices with multi-gable roof, cross-gabled buildings.

It is worth to mention the icon of the Ascent from Earth to the Heavenly City (Holy Monastery of the Theotokos Platytera, Corfu, ca 1500) that displays an interesting combination of Byzantine iconography and elements from European art.<sup>34</sup> While Babylon is depicted enclosed in white walls with towers, the stepped gable arises above one of the exquisite buildings (*Image 3*). The conventional means of icon-painting are visible in the architectural background. Several points of view and unrealistic scale enable us compare this icon with the Russian, the former being a similar case, introducing the European architectural motive into the local tradition.

While cityscapes of the late medieval Russian painting often incorporate a 'copy' of exotic architecture, certain images witness the application of the stepped gables as a modified decoration. The pyramid of the stepped gables top the church in the icon of Crucifixion (the Novgorod Museum, Figure 4.2): here the motive of interest becomes an ornament akin to kokoshnik and lacks its functional connection with roof pitches. The multi-gabled buildings of the Illustrated Chronicle of Ivan the Terrible and the Khutyn' icon display similar decorative approach to the architectural image, adding the stepped gable to a striking combination of forms to 'construct' the edifice. Thus the elements of the customary European landscape were blended with traditional architectural background of the medieval Russian paintings and used to enrich the sophisticated and majestic scenery in the miniatures and icons of the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

34 Ćurčić, Hadjistryphonos, *Architecture as Icon: Perception and Representation of Architecture in Byzantine Art*, 344–346.

**ILYA ANTIPOV, ALEXANDRA TRUSHNIKOVA, MAKSIM KOSTYRIA:**  
ARCHITECTURE AND ICON:

THE ORIGIN OF THE STEPPED GABLES IN THE ICON 'THE VISION OF THE SEXTON TARASIY OF KHUTYN'

**KEYWORDS:** ARCHITECTURAL BACKGROUND; RUSSIAN ICONS OF THE 16<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY; RUSSIAN ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS OF THE 16<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY; WOODCUT BOOK ILLUSTRATIONS; EUROPEAN PRINTS; THE VISION OF THE SEXTON TARASIY

### SUMMARY

The article invites to look afresh at the late 16<sup>th</sup> century Novgorod icon 'The Vision of the Sexton Tarasiy of Khutyn' and the Faceted Palace, built in 1433 by German craftsmen. The stepped gables of the building, located west of St Sophia Cathedral in the icon, were interpreted as realistic image of the upper parts of the Faceted Palace that have not survived. However, the iconographic analysis of more than a hundred of the Russian icons and illuminated manuscripts dating back to the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup>–early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries proved that the stepped gable was a decorative architectural motive, widespread since the 1560s–1570s. The authors classified the images of buildings with stepped gable in the late medieval Russian art, and determined their possible sources among the Northern European prints of the 15<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> centuries. The comprehensive study ascertained that the building in the icon 'The Vision of the Sexton Tarasiy' can't be used for reconstruction of the Faceted Palace. Since 1560s–1570s the schematic representation of the city in Russian art often placed buildings with the stepped gables (initially acquired from the European prints) next to the churches. Panorama of Novgorod in the Khutyn' icon followed this pattern and combined fantastic forms with rather realistic depiction of the church edifices.

### CV

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