

Creating Josaphat: The Making of a Saint in the Church-Slavonic Office for Josaphat Kuntsevych

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Summary. The liturgical commemoration of Josaphat Kuntsevych, the Uniate Archbishop of Polatsk, was initiated soon after his death in the hands of Orthodox citizens in Vitsyebk in 1623. The hymnographical Office (*sluzhba*) for Josaphat developed in the course of the seventeenth century, first in manuscripts, and, from the 1730s, at the latest, also in the printed form. This article examines the Office with a constructivist approach, analyzing how the historical figure is turned into a hymnographical protagonist through the selection of relevant elements and life events that demonstrate his sanctity. The focus is on three aspects: the ‘saintly arguments’ that are used in ‘creating Josaphat’, the imitation of Christ through parallel narratives, and the depiction of Josaphat as the pillar of the Church Union.

Keywords: Josaphat Kuntsevych; hymnography; sainthood; Byzantine Rite; constructivist approach.

1. Introduction

Josaphat Kuntsevych (1580–1623), the Uniate Archbishop of Polatsk, began his existence as a hymnographical protagonist soon after his death. Only three years after a group of Orthodox citizens had murdered Josaphat in Vitsyebk,¹ the new Archbishop of Polatsk, Antonii Sielava (1583–1655), reported to Rome that Josaphat was being venerated locally and requested that an altar be attached to his tomb.² Apart from testifying to the active role of the Uniate hierarchs in promoting the new martyr’s cult, the correspondence implied that the liturgical commemoration of Josaphat had been, or was about to be, initiated.

Liturgical veneration suggests ritual performance, which, in the Byzantine Rite, is notably based on the singing of hymns and the reciting of the *Psalter*. In

1 For a historical analysis concerning Kuntsevych’s death and his subsequent cult, see, for example, Ch. Fukushima, 2020; K. Jobst et al., 2013; B. Лось et al., 2020.

2 A. Naumow, 1996, s. 97.

order to commemorate Josaphat, the liturgical content had to be selected from the existing repertory or created anew. It is likely that the earliest stage of his liturgical veneration was based on hymns performed for close, saintly categories within the Byzantine Rite, for example, the hieromartyrs (martyred priests or bishops).³ However, an indigenous liturgical office conducted in the Church Slavonic language soon began to form in parallel to these. The process of creating new texts was quite likely spontaneous and unregulated. Aleksander Naumow has argued that new hymns began to emerge in Uniate centres such as Polatsk and Zhyrovichy, at the latest, right after the Council of Kobryn in 1626.⁴ His argument is based on the great variety of hymns which were compiled during the 17th century. For example, there were four different *troparion* hymns and five *kontakion* hymns in circulation at that time.⁵

The eagerness to adorn a new martyr with new hymns reflects the process of ‘making saints’ in the Orthodox tradition, where a local, popular cult was considered to be a stimulus for furthering official canonization.⁶ In the Roman Catholic Church, the process of canonization underwent significant regulation in the years surrounding Josaphat’s martyrdom. Pope Urban VIII’s 1623 canonization reform was aimed at making it more centralized. For example, the papal decree of 13 March 1625 forbade the publication of books which made claims about the sanctity of individuals who had not yet been canonized.⁷ None of this concerned the creation of the liturgical cult of Josaphat within the Uniate community of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Even prior to his beatification in 1643, and certainly before his canonization in 1867, Josaphat was referred to by hymnographers as ‘blessed’ (*blazhennyi*) or ‘holy’ (*svyatyi*), by using the traditional categories for sainthood, such as ‘holy bishop’ (*svyatytel’*), and ‘hieromartyr’ (*svyaschennomuchenyk*).

The development of the Church-Slavonic Office for Josaphat provides an interesting case for researching hagiological ‘saint-making’. In this article, I proceed from the idea that – despite acknowledging ontological sanctity in the spiritual context – a saint can be viewed as a ‘hagiological product’, created through an active

3 As Aleksander Naumow (1996, s. 104–128) shows, a significant part of the 17th- and 18th-century textual corpus for Josaphat borrows from existing Byzantine Rite hymns, either from the so-called ‘common offices’ based on the type of the saint, or from individual commemorations.

4 A. Naumow, 1996, s. 98.

5 Ibid., s. 98–103.

6 L. S. Cunningham, 2005, p. 44. The creation of a liturgical office, however, has not traditionally marked the initial stages of evolving cults. See S. Griffin, 2019, p. 233.

7 M. Leone, 2010, p. 8.

process of construction. This approach is well defined by the Belgian sociologist Pierre Deloos who argues that “all saints are more or less *constructed*, in that, being necessarily saints *for other people*, they are remodelled in the collective representation which is made of them” (italics in the original).⁸ We are thus talking about representations as constructed by people, for the needs of people who perceive the sanctity of the saints; or, as Simon Ditchfield puts it, we see saints as “both *for* and *by* other people” (italics added by M. T.-R.).⁹ Besides their spiritual role, the saints are an important social, cultural, ideological, and political resource. It is thus important to examine the different motives embedded in their representations.¹⁰ To quote Robert H. Greene, who examined the canonization processes in the Russian Orthodoxy, “human beings make saints, and for very human reasons”.¹¹

Recent research on sainthood has increasingly turned to Byzantine Rite topics and sources, especially in the Eastern European context, in order to explore how sainthood has been constructed, for example, in *vitas*, hymns, iconography, chronicles, and popular religiosity.¹² The construction of a saint in hagiologic texts (including the visual arts) is commonly understood as a process of selecting elements from the saint’s life (real or imagined) which argue for their sanctity,¹³ and which are interpreted and recounted following the conventions of the genre. Karin Hyldal Christensen, who has studied the hagiological basis for canonizing Communist-era new martyrs in Russia, states, interestingly, that the principles of selecting elements to support the claims of sanctity – which she calls the ‘mandatory saintly arguments’ – have changed very little over the centuries. These include examples of the saintly character and the saintly deeds of the martyr, as well as supernatural events such as visions, miracles, and prophecies occurring during the saint’s life or posthumously.¹⁴ It is obvious that the hagiological genres are closely intertwined.¹⁵

The construction of a saint by selecting and combining life events and personal features in order to demonstrate that they are worthy of veneration is only one

8 P. Deloos, 1983, p. 194, via S. Ditchfield, 2011, p. 185.

9 S. Ditchfield, 2011, p. 184.

10 M. Leone, 2010, p. 16; S. Ditchfield, 2011, p. 164.

11 R. Greene, 2010, p. 47.

12 For example, P.-A. Bodin, 2007; K. Hyldal Christensen, 2018; S. Griffin, 2019; E. Kahla, 2007; Zh. Kormina et al., 2007; K. Parpei, 2024.

13 Cf. K. Hyldal Christensen, 2018, p. 55–56.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 56.

15 P.-A. Bodin, 2007, p. 17; K. Hyldal Christensen, 2018, p. 52.

aspect of saint-making. Another, deeper, dimension is created by the archetypal role of Christ in the ‘network’ of sainthood. Within the genre of hagiography, according to Gail Lenhoff, a saint is a person who demonstrates an exemplary imitation of Christ,¹⁶ and is consequently presented as an example for the believers to imitate.¹⁷ The representation of a saint is constructed so as to orient the believer’s gaze to Christ, or, as the Early Modern Catholic hagiographer Alonso de Villegas stated metaphorically, the saints are the eyeglasses through which believers must contemplate God.¹⁸ Thus, the motif and the convention of *imitatio Christi* can be seen as permeating hagiology in general, and particularly the cult of the martyrs, who form what Candida Moss calls a ‘mimetic chain’, as martyrs imitate previous martyrs who had imitated Christ.¹⁹ A similar ‘chaining’ can be suggested for the categorization of sainthood into types such as bishops and hieromartyrs, through which the new saints refer to respective archetypal figures and form a kind of a synthesis between them.²⁰

Elina Kahla has pointed out that “as a canonical genre, hagiography renews and redefines itself at every historical watershed”.²¹ The idea expands well to other hagiological genres, and highlights the importance of the context in approaching representations of sainthood. The coexistence and competition between the Uniate and the Orthodox Churches of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth during the 17th and 18th centuries created a specifically charged historical context for saint-making and the creation of new hymnography. With both parties claiming to be the sole bearer of the ‘true faith’, for example, this common trope concerning the Byzantine Rite hymnography became loaded with highly partisan connotations and could be seen as both embodying and promoting confessional separatism.²² Thus, even the use of the common, pre-Union hymnography for Josaphat’s commemoration would have conveyed new views and ideas related to the context.²³

The Church-Slavonic Office for Josaphat provides a wealth of topics for research, for example, from historical, codicological, linguistic, and liturgical

16 G. Lehnhoff, 1987, p. 259.

17 K. Hyldal Christensen, 2018, p. 55.

18 M. Leone, 2010, p. 4.

19 C. R. Moss, 2010, p. 67, via K. Hyldal Christensen, 2018, p. 55.

20 Cf. E. Kahla, 2007, p. 22, who relates the saints to archetypal figures through their guardian-saints’ namesakes.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 17.

22 M. Takala-Roszczenko, 2020, p. 25–28.

23 A. Naumow, 1996, s. 133.

perspectives. Considering the numerous studies concerning the cult of Josaphat which have focused on his *vita* and popular cult,²⁴ it is surprising that the Office has been the focus of very few researchers. So far, it has mainly been explored by the Polish historians and philologists Marzanna Kuczyńska²⁵ and Aleksander Naumow. The latter's seminal article on the development of the manuscript tradition of the Office forms the basis for the current study.²⁶ Naumow provides the incipits for the full Office from different manuscripts in Lithuania and Poland, and discusses their hymnographical models along with the historical context, as well as some of the content of the hymns.

In this article, I will approach the Office via a more specified focus on the construction of Josaphat as a saint through hymnography. By using three representative manuscripts and complementing them with three of the earliest printed offices, I will examine the content of the hymns, by giving attention to three special points: first, the creation of Josaphat through the selection of 'saintly arguments';²⁷ second, by following the imitation of Christ through parallel narratives; and finally, by investigating the depiction of Josaphat as the pillar of the Union. Broadly drawing from a semiotic analysis, as delineated by Massimo Leone,²⁸ I will ask: *How is Josaphat constructed in the texts? What kind of connotations are embedded in them? And how were the representations of Josaphat made persuasive?*

2. The Manuscripts and Early Printed Offices

The corpus of texts examined in this article consists of a selection of liturgical manuscripts and early printed publications which include the full Office (*sluzhba*) for Josaphat of Polatsk in Church Slavonic. A full Byzantine Rite Office contains the hymnography and readings for vespers, matins, and the Divine Liturgy for the saint's commemoration.²⁹ I exclude from the analysis the short Office, i.e.,

24 E.g., K. Jobst et al., 2013; B. Лось et al., 2020.

25 M. Kuczyńska-Hyszka, 1992. Information provided based on A. Naumow, 1996, because the article was not available to me.

26 A. Naumow, 1996.

27 Cf. K. Hylidal Christensen, 2018, p. 56.

28 M. Leone, 2010, p. 16.

29 One of the manuscript offices, MSD 547, contains another set for vespers following the Divine Liturgy, which can be seen as influence from the Latin Rite custom. M. Kuczyńska-Hyszka, 1992, s. 10, via A. Naumow, 1996, s. 105.

the summary of the hymnographical content for the needs of the Divine Liturgy, which began to be included in Uniate missals and other liturgical sources from the 1690s onward.

The manuscript sources have been selected for analysis on the basis of their variety, in order to grasp the scope of the various texts compiled for Josaphat's commemoration. The selection was based on comparing the incipits provided in Naumow's article. The two earliest manuscripts date from the 17th century. An *Oktoich–Festal Mineya* from the Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences in Vilnius (hereinafter referred to as *LMAVB*), F19-177, is also considered; it used to belong to the collection of the Lithuanian Spiritual Seminary.³⁰ The Office for Josaphat (f. 106r–108v), prescribed for 2 October,³¹ contains the propers sung at Vespers and Matins, several of which are based on, or modified, the common office for hieromartyr-bishops.

The second 17th-century source is a *Mineya* from the Library of the Metropolitan Spiritual Seminary in Lublin, MSD 547; however, the Office for Josaphat (f. 44r–49r) is a later addition to the manuscript.³² This office is rather independent in its content, presenting an interesting set of seemingly indigenous hymns as well as some modified from common models. The canon in this manuscript provides references to the *irmos* hymns only.

The third manuscript, an *Anthologion* from the *LMAVB*, F19-113 (f. 42r–53r), was compiled in the monastery of Supraśl in 1714.³³ This office shares some hymns with other manuscripts, including F19-177, and presents a full canon with *troparia* based on the common canon for hieromartyr-bishops.

There is no full certainty about the first office to appear in print, yet we know it took place in the 1730s at the latest. Three printed offices have been compared in the framework of this article: *Sluzhba Iosafatu*, from the monastery of Supraśl, printed in the 1710s–1730s;³⁴ an analogous office included in the *Mineya*, published in the monastery of Pochaiv in 1737,³⁵ and another, included in the *Vozsledovaniia*

30 Н. Морозова, 2016, р. 303.

31 Before the Council of Zamość, the date of commemoration varied in different manuscripts between 16 September and 2 October. Cf. A. Naumow, 1996, s. 98.

32 I am grateful to the librarian Elżbieta Oszejca for help in obtaining copies of the Office. For a description, see A. Naumow et al., 2004, s. 259–260.

33 Н. Морозова, 2016, р. 290.

34 *Служба С[вя]тому С[вя]щенном[у]ч[е]нику Иосафату*, access online: <https://belbook.nlb.by>. For a description, see No. 220 in Г. Я. Галенчанка, 1986, с. 141.

35 *Мінея рочная или мало нечто сокращенный трифологион, сирѣчь цвѣтослов* (Почаїв,

praznikom in the monastery of Univ in 1738.³⁶ These offices, prescribed for 16 September, are identical in structure and content. This indicates that the Supraśl or the Pochaiv edition served as the model for subsequent publications, or that all three reproduced an earlier ‘prototext’.

In her article on early Uniate hymnography, Marzanna Kuczyńska attributed the printed office to the authorship of an unknown Basilian monk of Belarusian heritage and dated its origin to immediately after the beatification of Josaphat in 1643.³⁷ This points to the existence of an earlier version, yet leaves it unclear whether there is manuscript evidence for such an office already emerging in the 1640s–1650s. To the best of my knowledge, no manuscript source identical to the printed office has yet been found. Comparing the incipits of the hymns, it could be suggested that a *Trefologion–Festal Mineya* from Supraśl, dated to the third quarter or the 17th century (from LMAVB, F19-211),³⁸ presents a rather similar set of hymns, especially for vespers; yet it is far from identical to the printed office. Moreover, Kuczyńska’s suggestion raises the question as to why the office would only be printed more than 80 years later, in the 1730s. On the other hand, we know of other analogous 17th-century offices; for example, the *Feast of the Most Holy Mystery of Eucharist* (i.e., the feast of Corpus Christi), which was printed in full only after the 1720 Council of Zamość, which introduced this uniquely Uniate feast into the calendar.³⁹ In any case, the hymnographical tradition focusing on Josaphat developed over a long period of time and was thus able to reflect the formative decades, if not the century, of the Uniate confessional context.

3. Constructing Josaphat

In its content, the hymnographical Office for Josaphat builds on the characterizations of the saint whose individual features are, according to the Byzantine Rite

1737). I am grateful to Iryna Kachur from Vasyl Stefanyk National Scientific Library of Ukraine in Lviv for help in locating the Office. For a description, see No. 1273 in A. П. Запачко et al., 1984, с. 53.

36 *Восльдованія празником пресвятой тайны евхаристіі, состраданія пресвятія богородица и блаженнаго священномученика Иосафата от святого собора Замойскаго преподаванім* (Унѣв, 1738). For a description, see No. 1310; *ibid.*, p. 56.

37 M. Kuczyńska-Hyszka, 1992, s. 7, via A. Naumow, 1996, s. 99.

38 Н. Морозова, 2016, p. 310.

39 В. Лось et al., 2020, с. 455; M. Takala-Roszczenko, 2013, p. 146–178.

tradition, “translated into common Christian and medieval categories”.⁴⁰ These are made more personal by providing sporadic descriptions of his life, which are not organized chronologically. The selected parts of the life narrative paraphrase, to some extent, the *vita*.⁴¹

The hymnographers who compiled the liturgical hymns for Josaphat were thoroughly immersed in the Byzantine Rite textual tradition. As was typical in hagiological creativity, for them, “imitation was a guideline”,⁴² which meant the recycling and modifying of the already existing hymnographical tropes and images. These were mainly chosen from the common repertory of depictions of martyrs, ascetic saints, and bishops. As Aleksander Naumow has observed, several of the new hymns for Josaphat were modelled on the hymns for hieromartyr-bishops; some copied the original to a greater degree, yet some did this less literally.⁴³ Other hymnographical models used were, for example, from the office for the fourth-century Bishop Anthimus of Nicomedia (commemorated on 3 September). Some hymns recycled the content from the offices for the fourth-century archbishop John Chrysostom (13 November), the second-century bishop Simeon of Jerusalem (27 April), the third-century bishop and martyr Januarius of Benevento (21 April), the third-century martyr Mammes of Caesarea (Mamas, 2 September), amongst others. Next to referring to archetypes of martyrs and (martyred) bishops, the model texts were likely chosen due to their proximity to the dates of commemoration.⁴⁴

3.1. *Saintly Arguments*

Rooted in tradition, the Office for Josaphat constructed the image of the saint using highly standardized motifs which argue for his sanctity on several levels. These motifs do not focus solely on his martyrdom – but rather depict the path which led to his suffering by describing his virtuous youth, monastic asceticism, and his time as a priest. It is possible to reconstruct a narrative of his life from the references which are scattered across several different hymns. The references generally

40 P.-A. Bodin, 2007, p. 241.

41 For comparison, I use a printed Church Slavonic *synaxarion* for Josaphat (16 September). The origin of the collection of texts titled *Синаксари на весь годъ* is yet to be confirmed; it resembles the *Anthologion* published at the Monastery of Pochaiv in 1777. I am grateful to Taras Shmanko for suggesting the connection.

42 K. Hyldal Christensen, 2018, p. 51.

43 A. Naumow, 1996.

44 *Ibid.*, 1996, s. 132.

correspond to his *vita*, yet, within the frame of hymnographical conventions, they understandably present considerably smaller number of historical ‘facts’.

The first ‘saintly argument’ for Josaphat highlights his calling at a young age. The *vita* narrates this in a symbolic act of a spark of fire projected from an icon of the Crucifixion onto the chest of the young boy – this anticipates his zeal for serving God.⁴⁵ The *kontakion* for Josaphat refers to this incident by describing him as being “enlightened in [his] youth by a ray of fire from the crucified Christ” (“Зарю огненною от распятого Христа юношески просвѣщенъ”).⁴⁶ Accordingly, a love for Christ engulfs Josaphat from his childhood, and he becomes a zealot, fully committed to God (“От младенства былъ еси Господень рачителъ”,⁴⁷ “Весь от юности возложися Владыцѣ Христу”).⁴⁸ For the love of Christ, he “leaves the world and all that is beautiful in it” (“оставивъ миръ любви его ради, и вся яже во миръ красная”)⁴⁹ to pursue an ascetic life.

Josaphat’s monasticism relates him to the saintly virtues traditionally associated with asceticism. By denying the world (“земная вся оставивъ”)⁵⁰ and defeating the needs of the flesh by fasting, abstinence, prayer, and different ascetic feats (“постомъ твоимъ страстная игранія вся плотская оумертвилъ еси, воздержаниемъ и Молитвою, и различными Подвиги”),⁵¹ he achieves the likeness of the angels (“аггеломъ подобяся во Иноческомъ житии”).⁵² Unlike the *vita*, which describes in graphic detail how Josaphat physically tortures his flesh as part of his ascetic feats,⁵³ the hymnography emphasizes his spiritual development through prayers and all-night vigils, and also his commitment to life of obedience, poverty, and love of God and of his neighbour (“яко Агг(е)лъ во Иноцехъ поживъ на земли, во послушании и нищеть, во любовь ко Богу и ближнему, во Молитвахъ и бдѣннихъ всенощныхъ”).⁵⁴ Yet asceticism does not play the primary role in Josaphat’s hymnographical representation; rather, it lays the foundation for his later suffering. He is described as walking “steadily along the right way, having taken on his shoulder the weapon of the cross” (“оружие бо

45 *Синаксари*, [1777 (?)], с. 5.

46 *Kontakion*, in: Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences in Vilnius (hereinafter referred to as *LMAVB*), *LMAVB D19-177*, the printed offices.

47 *Doxastikon* at the *Lity*; *MSD 547*.

48 1st *sticheron* at Psalms 148–150; *LMAVB F19-177, F19-113*, the printed offices.

49 *Doxastikon* at Psalms 148–150; *LMAVB F19-177, F19-113*, the printed offices.

50 1st *kathisma*, *LMAVB F19-113*, the printed offices.

51 Canon, 1st ode *troparion*, *LMAVB F19-113*.

52 *Kontakion*, the printed offices.

53 *Синаксари*, [1777 (?)], с. 5.

54 1st *sticheron* at Psalms 148–150; *LMAVB F19-177, F19-113*, the printed offices.

крестное на рамо взем, неуклонно шествовал еси путь истинный)⁵⁵ thus he is conscious of approaching his own Golgotha.

The plot thickens with the description of the events in Vitsyebsk in 1623. For some reason, the most detailed narrative of Josaphat's martyrdom is placed towards the end of matins (in the canon and the *Exapostilarion* of the printed offices, and the *stichera* at psalms 148–150 in all the analysed sources, except for MSD 547), creating a dramatic culmination to the Office. Throughout all the events, the hymnography demonstrates the perseverance and the patience of the martyr-to-be, making it another argument for sanctity and creating strong parallels with the Passion of Christ. The hymnographer points out the connection by describing how, "like [the] Lord Christ approached his Passion and death on the Cross", Josaphat prepares himself to suffer by praying, on the ground, in the shape of a cross ("и яко Владыка Христось ко Страсти и Смерти Крестный приближаяся, Креста образно възлежь наземли молитву творя, ко Страданю себе оуготоваль еси Священномучениче Иосафате").⁵⁶

Josaphat is portrayed as defying the threats of his adversaries by crying out during his last earthly moments, possibly in reference to Psalm 26 (LXX), "The Lord is my light, and the giver of reason" ("Свѣтъ мнѣ естъ Богъ, и податель разума"), for which he is hit on the head with an axe ("сего ради оударенъ бывъ въ главу оскордомъ").⁵⁷ The attack on the bishop is depicted in gruesome detail: "after unanimous consultation, they have attacked you mightily, and shattered your honourable head, scourging without mercy and brutally dragging you, shedding your blood like water throughout the whole city. Heavy stones were tied to your neck and your feet, and from the mountain into the fast and deep river they cast you down, cursing and laughing, even after death showing no mercy to you" ("яко совѣщаша единомышлениемъ, нападоша на тя крѣпци, и главу твою Ч(е)стную разсъкоша. бьюще немилостивно и сурово влекуще, пролияша кров твою яко воду повсем градъ. Тяжкие привящавше камение ко виш твоей, и ногам с(вя)тым: с горы вбѣстрину и грузнину рѣчную ругающуюся и смѣющуюся вовергоша, Ниже по смерти ущедряющим").⁵⁸

55 *Doxastikon*, aposticha; MSD 547.

56 2nd sticheron at Psalms 148–150; LMAVB F19-177, F19-113, the printed Offices. The *vita* describes the same event: "The man of God lay down on the ground in the shape of a cross, preparing himself for a certain death" ("Мужъ же Божий крестаобразно падъ на землю, ко непремѣнный готовяше себе смерти"). *Синаксари*, [1777 (?)], p. 6.

57 Canon, 5th Ode *troparion*; the printed offices.

58 3rd sticheron at Psalms 148–150; LMAVB F19-177, F19-113.

In the Byzantine Rite's hymnographical tradition, the brutality of martyrdom becomes interpreted as beautiful and honourable – which is a testimony to victory. Similarly, the Office for Josaphat pays notable attention to the physical elements of death as symbols of purity and eternity. His blood, for example, is perceived as being beautiful pearls on his honourable wounds (“*честными Ранами Иосафате Премудре, яко красными бисеры обложен*”),⁵⁹ which beautify his priestly robes (“*очервленемъ своя крове священную и божественну свою одежду украсил еси*”),⁶⁰ and in which he bathes (“*страдалческою кровию омывся*”).⁶¹ Josaphat's head, on the other hand, is severed only to be crowned by Christ with a garland of victory (“*немилостивно главу твою врагъ разсѣче [...] юже Христосъ Богъ вовышнихъ вѣнцемъ побѣды вѣнча*”).⁶²

Miracles typically play a central role in the making of saints, particularly in hagiography. In the Office for Josaphat, however, there are only a few references to this saintly characteristic. He is described in general terms as a “true miracle-maker” (*чудотворецъ истиненъ*),⁶³ yet specific examples are restricted to the description concerning his relics. It is related how the relics, thrown into the depths of the Dvina River, are revealed by a “pillar from heaven and are found unharmed, and are received with joy by the Uniates” (“*Во глубинѣ рѣки дзвины, ввергоша Мощи твоя святыя [...] явижеся столпъ со небесе, показа я невредимы, людиеже соединенныи обрѣтише тя со радостію вземше*”).⁶⁴ Although the *vita* describes healings which took place at the coffin of Josaphat in Polatsk,⁶⁵ and several testimonies were published during the 17th century about the miracles,⁶⁶ the Office only refers to Josaphat as being a “doctor to bodily ailments for all who approach his healing relics” (“*недугомъ тѣлеснымъ врача, притѣкающимъ ко цѣлебнымъ Моцемъ твоимъ*”).⁶⁷ The modest characterization of Josaphat as a healer probably indicates that he would represent other, more central themes.

59 2nd *sticheron* on “Lord, I call”; MSD 547, LMAVB F19-113.

60 1st *sticheron* on “Lord, I call”; LMAVB F19-177.

61 5th *sticheron* on “Lord, I call”; the printed offices.

62 *Exapostilarion*; the printed offices.

63 4th *sticheron* on “Lord, I call”; LMAVB F19-177, F19-113.

64 Canon, 6th ode *troparion*; the printed offices.

65 *Синаксари*, [1777?], p. 6.

66 Лосъ В. et al., 2020, с. 451–453.

67 6th *sticheron* on “Lord, I call”; LMAVB F19-177, F19-113.

3.2. *Imitatio Christi*

The Office for Josaphat is an excellent example of the ‘mimetic chain’ of martyrs, which reaches back to the ‘protomartyr’, Jesus Christ.⁶⁸ The hymnography indicates that Josaphat’s martyrdom was not restricted to his personal passion but also, through him, a reliving of Christ’s sacrifice. Thus, Josaphat’s followers are invited to commemorate Christ’s Passion, which creates a deeper dimension to the parallels which are constructed throughout the hymns.

The high priesthood of Christ, which had already been developed conceptually during the early Christian tradition,⁶⁹ laid the foundation for the Christian priesthood on several levels, for example, as a mediator and intercessor in worship. Josaphat’s ‘imitation of Christ’ is obviously constructed on this typology; yet the connection created between Josaphat and Christ focuses on one particular aspect of priesthood, namely, the celebration of the Eucharist in the sense of a sacrifice. Christ’s sacrifice, his voluntary death to redeem mankind and conquer death, lays the foundation for Josaphat’s martyrdom. The Eucharist, instituted by Christ at the Last Supper, is carried by Josaphat as a “pure, terrible, and bloodless sacrifice to God” (“Жертву непорочну, страшну и безкровну Господеву принося”), and, beside it, he gives himself, his blood, immaculately as an offering (“себе самаго на заколение кровию Священномучениче Иосафате нескверно приведе”).⁷⁰ Josaphat is described as preparing his heart “as a beautiful sacrificial table”, which he, having celebrated the bloodless sacrifice, brings in sacrifice to God (“жертвенникъ красенъ сердце свое совершивый, и безкровныя жертвы священнодѣйствовавъ приносилъ еси жертвы Богови”).⁷¹

The imagery related to blood is central to the description of the sacrifice. Josaphat sheds his blood for Christ, the giver of life, who had shed his blood for him (“крови твоей каплющи жизнедавицу Христу, иже кровь свою тебе ради излиявшему”).⁷² In a notably Eucharist-related construction, Josaphat is depicted as drinking a chalice of his own blood, through the suffering of his flesh in imitation of Christ (“вѣрно испивъ чашу, страданиемъ плоти по Христу крови

68 C. R. Moss, 2010, p. 67 via K. Hylidal Christensen, 2018, p. 55.

69 O. J. Filtvedt et al., 2015.

70 Canon, 3rd ode; the printed offices.

71 2nd *kathisma*; LMAVB F19-113, the printed offices.

72 1st *sticheron apostichon*; MSD 547. This hymn is based on the *sticheron* for “Lord, I call” for the martyr Mammes. A. Naumow, 1996, s. 111.

своея”).⁷³ The references to blood could also be seen as allusions to the sacrifices made by the Jewish high priest in the Temple of Jerusalem, who alone could enter the Holy of Holies in the Temple. For example, Josaphat is described as entering the ‘Holy of Holies’ in his blood-reddened priestly vestments (“*кровию обогривъ свою священную одежду, вошелъ еси во Святая Святыхъ*”).⁷⁴ On the other hand, the ‘Holy of Holies’ also has a heavenly connotation: in another hymn, Josaphat is depicted as residing there with the Bodiless Powers, i.e., the angels (“*вошелъ еси во Святая Святыхъ съ Безплотными водворяяся*”).⁷⁵

The voluntary aspect of self-sacrifice, which is exemplified by Christ’s Passion and imitated by martyrs, permeates the parallelism which is created between Christ and Josaphat. The parable of the Good Shepherd (John 10: 1–21) provides the basis for presenting Josaphat as a hierarch who never ceases to care for his flock and is ready to give his life for it. Josaphat is greeted as “the good shepherd of Christ’s flock, who, [in] giving his soul [i.e., life] for the sheep, gives himself as a sacrifice and a fragrant offering to Christ” (“*Радуйся Пастырю добрый Христова Стада, иже душу свою положивый о Овцахъ, жертва и заколение Благоуханно принесесе Христови*”).⁷⁶

Yet one of the most interesting aspects of the hymnographical *imitatio Christi* in the Office of Josaphat can be found in the depiction of his adversaries. The hymnographers clearly grasped the parallel to the ‘death by compatriots’: the Jewish Council denounced another Jew, Jesus Christ; while the Byzantine-Rite Ruthenians murdered another Ruthenian, Archbishop Josaphat. This creates a deep underlying tension in the Office and enables the use of hymnographical repertory which is traditionally reserved for depicting the Jews in relation to the Passion. Terms such as ‘the council of the wicked’ (*совет нечестивый*) and the ‘gathering of the lawless’ (*беззаконных соборище*),⁷⁷ used in Byzantine hymnography to describe the *Sanhedrin*, are used in the Office to emphasize the extreme wickedness and lawlessness of those who conspire against Josaphat and who ultimately kill him. The use of the concept of the ‘law’ is generally interesting: Josaphat is emphatically depicted as ‘a lawful priest’ (*священникъ законенъ*),⁷⁸ while his enemies are ‘lawless’ – perhaps to allude

73 2nd *sticheron* at the *Lity*; MSD 547.

74 *Sticheron* for “Lord, I call”; MSD 547, LMAVB F19-113.

75 *Troparion*; MSD 547, LMAVB F19-113; the printed offices.

76 *Doxasticon* on “Lord, I call”; MSD 547, LMAVB F19-113.

77 The term ‘*соборище*’ translates as ‘synagogue, the Jewish prayer and judicial assembly’. See *Полный церковнославянский словарь*, 2024, с. 627.

78 *Doxasticon* on “Lord, I call”; LMAVB F19-177, the printed offices.

to Christ as the giver of the new law, by which the law of the Old Covenant, passes. The most illustrative example of the interplay between Old Testament topics is the following hymn, which is based on strong intertextuality: as Naumow points out, it uses direct quotations from Psalm 82 (LXX), which, in turn, are associated with the hymnography for Good Friday:⁷⁹ “The wicked men, *your enemies*, in the words of David the psalmist, *make a tumult, and those who hate you have raised their head*, O blessed hieromartyr Josaphat. Being deceitful in their will, *they have conspired unrighteously against you, saying: Come, and let us destroy them from being a nation, that his name shall be remembered no more, and because they conspired together with one accord, they have attacked you mightily*.”⁸⁰ (“Людие злочестивыи, врази твои якоже псаломски: давидъ рече вопсалмъхъ возшумѣша, и ненавидашии тя воздвигоша главу, на тя блаженне, священомучениче Иосафате. лукавноваша волею, и совѣтъ нечестивыи совѣщавше рѣша. Прийдѣте и потребим его от языка, и непомянется имя его к тому, и яко совѣщаша единомышлениемъ, нападоша на тя крѣпции”)⁸¹

Here, the parallelism clearly aims to create contrast between Josaphat and his murderers. According to Leone, descriptions of sinfulness and vices in hagiography are useful in emphasizing the triumph of the saints over them.⁸² However, in the case of Josaphat, the context in which the Office was created – the struggle between the Orthodox and the Uniate Churches after the Union of Brest (1596) – explains much of this contrast. The defamiliarization of the Orthodox community by using anti-Semitic hymnographical tropes can be seen as a tool for demarcation, of mentally separating the two Byzantine Rite communities. The representation of Josaphat which was produced, not only embodied but also promoted the juxtaposition of the two Churches, which was ultimately vital for the process of confessionalization in the Uniate Church.

3.3. Pillar of the Union

The unification of the Christian Church was one of the central aims of the Early Modern Roman Catholic Church, which also clearly became reflected in the

79 A. Naumow, 1996, s. 134.

80 Compare with Psalm 82 (LXX) in New English Translation of the Septuagint, 2014.

81 3rd *sticheron* at Psalms 148–150; LMAVB F19-177, F19-113, the printed offices. (Intertextuality in Psalm 82 is marked with italics by the author.)

82 M. Leone, 2010, p. 5.

representations of newly canonized Catholic saints.⁸³ Although fully rooted and constructed within the Byzantine Rite's hymnographical tradition, the Office for Josaphat continues the wider Catholic discourse on unification. The sheer number of references to 'unification' (*соединение*) or 'unity' (*единость*) suggests that the Office focused not only on an individual person but that it was also an office with a cause – a cause to promote and strengthen the Union in Ruthenian lands.

This goal seems to have gained more weight after the Council of Zamość in 1720. A comparison between certain hymns included in several different offices reveals that the printed sources from the 1730s modified the earlier versions by adding petitions for the unification of the Churches. For example, the hymn "With Martyr's Blood" (*Мученическими кровми*), which is found in both the *Mineya* from Lublin and the Supraśl *Anthologion* from 1713, concludes with the phrase "fearlessly pray for our souls" (*"содержновениемъ моли о душахъ нашихъ"*).⁸⁴ In the printed sources, the ending has been amplified to read "pray [to God] to give the Churches unification, and peace, and to have great mercy on our souls" (*"и нынѣ молися, даровати Церквамъ соединение, и миръ, и душамъ нашимъ велию милость"*).⁸⁵

Yet Josaphat's role is not only restricted to praying for the unification. He is a Messianic figure who leads people to unity through his righteous words and grace (*"ко соединению наставилъ еси люди, честными словесы твоими и благодатию"*).⁸⁶ The unity of the 'Orthodox Catholic Church' is equated to 'the true/right way', to which Josaphat guides those who are lost (*"заблудшихъ на путь истинный наставилъ еси и къ соединению церкви Православныя Кафолическия пвивель"*).⁸⁷

To underline his saintly and salvific deeds, powerful antitheses are built into the Office: Josaphat's actions are constantly contrasted with those of his adversaries. His enemies are not named directly, but referred to as 'lovers of quarrel' (*распрюлюбимые*) and 'creators of discord' (*раздоротворные*) in various combinations of the words. Josaphat is depicted as bringing down their vanity (*"низложивъ раздоротворное суетие"*)⁸⁸ and shattering their walls (*"раздорства стѣны*

83 Ibid., p. 535.

84 3rd *sticheron* on "Lord, I call"; MSD 547, LMAVB F19-113.

85 1st *sticheron* on "Lord, I call"; the printed offices. All *stichera* in this category in the printed offices conclude with this phrase.

86 5th *sticheron* on "Lord, I call"; the printed offices.

87 2nd *sticheron apostichon*; LMAVB F19-113, the printed offices.

88 3rd *sticheron* on "Lord, I call"; the printed offices.

разориль еси).⁸⁹ He is the medium through which the “darkness of the lovers of quarrel becomes darker still” and “the light of the unity shines” (“*Радуйся имже тма распрюлюбимыхъ помрачися. Радуйся имже свѣтъ възйде соединения*”).⁹⁰ His light is the “light of the divine understanding”, in which he instructs ‘Christ’s flock’, “banishing the darkness of the evil faith, and drying the deep [waters] with the river of his sweat” (“*стадо Христово [...] наставляя ко Свѣту Богоразумия, зловѣрия тму отгналь еси, и глубину рѣкою Потовѣ твоихъ [...] изсуишь еси*”).⁹¹ With his martyr’s blood, he also quenches “the hearts of the lovers of quarrel, which are set on fire by discord” (“*погасил еси распрюлюбимыхъ распаленная раздорствиемъ сердца мученическою кровию*”).⁹²

The depiction of Josaphat as the defender of faith creates a strong ‘saintly argument’. Again, by contrasting between the ‘evil faith’ (*зловѣрие*) of the enemy, and the ‘right faith’ (*правовѣрие*),⁹³ the ‘good faith’ (*благовѣрие*),⁹⁴ the ‘Orthodox faith’ (*правовѣрная вѣра*),⁹⁵ or the “true and immaculate faith of Christ” (“*истинная и непорочная вѣра Христова*”),⁹⁶ which Josaphat teaches, the hymnographers effectively demarcate a line between the two Byzantine Rite communities. Josaphat is also depicted as “banishing the heretical beasts” (“*отгналь еси еретическая звѣры*”)⁹⁷ and as “the one who roots out heresy” (*ереси искоренителю*),⁹⁸ in which case, the reference may point to the Protestants; the *vita*, at least, mentions Josaphat’s success in converting the *schismatics* (i.e., the Orthodox) as well as Calvinists and other Protestants.⁹⁹

The Union constitutes the backdrop for most of Josaphat’s hymnographical representation. It is particularly visible in the depictions of him as the shepherd of his flock, i.e., as a bishop, whose “grace of words strengthens the Church and makes [him] the pillar of the unification” (“*благодать Словесъ твоихъ*

89 Canon, 3rd ode *troparion*; the printed offices.

90 Oikos; the printed offices.

91 Canon, 4th ode; LMAVB F19-113.

92 *Kontakion*; LMAVB D19-177, the printed offices. The repetition of the prefix ‘raz’/‘ras’ can be seen as intensifying the effect while serving as an alliterative technique.

93 *Doxastikon* on “Lord, I call”; MSD 547, LMAVB F19-113.

94 Canon, 3rd Ode *troparion*; LMAVB F19-113.

95 1st *sticheron* at *Lity*; MSD 547.

96 *Doxastikon* at *aposticha*; LMAVB F19-177, F19-113, the printed offices.

97 2nd *kathisma*; MSD 547.

98 *Doxastikon* on “Lord, I call”; MSD 547, LMAVB F19-113.

99 Синаксари, [1777 (?)], p. 5.

оутврждаеть Церковь, Столпъ ты Блаженне соединению содѣла”).¹⁰⁰ For his zealous defence of the unity of the Church, he is frequently praised as the “unwavering pillar of the Church and of the unification” (“столпъ непоколебимъ Церкви и Соединения”), yet what he does in life, ‘in words and deeds’ (*словомъ и дѣломъ*), pales in comparison to his death: it is by giving his life for the unity of the Church (“заединость Церкви душу свою положилъ еси”) that he truly demonstrates his sanctity.¹⁰¹

4. Conclusion

The Office for Hieromartyr Josaphat developed as the first fruit of the independent hymnographical creativity within the Uniate Church. Complemented by different hymnographers in different locations, the Office kept evolving through the 17th and well into the 18th century. As typical of the Byzantine Rite hymnography, it is essentially a creative patchwork in which some already existing hymns and tropes are cited, recycled, and modified, alongside the composition of new ones, to form a coherent representation of the holy person or event. As one form of hagiological texts, the hymnographical office for a saint is understood to result from a process of selecting elements from their life and their miracles which are presented as arguments for their sanctity.¹⁰² In the constructive approach to representations of sainthood, the saint is viewed as a ‘hagiological product’, constructed by people for the needs of people,¹⁰³ thus embodying and promoting conceptions, ideas, and causes relevant to each historical period.¹⁰⁴

In this article, I have examined selected manuscript and printed versions of the Office from the 17th and 18th centuries in order to explore the process of ‘constructing Josaphat’. His representation in the Office is firmly founded on the Byzantine Rite tradition of depicting martyrs, especially martyred bishops or priests, i.e., hieromartyrs. Martyrdom is the goal towards which Josaphat’s life is oriented from the very beginning, yet the hymnographers also argue for his sanctity based

100 Canon, 5th ode *troparion*; LMAVB F19-113.

101 4th *sticheron* on “Lord, I Call”; LMAVB F19-177, F19-113. In F19-177, the word ‘unity’ is replaced by ‘the sheep’ (за овца), thus extending the trope on the good shepherd.

102 K. Hyldal Christensen, 2018, p. 55–56.

103 S. Ditchfield, 2011, p. 184.

104 M. Leone, 2010, p. 16.

on the calling he receives at a young age, and on his monastic life: fasting, prayer, and ascetic feats, which grant him the likeness of the angels already in life. Already a saint by his virtues, Josaphat's death is a martyr's testimony, beautified by the blood he sheds like pearls on his priestly vestments. These 'saintly arguments' of his life and death are skilfully highlighted by the hymnographers. However, for some reason, the references to the miracles performed at Josaphat's relics are less numerous, although these are well presented in the *vita* as well as in the testimonies of his contemporaries. It could be suggested that this aspect did not need to be elaborated further in his case, because his significance as a saint was based on other factors which were more relevant to the Uniate Church.

As the first Uniate martyr, and because of his death at the hands of the Orthodox mob, the figure of Josaphat was loaded with symbolic potential – and this potential was readily exploited in the Office. He is presented as the embodiment of the Church Union, 'the pillar of unification'. The juxtaposing of the saint with his adversaries is based on strong antitheses which play with concepts such as darkness and light, evil and rightness, discord and unity, which all function for the benefit of Josaphat as a Messianic figure leading people to all which is good. The rhetoric persuades the listener to choose between the two parties which are presented in stark contrast to each other.

This effect is made more intense by the parallel which is created between Josaphat and Christ. Although the *imitatio Christi* is considered a standard convention in saint-making – i.e., the hagiographers aim to demonstrate the exemplary imitation of Christ by the saint¹⁰⁵ – yet, for Josaphat, this involves much deeper connotations. He inherits his priesthood from Christ and unites with him in celebrating the Holy Eucharist, the bloodless offering, as well as in offering himself voluntarily as a sacrifice of blood, following Christ's example. They are both the Good Shepherds who are willing to give their lives for their flocks. In a rich interplay between Old Testament motifs and textual references, the parallelism of their sufferings at the hands of 'lawless' people is drawn from the Byzantine hymnography for the Passion. The references to the murderers of Josaphat, made by using anti-Semitic hymnographical tropes from the Byzantine office, can be seen as strongly demarcating tools.

The Office for Josaphat is an illustrative example of how a saintly representation is constructed through selecting the relevant elements of a saint's life and weaving

105 G. Lehnhoff, 1987, p. 259.

them into the highly expressive and multidimensional language and tropes of the Byzantine Rite's hymnography. Developed in the charged atmosphere of Uniate confessionalization in the 17th- and 18th-century Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Office skilfully exploits the figure of Josaphat as one who supports the Uniate Church as an unwavering pillar against the adversaries.

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