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RUSIJOS IR UKRAINOS KARO VAIZDAVIMAS UKRAINOS BAŽNYČIOS VADOVŲ DISKURSE

Framing the Russia-Ukraine War in the Discourse of Ukrainian Church Leaders

SUMMARY

The article investigates the representation of the Russia-Ukraine war in statements of the heads of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU), the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC). The study reveals stark differences in the discourse of Ukrainian Church leaders regarding their portrayal of the invasion. Thus, Metropolitan Onufriy resorts to the framing model of backgrounding by personifying the war and minimizing direct references to Russia as responsible for its commencement. Instead, Metropolitan Epiphanius and Patriarch Sviatoslav unequivocally condemn Russia as the aggressor state, apply derogatory labels to the Russian army and resort to hyperbolization, thus foregrounding the guilt of the enemy. Furthermore, they both tend to construct an extremely positive image of the Ukrainian nation and warriors, with many allusions to biblical heroes. They attribute the sacral meaning to the Russia-Ukraine war projecting it onto the eschatological dimension as the war between good and evil, where the good is destined to win. In contrast, Metropolitan Onufriy does not mention the idea of Ukraine's victory at all but mostly envisions the advent of peace as achieved by means of negotiation or mediation. In conveying their communicative intentions, all three heads make extensive allusions to biblical events, but even in case of the same biblical plots (the story of Cain and Abel, the apocalypse, etc.), there are significant differences in the aspects they choose to highlight.

SANTRAUKA

Straipsnyje nagrinėjama, kaip Rusijos ir Ukrainos karas vaizduojamas Ukrainos Stačiatikių Bažnyčios, Ukrainos Graikų Katalikų Bažnyčios ir Ukrainos Ortodoksų Bažnyčios vadovų kalbose. Atlikus tyrimą, atskleisti ryškūs Ukrainos Bažnyčios vadovų diskurso skirtumai, susiję su invazijos vaizdavimu. Štai metropolitas Onufrijus pasitelkia tokį modelį, kai Rusijos invazijos įvykiai nustumiami į antrą planą, karas per-

RAKTAŽODŽIAI: Rusijos ir Ukrainos karas, retorinės priemonės, tekstynas, religinis diskursas.

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sonifikuojamas ir vengiama tiesiogiai nurodyti į Rusiją kaip atsakingą už karo sukėlimą. Metropolitai Epi-fanijus ir patriarchas Sviatoslavas nedviprasmiškai smerkia Rusiją. Jie vadina šią šalį valstybe agresore, niekina Rusijos kariuomenę ir hiperbolizuoja, pabrėždami priešų kaltę. Be to, ir Epifanijus, ir Sviatoslavas kuria itin teigiamą ukrainiečių tautos bei karių įvaizdį, sustiprinamą gausybe aliuzijų į biblinius herojus. Jie suteikia Rusijos ir Ukrainos karui sakralią prasmę, perkeldami jį į eschatologinę dimensiją, vaizduodami kaip karą tarp gėrio ir blogio, kuriame gėriui lemta laimėti. Metropolitai Onufrijus, priešingai, apskritai neužsimena apie Ukrainos pergalę. Jis reziimuoja, kad taika bus pasiekta derantis arba padedant tarpininkams. Visi trys Bažnyčios vadovai, stengdamiesi įgyvendinti savo komunikacines intencijas, dažnai pasitelkia aliužijas į biblinius įvykius. Vis dėlto, net ir kalbėdami apie tuos pačius biblinius siužetus (Kaino ir Abelio istoriją, apokalipsę ir kt.), jie labai skirtingai traktuoja savo pasirinktus aspektus.

INTRODUCTION

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, evoked a strong response in the religious sphere of Ukraine and the world. On the first day of the war, the heads of the largest Churches in Ukraine made speeches condemning Russia's aggression. As the events of the war unfolded and civilian casualties increased, the Church leaders continued to assess the actions of the Russian army and to support the Ukrainian people in their struggle against the occupiers, responding to the latest tragedies of the war in their sermons, interviews, and appeals.

The coverage of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in religious media, its impact on the religious situation in Ukraine and the war-centered discourse of Church leaders have been partially discussed in recent publications (Hovorun 2022; Gallaher, Kalaitzidis 2022; Krawchuk 2022; Levko, Kramar 2022; Stan, Vancea, Zaharia 2023). In this article, we intend to investigate the major features of framing of the Russia-Ukraine war and to determine the main communicative strategies in the coverage of Russian aggression in the discourse of Ukrainian Church lead-

ers. For this purpose, we use a comprehensive approach, combining discourse analysis, contextual and pragmatic analysis with the partial involvement of corpus methods (namely, collocation and frequency analysis). Research materials include addresses, sermons and interviews of the leaders of the three largest Christian Churches of Ukraine – in particular, Metropolitan Epiphanius (Dumenko), head of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU), Patriarch Sviatoslav (Shevchuk), head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC), and Metropolitan Onufriy (Berezovsky), head of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in unity with the Moscow Patriarchate (UOC) – within the first 100 days of Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine (from February 24 to June 1, 2022). The sample encompasses text fragments on the Russia-Ukraine war posted on the official websites of respective Churches. Based on this sample, three text corpora were created: Metropolitan Epiphanius (corpus 1, 12534 words), Patriarch Sviatoslav (corpus 2, 29755 words) and Metropolitan Onufriy (corpus 3, 6130 words). These corpora were analyzed in Antconc

corpus manager (Anthony 2022) to determine the most frequently used words and word combinations in each Church leader's discourse. Corpus methods were instrumental in verifying the framing models of the Russia-Ukraine war based on statistical data.

In their addresses and sermons, Church leaders of Ukraine evaluate the Russian invasion of Ukraine from a Christian point of view. In addition to providing an ethical evaluation of the war, they exert an emotional and pragmatic influence on the audience to shape the corresponding cognitive behavior and emotional reaction to these events. At the same time, the framing models they use in their discourse perform the function of interpreting the war from different perspectives: in particular, they enable drawing the attention of the audience to certain facts (foregrounding) or shifting the focus of attention away from them (backgrounding). Foregrounding and backgrounding as types of framing are implemented via an array of linguistic and rhetorical devices selected by the addressers in view of their communicative goals. According to *Charles Fillmore, the founder of frame semantics, frame is "any system of linguistic choices [...] that can get associated with prototypical instances of scenes"* (Fillmore, 1977: 63). Frames are based on people's recurring experiences and are represented in language via both lexical and grammatical choices. On the other hand, rhetorical means – specifically metaphor and hyperbole as key figurative language types – can work as framing devices and "figuratively present a particular problem definition

and color the topic under discussion" (Burgers, Konijn, Steen 2016: 411).

Due to a very high level of abstraction, framing approach is very well suited to analyze how communicators can interpret war events, reflect different perspective on facts or even "make use of different aspects of war justifications" (Kornprobst 2019: 62). Thus, involving "selection and salience" and making some elements foregrounded, framing can "promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation" (Entman 1993: 52). Contrariwise, backgrounding is used by communicators to de-emphasize some elements or features and shift the audience's attention to other details. Sometimes, addressers even apply "the ultimate form of backgrounding", i.e., omission (Huckin 1995: 99), to leave important information aside and make prominent facts or voices silent in their discourse, shaping the public opinion in a manipulative way.

There are two other common types of framing, applied in political and media discourse, namely, metaphorical, and analogical framing. Metaphorical framing is closely related to the conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff, Johnson, 1980). By presenting complex abstract concepts in terms of concrete objects, conceptual metaphors help people to grasp and categorize complex phenomena. One of the tenets of the conceptual metaphor theory posits that an abstract concept can be understood through many conceptual metaphors: thus, communication can be viewed not only as sending (which is the most common mapping), but also leading, feeding, and

showing. Regarding framing, it means that the same idea can be represented via various metaphorical frames, each having a profound impact on the way a person perceives and acts upon it.

Analogical framing is applied in media communication, particularly in the religious sphere, by means of references to emotionally charged historical events

and biblical intertext, which are intended to call forth associations with the original text, image or symbol of culture and history. Biblical images and symbols, as well as historical precedent phenomena, are often introduced into Ukrainian religious media communication for the purpose of positive self-presentation and negative portrayal of others (Levko, 2021).

CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEGATIVE IMAGE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Our analysis has revealed stark differences in the discourse of the three Church leaders, particularly regarding their portrayal of the enemy. Metropolitan Epiphanius and Patriarch Sviatoslav directly call Russia an aggressor and sharply condemn the invasion, sometimes in a very harsh tone (ME, 24.02.2022, 27.03.2022; PS, 24.02.2022, 11.03.2022). The words *агресор* 'aggressor' and *агресія* 'aggression' belong to the high-frequency vocabulary of Epiphanius (in Corpus 1, the words *aggressor* and *aggression* occur 2 times each per 1000 words), while Metropolitan Onufriy does not use them at all. Instead, in his sermons and addresses, the war is attributed with linguistic agency, which is confirmed by word combinations with the component *війна* 'war': *Війна прийшла на нашу рідну українську землю* "The war came to our native Ukrainian land" (MO, 28.02.2022); *Війна проливає кров* "The war sheds blood" (MO, 4.03.2022); *Жорстока війна забирає життя синів і дочок України* "The cruel war takes the lives of the sons and daughters of Ukraine" (MO, 12.05.2022). Personifi-

cation of the war in Onufriy's addresses shifts the emphasis away from Russia's responsibility for the attack on Ukraine, despite the fact that several of his personal statements and the UOC Synod statements dated February 28 and May 12, 2022, contained verbal condemnation of Russia (MO, 24.02.2022, 28.02.2022, 12.05.2022). The noun *війна* 'war' appears in his discourse mostly in the nominative form as the subject of a sentence: in contrast, Epiphanius uses exclusively indirect cases of this word, which indicates the absence of linguistic agency. The words *Росія* 'Russia', *російський* 'Russian' are almost never mentioned by Onufriy, contrary to the other two corpora, where these words are used extensively in the context of a clear and unambiguous identification of those responsible for aggression against Ukraine. Thus, we can point out backgrounding as a type of framing used by Onufriy, apparently with the aim of blurring responsibility for the Kremlin's initiation of the war. In this regard, it is illustrative that Onufriy calls on Putin to stop the war "as the one with the power

to end it, yet he did not accuse Putin directly of having started it" (Krawchuk 2022: 179). Indirect evidence of Onufriy's attempts to avoid discussing the war in detail is the much smaller size of corpus 3 than corpora 1 and 2, given that the selection of materials was based on references to the Russia-Ukraine war.

In the discourse of Metropolitan Epiphanius and Patriarch Sviatoslav we encounter the opposite tendency, evident in the high-frequency units of corpora 1 and 2, which represent nominations for the Russian army, including allusive ones. Although these Church leaders do not resort to the derogatory terms *orcs* and *ruscists* – neologisms that arose due to intertextuality (see Spisiakova, Shumeiko 2022) and are exceedingly common in the media discourse now – they still use other derogatory nominations that refer to historical events. References to the intertext serve to emotionalize the discourse and reinforce the negative image of the enemy through correlation with emotionally laden historical events or phenomena. In particular, Epiphanius and Sviatoslav label the Russian army as *варвари* 'barbarians' (ME, 8.03.2022, 7.04.2022; PS, 12.03.2022), *орда* 'horde' (ME, 7.04.2022, 31.05.2022; PS, 21.03.2022), stimulating a negative emotional reaction and condemnation of Russian aggression in the audience. Metropolitan Epiphanius goes further than the other Church heads in constructing a negative image of Russians, calling them terrorists, murderers, and criminals (ME, 24.02.2022, 2.03.2022, 6.03.2022, 24.03.2022 etc.). In corpus 1, the word combination *напад Росії* 'Russia's attack' is combined with the evaluative

adjectives *підлий* 'mean', *цинічний* 'cynical', *неспровокований* 'unprovoked', *підступний* 'insidious' (ME, 24.02.2022), while the noun *агресія* 'aggression' is combined with the adjectives *підлий* 'mean' and *злочинний* 'criminal' (ME, 2.03.2022).

Actions of Russian occupiers are presented in corpora 1 and 2 through emotionally powerful images and statements that denounce Russia's violations of the rules of warfare. To foreground the targeting of Russian aggression against the civilian population of Ukraine and the infliction of large casualties among civilians, Patriarch Sviatoslav describes the war as *genocide* (PS, 10.03.2022) and resorts to emotionally charged rhetorical devices – including hyperbole, metaphor and metonymy – in depicting the enemy's cruelty: *Ріки крові та море сліз, які тепер проливаються на землях України* "Rivers of blood and the sea of tears, which are now being shed on the lands of Ukraine" (PS, 9.03.2022); *Кров невинних дітей є на руках злочинців, які розпочали цю війну* "The blood of innocent children is on the hands of the criminals who started this war" (PS, 16.03.2022); *Київська архієпархія спливає кров'ю* "The Kyiv Archdiocese is bleeding" (PS, 6.03.2022); *Знову крики, зойки і плачі лунають з української землі ген аж до небес, до вух Божих* "Once again, screams, cries and lamenting are heard from the Ukrainian land all the way to the heavens, to the ears of God" (PS, 21.03.2022). Therefore, the corpus data confirm that Epiphanius and Sviatoslav employ foregrounding, as well as analogical and metaphorical framing, en-

hancing them with the rhetorical tool of hyperbolization, with the aim of portraying Russia as directly responsible for the suffering of Ukrainians. Instead, Onufriy, despite proclaimed condemnation of Russia in the initial days of the invasion, resorts to backgrounding and personifies

the war, giving it the status of an agent, thus shifting the emphasis away from Russia's responsibility for bringing the devastation. This presumably represents his attempt to strike a balance between his civil position and canonical loyalty to the Moscow Patriarchate.

HEROIZATION OF THE UKRAINIAN NATION

Along with the negative image of Russia as the enemy, Epiphanius and Sviatoslav construct an extremely positive representation of Ukraine, which defends itself from military aggression and fights for its independence. Similarly, to the political media discourse, the speeches of religious leaders are characterized by a contrasting representation of the in-group and the out-group – “us” vs. “them” in CDA terminology (Fairclough 1995; van Dijk 1998). The effect of polarization in the depiction of the participants in the Russia-Ukraine war – i.e., the discrediting of “them” and the positive representation of “us” – is also enhanced using rhetorical devices, such as hyperbole, metaphor, and personification.

The dichotomic portrayal of the Ukrainian people as a victim-martyr and a fighter is particularly remarkable in the address of Patriarch Sviatoslav on the first day of the war:

Our Ukraine, which the world rightly named “bloody lands”, which has been sprinkled with the blood of martyrs and fighters for the freedom and independence of its people so many times, calls on us today to stand up to its defense. (PS, 24.02.2022)

When discussing the Ukrainian army, corpora 1 and 2 employ the heroic frame, creating an image of the invincible Ukrainian warrior. This framing typically involves analogies with historical events and biblical topics. Thus, Sviatoslav's address on the thirteenth day of the war, idealizes the Ukrainian resistance while simultaneously denigrating the Russian army:

Just as a miracle happened over the Vistula river almost a hundred years ago, when the Polish army stopped the onslaught of the red horde and defended the independence, the right to existence of the revived Polish state, today our Ukrainian army is performing that miracle over the Dnipro, stopping the onslaught of the northern neighbor who stepped on our land, bringing destruction and death. (PS, 8.03.2022)

Interestingly, the token *перемога України* ‘victory of Ukraine’ is found mainly in corpora 1 and 2 in the context of presenting the Ukrainian people as a hero-fighter who is destined to win. Epiphanius mentions the notion of victory in almost every address, creating the image of an invincible people that is already winning. In an address on the sixth day of the war, he hyperbolically asserts:

It is already clear to everyone, except perhaps Putin himself, that Ukraine is winning. Winning thanks to its indomitable spirit, extraordinary sacrifice, thanks to the power of love. (ME, 1.03.2022).

It is noteworthy that Sviatoslav projects the concept of victory onto a metaphysical dimension, expressing confidence in the future God's victory, which is defined as "*the victory of good over evil, truth over untruth, peace over war*" (PS, 6.03.2022). In the above axiological oppo-

sitions, Ukraine is presented on the side of light, goodness, God's truth and God's peace. Contrariwise, in Onufriy's discourse, the positive scenario is generally the end of the war (mainly through the mediation via the "*word of reason*") and the advent of peace, without an emphasis on victory (MO, 28.02.2022, 4.03.2022, 27.05.2022). Corpus data show that Onufriy avoids using the word *пемога* 'victory', while in the discourse of Epiphanius it is one of the most frequent words.

THE FRAME OF BIBLICAL EVENTS

The trend that is common to all three corpora is abundant allusions to biblical events in the depiction of Russia's military aggression and Ukraine's resistance. The use of the biblical frame is aimed at categorizing the events of the war in the biblical dimension, where Russia embodies sin and absolute evil, while Ukraine embodies good due to its righteous struggle for freedom.

In the first days of the war, the heads of two Ukrainian Churches described Russia's large-scale attack on Ukraine as Cain's sin (cf. Gen. 4:1–12). The portrayal of Russian aggression through the biblical frame of fratricide and the association of the aggressor with Cain indicates a negative assessment of Russia's actions in the light of Christian ethics. In the address of Metropolitan Onufriy in the first hours of the war on February 24, 2022, the name of Cain is mentioned in the context of condemning the Russian attack as the beginning of a fratricidal war:

In defense of Ukraine's sovereignty and integrity, we also appeal to the President of Russia to immediately end this fratricidal war. The Ukrainian and Russian peoples came out of the Dnipro baptismal font, and the war between these peoples is a repetition of the sin of Cain, who killed his own brother out of envy. Such a war is not justified by God or by people. (MO, 24.02.2022)

Metropolitan Epiphanius's address on the second day of the war also features the name of Cain, but the emphasis is slightly shifted – he condemns Russia's intention to deprive Ukrainians of freedom and statehood:

The enemy carries on his sinful deed – like Cain the murderer, he is trying to strangle our freedom and our very being. (ME, 25.02.2022)

Thus, despite referring to the same biblical story, the focus is on different aspects: Metropolitan Onufriy emphasizes the war between fraternal peoples and the repetition of Cain's fratricide with an indirect condemnation of Rus-

sia's actions, while Metropolitan Epiphanius directly condemns Russia as the embodiment of murderous Cain.

In Epiphanius's addresses and sermons, the collective "we" of the Ukrainian nation is associated with numerous biblical heroes who, owing to faith, were able to overcome a much more powerful enemy, superior to them in both strength and resources. The liberation struggle of Ukrainians, portrayed through the frame of biblical history, is placed on a par with the feats of Moses, Gideon, and David (cf. Ex. 5–15, Judg. 6–7, 1 Sam. 17):

After all, faith in God gives us the same power that Moses used against Pharaoh and all his power to free his people from slavery. Faith helps us to overcome the enemy, just as it helped Gideon to defeat the army of thousands of the Midianites with only three hundred soldiers. Just as the young man David defeated the giant Goliath by the power of faith, thanks to which the people of Israel were freed from the domination of the Philistines, so we, having faith, can expel Russian aggressors from our land. (ME, 13.03.2022).

Furthermore, Ukrainians leaving their destroyed homes and seeking refuge abroad are also presented through the frame of biblical events. In particular, in his address to "all people of good will" on April 8, 2022, Metropolitan Onufriy compares Ukrainian refugees to Jesus Christ, who was also a "refugee" and fled with his mother from Herod to Egypt (cf. Mt. 2:13–23). Thus, in his speech, the head of the UOC presents assistance to Ukrainian refugees as a service to Christ:

I also thank all the heads of European states and their peoples, the heads of other states of the world, international

organizations, and all those who have welcomed Ukrainians into their homes, and I thank people of different views and faiths. By doing so, you fulfill the most important commandment of God – love for God and for neighbor. The Holy Fathers teach us that by helping our neighbor, we help Christ, because He was a "refugee" when He and His mother fled from Herod to Egypt. (MO, 8.04.2022)

In the discourse of Patriarch Sviatoslav, Kyiv is conceptualized as the New Jerusalem, where the latest spiritual history is unfolding (PS, 3.03.2022). The head of the UGCC compares the suffering of the civilian population of Ukraine to the wounds of Jesus Christ and his crucifixion on the cross (cf. Mt. 27, Mk. 15, Lk. 23, Jn. 19), presenting it with a sacred dimension, as evidenced by the following phrases: *Торкнутися ран Христа в тілі зраненого війною українського народу* "To touch the wounds of Christ in the body of the war-wounded Ukrainian people" (PS, 8.03.2022); *На наших очах сьогодні розпинають Україну* "Ukraine is being crucified before our eyes today" (PS, 8.03.2022). The biblical dimension of the earthly suffering of Jesus Christ represents the fate of the Ukrainian people as victims of the Russian aggression:

If we return to our bloody reality, Jesus Christ is being crucified once again today by dropping bombs on peaceful towns and villages. He is once again humiliated when houses are looted and women, children and the elderly are abused in the occupied territories. He is once again being traded by those who want to hide behind Ukraine to allegedly prevent a third world war. (PS, 21.03.2022)

According to the head of the UGCC, just as the suffering of Jesus is followed by his Resurrection (cf. Mt. 28, Mk. 16, Lk. 24, Jn. 20), so the war should end with the resurrection of Ukraine (PS, 19.03.2022).

Drawing even more analogies with the New Testament, Sviatoslav refers to the feelings of Ukrainians that arise in response to the crimes of the Russian army as “righteous anger”, likening it to the anger of Jesus (Jn. 2:13–17; cf. Ps. 69:9):

When you see someone destroying your city, anger is a natural feeling. All the time I have images before my eyes of how Kyiv was changing from day to day dur-

ing this period... By the way, the Holy Scriptures describe the anger of Jesus Christ himself: when he enters the Jerusalem temple, drives out the merchants, overturns the money changers’ tables and says: “Zeal for Your house has consumed me.” This is righteous anger, as a reaction to obvious lawlessness, to an obvious fact of crime, an obvious evil that must be stopped. (PS, 21.03.2022)

The framing of the Russia-Ukraine war through the life of Jesus from His birth to the Resurrection is apparently used to heroize the Ukrainian people and sacralize their resistance to Russian aggression.

THE FRAME OF APOCALYPSE

The events of the Russia-Ukraine war are often presented through the apocalyptic frame in religious media (Levko, Kramar 2022). It is worth noting that this frame has two subframes: one based on biblical ideas about the apocalypse, the other related to modern notions of apocalypse, e.g., as a potential consequence of a nuclear war. Both subframes are featured in the addresses and sermons of Church leaders in Ukraine, but most often the war is perceived through the prism of biblical eschatology as an apocalyptic struggle between good and evil. Once again, this kind of war representation is based on the strategies of discourse polarization, i.e., positive representation of the “we” group and negative representation of the “they” group. The apocalyptic frame is also reinforced by rhetorical means, in particular hyperbole, which increases the contrast between the images of Russia and Ukraine.

Although the biblical apocalyptic subframe is almost absent in Metropolitan Onufriy’s texts, it is extensively featured in the discourse of the other two Church leaders. For example, Metropolitan Epiphanius uses this subframe to construct a negative image of the enemy, who is shown to the audience as the embodiment of biblical evil, the devil, and the Antichrist (cf. 2 Thess. 2; 1 Jn. 4:3–9):

It is not only Ukraine that is in danger – the whole world is in danger. The head of Russia has the spirit of the Antichrist, whose signs are revealed in the Scripture: pride, devotion to evil, ruthlessness, false religiosity. During World War II it was Hitler. Now it is Putin. (ME, 27.02.2022)

Patriarch Sviatoslav also refers to the Russian aggressor as the devil, although implicitly, conceptualizing the struggle of the Ukrainian people as the struggle of the heavenly army of angels against the forces of darkness:

All incorporeal heavenly forces, fight for Ukraine, overthrow the devil who attacks us, kills us, brings destruction and death. (PS, 4.03.2022)

Speeches of the Church leaders reiterate the idea that Russian occupiers' crimes against humanity will be subjected not only to human judgment, but first and foremost to God's judgment. Therefore, retribution for the lawlessness and war crimes of Russian soldiers is presented through the apocalyptic scenario of the Last Judgment, punishment and torment in hellfire (cf. Mt. 25:31–46; Rev. 20). For example, in his address of March 8, 2022, Epiphanius discusses the situation in Mariupol:

The situation in Mariupol, which is blockaded by Russian troops, is particularly terrible. I understand that there is no practical sense in addressing the Russian occupiers, so I just want to warn them that for the blood spilled, for the suffering and tears, for the destroyed lives, each of them will personally give an answer before God and will receive the merciless punishment promised by God in the fiery hell for their malicious mercilessness. (ME, 8.03.2022)

In his response to the tragedy in Bucha, Metropolitan Onufriy calls for God's judgment on war criminals, which will be fully realized in the biblical apocalyptic scenario at the Last Judgment:

From today's news I learnt about what happened in Bucha. It is terrible. Sorrow filled my heart. I submit those who committed this violence to the judgment of God, from which no one can hide. (MO, 4.04.2022)

In the sermons of Metropolitan Epiphanius, the events of the war are conceptualized as dark times, the struggle of the Ukrainian people – as the struggle of darkness against light, Russia as the personification of darkness, and the Russian occupiers as soul destroyers for whom the gates of hell are open and who have eternal torment ahead of them. These notions involve biblical associations with the devil and eschatological times, as the devil is the father of darkness and the destroyer of souls (cf. Jn. 8:44). We find a similar conceptualization of the war as an eschatological struggle between good and evil in Sviatoslav's discourse:

Today, Russia's war against Ukraine has a great spiritual dimension. A great confrontation between the newest manifestation of good – God's truth, and evil – the devil and his angels. (PS, 25.03.2022)

It should be emphasized that Onufriy avoids such linguistic means in his portrayal of Russians and generally prefers not to mention them directly in his sermons.

CONCLUSIONS

Having studied the discourse of Ukrainian Church leaders through the prism of framing with partial application of corpus methods, we can identify the major features of their verbal positioning

regarding the Russian aggression against Ukraine. Although all three leaders unanimously condemned Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in their addresses and official statements at the

beginning of the war, framing models and corpus data reveal greatly varying communication intentions and strategies, which range from complete denigration of the Russian occupiers and simultaneous praise of the Ukrainian people (OCU and UGCC) to partial ignoring of the events of the war and careful balancing between one's civic position and canonical loyalty (UOC).

Some of the common models of war representation in the discourse of the Church leaders are foregrounding, backgrounding, analogical and metaphorical framing. These framing models are used primarily to implement the discursive strategies of negative portrayal of the Russian Federation's leadership and army, on the one hand, and positive representation of Ukraine and the Ukrainian people in their struggle for territorial integrity and freedom, on the other. The biblical and apocalyptic frames serve to heroize the Ukrainian people and to sacralize their struggle by drawing analogies with the life and suffering of Jesus Christ or the feats of Old Testament heroes. The rhetorical devices used

in Epiphanius's and Sviatoslav's corpora – such as metaphor, personification, hyperbole, and metonymy – contribute to the polarization of discourse and its emotionalization, while at the same time enhancing the effect of framing models. Personification of the war in Onufriy's corpus, along with avoidance of direct assessment of Russians' actions, correlates with the framing model of backgrounding, which is used to blur their responsibility for the war.

Further research in this area could focus on the impact of the war on the religious situation and cross-confessional relations in Ukraine, as well as its coverage in religious media and the discourse of religious leaders. Pragmatic and discursive approaches, combined with corpus methods, can be productive in determining the communicative intentions and strategies in the coverage of the war and its effect on the religious situation in Ukraine. They can also help us better understand and evaluate the impact of these strategies on shaping the opinion of the participants on these events.

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Abbreviations

- ME = Addresses and sermons of Metropolitan Epiphanius (Dumenko), published on the official website of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. <https://www.pomisna.info/uk/category/vsinovyny/> (accessed January 10, 2023).
- MO = Addresses and sermons of Metropolitan Onufriy (Berezovsky), published on the official web-

site of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. <https://news.church.ua/> (accessed January 10, 2023).

- PS = Addresses, interviews and sermons of Patriarch Sviatoslav (Shevchuk), published on the official website of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. <http://archives.ugcc.ua/news/> (accessed January 10, 2023).