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**COSMOLOGICAL,
ASTRONOMICAL AND
ASTROLOGICAL ELEMENTS IN
SERMONS OF SEVENTEENTH-
CENTURY RUTHENIAN
AUTHORS**


Abstract: *The development of oral preaching and the genre of sermon in seventeenth-century Russia was primarily brought about by Ruthenian authors influenced by the Latin tradition, e.g., Ioannikiy Galyatovsky, Lazar Baranovych and Simeon Polotsky. These authors incorporated their general knowledge of cosmology, astronomy and astrology into their homilies, which present a valuable insight into the intellectual background of the period through the prism of cosmological elements used mostly as parts of rhetoric constructions. While the functions of the particular elements of natural philosophy varied in different authors, they shared certain concepts common to both scholastic thought and Baroque aesthetics. Despite being considerably distant from seventeenth-century science, the homilies also served educational purposes and may be perceived as a step towards the Westernisation and secularisation of Russian culture.*

Keywords: *homiletics; Ioannikiy Galyatovsky; Lazar Baranovych; Simeon Polotsky; cosmological imagery*

**Kosmologické, astronomické
a astrologické prvky v kázáních
zapadoruských autorů 17. století**

Abstrakt: *Vývoj ústního kázání a žánru kázání v Rusku v 17. století byl převážně dílem zapadoruských autorů ovlivněných latinskou tradicí, jako jsou Ioannikiy Galjatonovskij, Lazar Baranovič a Simeon Polockij. Tito kazatelé začleňovali své obecné znalosti o kosmologii, astronomii a astrologii do svých homilií, které umožňují nahlédnout do intelektuálního pozadí doby skrze kosmologické prvky používané převážně jako součást rétorických konstrukcí. Funkce jednotlivých prvků přírodní filosofie se u různých autorů lišily, nicméně autoři sdíleli některé koncepty společné jak pro scholastické myšlení, tak pro barokní estetiku. Navzdory tomu, že jejich homilie byly značně vzdáleny úrovni vědeckého poznání v 17. století, plnily také vzdělávací účely a mohou být vnímány jako krok směrem k westernizaci a sekularizaci ruské kultury.*

Klíčová slova: *homiletika; Ioannikiy Galjatonovskij; Lazar Baranovič; Simeon Polockij; kosmologická obrazotvornost*

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1. Introduction

The development of natural philosophy and science in medieval Russia differed significantly from European thought. Byzantine influence affected all the areas of search for knowledge, and was primarily theological, while secular Byzantine thought, as well as the tradition of antiquity, did not reach medieval Russia.¹ Although it is hard to deny that the Tatar yoke was primarily responsible for the Russian lagging behind the achievements of other European cultures,² the specificity of the Orthodox worldview should not be disregarded when it comes to its influence on the stagnation of Russian scientific development. The power and authority of the Byzantine tradition in its most rigid form in Russia could be illustrated by the fact that the notion of a flat Earth, originating from Cosmas Indicopleustes, was still reasonably widespread along with the geocentric system even as late as the seventeenth century.³ It was the merging of the Byzantine heritage with the Western tradition in the eighteenth century that later resulted in the birth of the original phenomenon of Russian religious thought in the nineteenth century.⁴

The age of enlightenment, however, did not happen suddenly and unexpectedly, as it has sometimes been presented. The seventeenth century was a preparatory period of cultural transformation, gradual expansion of intellectual horizons,⁵ which formed the ground for the emergence of the scientific attitude. An important part in this process was played by Ruthenian intellectuals educated in Kiev and, frequently, elsewhere in Europe.⁶ In Ruthenia (the lands that belonged to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the modern Ukraine and Belarus), the second half of the sixteenth century and the first half of the seventeenth century can be referred to as the period of active social, political and intellectual development, which

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¹ Alexander Vucinich, *Science in a Russian Culture: A History to 1860* (London: Peter Owen, 1965), 3.

² Teresa Obolevich, *Faith and Science in Russian Religious Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 11.

³ Elena K. Piotrovskaya, “*Khristianskaya Topografiya Koz'my Indikoplova*” v *drevnerusskoy pis'mennoy traditsii* (Saint Petersburg: Dmitriy Bulanin, 2004), 43.

⁴ Obolevich, *Faith and Science*, 7.

⁵ Vucinich, *Science in a Russian Culture*, 11.

⁶ Dmitrij Čiževskij, *History of Russian Literature: From the Eleventh Century to the End of the Baroque* (Tübingen: Walter de Gruyter, 2013), 358.

included growth in book-printing, the foundation of the Ostroh Academy and the Lvov Brotherhood School, the opening of the Kiev-Mohyla College (Kievan-Mohylan Collegium), which based their curricula on European (predominantly Jesuit) models.⁷ Therefore, compared with their Russian counterparts, Ruthenian intellectuals were familiar with traditional European concepts of cosmological, astronomical and astrological thought, which were manifested in their writings and translations produced in both Ukraine and Muscovy.⁸ In the context of the “scientific outburst” of the seventeenth century, the background of Kievan intellectuals was rather retrograde and outdated, and the foundation for the curriculum in natural philosophy at the Kiev-Mohyla College was still Aristotelian.⁹ Nonetheless, Kiev was the first place in Pax Orthodoxa where students were taught on Copernicus and Galileo.¹⁰ Ruthenian intellectuals who either moved to Muscovy or were known to the Russian audience through their writings substantially contributed to Muscovian intellectual history. Among their numerous undertakings, which included translations, teaching and the development of poetry and court theatre, there were new forms of sermons based on Baroque poetics,¹¹ which frequently contained metaphors related to natural phenomena.¹² That was a novelty for the Orthodox tradition that proved to be appealing for preachers since certain elements of natural history and natural philosophy appeared in the Russian preaching derivatives of late seventeenth century.¹³

In this paper, I will review and analyse the representation of the world as a system, the use of astronomical and astrological symbolism and the reflection of the sublunary world excerpted from the texts of sermons authored by

⁷ Vucinich, *Science in a Russian Culture*, 18.

⁸ Ivan Paslavs'kiy, “Astronomichni vchennya v konteksti ukrains'koi kul'turi serednikh vikiv i rann'omodernogo chasu,” in *Ukrains'ke nebo 2. Studii nad istorieyu astronomii v Ukraini*, ed. Oleh L. Petruk (Lviv: Oleh Petruk 2016), 293–94.

⁹ Vucinich, *Science in a Russian Culture*, 18.

¹⁰ Obolevich, *Faith and Science*, 16.

¹¹ Baroque sermons applied such Baroque devices as paradox, contradiction, amplification, repetition metaphor, and were characteristic for their verbal dynamism and abundant figurative language that privileges connotation over nominalism. See Andrew Kahn, Mark Lipovetsky, Irina Reyfman, and Stephanie Sandler, *A History of Russian Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 154; Anna S. Eleonskaya, *Russkaya oratorskaya proza v literaturnom protsesse XVII veka* (Moscow: Nauka, 1990), 8–14.

¹² Natalya Yakovenko, *U poshukakh Novogo neba. Zhittya i teksti Yoanikiya Galyatovs'kogo* (Kiev: Kritika, Laurus, 2017), 257.

¹³ Eleonskaya, *Russkaya oratorskaya proza*, 172.

three most prominent Ruthenian intellectuals, namely in *Klyuch razumenia* (*The Key to Cognition*, 1659) by Ioannikiy Galyatovsky (1620–1688),¹⁴ *Mech dukhovnyi* (*A Spiritual Sword*, 1666) and *Truby sloves propovednykh* (*The Trumpets of Preaching Words*, 1674) by Lazar Baranovych (1616?–1693),¹⁵ and *Obed dushevnyi* (1681) and *Vecherya dushevnyaya* (1683) (*Spiritual Repast* and *Spiritual Supper*, respectively) by Simeon Polotsky (1629–1680).¹⁶ The collection of sermons under analysis shared the tendency to use references to cosmological, astronomical and astrological elements in their texts. The selection of the authors for analysis was based on the following criteria: firstly, the background of the authors discussed here is similar to a certain extent, since all three of them were educated in Kiev, and both Baranovych and Polotsky supposedly extended their education at the Vilnius Jesuit College, therefore, they all were products of a specific combination of Orthodox background and Latinity.¹⁷ Secondly, I would like to present the difference between the authors that lies in the initial intentions and potential audiences, as well as in the language of the sermons. While Galyatovsky aimed his sermons at a wide Ruthenian audience and wrote in “prosta mova,” or simple speech, Baranovych and Polotsky wrote their books in Church Slavonic for the Muscovites, with the tsar and the court being the first target readers. Baranovych’s sermons were particularly targeted at Alexei Mikhailovitch,

¹⁴ Ioannikiy Galyatovsky, a lecturer and rector of Kiev-Mohyla College, authored the bestseller of its kind, *The Key to Cognition*, which was published four times (1659, 1660, 1663 and 1665) and was available in most of the religious centres in contemporary Ukraine and Belarus, as well as the first Orthodox handbook for preachers, *Nauka o zlozheniu kazannia*, or the *Art of Creating Sermons*. Written in “prosta mova,” or “simple speech,” *The Key to Cognition* was one of the first books translated into Church Slavonic from Ruthenian language in 1669. See Dmitriy Bulanin, “Ioannikiy Galyatovskiy (Golyatovskiy),” in *Slovar’ knizhnikov i knizhnosti Drevney Rusi*, Vol. 3 (XVII v.), Part 4, T—Ya, *Dopolneniya*, ed. Dmitry S. Likhachev (Saint Petersburg: Dmitriy Bulanin, 2004), 438–40; Natalya Yakovenko, *U poshukakh Novogo neba. Zhittya i teksti Yoanikiya Galyatovs’kogo* (Kiev: Laurus, 2017).

¹⁵ Lazar Baranovych was a teacher of Galyatovsky and Simeon Polotsky, and belonged to an older generation of authors, being subsequently a professor and rector of the Kyivan Mohyla College, bishop and archbishop of Chernihiv. See Nikolay F. Sumtsov, *K istorii yuzhnorusskoy literatury semnadtsato stoletiya. Vol. 1. Lazar’ Baranovich*, (Kharkiv: Tipografiya M. F. Zil’berberga, 1885).

¹⁶ Simeon Polotsky is traditionally referred to as the most important and influential figure of the Baroque literary tradition in Russia. Having moved to Moscow in 1664, he served as a teacher, publisher, poet, dramatist, polemist, and enlightener. See Kahn et al., *A History of Russian Literature*, 160.

¹⁷ Sumtsov, *K istorii yuzhnorusskoy literatury*, 6–7; Aleksandr M. Panchenko, “Simeon Polotskiy,” in *Slovar’ knizhnikov i knizhnosti Drevney Rusi*, Vol. 3 (XVII v.), Part 3, P—S, ed. Dmitry S. Likhachev (Saint Petersburg: Dmitriy Bulanin, 1998), 362.

since, being an archbishop of Chernihiv, Baranovych tried to use his books of sermons as a tool of political manipulation.¹⁸ However, since Baranovych was not familiar with the Russian audience, his books faced criticism and were not received well, despite the praise from Simeon Polotsky.¹⁹ Nevertheless, the distribution of Baranovych's collections of sermons was reasonably wide, despite the lack of readers' acclaim. On the contrary, Simeon Polotsky was familiar with the Russian audience, and although his texts seemed to lack the tangible reader, he apparently had two potential audiences, i.e., the tsar and the court, and students of rhetoric.²⁰ These differences in authors and audiences affected the way the preachers treated the issue of the universe and the choice of particular symbolism, motifs and allegories. Thirdly, these books of sermons were spread in Muscovy regardless of whether they were or were not intended for Muscovite readers. Therefore, they all served the purpose of both moral didactics and education in rhetoric, as well as texts that could help the Muscovite audience to get used to selected Western concepts, symbols and imagery.

In the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Orthodox oral preaching practice received an impetus arising from the necessity to maintain the Orthodox identity in the tense post-Tridentine environment.²¹ Orthodox preachers of mid-seventeenth century soon learned to use their ideological enemies' strategies, and the books of sermons they created were Baroque in form, content, methods and tools, relying mostly on Latin, and, less frequently, Polish sources.²² Sermons in the seventeenth century served various purposes, including dogmatic, catechetical, moral didactic and polemical ones, but they were not intended as a means of general education, therefore the genre of sermon cannot be considered as a primary source of practical

¹⁸ Marina S. Kiseleva, *Intellektual'nyy vybor Rossii vtoroy poloviny XVII – nachala XVIII veka: ot drevnerusskoy knizhnosti k evropeyskoy uchenosti* (Moscow: Progress-Traditsiya, 2013), 95; Giovanna Brogi, "Lazar' Baranovich v pol'skoy i tserkovnoslavjanskoj ipostasi," in Verenitsa liter. K 60-letiyu V.M. Zhivova, ed. A. N. Moldavan (Moscow: Yazyki slavyanskoy kul'tury, 2006), 333.

¹⁹ Giovanna Brogi Bercoff, "Plurilinguism and Identity: Rethinking Ukrainian Literature of the Seventeenth Century," in *Ukraine and Europe: Cultural Encounters and Negotiations*, eds. Giovanna Brogi Bercoff, Marko Pavlyshyn, and Serhii Plokhly (London: University of Toronto Press, 2017), 57.

²⁰ Anastasia A. Preobrazhenskaya, "Authorial Changes to the Biblical Text: Quotations in Sermons by Simeon of Polotsk," *Slověne* 7, no. 1 (2018): 117.

²¹ Margarita A. Korzo, *Obraz cheloveka v propovedi XVII veka* (Moscow: IFRAN, 1999), 3–8.

²² Margarita A. Korzo, "The Orthodox Sermon in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth of the 17th Century: Some Observations," *Slověne* 6, no. 2 (2017): 581–86.

or scientific knowledge. Thus, the information related to natural philosophy provided in sermons cannot be interpreted as a direct educational statement. It rather serves to disclose certain knowledge and notions of both the authors and the recipients, since the preachers appealed to a particular background, and presupposed an understanding of the concepts they used, while some limited amount of information was presented as a novelty. The cosmological elements can provide a compelling insight into the intellectual environment of the period, and a thorough study and comparison of the elements used by different authors may shed light on the following issues:

- the representation of the physical world in its entirety;
- the symbolic and allegoric interpretation of stellar objects;
- the attitude towards astrology and zodiacal symbolism;
- the difference in the use of particular elements with regard to intended audience;
- the expected background knowledge of the audience essential for perception.

The elements of natural philosophy are scattered throughout voluminous collections of sermons²³ in metaphors, symbols, allusions, side notes, mentions and similes. In this paper, I present excerpts from vast material of sermons and homilies related to all the aspects of the superlunary world and the four elements as a constituting foundation of the sublunary realm. The excerpted material included extended metaphors, similes, structural elements, short mentions of cosmological objects as symbols, reflections of natural phenomena, their causes and their cognoscibility, as well as all the traces of astrology and attitude of the preachers towards it. I classified the excerpted material in four groups, namely representation of the world as a system, astral symbolism, astrological elements, and the four elements as a frequent form of representation of the sublunary world. This paper aims to demonstrate the implementation of cosmological imagery in homiletic texts and its functions, and to trace the differences between particular authors with regard to their potential audiences.

²³ *Klyuch razumenia* contains 538 folios in 1665 edition, *Mech dukhovnyi* contains 481 folios, *Truby sloves propovednykh* contains 417 folios, and *Obed Dushevnyi* and *Vecherya Dushevnyaya* contain 771 and 716 folios, respectively.

2. The World as a System

The analysed sermon collections do not contain a separate detailed description of a model of the universe, nor do they reflect a different model than the geocentric one. However, the images of the world are incorporated in fragmentary elements of various sermons or constitute parts of rhetoric structures. The preachers frequently assume a certain basic notion of the geocentric (and only the geocentric) system and use it when building chains of allusions, comparisons and allegories. The most detailed and extensive description of the universe can be found in Ioannikiy Galyatovsky's works. One of the sermons (the second sermon on the Annunciation) presents an explanation of why Virgin Mary can be metaphorically called "heaven."²⁴ In this sermon, Galyatovsky compares Mary to each of the levels of the eleven-sphere universe in turn, as it was known from scholastic literature.²⁵ Galyatovsky refers here to an early fifteenth-century English Augustinian Canon Regular John Mirk,²⁶ but the idea of eleven spheres which included seven planetary orbs, the stellar sphere, the firmament, crystalline heaven, the Primum Mobile and the Empyrean heaven had been widespread since the twelfth century among other models that varied from eight concentric mobile orbs to eleven and the immobile orb, or the Empyrean.²⁷ Galyatovsky compares particular properties attributed to the objects or spheres to the features of Virgin Mary and supports the allegory by historical, legendary or hagiographic examples.²⁸ The structure of the comparison is presented in table 1.

²⁴ Ioannikiy Galyatovsky, *Klyuch razumeniya* (Lviv: Tipografiya Mikhaïla Slezki 1665), fols. 154v–225r.

²⁵ When referring to "scholastic authors," I follow the common definition of the term, when the scholastic tradition is presented as a commentary on the logical and natural books of Aristotle, see Edward Grant, *Planets, Stars, and Orbs: The Medieval Cosmos, 1200–1687* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 21–22.

²⁶ Yakovenko, *U poshukakh Novogo neba*, 260.

²⁷ Todd Timberlake and Paul Wallace, *Finding Our Place in the Solar System: The Scientific Story of the Copernican Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 103; Grant, *Planets, Stars, and Orbs*, 315–20.

²⁸ The references in marginalia include: Joannes Miricus, *Liber festivalis quattor sermons*; Janus Gruterus, *Loci communes sive Florilegium rerum et materiam*; Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos, *Ecclésiasticae historiae libri decem et octo*; Caesar Baronius, *Annales Ecclésiastici a Christo as annum 1198*; Marcin Bielski, *Kronika wszystkiego swyata, na szesc wiekow, monarchie cztery rozdzielona*; Vincentius Bellocensis, *Speculum historiae*; Gregorius Florentinus Tuorensis, *Liber miraculorum in Gloria martyrum*; Ioannes Moschus Epiratus,

Object	Property	Simile	Exemplum
Moon	induces growth	Virgin Mary makes small people great	Leo I heard the voice of the Virgin telling him that he would become emperor
Mercury	influences eloquence	Virgin Mary grants eloquence	legend of a Hungarian princess who started speaking upon being born, praising the Virgin
Venus	makes people compassionate	Virgin Mary makes people want to do good	Mary of Egypt prayed to the Virgin and received a blessing from God's Mother
Sun	source of the senses	Virgin Mary grants the senses	Apostle Luke created an icon of Hodegetria, or "She who shows the way," and Mary brought two blind people to the church and they could see again
Mars	bravery and fighting knights	Virgin Mary grants victory over enemies	Narses's victory over Totila supported by prayers to the Virgin
Jupiter	grants strength	Virgin Mary grants power	legend of three boys who moved big pillars during the reign of Constantine I
Saturn	reason, wisdom, promptness	Virgin Mary grants all these qualities	Mary taught Gregory of Neocaesarea to fight the heresy of Paul of Samosata
Firmament	holds stars	Virgin Mary holds gifts of the Spirit	the gifts include: wisdom, knowledge, faith, power of healing, power of miracle, abilities to prophesy, read people's minds, speak all languages

Pratum spirituale; Gregorius Nyssenus, *Homiliae*; Ionannes de Combis, *Compendium totium theologiae veritatis*. Cf. Yakovenko, *U poshukakh Novogo neba*, 597–695.

Crystalline	transparency and ability to ignite (e.g., gunpowder)	Virgin Mary ignites sinners with love for God	a story of a crystal in Santarém, which shows Christ in various ages and shapes, as Mary saw Jesus
Primum Mobile	drags other heavenly spheres	Virgin Mary first conceived Jesus, then she gave birth to him and adored him, and then she “dragged” other people to adore her child	Mary urged the heretic Cosmiana to accept the Orthodox faith by not letting her worship the tomb of Christ
Empyrean	throne of God	Virgin Mary saw the throne of God	Khosrow created a model of the universe and, being inside, ordered the people to bow to him, and the Virgin was a model of the universe while she was carrying Jesus

Table 1. The structure of cosmological imagery in sermon no. 2 on the Annunciation by Galyatovsky

As the table illustrates, the method Galyatovsky chooses lies in the gradual expansion of the metaphor with a balanced structure. The emphasis here is put on Mariological symbolism, not on the cosmological aspects of the sermon. The comparison of Mary to the entire heaven was not one of its kind, and much more voluminous treatises reflected this allegory. The most prominent example could be the enormous treatise *Mundus Marianus. Hoc est Maria speculum mundi caelestis* by Laurentius Chrysogonus published in 1651 in Padua, which was entirely devoted to the notion of Mary as the mirror of heaven.²⁹ There is no evidence that Galyatovsky was inspired by or knew the treatise; moreover, the particular attention he paid to providing references to each particular allusion indicates that he authored the construction created in the text. However, such a structure of imagery illustrates the

²⁹ Ante Katalinić, *Veliki hrvatski mariolog Lovro Grizogon o marijanskom nazoru na svijet* (Zagreb: Filozofsko-teološki institut Družbe Isusove, 1971), 28; Juniper B. Carol, *Why Jesus Christ: Thomistic, Scotistic and Conciliatory Perspectives* (Manassas, VA: Trinity Communications, 1986), 73–74; Ivan Golub, “Hrvatski teolozi XVII. Stoljeća,” *Bogoslovska smotra* 73, no. 4 (2003): 757–58.

inclusion of Galyatovsky into the literary process of the seventeenth century, which was characteristic for the tendency to use emblematic structures and developed metaphors. The allegories used in the sermon reflect the standardised features attributed to particular stellar objects and their supposed influence on the human character. The way information is provided suggests that Galyatovsky referred to those features as to common knowledge. This leads to the assumption that Galyatovsky presupposes awareness of the symbolism he is using, including the model of the universe and the qualities attributed to particular spheres, in his target audience.

Galyatovsky's method of incorporating cosmological imagery into the text and structure of a sermon was later used by Antoniý Radyvylovsky (?–1688), an appointed preacher in Kiev Pechersk Lavra who later served as a hegumen in Pustynnyj St Nicholas monastery and authored two collections of sermons, *Ogorodok Marii Bohoroditsy* (*The Garden of the Virgin*, 1676), and *Venets Khristov* (*The Crown of Christ*, 1688).³⁰ In the first sermon on the Ascension of Christ in *Ogorodok*, Radyvylovsky describes the Ascension as a gradual ascent from the lowest sphere (earth) through the sub-lunary spheres of air and fire, seven planetary spheres, the firmament, the Primum Mobile and, finally, to the Empyrean.³¹ In Radyvylovsky's sermon, the crystalline heaven is missing, and the imagery is complemented by the symbolism of the four elements. In each level, God the Father urges the Son not to stop but to ascend higher, since the level he has reached is not yet sufficient. The heavenly bodies are imperfect, since they are not eternal, and they also represent the qualities of pagan antiquity, not the divine truth and wisdom. For example, the reason why Christ stops at the sphere of Mercury is because the planet "by reasoning of infidels was venerated as the Lord of wisdom and eloquence." However, despite the "truth that the word is supreme," God declares that the wisdom of Mercury is temporary, therefore his Son is to ascend higher, since he deserves to place the throne of his wisdom in eternity.³² Such a rhetoric structure is then repeated in relation to other planets. In the same manner as Galyatovsky, the author of *Ogorodok* refers to standard qualities, attributed to planets by astrological symbolism.

³⁰ Sofia Azovtseva, "The Significance of Anthony Radivilovskiy's Works within the Scope of Historical and Literary Researches of XIX–XXI Centuries," *Naukovi zapiski TNPU. Seriya: Literaturoznavstvo* 34 (2012): 145–50.

³¹ Yuliya Zvezdina, "Kosmos v pozdnikh pamyatnikakh pravoslavnoy kul'tury vtoroy poloviny XVII–XVIII veka," in *VIII nauchnyye chteniya pamyati Iriny Petrony Bolottsevoy*, ed. O. B. Kuznetsova (Yaroslavl: Yaroslavskiy khudozhestvennyy muzey, 2004), 9.

³² Antoniý Radyvylovsky, *Ogorodok Marii Bohoroditsy* (Kiev: Tipografiya Lavry, 1676), 99.

The cosmological imagery in Radyvylovsky's sermon is based on symbolical and numerical congruity, and the universe is presented as a harmonious and powerful structure,³³ similarly to the world presented by Galyatovsky.

Another curious example of implementing a syncretic system with Aristotelian geocentrism and a naïve explanation of the visible retrograde motion of heavenly bodies in Galyatovsky's sermons can be found in the sermon dedicated to the Nativity of Mary.³⁴ In the sermon, Mary is compared to seven pillars holding the Church, which, in turn, is compared to heaven. The allegory is built on the claim that the Church, similarly to the heavenly spheres, is in constant motion. The Primum Mobile drags the spheres to the West (as Christians are also dragged by sins and vanity), while angels drag them to the East, i.e., make people follow Christ. Such a comparison is used on purpose and reflects the ideas which Galyatovsky (who, supposedly, was familiar with some more sophisticated explanations of the apparent retrograde motion, at least with the Ptolemaic one, given his extensive reading)³⁵ thinks are known to the recipients, and, therefore, much better acceptable to them. Moreover, such explanations contain moral didactic value and thus are more appropriate for a sermon.

The same imagery with angels moving the heavenly spheres is used by Lazar Baranovych.³⁶ In *Mech dukhovnyi* or *Truby sloves propovednykh*, the mentions of the structure of the universe are scarce, but certain elements of Baranovych's worldview can be reconstructed from brief remarks and metaphors. Baranovych's world consists of three parts, where the supra-heavenly sphere (the Empyrean) belongs to the Trinity, the heavenly sphere is occupied by angels, while humans live on the earth.³⁷ As to the structure of the physical world, the preacher refers to an eight-part physical heaven (apparently, seven planetary spheres and the firmament are meant).³⁸ The firmament is understood as a water canopy and sometimes is included in multi-level chains of comparisons, allusions and parallels, typical for Baranovych's style, e.g., Christ in the "arch of his body in the waters above the Heaven" is a parallel to Noah in his arch on Earth.³⁹ Similarly to Galyatovsky, Baranovych

³³ Zvezdina, "Kosmos v pozdnikh pamyatnikakh," 9.

³⁴ Galyatovsky, *Klyuch razumeniya*, fol. 161v.

³⁵ Nikolay F. Sumtsov, "Ioannikiy (Galyatovskiy): K istorii yuzhnorus. literatury XVII veka," *Kiyevskaya starina*, no. 2 (1884): 196.

³⁶ Lazar Baranovych, *Mech dukhovnyi* (Kiev: Tipografiya Lavry, 1666), fol. 75v.

³⁷ Lazar Baranovych, *Truby sloves propovednykh* (Kiev: Tipografiya Lavry, 1674), fol. 5v.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, fol. 115r.

³⁹ Baranovych, *Mech dukhovnyi*, fol. 65v.

frequently uses cosmic symbolism in connection to Virgin Mary, comparing her to the Church or Heaven. One of the examples where such imagery is used is a typical Baroque paradox, where the womb of the Virgin was bigger than heaven since it comprised the creator.⁴⁰ Baranovych here follows the Baroque tendency to excite and agitate the audience through the use of exaggeration, hyperboles, paradoxes and unusual metaphors.⁴¹

For Baranovych, cosmic symbolism lacks an educational aspect and is used mostly in the emblematic, allegorical and rhetoric senses. The symbolism of his sermons is not consistent, since he combines the notion of the “round world”⁴² with the metaphor of the cross-shaped Heaven,⁴³ or a square-shaped heaven,⁴⁴ compares the biblical words “he stretches out the heavens” with Jesus “stretched” on the Cross.⁴⁵ Baranovych’s world is schematic, emblematic and highly influenced by Baroque conceptismo. The preacher tends to structure his notion of the world using numerical expressions, including symbols of the zodiac, the two main luminaries, the four elements.⁴⁶ These aspects will be analysed in the following chapters.

The last of the three discussed authors, Symeon Polotsky, begins his first book of sermons with drawing a cosmogonic perspective. In the poetic introduction to *Obed dushevnyi*, he states that God created the universe in six days while the seventh day was devoted to thinking about his creatures, therefore a man should follow in his steps and work, devoting the seventh day of the week to contemplation.⁴⁷ Such an opening for the cycle established the connection between the Creator, the world as a whole, and a human being. Throughout the two cycles of homilies, the world is presented as a well-constructed and thought out system. God is called an architect,⁴⁸ an artist, who created the Earth from different minerals and metals,⁴⁹ or a sower, who sowed out all the parts of the universe, where angels and stars were the seeds

⁴⁰ Baranovych, *Truby sloves propovednykh*, fol. 126v.

⁴¹ Dmitrij Čiževskij, *A History of Ukrainian Literature: From the 11th to the End of the 19th Century* (New York: Ukrainian Academic Press, 1997), 262.

⁴² Baranovych, *Mech dukhovnyi*, fol. 379r.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, fol. 459r.

⁴⁴ Baranovych, *Truby sloves propovednykh*, fol. 30v.

⁴⁵ Baranovych, *Mech dukhovnyi*, fol. 459r.

⁴⁶ Yuliya Zvezdina, “Zodiak u vidannyakh Kievo-Pechers’koi lavri drugoi polovini XVII stolittya,” in *Ukrains’ke nebo 2. Studii nad istorieyu astronomii v Ukraini*, ed. Oleh L. Petruk (Lviv: Oleh Petruk, 2016), 181.

⁴⁷ Simeon Polotsky, *Obed dushevnyi* (Moscow: Tipografiya Verkhnyaya, 1681), fol. 1r.

⁴⁸ Polotsky, *Obed dushevnyi*, fol. 629r.

⁴⁹ Simeon Polotsky, *Vecherya dushevnyaya* (Moscow: Tipografiya Verkhnyaya, 1683), fol. 7v.

thrown to the heavens.⁵⁰ In his sermons, as well as in his poetic works, Polotsky presents a systematic image of the world deriving from the Pythagorean doctrine of numbers as a basis for the universe.⁵¹ The universe, according to Polotsky, is described by numbers, since heaven was created *ex nihilo* and became a quantity, and its shape is round like a number.⁵² Such a notion may have been excerpted from the hermetic or astrological literature present in Polotsky's library, including John Dee's *Monas hieroglyphica*, Ablumasar's *Flores astrologiae* and Alchabitius *Libellus isagogicus*.⁵³ Polotsky also assigns special significance to water as the main constituting element of the physical universe. Water is the element most frequently used in metaphors, allegories and paradoxes.⁵⁴ The temporal plane is also structured, based on the Augustinian notion of the six ages of the world.⁵⁵

Polotsky's sermons contain the following elements of the scholastic adaptation of the geocentric model: First of all, the heavenly spheres are perceived as bodies (Christ, going up to the Empyrean, did not rupture the orbs because his body was thin and almost non-physical),⁵⁶ which, contrary to matter made of the four elements, are incorruptible by the grace of God (the same idea was presented by Polotsky in his compendium *Venets Very*).⁵⁷ The Earth is equidistant from the other spheres⁵⁸ and is immovable, while the other heavenly bodies move and influence the Earth.⁵⁹ The emphasis Polotsky puts on the spherical shape of the Earth and the world⁶⁰ suggests that it was important for the preacher to highlight that information, since, as noted above, the notion of a spherical Earth still coexisted with the model of a flat Earth in seventeenth-century Russia. In this case, the sermon also served additional educational purposes.

⁵⁰ Polotsky, *Obed dushevnyi*, fol. 59v.

⁵¹ Aleksandr M. Panchenko, *Russkaya stikhotvornaya kul'tura XVII veka* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1973), 181.

⁵² Polotsky, *Obed dushevnyi*, fol. 155v.

⁵³ Anthony R. Hippisley and Evgenija V. Lukjanova, *Simeon Polockij's Library: A Catalogue* (Köln: Bohlau Verlag, 2005), 167.

⁵⁴ See, e.g., Polotsky, *Obed dushevnyi*, fols. 48r–49v, 195r, 209r.

⁵⁵ Polotsky, *Vecherya dushevnyaya*, fol. 105r.

⁵⁶ Polotsky, *Obed dushevnyi*, fol. 82r.

⁵⁷ Olga Chadaeva, "Two Authors, Two Universes: Cosmological Models in the Works of Simeon Polotskii and Archpriest Avvakum Petrov," *Russian Literature* 99 (2018): 6.

⁵⁸ Polotsky, *Obed dushevnyi*, fol. 537v.

⁵⁹ Polotsky, *Vecherya dushevnyaya*, fols. 123v–126r.

⁶⁰ Polotsky, *Obed dushevnyi*, fol. 154r.

The mimetic element to which Polotsky frequently appeals is the concept of “man as a microcosm,” or a little world, and the universe as a mortal being, like humans.⁶¹ The central position of man in the universe is emphasized (the world serves man, while he serves God).⁶² The central position of human beings is explained by the exceptional ability of mankind to “raise their head” to heaven (“edin est’ chelovek gore imeyay glavu sovershenne voznesennuyu”), and, therefore, ascend to heavenly matters.⁶³ The focus on man as the centre of the universe, which was well known in European literature, was also a new concept to Russian culture.⁶⁴

The image of Polotsky’s universe in his sermons balances between natural philosophy and pure fantastic and allegorical imagery. The sermons contain numerous personifications of stellar objects, with the heavens (including the watery level or caelum crystallinum, stars, Sun and Moon) celebrating the Creator,⁶⁵ the Earth which can offend or be offended by the heavens when it covers itself in clouds, or “weeps” delivering the crops.⁶⁶ Using cosmic metaphors in connection with the image of Mary,⁶⁷ Polotsky also joins the tradition presented by Galyatovsky and Baranovych. However, in Polotsky’s case, the development of Mariological symbolism is rather moderate when compared to Baranovych and, especially, Galyatovsky.

Comparing the representation of the universe by these three preachers, it is possible to state that all of them refer to a geocentric model of the world. Galyatovsky uses an image of an eleven-part universe and a convenient framework for a particular comparison, Baranovych mentions celestial matters marginally and mostly as emblematic structures, while Polotsky emphasizes the structural character of the world and the proactive position a man should take given his central position in the universe. Numerical symbolism plays a significant part in the texts of all three authors, emphasizing the tendency of Baroque writers to structure their image of reality. The educational and didactic character is more prevalent in Polotsky’s sermons, less in Galyatovsky’s works, which are more “entertaining,” and the least in Baranovych’s sermons, whose exuberant imagery is influenced primarily

⁶¹ Ibid., fol. 558r.

⁶² Polotsky, *Vecherya dushevnyaya*, fols. 3v–4r.

⁶³ Polotsky, *Obed dushevnyi*, fol. 446r.

⁶⁴ Lyudmila Chernaya, *Russkaya kul’tura perekhodnogo perioda ot Srednevekov’ya k Novomu vremeni* (Moscow: Yazyki russkoi kul’tury, 1999), 87.

⁶⁵ Polotsky, *Obed dushevnyi*, fol. 93v.

⁶⁶ Ibid., fol. 237r–v.

⁶⁷ Polotsky, *Vecherya dushevnyaya*, fols. 16v–17r, 106v, etc.

by their ceremonial character. The authors' common feature is the frequent connection of cosmological symbolism to Mariology, which is more evident in the case of the first two.

3. Astronomical Symbolism

Separate stellar objects frequently served as a source of poetic imagery, including their implementation into homiletic texts. As I demonstrated above, Galyatovsky uses particular properties traditionally ascribed to single objects as a rhetoric tool. Apparently, he perceives the influence of a stellar object, such as the Moon, the Sun, or the seven planets on a human being as common knowledge that can therefore be used for rhetoric purposes. The stereotypes are derived from astrology, and, although Galyatovsky did not explicitly express any interest in it, he effectively applied these concepts in his texts. As is evident from the examples discussed above, the most frequent use of astronomical imagery appeared in connection with the cult of Mary, which was heavily influenced by Latin literature.⁶⁸ One of the images Galyatovsky develops using a similar strategy as in the case of the aforementioned metaphor of Mary as heaven is *Mulier amicta sole* (Rev 12:1) interpreted as the Virgin in the second sermon on the Dormition.⁶⁹ While such an interpretation was common in the Latin hermeneutic tradition, especially after the Council of Trent, it was not typical for the Orthodox one.⁷⁰ The symbol includes “a woman clothed with the Sun, and the Moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars,” and Galyatovsky interprets each of these astronomical symbols separately. Initially, the preacher explains the Woman as a symbol of the Church. The Moon is a symbol of heretics because it has holes, or maculae, as heretics have spots of heresy and other numerous sins, and the Church triumphs over them.⁷¹ The twelve stars in the crown are the Twelve Apostles, whose teaching is preserved by the Church. The second interpretation is the Woman as the Virgin. Galyatovsky then develops a highly sophisticated symbolism of the twelve stars in the crown of the Woman, matching a particular celestial object to a particular virtue

⁶⁸ Yakovenko, *U poshukakh Novogo neba*, 97–103.

⁶⁹ Galyatovsky, *Klyuch razumeniya*, fols. 146r–54v.

⁷⁰ Maria Grazia Bartolini, “Tsitati z pisni nad pisnyami ta odkrovennya v rus'kikh gomilyakh na uspennya (XVII st.): mizh latins'kimi vplivami i tyaglistyu vizantiys'koi modeli,” *Kiivs'ka Akademiya*, no. 15 (2018): 68–69.

⁷¹ Galyatovsky, *Klyuch razumeniya*, fol. 146r–v. Possibly taken from Meffreth, see Meffreth, *Hortulus reginae, sive Sermones*, 106.

and then, similarly to the model implemented in the sermon with celestial spheres, he supports the allegory with a didactic example. The structure of the simile is schematically presented in table 2 (without exempla).

Object	Property	Virtue/Simile
Phosphorus	appears when night leaves and day comes	Virgin Mary was born in the moment when Old Testament was leaving and New Testament was coming.
Hesperus	appears in the evening	Evening is the end of a human life. The Virgin appears before people whose lives come to an end.
Arktos, the heavenly wagon (Ursa Major)	appears in the north	The north is a symbol of sins because winds, snow and frost come from the north, and Mary appears before sinful people.
Orion	appears in the south	The south means good deeds because they bring warmth to the human soul, and Mary appears before people urging them to do good.
Ophiuchus	serpent-bearer	Mary holds the serpent from hell in her power, its head is destroyed by the grace of her son.
Nodus Celestis (Alpha Piscium)	celestial knot	A knot means difficulty, and the Virgin creates obstacles for enemies of the faithful.
a comet	signifies changes, the fall of a state or of a kingdom	Virgin Mary signifies the fall of Beelzebub's reign.
Spica (spike)	provides people with food	The Virgin feeds those who seek her help.
Lyra	lyre or lute means consent and harmony	The Virgin loves harmony and leads people to it.
Amalthea (Capella)	Amalthea suckled Zeus	The Virgin breastfed Jesus.
Cassiopeia	looks as if sitting on a throne	The Virgin occupies her throne in heaven.

Andromeda	Andromeda was about to be eaten by a sea monster and was saved by Perseus	The Virgin was saved from death by her son Jesus.
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Table 2. The structure of cosmological imagery in sermon no. 2 on the Dormition from *Klyuch razumeniya* by Ioannikiy Galyatovsky

The mythological imagery in the sermon most likely derives from *De Astronomica* (attributed to Hyginus).⁷² The construction of the list seems to be random, it is more tied to geographical, historical or mythological connotations to certain plots or moral examples than to any quasi-scientific reasons. Galyatovsky then used this very construction as a model example of a perfect sermon, which consists of four parts, i.e., the theme, the exordium or introduction, the narration and the conclusion. Here, the theme is *Mulier amicta sole* as Mary, the exordium is the list of the stellar objects and explanation of their properties, which are followed by the narration, or historical anecdotes and morality tales attached to the majority of the similes.⁷³ The way Galyatovsky presents the allegories indicates that he, on the one hand, does not expect his audience to be familiar with all the stellar objects he refers to, since he explains and comments on the objects he mentions. On the other hand, he expects his audience to accept the comparison of ancient Greek pagan mythology to the traits of God's mother. Such use of pagan symbolism would be unimaginable in the case of a preacher targeting the audience in Muscovy, where Latin humanism was yet to arrive.⁷⁴ For Ukrainian intellectuals, however, "it was perfectly acceptable to mix the Christian God with pagan gods, and to merge the Christian heaven with Olympus."⁷⁵

Galyatovsky uses astronomical imagery in other cases as well, e.g., describing solar and lunar eclipses and comparing them to apostles Peter and Paul, where Peter is the Sun shining for faithful Jews, while Paul is the Moon, shining for the pagan world, or "the night."⁷⁶ Then the metaphor is

⁷² See, e.g., particular passages from *Astromonica: Hygini Astronomica: ex codicibus a se primum collatis*, ed. Bernhardt Bunte (Leipzig: In aedibus T. O. Weigeli, 1875), 45, 94.

⁷³ Ioannikiy Galyatovsky, *Nauka, albo sposob, zlozhenya kazanya* in Galyatovsky, *Klyuch razumeniya*, fol. 238r.

⁷⁴ Max J. Okenfuss, *The Rise and Fall of Latin Humanism in Early-Modern Russia: Pagan Authors, Ukrainians, and the Resiliency of Muscovy* (New York: Brill, 1995), 27.

⁷⁵ Okenfuss, *Rise and Fall of Latin Humanism*, 59.

⁷⁶ Galyatovsky, *Klyuch razumeniya*, fol. 42r–v.

extended and a physical explanation of the eclipse is given, which suggests that Galyatovsky might expect the target audience not to know the physical reason behind eclipses. For Galyatovsky, however, any natural phenomenon is an illustrative source for conveying didactic information, and it can never be perceived as the target information itself.

It is noteworthy that Lazar Baranovych very frequently uses the same imagery as Galyatovsky while interpreting Mary as *Mulier amicta sole*.⁷⁷ However, he never builds an extended construction of the symbol, briefly stating that Mary is “kind as the Moon, chosen as the Sun, twelve stars are decorating her head.”⁷⁸ Mary is also compared to the Milky Way through her breastfeeding God, and the drops of her milk can also serve as a staircase to Heaven.⁷⁹ Generally, the use of astronomical imagery in his sermons is frequent, but it is never detailed. It can be traced mostly with relation to glorification of the Virgin and is based on clichés and fixed tropes.⁸⁰ The most detailed symbolism in his sermons is related to the zodiac and the four elements, to be reviewed in the following two chapters.

Symeon Polotsky also uses astronomical imagery in connection with Mary,⁸¹ but his focus is more “masculine,” since the central figure in his sermons in the context of astronomical symbolism is the Sun as a metaphor of Jesus.⁸² The symbol of the Sun is also central in Polotsky’s poetic panegyric works.⁸³ This reveals Polotsky’s slightly more traditionalist approach to the imagery he is using, since he was quite well aware that too bold comparisons can lead to resentment on the part of the conservative Orthodox audience in Muscovy. Polotsky defends the prevalence of solar symbolism with the argument that it is, according to him (and according to the majority of scholastic authors),⁸⁴ the only shining body in the heaven.⁸⁵ The Sun is also often used in a metaphorical sense as the head of hierarchy, e.g., in the family,

⁷⁷ Baranovych, *Truby sloves propovednykh*, fols. 46r, 77r, 100r, 388r.

⁷⁸ Here we can observe the merge of the symbolism from Song of Songs (6:9) and Revelation (12:1), typical for Ruthenian Mariology, see Bartolini “Tsitati z pisni nad pisnyami,” 86.

⁷⁹ Baranovych, *Truby sloves propovednykh*, fol. 127v.

⁸⁰ See, e.g., Baranovych, *Mech dukhovnyi*, fols. 155v, 420r; Baranovych, *Truby sloves propovednykh*, fol. 99v.

⁸¹ See, e.g., Polotsky, *Vecherya dushevnyaya*, fols. 16v–17r, 105v.

⁸² Polotsky, *Obed dushevnyi*, fols. 35v, 154r, 215v, 307v, 654r; Polotsky, *Vecherya dushevnyaya*, fols. 126r, 479r.

⁸³ Lidiya I. Sazonova, *Literaturnaya kul'tura Rossii, Ranneye Novoye vremya* (Moscow: Yazyki slavyanskikh kul'tur, 2006), 398–400.

⁸⁴ Grant, *Planets, Stars, and Orbs*, 395.

⁸⁵ Polotsky, *Vecherya dushevnyaya*, fol. 126r.

where the Sun represents the father, the Moon is the mother and the stars are children.⁸⁶ Like Galyatovsky, Polotsky frequently uses the metaphor of eclipses, e.g., in relation to family conflicts or the incapability of some people to recognize the truth.⁸⁷ Polotsky also interprets the Moon as an ambivalent symbol. Lunar symbolism is often opposed to solar one, since the Moon is traditionally related to such qualities as changeability, frailty and insanity,⁸⁸ but, on the other hand, it is linked with the image of Mary, “for as the Moon receives all her light from the Sun, the Holiest Mother of God, receiving from Christ [...] all her light, shines everywhere.”⁸⁹

As we can see, the use of astronomical symbolism in the analysed sermons is mostly limited to clichés in the topical images of the triad of the Sun, the Moon and the stars. It is predominantly related to the cult of Mary, following the Western tradition. Baroque inventiveness, however, sometimes resulted in more developed astronomical imagery, as in Galyatovsky’s case, which is explained by the different expected background of the target audience. Homiletic texts could incorporate some extension of common knowledge, based on planetary stereotypes, astrology, mythology, but also occasionally included information of the physical world, such as the location of objects, eclipses, “shining” and “non-shining” bodies. The difference between the authors lies, on the one hand, in a more active use of pagan symbolism in the case when the target audience is Ruthenian and is expected to be more tolerant to the connection of Latinity with Christian moral didactics, and, on the other hand, in the predominant focus of the use of astral symbolism with connection to Mariology in the authors not familiar with the Muscovite audience and a more “masculine” focus of Polotsky.

4. Astrological and Zodiacal Symbolism in Sermons

Astrology penetrated Russian culture in several waves. In the sixteenth century, it first faced the active and purposeful criticism of Maximus the Greek.⁹⁰ Apparently, however, this discourse was partially imported from

⁸⁶ Polotsky, *Obed dushevnyi*, fol. 545r–v.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, fols. 420r, 506r, 545r–v.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, fols. 226r–228v, translation is mine.

⁸⁹ Polotsky, *Vecherya dushevnyaya*, fol. 105v.

⁹⁰ Rem A. Simonov, *Russkaya astrologicheskaya knizhnost' (XI – pervaya chetvert' XVIII veka)* (Moscow: Mir knigi, 1998), 54.

Renaissance disputes and had little to do with original Russian thought.⁹¹ Nevertheless, attitudes towards astrology varied from cautious to adverse. During the reign of Alexei Mikhailovitch (1645–1676), the situation changed. Astrological literature was being translated into Russian, and the court culture enhanced the popularity of making astrological charts and calendars.⁹² Astrological imagery gained momentum when its symbolism was tied to the panegyric context, glorification of the tsar family and courtly life.⁹³ It is therefore compelling to trace how particular elements of astrology were revealed in the homiletic works of different authors.

In the previous chapters, certain elements related to astrological symbolism in the works of Ioannikiy Galyatovsky were discussed. Despite the aforementioned cases of implementing astrological stereotypes and attributing particular qualities to planetary influence, Galyatovsky did not express any particular interest in astrology.⁹⁴ In his sermons, astrologers are mentioned as people who give names to stars, like God does, with references to the Psalms (Ps. 147:4) (“*isčitayay mnozhestvo zvezd i vsem im imena naritsavyy*”).⁹⁵ Zodiacal imagery is absent from Galyatovsky’s sermons, as is more detailed reflection on the issue of predictions and influence of the zodiac on human beings.

The author who directly and openly used zodiacal symbolism was Lazar Baranovych. His attraction to zodiacal imagery has already been discussed by some researchers.⁹⁶ In *Mech dukhovnyi*, he uses astrological symbolism, e.g., comparing the twelve baskets of leftovers the Apostles collected after the “Feeding of the 5,000” (Matthew 14:13–21) to the twelve signs of the zodiac.⁹⁷ Baranovych also mentions astrologers and neutrally refers to them as people who attempt to predict the crop yield.⁹⁸ However, he emphasises

⁹¹ Ovanes Akopyan, “S ‘latinyanami’ protiv ‘latinskogo nechestiya’: Maksim Grek, Savonarola i bor’ba s astrologiyey,” in *Evropeyskoye Vozrozhdeniye i russkaya kul’tura XV–serediny XVII vv.: kontakty i vzaimnoye vospriyatiye*, ed. Oleg F. Kudryavtsev (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2014), 92–102.

⁹² Simonov, *Russkaya astrologicheskaya knizhnost’*, 64, 85.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 87.

⁹⁴ Yakovenko, *U poshukakh Novogo neba*, 261.

⁹⁵ Galyatovsky, *Klyuch razumeniya*, fol. 147r.

⁹⁶ See, e.g., Yuliya E. Shustova, “Vospriyatiye simvoliki znakov zodiaka v knizhnosti Moskovskogo gosudarstva vtoroy poloviny XVII veka,” in *Vspomogatel’nyye istoricheskiye distsipliny v prostranstve gumanitarnogo znaniya* (Moscow: RGGU, 2009), 56–81; Yuliya Zvezdina, “Zodiak u vidannyakh Kievo-Pechers’koi lavri,” 176–86.

⁹⁷ Lazar Baranovych, *Mech dukhovnyi*, fol. 144r.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, fol. 249v.

Zodiac sign (order as appears in the first poetic introduction)	Saints	Simile
Pisces	Apostles: Peter, Paul	Apostles as fishers of men
Aries	Prophets: John the Baptist, Elijah	John the Baptist speaks of the Lamb of God
Libra	Martyrs: Stephen, Theodore Stratelates	Martyrs put their blood to be weighed on scales
Scorpio	George, Demetrios	George slayed the dragon, Demetrios defeated Lyaios
Virgo	Paraskevi, Barbara	Virgin martyrs
Capricorn	Paraskeva of the Balkans, Mary of Egypt	Both saints went to desert to escape sins
Aquarius	the Three Holy Hierarchs (Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and John Chrysostom)	“Wisdom flowed from them like a river”
Leo	John the Apostle, Saint Nicholas of Myra, Gregory of Neocaesarea	The saints’ voices were similar to the roar of a lion
Taurus	Constantine the Great, Vladimir the Great	As pagans they made sacrifices of animals but later slew the idols
Gemini	Boris and Gleb	Brothers that were slain
Cancer	Cosmas and Damian	As crawfish moves backwards, the saints, being doctors, gave health back to their patients
Sagittarius	Alexius of Rome, Alexius, Metropolitan of Kiev	Hunters for peoples’ hearts
Morning star	Anthony and Theodosius of Kiev	Morning stars from the East

Table 3. The “zodiac” in Lazar Baranovych’s *Truby sloves propovednykh*

that despite all attempts, Scripture is still more reliable.⁹⁹ His second book of sermons, the *Truby sloves propovednykh*, implements the zodiac as a means to organize the whole cycle of sermons. Each sign is associated with certain saints who represent the qualities symbolised by the sign. This emblematic imagery is presented in the engraving on the title page of the book and repeated in the two introductions to the cycle, poetic and prosaic ones. Surprisingly, the attribution is not related to Church calendar and is based on an allegorical connection of the sign itself (and not the qualities traditionally attributed to people born under that sign) and the major characteristic feature of the saint. The author also adds two more stars to the zodiac, with the addition being politically motivated, since Anthony and Theodosius of Kiev are presented as morning stars, the “Russian Stars who shone with new glory from the East” (“Zvedzy Rosskiya ot Vostoka voz-siyavshiya”). Such an addition was motivated by an attempt to emphasize the importance of Kiev after left-bank Ukraine fell under Russian control. The metaphorical connection of saints and signs is presented in table 3.

The zodiacal symbolism is then used consistently throughout the cycle, but with no particular emphasis on astrological connotations. The author does not return to the connections established in the introduction, using the symbolism more loosely. For example, the first month of the Orthodox Church year, September, being in Libra, signifies the beginning of weighing the deeds of saints, October is in Scorpio because the air is bad, etc.¹⁰⁰ Curiously enough, Baranovych does not reflect on the issue of the influence of the zodiac on humans. He uses zodiacal symbolism merely as a structuring element with a strong emblematic meaning and fixed connotations that enable to develop rhetoric structures and organize the text. The zodiac helps Baranovych present the world as a structure on several levels, including the physical one (the zodiac itself), the spiritual and moral ones (saints and their virtues) and the textual one, since the annual framework is provided by God and, therefore, it forms the cycle of the sermons. The implementation of zodiacal symbolism into homiletics as a means to organize the text was not a novelty introduced by Baranovych. One of the “bestsellers” of seventeenth-century homiletics—*Zodiacus christianus* by Jeremias Drexel (1633)—introduced that practice. Whether or not this work could have loosely influenced Baranovych’s imagery remains a question for further research.

⁹⁹ Ibid., fol. 299r–v.

¹⁰⁰ Baranovych, *Truby sloves propovednykh*, fols. 4v, 45r.

In Simeon Polotsky's sermons, the attitude to astrology is ambivalent. On the one hand, he repeatedly expresses criticism towards astrologers, magicians and fortune-tellers.¹⁰¹ On the other hand, he also admits that the motion of heavenly bodies influences human beings. In one of the sermons, he mentions that when the kind Sun enters an unfavourable sign or is in conjunction with an "evil" planet, it can cause much trouble in the world ("Se i solntse, zelo polezno mirovi sushchee, yegda so zlym planetoyu ili znameniem sluchitsya na nebbesi, veliyu tshchetu v mire deet").¹⁰² Polotsky claims, however, that certain knowledge should remain hidden from a human who aspires to enter heaven. According to the preacher, a man should not try to understand "times and years," and attempt to uncover the mysteries that God decided to hide from human beings, since their intellect is incapable of grasping them.¹⁰³ Despite the belief in "evil planets and signs," Polotsky also expresses a cautious attitude towards assigning particular properties to stellar objects. He does not favour exaggerating the influence of heavenly bodies on human beings. Thus, speaking of the Moon and its alleged influence on humans, Polotsky calls it "a good creature of the most gracious Creator," which should not be blamed for negative influence since that may lead to blaming God for the imperfection of the world.¹⁰⁴

As the presented review of astrological elements in the homiletic works of Ioannikiy Galyatovsky, Lazar Baranovych and Simeon Polotsky has shown, this aspect, despite the presence of planetary and zodiacal symbolism, and of a reflection of astrology, was neither fundamentally important nor dominant. Of all the authors, the most abundant zodiacal imagery is used by Lazar Baranovych, and he, unlike Polotsky, expresses a neutral attitude to the activities of astrologers, leaving, however, the dominant role in interpreting natural phenomena and human life to Holy Scripture. Nevertheless, his interpretation of zodiacal symbolism can seem superficial and more related to aesthetic and rhetoric purposes, although it also serves the purpose of presenting the world as an ingenious structure. Similarly to the solar and zodiacal symbolism in the poetic works of Polotsky, for Baranovych, zodiacal imagery is also tied to political imagery. Recognizing the alleged influence of the superlunary realm on human beings and using astrological imagery and symbolism, the preachers, however, either do not

¹⁰¹ Polotsky, *Obed dushevnyi*, fol. 79r; Polotsky, *Vecherya dushevnyaya*, fol. 130 (3rd page).

¹⁰² Polotsky, *Obed dushevnyi*, fol. 544r.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, fol. 79r.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, fol. 227v.

focus on this issue or warn against attempts to assign a greater role to the heavenly bodies than to the wisdom of divine providence.

5. The Four Elements as a Basis of the Sublunary Realm

The dominant ancient and then medieval doctrine of the four terrestrial elements as a basis for the sublunary realm, although abandoned by some as early as the sixteenth century, was still accepted by scholastic authors in the seventeenth century.¹⁰⁵ The influence of this doctrine is evident in the discussed Ruthenian authors, and, like other aforementioned elements of natural philosophy, it demonstrates the intellectuals' inclination to follow the tradition, not the controversial advances offered by seventeenth-century scientific development. Describing the sublunary world, all the authors mention the four elements with varying frequency. Galyatovsky, who encouraged preachers to constantly expand their knowledge of the physical world, reading about animals, birds, reptiles, fish, plants, herbs, rocks and various waters and used a handful of examples from Aristotle,¹⁰⁶ surprisingly was the one who mentioned the four elements symbolism less frequently. He relates the four elements, e.g., to the life of Christ, who purified all the elements in turn – fire was purified when God spoke to Moses, air was purified when Jesus descended from heaven to earth, which was then purified by Christ's feet and, finally, water was purified by Jesus's baptism.

Lazar Baranovych uses similar examples in his sermons.¹⁰⁷ Baranovych's style was characterized by abundant use of amplifications,¹⁰⁸ and the symbolism of four elements in that aspect is very convenient. It allows for repeating the same structure at least four times, sometimes multiplied by three, if used with reference to the three persons of the Trinity. For example, earth is filled by the power of the Father, which is revealed in the ability to give birth, by wisdom of the Son, like flowers growing from the soil, by grace of the Spirit, who revealed its goodness. This method of connecting particular elements with the persons of the Trinity is repeated for water, air, and fire.¹⁰⁹ The elements accompany the earthly life of Jesus, whose labour

¹⁰⁵ Grant, *Planets, Stars, and Orbs*, 189.

¹⁰⁶ Yakovenko, *U poshukakh Novogo neba*, 256–58.

¹⁰⁷ For example, the symbolism in Baranovych, *Mech dukhovnyi*, fol. 107r. mirrors the aforementioned construction in Galyatovsky's *Klyuch razumeniya*.

¹⁰⁸ Olena Matushek, "Amplifikatsiya v propovidyakh Lazarya Baranovicha," *Aktual'ni problemi ukrains'koi literatury i fol'kloru* 16 (2011): 65–78.

¹⁰⁹ Baranovych, *Mech dukhovnyi*, fols. 75v–77v.

related us to each of the elements, and only having completed his task on earth, Christ could rest in heaven.¹¹⁰ The elements are divided between all creatures (fire to angels, earth to animals, air to birds, and water to fish),¹¹¹ The elements, which are the guarantee and condition of all being, can also pose a danger to sinners,¹¹² even in their afterlife. The four elements drag or extrude sinners to hell, i.e., earth takes sinners to hell if they were mercenary, water in the case of laziness, air if they were proud, and fire if they were lustful or wrathful.¹¹³ Baranovych, who frequently referred to Ambrose of Milan, may have been inspired by his imagery related to the four elements.¹¹⁴ The four elements in Baranovych's sermons seem to be the most frequently used element of natural philosophy. The reason for that may lay in the clarity and simplicity of the symbolism, its universal and yet concrete meaning and perfect symmetry and harmony, important for the rhetoric structures.

For Simeon Polotsky, the idea of the four elements was also important and he frequently referred to it in his poetic works and even private conversations.¹¹⁵ Celebrating the wisdom of the Creator in his sermons, he sees it in the heavenly spheres, in the actions of the heavenly bodies, in the different qualities and, especially, in the coexistence of the elements, which he discusses in detail.¹¹⁶ Fire is powerful, omniscient and luminous, has multiple actions, such as burning, cleaning, restoring, melting and condensing. Air breathes life into all creatures, moves ships and creates rain, dew, snow, hail, lightning and thunder. Water humidifies earth and makes it fertile, nurses living beings and fights fire. Earth is a manifestation of divine power, since it has no basis ("bez osnovaniya stoit") and gives birth to gold, silver, rocks and metals, crops, etc.¹¹⁷ The elements are ordered in a hierarchy, and the lowest position of earth should serve as a reminder of humility to a human (despite his central position in the universe).¹¹⁸

As evident from the examples above, Polotsky prefers to be more specific when using the symbolism of the four elements, giving more "realistic"

¹¹⁰ Ibid., fol. 52r.

¹¹¹ Ibid., fol. 194r.

¹¹² Baranovych, *Truby sloves propovednykh*, fol. 17r.

¹¹³ Baranovych, *Mech dukhovnyi*, fol. 237v.

¹¹⁴ John Moorhead, *Ambrose: Church and Society in the Late Roman World* (London: Longman, 1999), 176.

¹¹⁵ Lola U. Zvonareva, "Naturfilosofskiye predstavleniya Simeona Polotskogo," in *Estestvennonauchnye predstavleniya Drevney Rusi*, ed. Rem A. Simonov (Moscow: Nauka, 1988), 242.

¹¹⁶ Polotsky, *Vecherya dushevnyaya*, fol. 311.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., fols. 311–12.

¹¹⁸ Polotsky, *Obed dushevnyi*, fol. 526r–v.

connotations to the elements and not relating them to particular episodes of Scripture. The moral didactic value ascribed to the four elements by Baranovych does not appear in Polotsky's sermons. Apparently, Polotsky tended to implement Galyatovsky's aforementioned recommendation to use elements of natural philosophy to make his sermons more informative and educative for the target audience. Another aspect to be emphasised when discussing Polotsky's work is his tendency to systematize the world and present it as an encyclopedia, as a structure.¹¹⁹ The symbolism of the four elements, due to their emblematic character, serves this purpose exceptionally well.

6. Conclusion

Baroque books of sermons contain an insight into the theological, ideological and ethical challenges of the period.¹²⁰ Moreover, due to the fact that sermons were frequently aimed at the widest audience including practically all levels of society,¹²¹ a thorough study of homiletic texts helps to understand the worldview of the period, the most challenging problems and issues the society was facing, and the background of the preachers as well as of the listeners, whose attention and interest the preachers were fighting for.¹²² The sermons of the analysed Ruthenian authors did not primarily focus on issues of cosmology, astronomy and astrology. The preachers added these elements predominantly as parts of rhetoric constructions in order to structure the text or to make it more compelling and intriguing for the audience. The idea of structure, however, was crucial for understanding the world in the second half of the seventeenth century, since it led to the conviction that the world is cognoscible. The imagery the authors used is still tied to the scholastic adaptation of the geocentric Aristotelian-Ptolemaic universe, to astrological clichés and to fixed poetical connotations known from Scripture or hymnography. However, despite a certain obsolescence of the ideas presented by Ruthenian monks in European context, cognoscibility of the world can be deduced from various aspects of the cosmological elements in the homilies. The description of the world can then be further used as a foundation for creating texts.

¹¹⁹ Sazonova, *Literaturnaya kul'tura Rossii*, 521.

¹²⁰ Miloš Sládek, *Svět jako podvodný verbíř, aneb Výbor z českých jednotlivě vydaných svátečních a příležitostných kázání konce 17. a prvních dvou třetin 18. století* (Praha: Argo, 2005), 12–13.

¹²¹ Miloš Sládek, *Malý svět jest člověk aneb Výbor z české barokní prózy* (Praha: H&H, 1995), 15.

¹²² Sládek, *Svět jako podvodný verbíř*, 12–16.

The presence of the most developed cosmological and astronomical symbolism in Ioannikiy Galyatovsky's (and also Antony Radvylovsky's) sermons suggests that the Ruthenian audience, contrary to the Muscovite one, may have been more acquainted with the Western patterns. Baranovych's sermons focused primarily on the court, therefore the symbolism he uses is most artificial and even contrived, serving the purpose of ceremonial eloquence. Polotsky's sermons, although also ceremonial in their nature, are affected by their educative purpose and therefore contain elements of the worldview the author wants to emphasize. Compared to panegyrics, the use of astral symbolism with reference to political aspects is less present in the sermons, but it can also be traced, particularly in the case of Baranovych who may also have contributed to the fixation of the so-called Baroque "astral imperialism," conceived by Polotsky.¹²³

The reception of the Ruthenian collections of sermons was not smooth. On the one hand, the readers complained that the texts were too difficult for simple folk to understand.¹²⁴ On the other hand, the Latin influence inevitably resulted in criticism from the Graecophiles and traditionalists. In 1690, all the books were condemned and consequently banned by Patriarch Joachim at the Moscow council among other works of Ruthenian authors. Nevertheless, they still remained in libraries and were known to contemporaries in Ruthenia, Muscovy, and even in Serbia and Georgia.¹²⁵ Through those sermons, Orthodox recipients in Muscovy could learn about some basic cosmological concepts, structures and imagery widespread in Western Europe and get more accustomed to them, as well as to the image of a structured mechanism-like universe based on the symbolism of numbers. The imagery from the sermons found its way to iconography and gradually the astronomical and astrological symbolism started to appear in Orthodox icons.¹²⁶ Despite being considerably distant from the leading seventeenth-century scientific thought on the universe, the collections of sermons of Ruthenian authors also may be perceived as a step towards the Westernisation and consequent secularisation of the Russian culture.

¹²³ Harsha Ram, *The Imperial Sublime: A Russian Poetics of Empire* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 37.

¹²⁴ Anthony R. Hippisley, *The Poetic Style of Simeon Polotsky* (Birmingham: Department of Russian Language & Literature, University of Birmingham, 1985), 12.

¹²⁵ Sazonova, *Literaturnaya kul'tura Rossii*, 57–58.

¹²⁶ Zvezdina, "Kosmos v pozdnykh pamyatnikakh," 3.

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