

Life of Sts. Job and Theodosius of Manyava, and a brief history about the Manyava skete

Compiled and translated by Sava Beljovich

ST. JOB OF MANYAVA

Ivan Knyahynytski was born in the town of Tysmenytsia (now in the Ivano-Frankivsk district in Ukraine) to an Orthodox Rusyn (Ruthenian) family in 1550. Not is much is known about the young Ivan's early life, however it is known that he was educated at the monastery school in Uhniv (today Lviv district) and in Ostrog, which was a center for Orthodoxy after the Union of Brest-Litovsk and the takeover of Ukraine by the Polish.

Ivan as a young man taught at the Ostrog Academy -- an important Orthodox school in Ukraine -- and was invited there personally by the founder of the school, the nobleman Konstanty Vasyl Ostrogski.

Konstanty Vasyl Ostrogski (2nd February 1526 - 13th February 1608) was a Rusyn who was born in Tarnow in Poland. Being of noble birth, he was prince and had lordship over many areas in Tarnow in Lesser Poland. Being one of the few Polish princes who was Orthodox, he actively resisted the efforts of the Papists to force the people of Ukraine after the Union of Brest-Litovsk to accept Papism. He defended the Orthodox people of Ukraine and helped stop the seizure of churches and housed many refugees in his domain. In 1576 he founded the Ostrog Academy, a school for Orthodox Christians which was important in revitalizing usage of Slavonic and Koine Greek in Eastern Europe, as well as translating works by the Holy Fathers. Under Ostrogski's direction, the first printed Bible in Slavonic was produced; the Ostrog Bible. The Ostrog Academy was closed by the Jesuits in 1636.

While Ivan was teaching in Ostrog, a monk from Mount Athos visited the city and the young Ivan wanted to visit the Holy Mountain. He made two visits to Mount Athos in Greece, and on his second trip he lived with his spiritual father on Mount Athos, where he would stay for the next few years. On Mount Athos, the young Ivan would take monastic vows and be tonsured with the name Ezekiel. In 1593 he started work (possibly while visiting Ostrog) on a work that he would finish by 1596, a seminal work against the Uniates called "on the prelest of the Latins". In 1598 he returned to Ukraine with other monks from Mount Athos to collect alms. In 1600-1601, he again returned to Ukraine to help establish and organize monasteries in Ukraine – apparently well known for his spiritual direction by then. Sometime before 1606, he was tonsured into the Greater Schema with the name Job

ST. THEODOSIUS OF MANYVA

St. Theodosius of Manyava was born in 1551, to an Orthodox Rusyn family somewhere in the Carpathian mountains. Very little is known about his early life, however it is known that he was a nephew of St. Job. In his early life he decided to abandon worldly cares and dedicate his life to fulfilling the commandments of Christ. Some time before meeting St. Job, he was tonsured and ordained a Hierodeacon and lived as a hermit in the Carpathian Mountains.

In 1606, Schemamonk Job settled near Krasnopol, on the foothills of the Carpathian Mountains, and soon many monks joined him, all seeking spiritual purity. Soon they moved close to the village of Manyava (Ivano-Frankivsk district). Soon a need was developed to have a priest to serve a Liturgy, and Job, not being a priest, started seeking a monk who would be able to celebrate the Liturgy. In 1608, Hierodeacon Theodosius travelled to Manyava, and very shortly after arriving, Schemamonk Job realized he was the perfect candidate for Hegumen of the monastery. Theodosius was ordained a Hieromonk and became the first Hegumen of the Manyava community, St. Job told St. Theodosius: "Be the pastor and teacher of this flock – gathered by God. You are our Hieromonk and Confessor, you are worthy to be Hegumen and I will help you with my strength for as long as I live." The property was organized in 1611 and a Church was soon dedicated to the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross in 1612. The monastery followed the Athonite rule and soon became known as the "Ukrainian Athos".

Shortly after the founding of the first Church at Manyava, the Theotokos appeared to St. Job in a dream and promised to protect the monastery, and that it would be under her care. Also stating that him and Fr. Theodosius were embarking on the same mission that Sts. Anthony and Theodosius did centuries prior. In response, Schemamonk Job and Fr. Theodosius commissioned a chapel to built in honor of the Annunciation of the Theotokos. Schemamonk Job also traveled to Kiev to venerate the relics of Sts. Anthony and Theodosius, and many of the other Saints of the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra, and received many relics of the Fathers of Kiev which are still housed at the Manyava skete to this day.

An early benefactor of the Manyava Skete was an Athonite Monk named Ivan (Vyshenskyi), himself a student of the Ostrog Academy and a Rusyn. He was a great Apologist against the Uniate heretics. Another benefactor for the Manyava Skete was Fr. Zacharias (Kopystensky) of the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra, who wrote the famous work "Palinodiia", which defended the Orthodox Faith from the Uniates. He also helped translate the Horologion and many works of St. John Chrysostom into Slavonic.

By 1618, the Manyava Skete had 40 monastics, and was overseeing several monasteries in Ukraine, Moldova and Romania spiritually. By 1620, it was granted stavropegial

status by Patriarch Timothy, that meant it was directly subordinate to the Patriarch of Constantinople (at the time, the first Hierarch of the Russian Lands). In 1619, the Orthodox writer Kirill Stavrovetsky in his writings against the Uniates appealed the Manyava monastery and its founders, Sts. Job and Theodosius as authorities and proof for the spiritual correctness of Orthodoxy (which can be found in his work "Mirror of Theology"). In return, Schemamonk Job sent a letter to Kirill Stavrovetsky which praised his work "Confession of Faith" -- and in humility, explained he was a simple monk -- in a letter dated August 23rd 1619. Many turned to the Saints for questioning about the spiritual life and correctness of the Orthodox Faith.

Being strict ascetics, Sts. Job and Theodosius endured much suffering, the persecution of the Jesuits did not weaken their faith, but on the contrary strengthened it. Shortly after being granted stavropegial status, a cathedral church in honor of the Ascension was built in similar style of the cathedral at Vozdvizhensky (now a suburb of Kiev) under the direction of Patriarch Timothy and Fr. Theodosius.

In 1621, the 70 year old Job fell ill and after a short illness, reposed on December 29th, 1621. He was buried in the vestibule of the Ascension cathedral. Not long after his death, Hieromonk Ignatius of Lyubarov, who knew St. Job from staying with him at the Ugornytsky and Manyava skete, composed a short life some time between 1623 and 1628.

The Venerable Hegumen Theodosius continued to lead the monastery, and in 1628, he participated in the First Synodal meeting of the Kiev Metropolinate after the infernal Union of Brest-Litovsk. Led by Metropolitan Job (Boretsky) of Kiev and Gallicia and held at the St. Michael of the Golden Dome monastery in Kiev. Shortly after this Synod, stories about Fr. Theodosius' strict living and asceticism quickly spread, and monastic communities in the Carpathians, Galicia, Volynia, Northern Bukovina, Moldova and Romania all applied to seek spiritual direction from the brotherhood of Manyava. In total, more than 556 monasteries all wished to join the newly flourishing Orthodox brotherhood.

Hegumen Theodosius reposed on September 24th, 1629, and was buried next to his teacher, St. Job. The Crosses placed over their graves soon started to work miracles and soon their graves became a popular pilgrimage destination. Only ten years after the repose of St. Theodosius, the Metropolitan of Kiev and Gallicia, Petro Mohyla, of blessed memory wrote of Manyava saying: "If you want to see the servants of God in human form, then go to the Carpathians, where two hundred angels in human flesh have dedicated their lives to God with their service."

THE MANYAVA SKETE

The Manyava Skete grew to have three more churches and several smaller chapels, along with the main church dedicated to the Exaltation of the Holy Cross and the Ascension Cathedral, a Church was built in the honor of the Martyrs Boris and Gleb, and an underground Church to the Archangel Michael. The skete became well known for its library and an iconostasis painted by the famous Ukrainian iconographer, Jov Kondzelevich which was relocated to the village of Bogorodchany, and today is located in the National Museum in Lviv. A wonder-working icon from Mt. Athos, "The Redeemer Mother of God" was transferred here and is kept in the monastery bell tower, which served as a vault and treasury.

St. Job of Pochaev visited the monastery some time in the 1630s. In 1652, during a plague epidemic in the Carpathian mountains, a Hieromonk by the name of Philaret had a vision of the Theotokos, dressed in a red hegumen's cloak, who came through the monastery gates and entered the Chapel of the Annunciation, and having stopped there, said: "The plague will end". In remembrance of this event, there is an icon, "Hegumenia of the Manyava monastery" kept in the skete. The Theotokos was considered by the monks to be the Directress of the monastery -- since she had appeared twice there -- keeping much in tradition with Mount Athos.

Over the years, the monastery had to be fortified with three defensive towers and walls due to raids by the Turks. The residents from surrounding villages took refuge in the monastery often during these raids. The monastery also became a hospital, due to the climate around the Carpathian mountains being hospitable for those who suffered from respiratory diseases.

In 1740, it was once again given stavropegial status by Patriarch of Constantinople.

Another feature of the Manyava skete, is a hand-carved cave in which hermits lived, measuring around 10 x 3 meters, and it is believed there were monks who carved the cave around the Carpathian Mountains as early as the 13th century. In the cave hermitage of Manyava, a blessed spring started pouring forth in the 17th century, with its water healing many of diseases. This flowed until the closing of the monastery by the Austrians on July 1st, 1785, after the Austrian Emperor Joseph II had outlawed Orthodoxy within his domains, including the occupied Ukraine and other historical Orthodox lands.

In the 19th century, the famous Ukrainian painter Kornily Mikolaevich Ustianovich painted scenes from around the monastery, including the beautiful waterfalls in the area around the skete, which helped create awareness of the monastery's dilapidated state and led to many of the buildings being restored by the Russian government, which has allowed the monastery to survive into the modern period.

During the takeover the Russian lands by the Bolsheviks, the Manyava monastery was spared due to having been closed for well over a century, and its treasures were well hidden in the underground Church of St. Michael, or in the bell tower vault.

Today the Manyava skete stands as a great example of 17th and 18th century architecture, and since the 1990s, has been re-established as a monastery. Shortly thereafter, the blessed spring in the hermitage cave started flowing again.

The icon of the "Hegumenia of the Manyava monastery" is well attested to be wonder-working. Twice the icon started crying. Once in 2004 shortly before the "Orange revolution" and another time in 2012, shortly before the "Euromaidan" revolution and war in Donbass. On multiple occasions, the icon has been reported to stream myrrh as well.

Today in the lands of Russia and Ukraine, Sts. Job and Theodosius are well beloved, with the dates of their repose (December 29th and September 24th) becoming days of remembrance for the Saints, and both of their memories are celebrated on June 24th. There exist many icons of Sts. Job and Theodosius of Manyava. Konstanty Vasyl Ostrogski is also considered by many in the lands of Ukraine and Russia to be a Saint as well, with a commemoration of his memory being on February 26th and many icons existing of him. There is also a commemoration for Sts. Job and Theodosius for "all the Saints of Galicia", which is celebrated locally in Ukraine (in the Lviv region) on the third Sunday after Pentecost.