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**“Pillar of Faith”**

**The Cult of the Ascetic Saints Simeon Stylites and Sabbas the Sanctified in the Icon Painting of the Peremyshl Diocese of the Ukrainian Church in the 15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Centuries**

This article examines how regional religious identity and hagiography influenced iconography of the two saints of the early Church – Simeon Stylites and Sabbas the Sanctified, both from Asia Minor – in the Peremyshl diocese of the Ukrainian (then called *Rus'ka*) Church of the Kyiv metropolitanate from the 15<sup>th</sup> until the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Peremyshl diocese, the westernmost part of the Kyivan metropolitanate, officially accepted the union in 1691, but for more than half a century its faithful preserved the ancient traditions of iconography and ritual. The cult and iconography of the holy monks Simeon Stylites and Sabbas the Sanctified in particular, reveal the connection with the Byzantine tradition. We can trace this connection on icons of the 15<sup>th</sup>-first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, most of which come from churches dedicated to these saints in villages established during the medieval princely period. From the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, with the intensification of Latinization, the iconography of both saints ceased to develop. The life stories of Simeon Stylites and Sabbas the Sanctified on the icons correspond with their written lives in 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup>-centuries manuscripts and printed books from the churches of the Peremyshl diocese. According to these texts, Simeon Stylites the Elder was the most popular of the stylites, which is also confirmed by the preserved icons.