Biblical names in Ukraine: regional aspects
Nombres bíblicos en Ucrania: aspectos regionales

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Abstract: This paper presents a study of the Biblical names in regional and historical aspects. Throughout history the Bible has served as the most important religious book for many people. As a result, the Bible has had a significant impact on various aspects of culture, education, and traditions. Ukraine has been characterized by the use of the Biblical names since the adoption of Christianity which influenced on the whole history of the state. Since Biblical personal names are both the lexical units and the symbols, it is interesting to see the presence of these names in different regions and epochs. The present study aims at pointing out at regional aspects of Biblical personal names. The paper provides a brief overview of naming trends in the assignment of Biblical names and Christian names in Ukraine. Our database of all names was fed the names of 2,000 people. The material is taken from the list of students who studied at Odesa State Agrarian University from 2014-2024 with the help of a continuous sampling method. The methodology, both statistical and qualitative, had two phases: a) comparison of the ratio of Biblical names to non-Biblical names, and b) classification of discovered Biblical names. This research is just one aspect of a series of investigations whose goal is to describe the anthroponomical system of Odesa, Ukraine in diachronic and synchronic format. The findings suggest that personal names with Biblical origin continue to be widely used in Ukraine. We emphasize that the study of anthroponyms in different regions and epochs is a valuable tool for understanding the history and cultural traditions of Ukraine. Therefore, the importance of onomastics as an interdisciplinary science affecting History, Sociology, Theology, Literature, and regional studies in the research of the Biblical names in current and past Ukraine is shown. This study draws upon three theoretical frameworks: anthroponomastics (Felecan & Mihali, 2023; Piddubna, 2021, etc.), socio-onomastics (Ainiala, 2016; Beley, 2019, etc.), and the regional onomastics (Braychenko, 2019; Buga, 2013; Chuchka, 1970; Frai, 2021; Matsyuk, 2021; Sholia, 2018, etc.).

Keywords: anthroponyms, Bible, onomastics, proper names, Ukraine.

Resumo: Este artículo presenta un estudio de los nombres bíblicos en aspectos regionales e históricos. A lo largo de la historia, la Biblia ha sido el libro religioso más importante para muchas personas. Como resultado, la Biblia ha tenido un impacto significativo en varios aspectos de la cultura, la educación y las tradiciones. Ucrania se ha caracterizado por el uso de nombres bíblicos desde la adopción del cristianismo, que influyeron en toda la historia del estado. Dado que los

nombres personales bíblicos son tanto unidades léxicas como símbolos, es interesante ver la presencia de estos nombres en diferentes regiones y épocas. El presente estudio tiene como objetivo señalar aspectos regionales de los nombres personales bíblicos. El artículo proporciona una breve descripción de las tendencias en la asignación de nombres bíblicos y cristianos en Ucrania. Nuestra base de datos de todos los nombres recibió los nombres de 2.000 personas. El material se tomó de la lista de estudiantes que estudiaron en la Universidad Agraria Estatal de Odesa entre 2014 y 2024 con la ayuda de un método de muestreo continuo. La metodología, tanto estadística como cualitativa, tuvo dos fases: a) comparación de la proporción de nombres bíblicos con respecto a nombres no bíblicos; y b) clasificación de nombres bíblicos descubiertos. Esta investigación es sólo un aspecto de una serie de investigaciones cuyo objetivo es describir el sistema antroponómico de Odesa, Ucrania en formato diacrónico y sincrónico. Los hallazgos sugieren que los nombres personales de origen bíblico siguen siendo ampliamente utilizados en Ucrania. Destacamos que el estudio de los antropónimos en diferentes regiones y épocas es una herramienta valiosa para comprender la historia y las tradiciones culturales de Ucrania. Por lo tanto, se muestra la importancia de la onomástica como ciencia interdisciplinaria que afecta a la Historia, la Sociología, la Teología, la Literatura y los estudios regionales en la investigación de los nombres bíblicos en la Ucrania actual y pasada. Este estudio se basa en tres marcos teóricos: la antroponomástica (Felecan & Mihali, 2023; Piddubna, 2021, etc.), la socioonomástica (Ainiala, 2016; Beley, 2019, etc.) y la onomástica regional (Braychenko, 2019; Buga, 2013; Chuchka, 1970; Frai, 2021; Matsyuk, 2021; Sholia, 2018, etc.).

Palavras-chave: antropónimos, Biblia, onomástica, nombres propios, Ucrania.

1. Introduction

The Bible is a collection of religious works of various forms and contents and a large place in it is devoted to the legends about the Biblical characters. Many Biblical scholars, linguists, theologians, and philosophers have been researching the texts from the Bible since the ancient times. Modern linguists take a multifaceted approach to studying the Bible. Some of them look at general trends in how Biblical texts have been translated throughout history. The Biblical phrases and use of stylistic devices like metaphors, similes, and other tropes have been examined. It is worth noting that the Ukrainian poet, and translator Pylyp SemenovychMorachevsky was the first in the history of Ukrainian culture to translate the New Testament (Gospels) into Ukrainian in 1860 (Botvyn, 2020: 50).

Religious- and Christianity-based anthroponomastics has long been in the interest of many scholars in different countries and cultures. The scholars take Biblical characters, proper names, archetypes, ideas, and contents as the subject of their investigation as well. In their works, the researchers exploit the different aspects of the Hebrew Bible (Römer, 2013); symbols in the Old Testament texts (Barker, 2005); transliteration of Biblical proper names into Greek and Latin (Krašovec, 2010), Biblical naming (Marks, 1995), multicultural aspects in naming in the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (Matsyuk, 2021), religious anthroponyms in Algeria (Taibi-Maghraoui, 2021), sacred and profane in the history of Hungarian names (Slíz & Farkas, 2019), religious trends in naming in Brasil (Frai, 2021), symbolic meaning of Biblical names (Sasson, 2015), etc. The first book about the proper names in the Bible was written in 1804 by John Robinson (Robinson, 1855).

Generally speaking, studying the Bible is a matter that requires special attention from linguists. The Bible's characters, plots, and motifs have left an indelible mark on literature, art, and music. This deep influence is evident in the prevalence of Biblical personal names throughout not only Europe but America, Australia, and Africa. A great number of personal names in Ukraine derive from the Bible. Throughout the history of the World, the Bible has probably been one of the most influential texts for people around the world, even beyond those who adhere to other religious denominations. The influence of the Bible on Ukrainian people of different nationalities has been reflected in various cultural aspects.

The interference of religious and regional aspects in the personal names has been presented in this paper. The Biblical names are particularly interesting for both the Biblical onomastics and the regional onomastics because they are connected to both the religious background of a country and cultural traditions. It should be noted that onomastics as an independent science has several branches: literary onomastics, cognitive onomastics, etc. What matters for us in this paper besides the Biblical onomastics is the regional onomastics. Regional onomastics is a specific area of study that focuses on the proper names within a particular region.

Traditionally Ukrainian scholars research the proper names in different regions and cities. There is the research about first and family names in Uzhhorod in the 20th century (Sholia, 2018), in Lutsk in the 20th century (Scoruk, 1999). For instance, Buga analyzed male and female names in Ukrainian and Ukrainian-mixed families in the villages of Central Donetsk region from the end of the 19th to the beginning of the 21st century (Buga, 2013), research of unofficial anthroponymy of Ternopil Region (Verbovetska, 2016), it has been researching the anthroponyms on the Romanian-Ukrainian Interstate Border along the Tisza River (Felecan, 2023). But there is no investigation in the personal names of the Biblical origin in Odesa.

Southern Ukraine, particularly the Odesa region has a rich history of settlement by diverse national Diasporas and religious denominations. Firstly, according to the All-Ukrainian population census of 2001, Odesa is a multi-ethnic city in which different nationalities live, among them there are Ukrainians, Armenians, Bulgarians, Greeks, Jews, Moldovans, Tatars, etc.[1] Secondly, one of the important features of the Odesa region is that "the comparative analysis of active religious in the Odesa region shows that Christianity is the main religion trend in the region, because out of 1,332 religious organizations, 1,215 ones belong to Christianity" (Berezovskaya, 2015).

However, a large number of the representatives of Judaism and Islam live in the south of the Odesa region. For example, Odesa has been the city with the one of the richest history of Jewish communities in Ukraine and there are currently six synagogues in Odesa nowadays. It is clear that Jewish and Christian communities constantly use Biblical names for new-born children for the religious beliefs. As Bailey (2007: 2) discusses "the form of a name can be considered 'community property', and a given community might recognize one form as 'theirs' and another as foreign". However, most people do not attach importance to the origin of their names, although, as the scholar claims, any name has both semantic and symbolic meaning (Bailey, 2007: 3). However, the

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[1]OfficialsiteofOdesa. https://omr.gov.ua/ua/odessa/data

other groups of population use Biblical names by tradition even if they do not know the origin of the names and their symbolic meaning.

This fact guided us to look at personal names deriving from the Bible because they represent the tradition and religion that have been deeply rooted in this region. It must be noted, that a significant gap exists in understanding of how Biblical names are used within Ukraine's multicultural regions, particularly Odesa. The research that is presented here addresses the following questions: Is there a difference between the frequency of using the Biblical names in the Old Testament and the New Testament? What variations exist in the way the Biblical names were used in various historical periods in Ukraine? This lacuna presents a unique opportunity for our research, which will be the first comprehensive analysis of Biblical names in Odesa.

2. Methodology and methods

In this paper, a descriptive method is applied, which involves observation, synthesis and classification of the material. We used analytical and differential, linguistic and cultural methods, cultural and semantic analysis of proper names. The selection was carried out by continuous sampling. In summing up, a qualitative method and statistical comparison were used, on the basis of which summary tables were compiled. The data for this study were collected from the list of students of Odesa State Agrarian University (Ukraine) who studied in the 2014-2024.

3. Regions in the focus

People seem always to name babies in dependence on traditions, religious beliefs, fashionable trends, political situation in the certain county. On the one hand, many scholars indicate that the country (region) you live in plays the important role for name giving process. For example, Romanian scholars researching historical anthroponyms point out the specifics of naming in Romania: "Newborns are usually given one or two first names; there are situations in which certain people have between three and five first names: *Catalina Elena Nataliţa Maier*"

(Duda, Gafu, 2011: 20). Having researched the names of newborn babies in Kazakhstan, Aliakbarova et al. (2020: 1530) wrote that a pattern of naming children is dependent on socio-cultural and political events; the Islamic faith and the Arabic influence; famous people's names; character traits; traditional beliefs, and similar endings of names of siblings.

On the other hand, some research conducted by different scholars show the prevailing role of fashion or political events in the name giving process. Ainiala et al. (2012:178) points out that one significant principle of name giving in Finland has also been the naming after personal role models: leading historical figures and politicians, religious figures, athletes, musicians, etc. Considering the situation in the African region, Yusuf, J. B. notes "Africa represents a unique continent in which names not only convey deep religious meanings but portray political events or the life people encounter" (2022: 45). The Ukrainian researcher has the same opinion, and suggests that fashion on foreign policy movements and music; literature, movies, television, sport etc. became a driving force of names giving process (Sofinska, 2011: 918). After searching for naming in the Odesa region, Braychenko (2019: 31) states that the reasons for names in this area are typically socio-historical, cultural, artistic, psychological, and less frequently, personal names and co- religious aspects. By the way, researchers suggest that the fashion to give names Ukrainian newborns in honour of the Old Statement characters like *Sara, Ruth, Rachel*, etc. appeared in the modern Ukraine because of the fashion trends (Beley, 2010: 78).

In this regard, it is worth noting the modern naming trends under the influence of globalization, parents often give their children unexpected names. For example, the British newspaper *The Independent* wrote about the "Instagrambabies" phenomenon when parents in the US were naming their children after Instagram filters.[2] Unusual names exist is Ukraine as well, for example, in 2023 there were such names in Kyiv as *Sahara*, *Spring* (female names); *Earl*,

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[2] Eleftheriou-Smith, L.-M. (2015). Instagrambabies: Parents are naming their children after Instagram filters, "Independent" https://www.independent.co.uk/ life-style/health-and-families/instagrambabies-parents-are-naming-their-children-after-instagram-filters-a6756761.

Mars (male names).[3] Because every Ukrainian region is unique, so are the most common names in each area. For example, among the five most common male names which were given to children in Lviv region during 2023 there were Maxim, Matthew, Demyan, Timothy, David. The five most common female ones were Anna, Sofia, Solomiia, Victoriia, Eve.[4]

Let's consider the most popular names for newborns from some other regions of Ukraine in 2023 (Table 1). The information was taken from the Central Interregional Department of the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine.[5]

Table 1.

The most popular names for newborns from some regions of Ukraine in 2023

Kyiv		Cherkasy region		Zhytomir region		Vinnytsia region	
Female	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*
Maria	Maxim	Anastasiia	**Andrew**	Anastasia	Bohdan	Milana	Alexander
Solomiia	**Mark**	**Anna**	Bohdan	Angelina	Vladyslav	**Anna**	Dmytro
Eve	**Timothy**	Emilia	**Zakhar**	Dariia	**Daniel**	Daria	**Timothy**
Pauline	Alexander	**Eve**	Maxim	**Eve**	Dmitry	Alina	Denis
	Daniel	Zlata	**Mattew**	Milan	**Zakhar**	Anastasiia	**Andrew**
	Michael	Mia	Alexander	**Solomiia**	Eugene		Maxim
		Solomiia	**Timothy**	Tetiana	**Ivan**		

As Table 1 shows, the Biblical names remained among the most popular in each region last year but differ in the choice of the names. The Biblical names used prove that religious affiliation and the naming tradition are important in every Ukrainian region. Names of the newborn babies are the part of this system which represent the people's worldview and reflect culture and religion, literature and history. We agree with Sofinska (2011: 921), that official statistics of popular name's

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[3] https://centraljust.gov.ua/news/info/populyarni-imena-yakimi-nazivali-ditey-u-2023-rotsi

[4] https://tvoemisto.tv/news/yak_lvivyany_nazyvaly_ditey_u_2023_rotsi_nayposhyrenishi_ta_ridkisni_imena_159759.html

[5] https://centraljust.gov.ua/news/info/populyarni-imena-yakimi-nazivali-ditey-u-2023-rotsi

state registration depends very much on geographic position of every region of Ukraine due to its historic background, common land border with European Union Member States (Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia), or ex-Soviet republics (Belarus, Moldova and Russia). By the way, region of Ukrainian people living is the important trigger for naming people. A lot of Ukrainians have been immigrating to different countries of the world, and there are the big Ukrainian Diasporas, for example, in Canada and the USA. For example, Ukrainians have immigrated in some waves in the last centuries. By the way, researchers has established that immigrants are trying 'to give their children names which sound similar to or are identical with those found in the English language' (Vlasenko-Bojcun, 1984: 68). Such tendency leads to Ukrainian names transformation.

Likewise, this tendency characterizes many countries. In this regard, it is worth noting that Ukrainian researchers say that on the one hand, religious names actively used in Ukraine, serve to reflect the religious picture of the world, and on the other hand, they are undergone desacralization and resacralization, which leads to the expansion of their pragmatic potential and, accordingly, to non-religious semantics (Piddubna, 2021).

Generally speaking, there are different approaches to the Ukrainian personal names typology (Sofinska, 2014; Zakhutska, 2015). We base our research on the proper names typology of Zakhutska O. (2015: 23), who classified Ukrainian personal names by origin into 1) Old Russian; 2) West Slavic and South Slavic; 3) Western European; 4) New personal names that began to appear after the revolution of 1917, reflecting the revolutionary ideology, new phenomena and realities of social life, as well as the names of flowers, e.g.: Lily; 5) Byzantine, which includes personal names of Latin origin, or Old Hebrew, or Greek.

We found out examples from all above-mentioned types of names in our list of students names. Let's consider them in more detail: 1) Old Slavonic, or pre-Christian personal names, for example, *Yaroslav,* which means 'the one who possess the powerful glory'. By the way, there is the

female name *Yaroslava,* andthe researchers stated that this name was popular in Slavic countries such as Poland, Czech and in the Western part of Ukraine in the certain period (Chuchka, 2011: 415). 2) West Slavic and South Slavic, for example, *Vladyslav*; 3) Western European, for example, Arthur, from Celtic*art(h)* – «a bear»; 4) New personal names, for example, *Ninel*, *Vilena,* formed from the abbreviations of the personal name of the leader of the socialist revolution in Russian Empire in 1917. As mentioned earlier, sometimes people their names do not know the history of their own name creation. Though, as Long noted "now, as a rule, not a man in a thousand knows whether his name is local, personal, ancient, or modern" (1883: 27). 5) Byzantine, for example, personal names of Latin origin – *Vitalii*; Old Hebrew – *Mykhailo*; Greek – *Andrew*. Some personal names from these groups which we came across in our research are represented in Table 2.

Table 2.

Personal names typology (based on our research data)

Pre-Christian	West Slavic and South Slavic	Western European	New personal names	Byzantine		
				Latin	**Old Hebrew**	**Greek**
Ihor	Vladyslav	Arthur	Vilena	Yulianna	Michael	Andrew
Bohdan	Milana	Yana	Liliia	Angelica	Eva	Mykola
Yaroslav	Stanislav	Andrea	Violet	Diana	Danylo	Varvara
Svitlana	Borys	Nicole	Vladilena	Leonid	David	Kateryna

It is noteworthy that a Ukrainian researcher, having witnessed the name-giving transformation in Ukraine after the USSR collapse in 1991 and gaining independence, stated[6]

Having definitively got rid of characteristic "communist" personal names like *Stalina,*

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[6] This extract has been translated by the author (Nasakina, 2024)

Oktyabrina, Traktorina after 1991, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, having gradually begun to reduce the percentage of Russified forms, Ukrainian names of the post-Soviet era began a stage of reform thanks to the attention of onomasticians, relying on authentic naming traditions, thus starting a long process of democratization and re-Ukrainization of the principles for creating Ukraine's official name register (Beley, 2019: 213).

Thus, in Ukraine, each region has its own characteristics associated with religious, cultural and historical characteristics of residence in a given territory, which certainly influence traditions in name-giving. Historically, representatives of different nationalities and religions live in the south of Ukraine. Since both religious traditions and regional culture are of equal importance in the people naming, let's look at the Biblical personal names through the prism of religion and history.

4. Naming: religious and historical aspects

This part of the paper deals with some points about the naming affected by the religion. First of all, it is needed to define the structure and some terms of the Bible. The Bible consists of two main parts: the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament contains the sacred scriptures of the Jewish faith, while the New Testament focuses on the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the early Christian Church. Together, these two parts form the foundation of the Christian faith and provide guidance, inspiration, and moral teachings for millions of believers worldwide. According to the dictionary Angel means "messenger" (Rand & Robinson, 1859: 26), Apostle is a "messenger or envoy" (Rand & Robinson, 1859: 31) and Prophet is a "class of men of God, especially in the Old Testament dispensation, inspired to foretell future and secret events" (Rand & Robinson, 1859: 355). Prophets and Apostles travelled across lands to spread God's message to people of different nations. In the Old Testament, the Lord guided his people on the path of truth through the prophets.

The Biblical anthroponyms in our research were contingently divided into two groups: 1) anthroponyms from the Old Testament, 2) anthroponyms from the New Testament. The first

group in was divided into three groups: 1) Angels' names, e.g. the name after the Archangel *Michael*; 2) Prophets' names, e.g. the name after the Prophet *Daniel*; 3) Biblical persons, e.g. *Eve*. The second group in its turn was divided into three groups: 1) Apostles', e.g. the name after the Apostle *Peter*; 3) Biblical persons, e.g. *Mary, Elisabeth*. The results of our statistical calculations are presented at Table 3.

Table 3

Names from the Old Testament and the New Testament (based on our research data)

The Old Testament names			The New Testament names		
	Quantity	*%*		*Quantity*	*%*
Michael	*61*	*3,05*	Ann	*124*	*6,2*
Elijah	*21*	*1,05*	Maria	*75*	*3,75*
Daniel	*18*	*0,9*	John	*73*	*3,65*
Jacob	*4*	*0,2*	Elisabeth	*49*	*2,45*
David	*3*	*0,15*	Andrew	*48*	*2,4*
Eve	*1*	*0,05*	Paul	*28*	*1,4*
			Peter	*15*	*0,75*
			Philip	*1*	*0,05*
Total	**108**	**5,40**	**Total**	**413**	**20,65**

The research results show that the non-Biblical names in total is 1479 lexical units while there are 521 Biblical names. Probably, this ratio can be explained by the general tendency for most people to exist without including religion in their lives. According to the data obtained, it is clear that among the names of students there are more names from the New Testament (413 names), while the quantity of the names from the Old Testament include 108 units. As for the prevalence of biblical names from the New Testament over names from the Old Testament, the explanation may lie in the fact that for most Christian communities the New Testament is more understandable and more often used.

The most frequent personal name from the Old Testament is *Michael*. In Ukraine, this name is used in the form *Mykhailo (Михайло)*. This name is given in honour to the Archangel Michael who holds a significant place in various religious traditions, including Judaism**,** Christianity, and Islam. According to the dictionary, the name *Michael* means

'Godlike, as God", the mission of the Archangel is to strengthen man in his struggle against error (Potts, 1922: 172). In Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, and Lutheran traditions, he is referred to as Saint Michael the Archangel and Saint Michael. He is renowned for his exceptional strength. Christians believe that God dispatches *Archangel Michael* to aid those who face challenging time. In the Old Testament, his name is attested only in the Book of the Prophet Daniel, dating back to the 2nd century BC, here he appears in the image of the defender of Israel.

The second most common name from the Old Testament is *Elijah*. In Ukraine, the name is used in the form *Illiya (Ілля)*. This name is given in honour to the prophet *Elijah*. According to the dictionary, the name *Elijah* means 'the strength of God' (Potts, 1922: 77). One of the most important prophets was Elijah, known for his strong moral character. Back in ancient Judea, prophets formed a special group. The Old Testament tells us they were like preachers who delivered God's messages, warnings, and judgments. These prophets often clashed with the rulers in power. The third most common name from the Old Testament is *Daniel*. In Ukraine, the name is used in the form *Danylo (Данило)*. This name is given in honour to the prophet *Daniel*. According to the dictionary, the name *Daniel* means 'God is judge' (Potts, 1922: 70).

The name *Jacob* is on the fourth place. In Ukraine, this name is used in the form *Jacob (Яков)*. According to the dictionary, the name *Jacob* means 'supplanter' and he is the ancestor of Jesus (Potts, 1922: 126). Jacob, also known as Israel, is a significant figure in the Old Testament. He is the second son of Isaac and Rebecca, and the twin brother of Esau. Jacob plays a crucial role in the Biblical narrative as the patriarch of the 12 tribes of Israel. Known for his cunning and deceitful ways, Jacob's life is marked by various struggles, including his wrestling with God, receiving a new name, Israel, and seeking reconciliation with his brother Esau. His story is characterized by themes of transformation, faith, and the complex relationship between humanity and divinity.

The name *David* is on the penultimate place in the list of names from the Old Testament. According to the dictionary, the name *David* means 'beloved, loving, dear' (Potts, 1922: 71).

David is one of the key characters in the Old Testament; he stands out as Israel's third and most important king. David is mentioned more than any other human in the Old Testament. The Bible describes David as a man who followed God's will. He was known for his strong faith. The least frequent name from the Old Testament is Eve. According to the dictionary, the name *Eve* means 'life, living, alive' and she is wife of Adam and the mother of Cain, Abel, and Seth (Potts, 1922: 87).

The most frequent personal name from the New Testament is *Ann.* In Slavic communities, this name may be used in two forms *Anna, Hanna (Анна, Ганна)*. According to the dictionary, the name *Ann* means 'Grace, free gift" (Potts, 1922: 31). The name *Ann* is also associated with Christianity: she was the mother of the Virgin Mary. As Chuchka (1970: 23) states, the name *Ганна* has about 70 speaking variants in Zakarpattia region of Ukraine.

The second frequent personal name from the New Testament is *Maria.* The name Maria has links to the Hebrew name Miriam, which has various meanings such as 'bitterness, rebellion" (Potts, 1922: 31). The name Maria is also associated with Christianity, particularly with Mary, the mother of Jesus.

The most popular male name from the New Testament is *John*. It must explained that according to Beley (2010: 51-52) the Biblical name John was transformed into *Ivan* in Ukraine. According to the dictionary, the name *John* means 'gift of God, grace, dove" (Potts, 1922: 142). *John* was one of the Apostles and the author of the fourth Gospel. Besides, the name *John* is also associated with John the Baptist. As Langendonck (2007: 440) indicated to the fact that proper names may contain a number of connotations or associations, it should be noted that every person connects the name *John* with what it is close to him. It is interesting to add than some researchers point out that an important criterion of the attractiveness of the name is also ease of the sound pronunciation, and the presence of smooth sounds /m/, /l/, /n/ (Braychenko, 2019: 31) and the first nine most frequent names in our research have one of these sounds (Table 4).

The next female name from the New Testament is *Elisabeth*. According to the dictionary, the name *Elisabeth* means 'oath of God" (Potts, 1922: 79). *Elisabeth* was wife of Zacharias and

the mother of the *John the Baptist* (Potts, 1922: 79).

Andrew, Paul, Peter and *Philip* were Jesus's Apostles. According to the dictionary, the name *Andrew* means 'manly, strong" (Potts, 1922: 30), *Paul* means 'to restrain, to pause or check" (Potts, 1922: 191), *Peter* means 'stone, a piece of rock" (Potts, 1922: 30).

The least frequent male name from the New Testament is *Philip*. According to the dictionary, *Philip* was an Apostle and one of the twelve who were earliest called to follow Christ (Rand & Robinson, 1859: 340). *Philip* means 'war-like" (Potts, 1922: 195).

In addition, as the research progressed, a question emerged about comparing the collected data with similar information from people in earlier historical periods. For this purpose, 1000 names were selected from the list of registered Cossacks of the Zaporizhzhia Army of 1649 year using a continuous sampling method (Todiichuk et al., 1995). Since Cossacks comprised nearly half of Ukraine's population during the War of Liberation (Todiichuk et al., 1995: 5), the results of this study offer valuable insights into a broad segment of Ukrainian society in the 17th century. All results are presented in Table 4.

However, before delving into the results, let's establish a historical framework by outlining some key events. Looking at the history, it must be noted that according to the researchers, the names of the inhabitants of Kyivan Rus' were changed after Grand Prince Volodymyr the Great officially adopted Christianity as the faith of his realm in 988 and everyone was given a Christian name upon being baptized (Pihach, 2007: 24).Christian names were chosen from a register of saints and martyrs, each of whom had a particular day of the year assigned to them. These names had their origins in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew nomenclature and entered Kyivan Rus' along with Byzantine Christianity and its church calendar. However, Masenko (1990: 6) thinks that Christian names were not widely used at the 10-11 centures and even till 17 century. As the example she gives the name of Bohdan Khmelnytsky, who was Zinovy by a register of saints, but the pre-

Christian name was used during his life and he is known in the history as Bohdan. All results are presented at Table 4.

Table 4.
Names from the Old Testament and the New Testament (based on the list of registered Cossacks Register of the Zaporizhzhia Army of 1649)

The Old Testament names			The New Testament names		
	Quantity	*%*		*Quantity*	*%*
Michael	21	2,1	John	122	12,2
Daniel	13	1,3	Paul	21	2,1
Isaiah	3	0,3	Andrew	20	2,0
Jacob	3	0,3	Mark	16	1,6
David	3	0,3	Gabriel	14	1,4
Elijah	3	0,3	Mathew	8	0,8
Joseph	2	0,2	Peter	9	0,9
Samuel	2	0,2	Philip	6	0,6
Job	1	0,1	Thomas	6	0,6
Total	**53**	**5, 3**	**Total**	**222**	**22,2**

The results presented in Table 4 show that the non-Biblical names in total is 725 lexical units while there are 275 Biblical names. The quantity of the names from the New Testament (222 units), while the quantity of the names from the Old Testament include53 units. The most popular male name from the New Testament is *John* like in the previous results (See Table 3). The most frequent personal name from the Old Testament is again *Michael*.

The Biblical names borrowed from the sacred texts and perform the precedent names in the regional cultural discourse. They represent a dynamic unity of the onomastic content itself and the regional context. Moreover, some researchers of the Slavic names state that there are similarities in the name giving process in the Slavic countries. For example, a comparison of Ukrainian and Croatian personal names by Vidović (2022: 251) aligns with own research: he found out that "two most common Croatian and Ukrainian female names are Maria and Ana (Ukrainian Gana)". Moreover, the scholar states that the name *Ivan* is the most common Croatian male name. Our results confirm the popularity of the name *Ivan* in the Ukrainian community.

All in all, the most frequent Biblical female name used by the students of Odesa State Agrarian University is *Ann* (6, 2%), the most frequent Biblical male name is *John* (3, 65 %). The least frequent Biblical female and male names used by the students are *Eve* (0,05 %)and *Philip* (0,05 %). Among 2000 names of the students there are 521 names of the Biblical origin and 1479 non-Biblical origin. The names of the latter include pre-Christian names, West Slavic and South Slavic names, Western European Names and Byzantine names. These names can be exploited at the next stage of our research. In the result of comparison we found out that some male Biblical names are used in many centuries.

Concluding remarks

The data adduced in this paper present only a small fraction of all Biblical anthroponyms used in Odesa region, but they can present the religious tendency in naming in the researched area. In conclusion, it may be suggested that this study presented some tendencies in the Biblical names spread. In any country, there are personal names that can reflect the religious beliefs of a certain nation, political changes, and cultural traditions. It was noticed that the Biblical names are widely used in Odesa (Ukraine). Based on the analysis provided in this paper, the following findings could be drawn:

1. Biblical personal names in any country reveal religious and regional information about the traditions and culture of the nations. On the whole, we can see that religious traditions has undeniable effect on the name-giving process in contemporary Ukraine of the 21st century as well as the Biblical names popularity in Ukraine is explained by the existence of Christian and Jewish communities.

2. Looking at the results of research through a religious lens, the prevalence of Biblical names in Ukraine reflects a deep connection between generations and traditions. This enduring tradition has even inspired resilience through various cultural shifts and historical upheavals, like

the suppression of religion under the Soviet regime in the early 20th century. From a regional perspective, the consistency of Biblical names across Ukraine highlights the country's cultural unity and shared values.

3. The most frequent Biblical female name used by the students of Odesa State Agrarian University is *Ann* (6, 2%), the most frequent Biblical male name is *John* (3, 65 %). The most frequent personal name from the Old Testament is *Michael*.

4. Among 2000 names of the students there are 521 (26,05%) names of the Biblical origin and 1479 (73,95 %) non-Biblical origin. Among 1000 names of the Zaporizhzhia Army warriors there were 275 (27, 5%) names of the Biblical origin and 725 (72, 5 %) non-Biblical origin. The percentage ratio between names of the Biblical and non-Biblical origin taken from the list of students of the 21st century and Cossacks of the 17th century are almost identical. Besides, four male Biblical names (*John, Michel, Paul, Andrew*) are frequently used in both analyzed historical periods. Almost the same results could suggest that the nation saved the name-giving tradition for the population living on the same territory for a long period and having the same religious beliefs, traditions, and cultural concepts.

5. Biblical names from the New Testament taken from the list of students of Odesa State Agrarian University are more popular than ones from the Old Testament. It can be explained by the fact that ancestors of the most students either belong to the Christian community or are in the cultural circle of Christian traditions. However, we guess that limited to this specific University community, our research may not capture the full range of naming practices in Ukraine. Further studies encompassing the names of students from other educational institutions in Odesa are warranted.

Throughout history, people communities have undergone a continuous exchange of cultural ideas and religious traditions, enriching human civilization as a whole. This interplay   is particularly evident in name-giving practices, as seen in the results of our research as well. The enduring popularity of Biblical names reflects their deep symbolic and cultural significance in the Ukrainian society. These names carry the deep influence of religious heritage and embody the continuity of cultural identity passed down through generations in Ukraine.

To sum up, we would like to support Richard Coates' argument that "we as onomasticians do not have to be bound by arcane points of theology", and "we as onomasticians deal simply in names for allegiance groups" (Cotes, 2021: 17).

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