

Abstract/Résumé analytique

Biblical Parallels in Political Rhetoric: A Case Study of Writings by Ukrainian Hetmans, Their Entourages, and Contemporaries (1640s-70s)

Roman I. Shiyan

This paper explores ideology in seventeenth-century Cossack Ukraine by analyzing the use of religious motifs in political rhetoric from the late 1640s to the late 1670s — a time of foreign invasions and internal power struggles. Based upon the premise that the major factor affecting the incorporation of religious motifs into secular political discourse was the general religiousness of public and private life during that period, this paper investigates how and for what purposes specific biblical motifs were employed.

Religious motifs were used for political purposes by various parties, all of whom belonged to the same cultural-religious space or were familiar with Bible narratives. Agendas and approaches, however, varied. The educated clergy and laity used more developed motifs in a more eloquent presentation, aimed at other educated clergy and laity as their main audiences. In contrast, manifestos with less elaborate use of biblical references and religious motifs issued to the general public, as well as letters by some Cossack officers, served utilitarian propaganda purposes.

Dans cet article, nous étudions l'idéologie cosaque ukrainienne du dix-septième siècle en analysant l'emploi de motifs religieux dans la rhétorique politique à compter de la fin des années 1640 jusqu'à la fin des années 1670, période où ils étaient au prise avec des invasions de l'étranger et aussi avec des luttes politiques internes. En partant du principe que le facteur principal d'incorporation de motifs religieux dans le discours séculier de la politique provenait du fait que durant cette période on trouvait une grande piété générale dans la vie publique et privée, nous explorons le comment et le pourquoi de l'emploi de certains motifs bibliques.

Les motifs religieux furent utilisés à des fins politiques par différents partis qui tous provenaient du même milieu religio-culturel ou qui étaient familiers avec les récits bibliques. Toutefois, les approches et les programmes étaient variés. Les laïques et le clergé cultivés utilisaient des motifs plus développés et dans des présentations éloquentes visant surtout une audience composée principalement d'autres laïques et ecclésiastiques. Par contre, d'autres manifestes utilisaient également des références bibliques et motifs religieux mais moins compliqués et ciblant surtout le grand public. De plus, ils utilisaient du courrier de certains officiers cosaques, servant ainsi des objectifs de propagande utilitaire.

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BIBLICAL PARALLELS IN POLITICAL RHETORIC: A CASE STUDY OF WRITINGS BY UKRAINIAN HETMANS, THEIR ENTOURAGES, AND CONTEMPORARIES (1640s-70s)

Although the political history of Cossack Ukraine in the seventeenth century is well studied, lacunae still exist in research on the ideology of that period. Indeed, scholars face numerous challenges, the most significant ones being contentious methodology and limited primary sources. This study addresses the question: how and for what particular reasons were Biblical parallels projected onto contemporary political events in Ukraine during the 1640s-70s? I will examine this question in the context of the political rhetoric of political figures of the late-seventeenth-century Ukraine.

Answering this question means describing the political situation in Ukraine during this time of foreign invasions and internal power struggle. It also means examining the adaptation of certain ideas to a new political and cultural context, and establishing which parallels — in the form of Biblical passages and separate motifs — were drawn under which circumstances and for what purposes. This study focuses on the use of a number of specific motifs, drawn directly from, or inspired by, the Bible.¹

The incorporation of Biblical parallels into secular political discourse had its roots in popularization of “sacred” Christian teaching by the clergy and the deep religiosity of public and private everyday life in medieval and early modern Europe. The eminent Russian medievalist Aron Gurevich once pointed out that in Medieval Europe “we find an impressive attempt to transform Christian doctrine from the learned heritage of the ecclesiastical élite into the world-view of the broadest strata of the population.”² Gurevich continues by saying that “it was through ... sermons and tales ... that Christianity ... found its way into the consciousness of the people....”³

¹ “Motif” in literature is usually seen as a subject, a central idea, a recurrent thematic element used in a given text. See Horst S. Daemmrich, “Themes and Motifs in Literature: Approaches: Trends: Definition,” *The German Quarterly*, vol. 58 (autumn 1985), p. 567.

² Aron Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture: Problems of Belief and Perception* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 2.

³ Ibid.

According to Peter Burke, "in early modern Europe, many people had read the Bible so often that it had become part of them and its stories organized their perceptions, their memories and even their dreams."⁴ For example, the French Protestant community "viewed the sixteenth-century wars of religion through biblical spectacles, including the Massacre of Innocents."⁵ Since the Bible itself is full of schemata, "the chain of examples could be stretched still farther back," thus, establishing the connection between the contemporary and Biblical times using certain motifs.⁶ Christopher Hill similarly proves in *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution* that in sixteenth- to seventeenth-century England the Bible was "central" in political, intellectual, moral as well as many other spheres of life of the contemporary English society.⁷ Several other scholars have likewise argued that the Holy Bible was a primary source for composing sermons and polemics, and shaping people's views. For example, American theologian George A. Lindbeck refers to "myths" and "narratives," particularly those of the Bible, as a primary method for structuring "human experience and understanding of the world."⁸

But was this equally the case in Eastern Europe? While exploring the notion that the "Third Rome" concept might have been dominant in early modern Muscovite ideology, Daniel B. Rowland notes that,

evidence overwhelmingly indicates that the Bible in general and the Old Testament in particular, loomed far larger in the historical imagination of Muscovites than did any image of Rome. This correction in turn implies a common Christian ideological heritage shared by both Russia and Western Europe.⁹

In a recent study on religion in early modern Ukraine, Serhii Plokhyy discusses the ascription of the image of Moses to prominent actors on Ukraine's political stage: Metropolitan Petro Mohyla (1633) and Hetman Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi (1649).¹⁰ Plokhyy also points to non-Ukrainian sources. The Polish chronicler Wespazjan Kochowski, a contemporary of Khmel'nyts'kyi's revolt, "wrote about the comparisons then being made between Khmelnytsky and

⁴ Peter Burke, *Varieties of Cultural History* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell U P, 1997), p. 50.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Christopher Hill, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution* (Allen Lane, United Kingdom, 1993), p. 5.

⁸ George A. Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Philadelphia, 1984), p. 32. Also see Roy F. Melugin, "Scripture and the Formation of Christian Identity," in Eugene E. Carpenter (ed.), *A Biblical Itinerary: In Search of Method, Form and Content. Essays in Honor of George W. Coats, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement Series* 240 (Sheffield, 1997), p. 170.

⁹ Daniel B. Rowland, "Moscow: The Third Rome or the New Israel?" *Russian Review*, 55 (October 1996), p. 592.

¹⁰ Serhii Plokhyy, *The Cossacks and Religion in Early Modern Ukraine* (Oxford, 2001), p. 221.

the Maccabees.”¹¹ Nathan Hanover, the compiler of one of “the most authoritative Jewish chronicles,” drew “the parallel between the Hebrews in Egyptian bondage and Ruthenians under the Polish yoke.”¹² Thus, there is consent for similarity in how in medieval and early modern Europe (Western and Eastern alike), people, clergy, and laity viewed various events through the prism of biblical narrative, often making references to Scripture.

While discussing biblical motifs there are at least two important aspects that should be kept in mind: first, motifs “capture a significant aspect of human interaction or perception of reality in a striking manner,” and, second, motifs “crystallize schematic patterns of typical, even archetypal traits and situations,” merging into the collective substance of human activity and thought.¹³

The sixteenth century, an epoch of religious struggle in Europe and its resonance in Poland and Ukraine after the Union of Brest (1596), saw the rise of the use of Biblical motifs for political purposes.¹⁴ This tendency was initiated by well-educated members of the clergy. In response to the attacks of Roman Catholics (particularly, by the Jesuits Piotr Skarga and Benedict Herbest) and their Ukrainian supporters (for example, Lev Krevza and Josyp Ruts’kyi), Ukrainian Orthodox authors, such as Stephan Zyzanii and Meletii Smotryts’kyi, who defended the “Eastern Church,” reproached the Roman Catholics and the Church Union by drawing on the Holy Book for their inspiration and examples.¹⁵ Soon they were joined by the educated members of Ukrainian laity. According to Ihor Shevchenko, “the debates over the Union of Brest ... involved

¹¹ Ibid., p. 201.

¹² Ibid., p. 202.

¹³ Daemmrich, “Themes and Motifs,” p. 568.

¹⁴ V.N. Peretz, *Issledovaniia i materialy po istorii starinnoi ukrainskoi literatury XVI-XVIII vekov*, vol. 1, third edn. (Leningrad, 1929), p. 56.

¹⁵ “Pamiatniki polemicheskoi literatury,” *Russkaia istoricheskaia biblioteka*, vol. 7, book 2 (St. Petersburg, 1882); Mykhailo Vozniak, *Istoriia ukrains’koi literatury*, vol. 2 (L’viv, 1921), pp. 356, 359, 363. For example, Meletii Smotryts’kyi’s *Lament iedney s. powszechney apostolskiei-wschod-niei cerkwie* [The lament of the ecumenical Apostolic Eastern Church] (1610) was styled after the Biblical texts, and most likely drew its inspiration from the laments of the Old Testament’s prophet Jeremiah or one of its later adaptations. Smotryts’kyi focuses on the fate of the “Mother” — the Orthodox Christian Church: the “queen” among other churches, the “lily” among the “thorns,” “Jerusalem” among “other Jewish cities.” Because of its “beauty,” this Church (“the bride”) was greatly desired by the “King” (the “bridegroom”), the “best among the sons of men,” who fell in love with “her” and united with “her” in “eternal marriage.” Smotryts’kyi builds up an impressive sequence of metaphoric images of Jesus Christ and the “Eastern Church,” elevating the latter to the status of the “first among the equals,” making it a “chosen one by the Savior Himself.” This argument plays an important role in this author’s further depiction of the decline of the Orthodox Church in Ukrainian lands: this Church, which “used to be marveled at by people and angels alike, now becomes the target of mocking in the eyes of the world.” “And why did that happen?” Smotryts’kyi persists in asking? It happened because “children, born and raised by her,” stripped her naked and chased “her” away from “her home.” Upon this, “her sons and daughters” turned to the “one,” who “did not bear sufferings of giving birth and of raising them.” As the result, “the priests grew blind, the pastors grew mute, the elders became mad and youth became debauched.” See *Ukrains’ka literatura XVII st.: synkretichna pysemnist’, poeziia, dramaturhiia, beletrystyka* (Kyiv, 1987), pp. 67-92.

a good part of society and even seeped down to the Cossacks.”¹⁶ Overall, the use of religious ideology “increased the legitimacy” of the Cossack uprisings of the 1630s among non-Cossack Ukrainians and, it appears, persisted well into the second half of the seventeenth century.¹⁷ This becomes particularly evident during the time of the uprising led by Hetman Bohdan Khmel’nyts’kyi (1648-57) and its immediate aftermath (the late 1650s-70s).

As Plokhly points out, “the idea of defending religious and national interests” allowed Khmel’nyts’kyi’s uprising to surpass earlier Cossack uprisings in magnitude, and “the religious sanction given to the.... [u]prising by the Eastern hierarchs not only transformed the Cossack revolt into a religious war but also helped to legitimize Cossack rule over the territory and corporate estates of the new polity.”¹⁸ Consequently, the amalgamation of religion and politics revealed itself on many levels, particularly on how contemporary events were viewed through the prism of the Biblical narrative.

The application of religious motifs to reflect on events and, in some cases, for propaganda and other purposes, became evident at the early stage of Khmel’nyts’kyi’s rebellion, with the Poles being the primary target for both military and ideological attacks. For instance, on 4 February 1649, Syluiian Muzhylovs’kyi, Khmel’nyts’kyi’s ambassador to Moscow, in his letter to the Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich, drew a parallel between the conditions of Orthodox Christians in Ukraine at that time and the people of Israel in ancient times, comparing Polish rule to “Egyptian bondage” (Genesis 47:9 – Exodus 12:41):¹⁹

The All-Mighty God revealed His grace to [our] people, as once He did to His people, who were living in the Egyptian bondage so that the name of the Living God would be praised [for the ages to come]; now the All-Mighty God, united in the Holy Trinity, has done likewise so that the Orthodox Christian faith would prosper and not fall.²⁰

Hetman Khmel’nyts’kyi, hailed by contemporaries as “Moses, deliverer, savior, liberator of the nation from the Polish bondage,” in his February 1649 letter to the tsar included images of Polish persecution, comparing it to the deeds of King Herod:²¹

those sly and treacherous Poles, while negotiating truce with us, are gathering troops against us; [they] have wiped out Christians in several towns, capturing and cleaving priest and

¹⁶ Ihor Ševčenko, *Ukraine between East and West* (Edmonton, 1996), p. 149.

¹⁷ Plokhly, *The Cossacks and Religion*, p. 341.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ From this quotation and on, references in parentheses are made to the King James version of the Bible.

²⁰ *Vossoedinenie Ukrainy s Rossiei. Dokumenty i materialy v tr'okh tomakh*, vol. 2 (Moscow, 1954), pp. 127-31 (quotation on page 128).

²¹ Plokhly, *The Cossacks and Religion*, p. 221.

monks, causing them various tortures, as Herod once did, and for this the Creator would punish them from heaven for their deeds.²²

The purpose of this letter was to secure Muscovite military assistance by appealing to the tsar's religious feelings. Biblical references were employed both as an illustration of the current political situation and as legitimization of the Cossack revolt in the eyes of the Muscovite monarch.

In November 1650, Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi met with Gabriel, the Greek Orthodox Metropolitan of Nazareth, and the monk Arsenius to discuss the current political situation in Ukraine. The hetman invoked Biblical references to prove his point, which was that the tsar was in position to take Ukraine under his protection even though Muscovy and Poland were at peace at that time:

Herod, by killing St. John the Baptist, did just as he had said he would, but how did he profit from keeping his promise? Would it not be better for him to break it? And Rahab, the harlot, spoke lies, but was she punished for this? [No], she obtained eternal salvation [as a reward] for lying.... Therefore, the tsar could have taken our side, for we belong to the same faith.²³

In 1654, the Muscovite tsar became a patron of the Cossack state. However, Khmel'nyts'kyi's death in July 1657 resulted in power struggle and marked the beginning of major unrest in Cossack Ukraine. In September 1659, Khmel'nyts'kyi's successor, the pro-Polish Hetman Ivan Vyhovs'kyi, had to leave his office due to staunch domestic opposition. He was succeeded by the late Khmel'nyts'kyi's son, the pro-Muscovite Yurii, who was elected hetman in Pereiaslav the month after Vyhovs'kyi's resignation. The following discussion deals with the use of biblical motifs for political purposes between 1658 and 1678.

The Polish government was not ready to surrender Ukraine to Muscovite protection and was trying to secure young Khmel'nyts'kyi's loyalty by appealing to the terms of the Treaty of Hadiach (September 1658). This, signed by both the king and the previous Hetman Vyhovs'kyi, envisaged Cossack allegiance to the Polish monarch. In his sarcastic reply to Stanisław K. Bieniewski, the palatine of Volhyn', Yurii Khmel'nyts'kyi advised him not to treat Ukrainians as "prodigal sons," pointing out that all of the previous agreements between Poland and Vyhovs'kyi had been terminated:

²² *Vossoedinenie Ukrainy s Rossiei. Dokumenty i materialy v tr'okh tomakh*, vol. 2 (Moscow, 1954), pp. 132-33 (quotation on page 132).

²³ Lev Zaborovskiy, *Katoliki, pravoslavnye, uniaty. Problemy religii v russko-pol'sko-ukrainskikh otnosheniakh kontsa 40-kh-80-kh gg. XVII v. (Part 1. Istochniki vremen getmanstva B.M. Khmel'nitskogo)* (Moscow, 1998), p. 92. For the biblical motifs also see Matthew 14:6-10 and Joshua 2:1-24; Joshua 6:17-25.

Your graces saw the foolishness of Ivan Vyhovs'kyi, who wanted to be hetman of Zaporozha as well as the palatine of Kyiv and the Prince of Rus'. This way your lordships expected to gain a great deal, but lost everything.... In that same letter your lordship mentions that His Majesty the king accepted us, the prodigal sons, under his wings as the son-loving father and granted us privileges. However, those privileges were given only to those who supported Ivan Vyhovs'kyi and not the Host of Zaporozhian Cossacks.²⁴

To participants and observers, events in Ukraine in 1658 must have looked chaotic. For example, the Crown Quartermaster Andrzej Potocki wrote that same year to his sovereign, the Polish king, that:

The late Khmel'nyts'kyi purposefully turned them [Cossacks and alike] into unruly people with his wars and brought them up in bloody vengeance towards us; and now they fight one another, sons robbing their fathers, and fathers their sons. They live in chaos similar to that caused by the construction of the Tower of Babel.²⁵

In the early 1660s, Ukraine was divided into two parts, each with its own hetman (sometimes more than one), administration, and army. Each hetman, with his foreign allies, tried to eliminate his opponent(s) and to establish a united Hetmanate on the both banks of the Dnieper. However, those powerful "allies" — the Muscovite state, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Ottoman Porte and its vassal state, the Khanate of Crimea — often pursued political interests of their own. This led to a series of almost continuous wars and the depopulation of Right-Bank Ukraine, a period in Ukrainian history subsequently referred to as "the Ruin." Ultimately, only the polity on the Left Bank managed to survive under Muscovite protection.²⁶

The internal political struggle in Ukraine was being waged not only with weapons, but also with the written word: in legal documents, such as manifestos and orders, in sermons, and in private letters. However, in contrast to Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi's time, ideological attacks were aimed at domestic enemies as well as their allies and foreign patrons.

It appeared that the division of the Cossack state was a traumatic experience for all Cossack factions; this was evidenced by their repeated attempts to re-unify

²⁴ *Pamiatniki izdannye vremennoi komissiei dlia razbora drevnikh aktov, vysochaishe uchrezhdennoi pri kievskom voennom. podol'skom i volynskom general-gubernatore*, vol. 3, part 3 (Kiev: V universitetskoi tipografii, 1852), pp. 423-32 (quotations on pages 425, 427). Also, for the "prodigal sons" motif see the parable of the lost (prodigal) son in Luke 15:11-32.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 299-304 (quotation on p. 302). Also, for the "Construction of the Tower of Babel" motif see Genesis 11:1-9.

²⁶ See Dmytro Doroshenko, *Narys istorii Ukrainy* (Munich, 1966), pp. 51-53; Nataliya Yakovenko, *Narys istorii seredn'ovichnoi ta rann'omodernoi Ukrainy* (Kyiv, 2005), pp. 322-85; V. A. Smolii, et al. (eds.), *Istoriia ukrains'koho kozatstva*, vol. 1 (Kyiv, 2006), pp. 355-80.

it militarily and diplomatically. Pavlo Teteria, a nobleman in the Polish king's service, who would later become the pro-Polish hetman of Right-Bank Ukraine, compared Cossacks on both banks of the Dnieper to members of one body and, in a November 1660 letter, called on them not to spill the blood of their brothers.²⁷ Even though no Biblical names were used in this letter, it is likely that in the passage about "fratricide" Teteria was referring to the murder of Abel by Cain. Other correspondence contained less ambiguous references.

In April 1662, a then pro-Muscovite contender for the hetman's office, Ivan Briukhovets'kyi, in appealing to the Ukrainian townsfolk, wrote: "by securing God's assistance, we shall see that that sword is taken away from Ukraine and will fall onto the Poles, who will experience their own demise due to the [Lord's] judgment, as did Sodom and Gomorrah."²⁸

On 6 April 1665, a hetman of Muscovite-controlled Left-Bank Ukraine, Ivan Briukhovets'kyi, wrote to the Muscovite tsar, Aleksei Mikhailovich, renowned among his contemporaries for his religious piety: "when our strength begins to succumb to the enemy forces, Your Majesty's prayer gives us, who are few, victory over our enemies similar to how it happened to Moses of Israel."²⁹

It helps to consider the above letter in light of Briukhovets'kyi's political situation at that time. On 1 November 1665 he was promoted to the Muscovite nobility; two weeks later his marriage to a member of the Dolgorukiy noble family brought him even closer to the tsar and his court.³⁰ An educated and politically shrewd person, he was eager to please his patron, particularly by flattering the monarch. Although popular with the Muscovite court, hetman Briukhovets'kyi was losing his support in Ukraine. Heavy taxation of the Ukrainian people by Muscovite tax collectors and growing numbers of Muscovite troops in Ukrainian towns — all results of Briukhovets'kyi's policies — made his domestic situation rather precarious, forcing him to rely on the tsar's political and military support.³¹

²⁷ *Akty, otnosiashchiesia k istorii Iuzhnoi i Zapadnoi Rossii. Sobranie i izdannye arkhograficheskoi komissiei*, vol. 5 (St. Petersburg, 1867), pp. 143-45 (quotation on p. 144). For the political history and ideas during Briukhovets'kyi's hetmancy see Zenon E. Kohut, "Emerging Concepts of Fatherland in Cossack Ukraine (1660s-1670s)," presented at the "Patterns of Patriotism" conference, held at the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences, Cracow, Poland on 14-16 September 2006.

²⁸ *Akty, otnosiashchiesia k istorii Iuzhnoi i Zapadnoi Rossii. Sobranie i izdannye arkhograficheskoi komissiei*, vol. 5 (St. Petersburg, 1867), p. 101. Reference is made to Genesis 19: 24-25 ("Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven and He overthrew those cities....") For the application of a similar motif during the Muscovite-Cossack-Polish war (1656), also see Lev Zaborovskiy, *Katoliki, pravoslavnye, uniaty*, pp. 228-31 (quotation on page 230).

²⁹ *Akty*, vol. 5, pp. 266-67.

³⁰ Tetiana Yakovleva, *Ruina Het'manshchyny: vid Pereiaslavs'koi rady-2 do Andrusivs'koi uhody (1659-1667rr.)* (Kyiv, 2003), pp. 475-77; Zenon E. Kohut, *Emerging Concepts of Fatherland*.

³¹ "Universaly ukrains'kykh het'maniv vid Ivana Vyhovs'koho do Ivana Samoilovycha (1657-1687)," *Universaly ukrains'kykh het'maniv. Materialy do ukrains'koi dyplomatiarii. Serii I* (Kyiv, 2004), pp. 255, 257-59; "The Eyewitness Chronicle," part I, *Harvard Series in Ukrainian Studies*, vol. 7 (1972), pp. 90-93.

With Briukhovets'kyi in Moscow, his entourage remained in charge of Left-Bank Ukraine, keeping peace among its residents and repulsing the attacks of the Right-Bank Cossacks. On August 26 1665, Briukhovets'kyi's deputy and acting hetman, Colonel Danylo Yermolens'kyi, wrote a report to the Muscovite nobleman prince Nikita Lvov about the activity of the Tatars and their pawn hetman Stepan Opara of Right-Bank Ukraine, who had been recently overthrown by Petro Doroshenko — the new hetman of Right-Bank Ukraine (1665-76). In this letter, Yermolens'kyi repeatedly calls Opara "Judas," for his alliance with the Muslim Tatars and the alleged "betrayal" of the Muscovite tsar:

On August 18, that Judas, Opara, with his officers went to the [Tatar] princes to hold a council; he had not yet approached their tents, when the Tatars met [Opara] and began plundering him [and his people], binding and taking [Cossacks], who were stripped of all clothes, but shirts, to their princes; as for Opara, to him, who was the second Judas, [the Tatars] gave presents for his service: a chain on his neck and chains on his legs.³²

Hetman Briukhovets'kyi himself did not miss a chance to brand his political rival in his call to "separate wheat [most likely, himself] from the chaff [Opara]." ³³ Briukhovets'kyi's officers referred to the hetman of Right-Bank Ukraine Petro Doroshenko, who pledged allegiance to the Polish king and was supported by the Ottomans and their vassals, the Tatars, as the "the traitor, who betrayed the Holy Cross (*krestoprestupnyi*), and the bloodsucking [bane] of Christian people and the destroyer of the Orthodox faith (*krovopivtsa rodu khristianska i razoritel' very pravoslavnyi*)."³⁴

The following example used the phrases "wicked and unmerciful servant" (Matthew 18:23-35), and "Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion" (1 Peter 5:8). In his letter to the tsar's minister, Bogdan Khitrovo, Briukhovets'kyi was keen to convince the minister of his loyalty to the Muscovite monarch: "and that would be an evil foe, a wicked and unmerciful servant, who burns the inheritance of Your Majesty with the fire of war, who, in his disloyalty, gives [this inheritance] to the roaring lions."³⁵ The hetman went on to reproach his political opponents, the former hetmans Yurii Khmel'nyts'kyi and Ivan Vyhovs'kyi, by suggesting that they were "the wicked servants" while he "chooses a different path."³⁶

³² *Akty*, vol. 5, pp. 307-8 (quotation on page 308).

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 300-307 (quotation on page 300). For the motif of "burning the chaff" see Matthew 3:12.

³⁴ See the aforementioned letter by colonel Yermolens'kyi in *Akty*, vol. 5, p. 308; also the letter of the colonel of Poltava regiment, Hryhorii Vitiazenko to hetman Briukhovets'kyi (9 November 1665) in *Akty, otnosiashchiesia k istorii Iuzhnoi i Zapadnoi Rossii. Sobranie i izdannye arkheograficheskoi kommissiei*, vol. 6 (St. Petersburg, 1869), pp. 53-55 (quotation on page 54).

³⁵ *Akty*, vol. 5, pp. 254-58 (quotation on page 257).

³⁶ *Ibid.*

However, in January 1668, Briukhovets'kyi, sensing the growing animosity towards the Muscovites among his subjects, was inspired by Doroshenko, his former rival and now ally, and rebelled against the tsar, wiping out some Muscovite garrisons and besieging others. An able demagogue, Briukhovets'kyi issued a number of manifestos to Ukrainians and other Cossacks in Muscovite service, in which he now blamed both the Poles and Muscovites for plotting the ruin of Ukraine. In his February 1668 manifesto to the Cossacks of the Don, the hetman decried the Muscovite bondage:

As of now, those Muscovite rulers are against us, poor and innocent us, who willingly submitted ourselves to them only because of the Orthodox tsar, us, who are assailed by godless tormentors, and their merciless bondage and torments. Our only hope is that God will deliver us from that unbearable bondage with His mighty hand.³⁷

The opposition's response followed shortly. From 6 to 18 February 1668, the Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich wrote to the highest hierarchs of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, accusing his former servant of treason. In those letters, the tsar also employed religious motifs (for example "the Last Judgment," and "The betrayal of Christ by Judas") in describing the political situation. In his letter to Bishop Methodius, the caretaker of the Metropolitan See of Kyiv, the Muscovite monarch wrote:

And now, inspired by an evil spirit, hetman Briukhovets'kyi reneged not only on his allegiance to Our Majesty and our heirs, but the aforementioned Briukhovets'kyi in his malicious intent, forgetting about the Last Judgment and delivering service to the infidels, reneged on his faith, spilling the blood of innocent Muscovite soldiers who were protecting this apostate, and he devoured them in a beastly fashion; that innocent Christian blood will burst open the devouring belly of that traitor, the second Judas, and will reveal [Briukhovets'kyi's true nature] to an entire world.³⁸

In a letter to the Archbishop of Chernihiv, Lazar Baranovych, the tsar once again made reference to the Last Judgment, and called for a separation of the "sheep from the goats":

Through the intercession of His Divine wisdom, which no words can describe, [it is known] that if one wants to do good to mankind and to liberate the faithful from evil [forces], it

³⁷ *Akty, otnosiashchiesia k istorii Iuzhnoi i Zapadnoi Rossii. Sobranie i izdannye arkhеографическоi komissiei*, vol. 7 (St. Petersburg, 1872), pp. 60-62 (quotation on page 61).

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 34-39 (quotation on page 35).

must be done similarly to the Last Judgment, when the sheep will be separated from the goats.³⁹

The Muscovite monarch made it clear, whom he meant in this parable:

evil people, who forgot the awe [of God], emulating the evil apostate Briukhovets'kyi, spill Christian blood in Ukraine with their hands, and for this, the Merciful Judge, Our Lord, God, will retaliate against them both now and in the future.⁴⁰

Baranovych, posing as the tsar's faithful servant, made an attempt to convince the rebellious hetman to pledge his allegiance to the Muscovite monarch. On 15 March 1668, the archbishop wrote a sermon-like letter to Briukhovets'kyi, full of biblical parables and images:

On my part, I am very sad that that fire broke out; I am constantly praying, and my prayers are flowing like water and there is no end to them, asking that that fire be extinguished by our Orthodox Rosian⁴¹ people so that it would walk on dry land as [the people] of Israel once used to; as suits my office, I always pray to God ... Lord, deliver me and my flock from this bloodshed.... The one anointed by the Lord [the tsar], emulates King David, who was in peace even with those who hated peace itself.... He follows in the steps of the Son of God and never withdraws his grace entirely....

Also, attend to the words of Apostle Paul: do not be self-centred, paying with evil for every evil deed, but do good things to the people.... If you do well to the benevolent tsar then you receive the reward, and, if not from him, then from the Heavenly King. The same Apostle teaches us: do not be persuaded into the yoke of the infidels; what does light have to do with darkness, what is common between the faithful and the infidels?... And finally, listen to what I have to tell you.... If anybody is going to stand between you two, brothers of the Zaporozhian Host from both banks, it will be the God of Love Himself. If you love each other, then you will have no use for the infidels' yoke; as fire can not be mixed with water, so the faithful Zaporozhian Cossack Host can not join the infidels. Only under the protection of the benevolent monarch will the Zaporozhian Cossack Host have its liberties.... Kneel before the illustrious monarch, because even God can be appeased by

³⁹ Ibid., p. 37. Also, for the "separation sheep from the goats" motif see Matthew 25: 31-33.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 37.

⁴¹ In the original document, the word "rosiiskiy" clearly refers to Ukrainian people, and not the Russians, who in 1668 were known as "the Muscovites." That is why in my translation of an original document I am using the English term "Rosian" to prevent possible confusion of terminology.

piety: repent and be saved. Likewise, the tsar, anointed by God, will be appeased seeing your repentance.⁴²

Members of other Cossack factions and their patrons frequently used religious motifs for political purposes. In October 1668, the Tatar-backed hetman and Doroshenko's challenger, Petro Sukhoviiv, issued a manifesto to the Ukrainian people. In making his case against Polish and Muscovite protection, he once again referred to a popular Biblical motif, comparing such protection to the "Egyptian bondage":

And now, when the great monarchs, His Majesty the tsar and His Majesty the king, agreed on armistice and the final takeover, cemented by oaths, of unfortunate Ukraine, one part of it [on the left] side of Dneiper going to His Majesty the Muscovite tsar, and the other side to the Polish king, [I foresee that this] division is executed ... so that all Orthodox people, especially the Cossack host of Zaporozha with their ancient glorious domain in the lower flow of the Dnieper, together with [their] women, children, and newborns, will be put down by the sword or captured and placed under Muscovite bondage, similar to the Egyptian one; towns and villages will be razed together with the Lord's temples, and in their places only the wild animals and serpents will live on in their burrows.⁴³

After the downfall and death of Briukhovets'kyi in June 1668, Hetman Doroshenko briefly united both parts of Ukraine under his authority. He dispatched his deputy, Dem'ian Mnohohrishnyi, to Left-Bank Ukraine. However, Mnohohrishnyi very soon broke away from Doroshenko and recognized the authority of the Muscovite monarch.⁴⁴ Mnohohrishnyi was keen to secure the loyalty of the Left-Bank Cossack officers. As the following document shows, this was not easy. Responding to Mnohohrishnyi's letter, the commander of the Poltava regiment, Colonel Horkushenko, advised Mnohohrishnyi not to call himself "hetman" and proceeded to accuse him of betrayal and ingratitude, and, finally, to compare him to Satan:

⁴² Ibid., pp. 52-53.

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 84-86.

⁴⁴ Mnohohrishnyi's defection can be in part attributed by the epistolary interventions on the part of Lazar Baranovych, the Archbishop of Chernihiv. For example, in one of his letters to Baranovych, Mnohohrishnyi mentions numerous letters, in which the Archbishop was persuading him to betray Doroshenko and submit himself to the tsar: "...[W]e had been receiving your frequent pastoral advices to live in peace, not to get fraternal with the Tatars and, as it is suitable to Christians, obtain liberties not by the means of a sword, but through submitting yourself voluntarily to the illustrious His Majesty the tsar and ask Him to grant you those liberties...If His Majesty takes us under his authority and confirms our liberties...then I am ready to bow before His Majesty the tsar together with all regiments of this side of the Dnipro and direct my forces against whom His illustrious Majesty the tsar commands." See *ibid.*, p. 64.

it is not known whether you received such a great position from the Orthodox tsar or from the enemy of the soul himself, calling yourself the hetman of Zaporozhian Host, in your pride rejecting the mercy of our most illustrious lord Hetman Petro Doroshenko, who, by his grace, imposed upon you the position of hetman of Sivers'k and made you his deputy [in those lands]. And you thus resembled Satan, who disregarded the Creator of All Things, disregarding the mercy of the Cossack Host and our lord, hetman, accepting this high position and calling yourself the hetman of the Zaporozhian Cossack Host.⁴⁵

The direct intervention of the Ottoman Empire in Ukrainian affairs during the 1670s gave rise to intense anti-Muslim polemics, spearheaded by the Ukrainian Orthodox clergy.⁴⁶ After the political demise of Petro Doroshenko in the fall of 1676, the Ottomans decided to replace him with their puppet, Yurii Khmel'nyts'kyi, who had fallen into their hands as a prisoner.⁴⁷ In August 1677, a huge Turkish-Tatar army besieged Chyhyryn with the purpose of returning this capital of Ukrainian Cossack hetmans to Khmel'nyts'kyi. However, the first Turkish campaign of Chyhyryn failed. In mid-July 1678, the Turks made another attempt to capture Chyhyryn. This time the Muscovite-Ukrainian garrison of Chyhyryn was overwhelmed and had to leave the city, which was completely destroyed.⁴⁸

On 4 December 1678, one of the most eloquent members of the Ukrainian Orthodox clergy of that time, the Archimandrite of Chernihiv's Yelets Monastery Ioanikii Haliatovs'kyi, wrote a letter-sermon to Yurii Khmel'nyts'kyi, urging the latter to sever his alliance with the Turks and return to the monastery as the monk he once was. Haliatovs'kyi's epistle, composed with the sole purpose of convincing the hetman to leave politics, is filled with religious and historical references. "Have courage to remember with your heart and memory the words of Christ," the Archimandrite wrote: "How shall it profit a man, if he conquers the entire world, but loses his soul, or what would a man aspire in exchange for his very soul?"⁴⁹ Haliatovs'kyi then answers this question, saying that "your lordship is ready to lose your soul for this world's earthly riches and for the title of 'prince' and 'hetman,' even though you yourself know that this entire world is not worth one man's soul."⁵⁰

⁴⁵ *Akty, otnosiashchiesia k istorii Iuzhnoi i Zapadnoi Rossii. Sobranye i izdannye arkhieograficheskoi komissiei*, vol. 8 (St. Petersburg, 1875), p. 259.

⁴⁶ Plokhyy, *The Cossacks and Religion*, p. 340.

⁴⁷ *Narys istorii Ukrainy*, p. 90.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

⁴⁹ *Akty, otnosiashchiesia k istorii Iuzhnoi i Zapadnoi Rossii. Sobranye i izdannye arkhieograficheskoi komissiei*, vol. 13 (St. Petersburg, 1884), pp. 750-51 (quotation on page 750).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 750.

In his attempt to convince the hetman to accept the inevitable (that is, the end of his political career), the archimandrite resorts to biblical as well as historical examples:

May your lordship read from the Evangelist Luke's gospel, chapters 9 and 14, and the history of Gebron, who had, first, accepted the monastic life and later abandoned the monastery, serving as a court's marshal to the French king. When he passed away, some monks heard noise over the river, voices crying: "we are the demons, who are carrying the soul of Gebron, who had left the monastery and returned to the world and who is now dead."⁵¹

At the end of this letter, Haliatovs'kyi speaks clearly about current politics, calling Yurii Khmel'nyts'kyi's political orientation "a sin," and advises him to surrender, promising Yurii mercy and protection from the hetman of the Left-Bank Ukraine, Ivan Samoilovych:

His lordship Hetman Ivan Samoilovych, in charge of His Majesty the tsar's Zaporozhian Host, promises through me to your lordship that no harm will be done either to your life or your honor or your property, and that you will be guaranteed clerical status within the Lord's Church. Remember the latter and you will never fall into sin; remember about death, Last Judgment, heaven, and hell; [you will be delivered] if you do not fall in sin, sever friendship with the Muslims, and stop fighting against the Orthodox Christians.⁵²

In conclusion, this study has illustrated that the use of Biblical motifs in Ukrainian political discourse during the 1640s-70s was not accidental and was prompted by popularization of the Biblical narrative among various populations in Ukraine and neighboring Christian countries. Indeed, Biblical parallels were used for political purposes by Ukrainian hetmans and Cossack officers, by Ukrainian Orthodox clergy, by Polish officials, and by the Muscovite tsar and his servants. What we have found is that all the subjects of correspondence belonged to the same cultural-religious space or, in the case of the Poles, were familiar with Biblical narratives, and were actively involved in Ukrainian politics of that time.

In our case, it appears that the educated Ukrainian Orthodox clerics and some well-educated laymen (particularly, the Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich) used more developed motifs in a more eloquent presentation. Also, educated clergy and laity were the main target audiences of discourses based upon or featuring Biblical examples. By contrast, manifestos, aimed at the general public, as well as letters by some Cossack officers feature less elaborate use of Biblical references and religious motifs, often just a phrase or one-word reference. As a rule,

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., pp. 750-51.

this can be explained by these authors' more utilitarian propaganda goals, as well as their more modest religious educations.

While certain Biblical motifs kept reappearing, they were adapted to new political realities. Probably the best illustration of this trend is how Hetman Ivan Briukhovets'kyi applied the motif of "Egyptian bondage": in 1663, while a tsar's servant, he accused the Poles of bringing this bondage onto Ukrainians; when, in 1668, Briukhovets'kyi rebelled against the Muscovite monarch, he began writing about the Muscovite "Egyptian yoke." To sum up, the authors employing such Biblical references pursued many objectives, in circumstances that often changed greatly over time.

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