

Propaganda in Ukrainian Art of the Seventeenth to Eighteenth Centuries: The Legacy of Reformation Visual Practices

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Abstract:

After numerous illustrated Luther Bibles, Protestant propaganda pamphlets and leaflets had spread all over Europe, the process of copying and creatively reshaping Reformation images reached Ukraine likely at the end of the sixteenth century. The imagery that emerged shows the concepts of Martin Luther theology. The use of such religious images and plots resulted in particularly interesting metamorphoses, as Ukraine had already become a multi-confessional country by the seventeenth century. Some of the visual propaganda concepts in the Ukrainian art were inherited from the Byzantine tradition. The implementation of both themes and compositions of Lutheran confessional advocacy led to unique transformations. One of the major Ukrainian centres for producing such imagery was Kyiv Pechersk Lavra. Artists, mostly Orthodox monks, borrowed Lutheran propaganda ideas, following the tradition set by Metropolitan Petro Mohyla (also known as Piotr Mohyla, Petru Movilă). There are clear parallels with Romanian art, where the Movilă family used Lutheran iconography (such as the Apocalypse scenes in Sucevița Monastery, founded by the uncles and father of Petro Mohyla). The Antichrist is wearing a papal tiara in Master Prokopii's Apocalypse (1646-1662), inspired by Metropolitan Petro Mohyla and continued by Archimandrite Innokenty Gizel, who came from a Prussian Protestant family. Later such images were used to villainize Catholics, as the process of changing Orthodox eparchies into Uniate ones developed in the western regions of Ukraine. By around 1700, the main narrative of religious propaganda focused on the Turkish threat. Nikodem Zubrzycki's woodcuts and etchings show many such cases. Visual propaganda was also directed against Protestants themselves. Traces of Reformational imagery practices survived in art up to the nineteenth century, if not longer.

Keywords: *Ukrainian art, visual propaganda, Reformational iconography, images, Nikodem Zubrzycki*