

Finns' Holy War against the Soviet Union

[or: Fin(n)ish Holy War against Soviet Union]

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06.11.2011

UNPOLISHED, UNFINISHED PAPER

Note: this paper is not yet finished and especially the conclusions need feedback of all readers. As non-native English speaker I have used my own dialect, Finglish. I hope it will not prevent your reading too much. All translations from Finnish to English are mine and not yet corrected.

1. Introduction

The aim of the paper is to analyze the reception of the Old Testament (term Old Testament follows the language of the studied sources) in Finland during the Second World War. Specific period of the study is the latter part of year 1941 and the data analyzed is *Kotimaa* –newspaper and Finnish theological journal *Teologinen Aikakauskirja* (*Finnish Journal of Theology*). In 1941 *Kotimaa* was a church oriented newspaper published twice a week, each issue having four pages. *Teologinen Aikakauskirja* contained all together 513 pages in 1941: scholarly and professionally oriented articles, reviews and actual short notices.

The research question is as follows: how the Hebrew Bible texts about the land and conquest were used in the Finnish war context. The presupposition before the analysis was that there are similarities and connections between Finnish texts and the Hebrew Bible conquest stories in Joshua and Judges. The expected common theme was God's guidance in the conquest of land, the land taken from the enemies and given to Israelites/Finns; a central theme in the Deuteronomistic History (DH) and the burning issue in the Finnish war context. In the Winter War biblical images were also used. The well known metaphor about the Winter War between Finland and Soviet Union was fight between white David and red Goliath. Also Janne Helin

(2006) has argued that the religious and ideological concepts used during the Winter War. Helin concludes that that the religious and mythological metaphors were widely used and an important element in the national rhetoric during the Winter War.

Method

The primary method of the study is reception analysis. The reception analysis aims first to find a connection between biblical text and its usage in a later document. The first part of the analysis can be also called as “intertextual analysis” (Huttunen 2010, 19). The connection can be clear and finding such a textual connection is easy if for example biblical passage is quoted. All relevant connections are, however, not so explicit. Thus it is helpful to divide observations in four categories:

- 1) Direct connection: in the source there is a direct and unambiguous connection to the Old Testament
- 2) Verbal connection: in the source there is a verbal connection to the Old Testament but the specific reference is missing
- 3) Ideological connection: in the source there is a verbal or ideological connection to the Old Testament.
- 4) Ambiguous connection: in the source there is an ambiguous or transformed link to the Old Testament or the connection between the Old Testament and studied period, year 1941, is not articulated explicitly.¹

¹ Huttunen 2010, 19 divides the connections between the Bible and sources in five categories in his study of biblical reception in Finnish civil war (1918) documents. 1. Open Bible connection, 2. Variations, 3. Names, 4. Biblical

Reception analysis can be complemented with other kind of approaches. In this case when the study focuses on the conquest story of the land and its reception in a war between small ethnic nation and gigantic superpower the colonial and postcolonial analysis offers an interesting tool. Thus several further questions can be studied: What were the (colonial) intentions of the conquest stories in Old Testament? How the intentions of biblical texts are connected to the imperial views in ancient Near East and what were the connections to the imperial/colonial politics in 1940s?

Sources

Kotimaa-newspaper is well known in Finland, especially in church related environment. During the WWII (and still does) it represented main stream Lutheran views. Each issue contained news about the war, political and religious analysis about it but the major section was focused on various aspects of the church: church administration, decisions made in the church, stories about the arrangement in the front and in the local parishes. Important role was also given to the spiritual writings, which remind about short sermons.

Teologinen Aikakauskirja (TAik; *Finnish Journal of Theology*) represented highest academic and professional theological study in Finland. The editor, A.F. Puukko, was a professor of the Old Testament exegetics at the University of Helsinki, a known scholar and the author of “Das Deuteronomium” (1909/1910) and several Finnish speaking academic textbooks.

Historical Context

style (like parallelism), and 5. The Bible or a gospel as a whole. The division makes apparent how the reception analysis follows similar routes but is always tailor made to fit the specific nuances of each case.

The Second World War in Finland contained two parts: so-called Winter War (30th of January 1939– 13th of March 1940) and so-called Continuing War (25th of June 1941 – 19th of September 1944). In Winter War the Soviet Union attacked against Finland following the secret agreement with Germany. In the secret protocol of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact Finland belonged to the interest sphere of the Soviet Union. The war continued only four months and was followed with the Moscow Peace Treaty. The result of the war was that Soviet Union occupied about one tenth of Finland's territory: eastern part of Finland, major part of Karelia including the second largest city of Finland Vyborg, (Viipuri). Also some strategic areas in the coastal area of Finland (like the peninsula of Hanko) were rented or occupied by the Soviet troops.

The Continuing War started 25th of June 1941 and continued until 19th of September 1944. According to the official understanding, in the Continuing War Finland had its own separate war along with Germans. During the early months of the war both Finland and Germany were successful. The Soviet troops were pushed quickly eastwards and Finland reached the earlier borders just in few weeks. Politically debated moment was the Finnish occupation of the East Karelia. Although officially Finland did not represent the ideology of Great-Finland there were right-wing political and religious groups who wanted to join together all Finnish ethnic groups. These views were promoted especially in the Academic Karelia Society but also the commander in chief of Finnish army, C.G. Mannerheim.

2. Analysis

Kotimaa

In the writings of *Kotimaa* biblical passages are mentioned and also quoted frequently. Quite a many of the texts were from the New Testament but also Old Testament texts appeared. At least some, if not most, of the texts followed lectionaries of the church year.

In *Kotimaa* (44/27.6.1941), the beginning of the war was commented in the first page. In the same issue military pastor E. Rinne wrote under the title “Today”:

As true as Finnish men for nearly two years ago, in early part of our struggle felt that they were soldiers for the free proclamation of the gospel, so he is now the weapon in the hand of the Lord, when God's judgment faces the eastern movement of ungodliness in order to destroy it. – – Forwards in the name of God and in his power. Sign of the cross will win!²

In the next issue (*Kotimaa* 45/1.7.1941) several writings emphasized the same theme. Lutheran bishops gave an “exhortation” which said that “the cruel enemy has attacked again into our country and started annihilative acts. God has given to us a task to defend with all our might the land donated to us by God, the Christian faith and freedom, so that we could leave them as an inheritance for future generations.”³ At the end, the bishops quoted Isa. 54:7: “For a brief moment I forsook you, but with great compassion I will gather you.”(RSV)⁴

In the same front page pastor Hannes Anttila quoted Ezek. 36:33–35 in the section “Today” as follows: “Thus says the Lord GOD: On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will cause the cities to be inhabited, and the waste places shall be rebuilt. And the land that was desolate shall be tilled, instead of being the desolation that it was in the sight of all who passed by. And they will say, ‘This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are now inhabited and fortified.’” (RSV)

Anttila applied the text into the actual moment: that the personified Karelia (“you beautiful Karelia”) has been inhabited but will become like “the garden of Eden” – at least for Finns.

² ”Niin totta kuin Suomen mies lähes kaksi vuotta sitten taistelumme ensi aiheessa tunsi olevansa sotilaita evankeliumin julistamisen vapauden puolesta, niin hän nyt on ase Herran kädessä Jumalan tuomion langetessa idän jumalattamusliikkeen yli sen hävittämiseksi. – – Eteenpäin Jumala nimessä ja hänen voimallaan. Ristin merkki voittaa!”

³ ”Julma vihollinen on uudelleen hyökännyt maahamme ja ryhtynyt hävitystyöhönsä. Jumala on antanut meidän tehtäväksemme kaikin voimin puolustaa hänen meille lahjoittamaa synnyinmaata, kristillistä uskoa ja vapauttamme, niin että voisimme jättää ne perinnöksi tuleville sukupolville.”

⁴ All quotes follow RSV if not otherwise indicated.

Strict connection between the text and context is explicit: “Your ruined cities we will rebuild, your desolate fields will be have golden waves, your lakes will glitter.” Still Anttila reminded that both outer and inner renewal is needed.

Furthermore Eino Kalpa, a military chaplain, wrote under the title “Great moment of our nation” that “God guides nations and individuals like a great and wonderful God. – – As Finns and Christian soldiers we stand in guard and have a task to defend and destroy the biggest lie in the world history. – – A dream of great and undivided Finland will become true.” Kalpa did not refer to any specific biblical passages. Same writer, Eino Kalpa, repeated later similar themes in the issue (68/19.9.1941). The dream about undivided Finland was going to fulfill; it was God’s will.

In the same issue, A.E. Jokipii, a well known vicar, in a writing titled “What does God think about me?” (Kotimaa 45/1.7.1941), quoted Jer 29:11 “For I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.” In the text he reminds that “our country will have glorious future and time of hope.” According to the writer, this requires also sacrifices.

In two issues the writer using initials L.P. wrote in section Daily Word about “Crusade” (59/19.8.1941) and “War” (61/26.8.1941). In the first writing L.P. says that the current war has been named “as a crusade: not only a fight for the European culture but also against public and rude godlessness and all destroying atheism.” However, L.P. refers also to the story about Ai without explicit reference to Josh 7. “Holy history tells that the Israelites could not occupy small town of Ai because in the midst of them there was something dedicated to God.” L.P. applies this into the individual life: “Do you have in your life a secret sin what you have not confessed

and you are not willing to give up? Only one such a thing can prevent the victory. Will the victorious front break in front of you? Is it because of you that victory will not be achieved?”⁵

In the text of L.P. historical story in Josh 7 is transformed into individual and pietistic level of life. Such a connection gives an impression that if all Finns would repent, confess also secret sins and ask forgiveness the war could be successful. One week later the same writer, L.P. in the same section wrote: “We have a holy war against wickedness. But that's what God's chosen people did and fought against the pagans, and was destroyed. – – Our fight will be a holy war as long as and until that extent we fight in front of God, accepting his will in a humble submission.”⁶ L.P. still quoted Jer 4:14 and Dan 9:18. For the writer these texts emphasize human beings' need to have clean and humble attitude in front of God.

In the issue 69/23.9.1941 a writer using initials A.W.K. titled a short article “How shall we survive.” The writer summarizes the text in 2 Chr 20 and concludes:

“This historic report is timely for us Finns, and instructive. – – However, we must not forget the requirement for the aid given by the Lord; that the people and their leaders humble themselves in front of God, regret, repent, and abandon the known sins. – – The force which will help us to survive is coming from the invisible God's world”.⁷

In the issue 73/7.10.1941 a writer named as “corporal K-o P-o” (“What kind is the holy war”) reminded that the expression “holy war” requires that not only the thing itself and its goals are

⁵ ”Pyhä historia kertoo, että israelilaiset eivät saaneet vallatuksi pientä Ain kaupunkia, koska heidän keskuudessaan oli jotain tuhon omaksi vihittyä. Eräs israelilainen oli tehnyt varkauden ja salannut sen. – – Onko sinun elämässäsi jokin salainen synty, jota et ole tunnustanut ja josta et tahdo luopua? Yksi ainoa tällainen asia voi olla voiton esteenä. Sinunko kohdallasi voitollinen rintama murtuu? Sinunko takiasi voitto jää saavuttamatta.”

⁶ ”Me käymme pyhää sotaa jumalattomuutta vastaan. Mutta niinhän Jumalan valittu kansakin aikanaan taisteli pakanoita vastaan ja tuhoutui. – – Taistelumme on meidän kohdallamme pyhää sotaa niin kauan ja siinä määrin, kuin käymme sitä Jumalan edessä, hänen tahtoonsa nöyrästi alistuen ja tyytyen.”

⁷ ”Tämä historiallinen kertomus on meille suomalaisille ajankohtainen ja opettava. [Olemmehan jo toista kertaa taistelussa mitä parhaiten varustettua jättiläisvihollista vastaan.] – – Kuitenkaan emme saa unohtaa sitä perusedellytystä, joka on Herran avun saamisen ehtona, että kansa johtajineen nöyrtyy Jumalansa edessä katumukseen, parannukseen ja tietösten syntien poispanemiseen. – – Sieltä, näkymättömästä Jumalan maailmasta tulevat ne voimat, joiden avulla selviydymme.”

right but that “the men who use the weapons strive to give their entire lives to the hands of God.”

In the issue 74/10.10.1941 an anonymous writer used a title “Crusade”. In the rather long article the writer supports the use of the word crusade because “the defensive war” is a fight for the Christianity.

In the section “Today” E. Kilpeläinen wrote (83/11.11.1941) about Saul’s rejection in 1 Sam 15. The story is interpreted as a personal and pietistic warning what can happen if a person is not wholeheartedly following God. The writer warns the readers not to have any secret parts in the life which cannot be accepted by God, especially the sins. Thus the obedience to the God requires a strict attitude: all or nothing.

One month later, a writer using initials M.P. (“Rejected by God” 77/6.12.1941) referred once more to Saul (1 Sam 15) but also to Simpson (Jud 16). Both figures, said M.P., are reminders that God can reject also the chosen ones. The stories of Saul and Simpson are used in order to illustrate what can happen if the believers do not follow all God’s demands or if they focus too much on material values.

In December *Kotimaa* published the Independence Day sermon held by bishop Aleksi Lehtonen (“God’s help to our nation during the last stages”, 91/9.12.1941). Aleksi Lehtonen (1891–1951) belonged to the influential figures in Finnish context: a professor of practical theology, a bishop and was chosen in 1945 as archbishop.

The text of the sermon was Ps 107:19, 21.

Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,
and he delivered them from their distress;
Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love,
for his wonderful works to the sons of men!

In the sermon Aleksis Lehtonen gave an interpretation of Finnish history.

“Today when we celebrate our independence day in the middle of a raging war, we can only in a humble gratitude to God recognize that, miraculously, he has helped Finnish people so far. – Just recently, our nation has strangely been able to experience God's help. Within two difficult years the Finnish people have seen two wonders. In the Winter War, this small nation struggled left alone in the middle of a severe winter. – Elsewhere in the world were told: In the north, David was fighting against Goliath. And it happened like in the biblical story. – Our people were rescued from destruction. And isn't there now another miracle taking place? – The history is in God's hands. – Not so, that we need to be concerned about God's righteous governance and the victory of the right thing. He cares for us and our victory if we hang on Him and in all want to live righteous life.”⁸

The sermon leaves no questions that the bishop saw both Finnish wars as God's miracles. God has helped Finland in an extraordinary way and the entire history is controlled by God. The context of the sermon was a mixture of religious and national elements: in the main Lutheran cathedral in Helsinki on Independence Day bishop confirms that God and Finland has a special relation. The text of the sermon, Ps 107:19,21, is part of the psalm which describes various experiences in the history of Israel. Lehtonen uses the text *not* as a text which speaks about Israelites and can be applied also into the Finnish context, but as a text which directly describes the experienced reality in Finland. In the sermon the textual level and contemporary history are thus fully assimilated.

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⁸ ”kun vietämme tänään maamme itsenäisyyspäivää keskellä raivoavaa sotaa, emme voi muuta kuin nöyrällä kiitollisuudella Jumalaa kohtaan tunnustaa, että ihmeellisesti Hän on Suomen kansaa tähän asti auttanut. – [A]ivan äskettäin on kansamme merkillisellä tavalla saanut kokea Jumalan apua. Kahden vaikea vuoden kuluessa on Suomen kansa nähnyt kaksi ihmettä. Talvisodassa kamppaili tämä vähäinen kansa yksin jätettynä ankan talven keskellä. – Muualla maailmassa sanottiin: Pohjoisessa taistelee Daavid Goljatia vastaan. Mutta kävi kuten Raamatun kertomuksessa. – Kansamme pelastettiin perikadosta. Ja eikö nyt ole tapahtunut toinen ihme. – Historia on Jumalan kädessä. – Ei siis meidän tarvitse olla huolissamme Jumalan vanhurskaasta maailmanhallinnasta ja oikean asian voitosta. Hän huolehtii meistä ja meidän voitostamme, jos me riipumme Hänessä kiinni ja tahdomme kaikessa elää vanhurskasta elämää.”

During the WWII *Teologinen Aikakauskirja (TAik)* did not remain to non-political or purely academic approach but reflected two wars in several occasions (Laine 1997, 504– 525; Seppo 1997, 526– 555).

TAik published in 1941 two articles which are relevant for this study. A.E. Jokipii (1893– 1968) wrote about wartime demands for the Christian proclamation (Jokipii 1941, 1– 15) and A.F. Puukko (1875– 1954) about the governance of God and the world history (Puukko 1941, 349– 366). Jokipii was a well known vicar in the Finnish Lutheran Church, author of several theological books and a doctor of theology. A.F. Puukko, professor of Old Testament Exegesis, on the other hand represented highest academic quality. Puukko had studied in Leipzig, Germany, under the guidance of Rudolf Kittel during the early years of 20th century. Close connections with Germany were strengthened by the marriage with a German, Clara Maria Helene Füchsel. Later Puukko joint Academic Karelia Society and was also known as an opponent of socialist ideas (Niemelä 1999, 7– 41).

Jokipii expressed his regret that “general and deeper revival” was still missing in Finland.

On the other hand the Winter War had changed the traditional God-talk:

God was felt to be very close compared to the remoteness, where he was felt to have been previously. God's closeness and sense of reality was often astonishing. He was now in the true sense of the God of history, who was involved in what happened. The religion of the prophets became dear and comprehensible. Their books were read, and through the eyes of faith God was seen; The God, who leads to the destinies of peoples and individual human beings. – – It was almost a must to recognize a glaring injustice that a great power might attack against it [= Finland]. Faith in victory of justice was a necessity. But the justice was supported by living God of the history. (Jokipii 1941, 5)⁹

⁹ ”Jumala tuntui astuneen aivan lähelle siitä kaukaisuudesta, missä hän aikaisemmin tuntui olleen. Jumalan läheisyyden ja todellisuuden tunto oli usein hämmästyttävää. Hän oli nyt sanan varsinaisessa merkityksessä historian Jumala, joka oli mukana siinä, mitä tapahtui. Profeettojen uskonnollisuus kävi rakkaaksi ja ymmärrettäväksi. Heidän kirjojaan luettiin ja uskon silmin nähtiin se Jumala, joka johtaa kansojen ja yksittäisten ihmisten kohtaloita. – – [O]li suorastaan pakko nähdä huutava vääryys siinä, että suuri valtiomahti hyökkäsi sen [= Suomen] kimppuun. Usko oikeuden voittoon oli välttämättömyys. Mutta oikeiden tukena oli juuri historian elävä Jumala.”

Furthermore Jokipii wonders if the Winter War had been “a punishment of the sins or a call”. Although the punishment was actually earned, Finland, as an innocent victim, was called to protect whole Nordic freedom and western civilization. The true meaning of the war was “a call, given by God of history. The war was expected to happen in God’s guidance.” (Jokipii 1941, 6)

Jokipii also offers a summary of common patterns of war time proclamation.

God is with our people, because our mission is just, and because he has led us into this. Therefore, we shall firmly trust in God's help and with the courage, do all the tasks given by the war. God has prepared us for this. – – Christianity has emphasized to believe in importance of moral relevance of individual. This has exhorted to believe in the importance of a small nation to become boldly a weapon of God.¹⁰

Jokipii quotes an often used sentence “The LORD kills and brings to life” but does not mention that the quote is from 1 Sam 2:6. He also warns to speak about the defeat of God because God will always win but nations and individuals may experiences losses if they do not hear the call of God. Finally he concludes the article saying that “the Christian church has a task to proclaim the pure Gospel of Christ without letting the weight of the war time to color and distort it”. (Jokipii 1941, 10, 14– 15)¹¹

In the entire article Jokipii used hardly any biblical references but still it presupposes the use of the scriptures in the proclamation and speaks about it. Thus God’s protection can be taken as real and granted without any biblical references because God’s guidance is possible to observe and because there are also moral grounds for it. Special value of the prophetic texts is also mentioned. The author saw Finland not only as a poor and small victim but also as a mighty weapon in God’s hands. Most interesting is the final comment of article. Jokipii is aware that the Christian proclamation may in some occasions be colored by the context but he seems to be sure that it does not happen in his interpretation.

¹⁰ “Jumala on kansamme kanssa, koska asiamme on oikea ja koska hän on meidät tähän johtanut. Siksi on lujasti luottaen Jumalan apuun käytävä rohkeasti kaikkiin sodan antamiin tehtäviin käsiksi. Jumala on valmistanut meitä tähän. – – Kristinuskon korostama yhden ainoan ihmisen siveellisen uskalluksen suuri vaikutus kehoitti uskomaan myöskin pienen kansan uskalluksen merkitykseen ja antautumaan rohkeasti Jumalan aseeksi.”

¹¹ “Kristillisen kirkon tehtävä on julistaa Kristuksen evankeliumia puhtaana antamatta ajan painon värittää ja vääristää sitä.”

Finally, the article written by A.F. Puukko earns a special attention. Originally it was a lecture in the synodal meeting in Mikkeli diocese in 21.8.1941. In his text we can assume to read a combination of scholarly approach and contextual reading. Puukko explains first the relation of God and king in the ancient Israel based on chapters 1 Sam 8– 12. Also some reflections about the Palestine as a Holy Land, governed by God, are included. Israelite conquest of the land is argued because of “religious and ethical reasons”. According to Puukko the central issue was as follows:

“Baal was the god of lust, who preferred sexual excitement (cultic prostitution) and made his servants flabby. The Canaanites polluted even the land with an unclean worship, which is why Yahweh, the God of chastity and sexual purity, took it from the Canaanites and gave to the Israelites, who had received the ethical religion of Yahweh through the Mosaic revelation. Battle of the land of Canaan, the Holy Land, was thus a struggle between religions.” (Puukko 1941, 352)¹²

Puukko did not give any biblical or scholarly references to the Israelite conquest. Actually in Joshua or Judges the conquest story does not say much about high Israelite moral or sexual purity. Also the idea that Canaanites were sexually wild and thus flabby is actually not mentioned in the conquest story. Moreover this kind of black-and-white image made possible to say that there were ethical reasons which guided the God’s history. Holy land was taken from the bad Canaanites and given to the good Israelites.

Puukko was not the only scholar who blamed Canaanites as representatives of low moral.

Similar voices occurred very widely both among the Finnish scholars (E.G. Gulin 1922, 9) and in the English speaking world. G.E. Wright represented these views when he said that, Canaanite civilization was “one of the weakest, most decadent, and most immoral cultures of the civilized world at that time.”(Wright 1957, 108)

¹² “Mutta Baal oli hekuman jumala, joka suosi sukupuolista villiintymistä (kultillinen prostituutio) ja veltostutti palvelijansa. Saastaisella jumalanpalveluksellaan kanaanilaiset saastuttivat maankin, minkä vuoksi Jahve, siveyden ja sukupuolisen puhtauden Jumala, otti sen kanaanilaisilta ja antoi israelilaisille, jotka olivat omaksuneet Mooseksen ilmoituksena saaman eettillisen Jahve-uskonnon. Taistelu Kanaanista, Pyhästä maasta, oli siis uskontojen välistä taistelua.”

On the other hand in 1941 partly similar rhetoric was used in the same journal against the Soviet Union and Bolshevistic ideology (Mustonen 1941, 482– 483). In this section of Puukko's article there are no references to the Finnish wars but probably the audience was able to recognize the non-articulated but obvious connection. Finns represented the higher ethical nation and the Soviet Union was assimilated with the bad Canaanites.

In the major section of the article Puukko focused on the prophets and explained how Eliah, Ezekiel, Amos, Isaiah, Deutero-Isaiah and others revealed the will of God. The message of the prophets was that God rules in the history and is able to use even large imperial powers for his own purposes. Also the imperial powers, like Assyria and Babylon, were under the judgment of God. The destruction of Jerusalem was not “caused by the will of imperial power of Babylon but the decision of Almighty God. The destruction of the holy city was decided in Heaven, not in the war camp of Chaldeans’. And it was executed from heaven: the angel of God was ordered to fill their hands with burning coals and scatter them over the city. (Ezek 10:2)” (Puukko 1941, 359)

However, Puukko is determined not to interpret the vision about Gog and Magog (with the names like Roos, Mesek and Tubal) as a reference to modern Soviet Union. According to Puukko, “such theories do not stand in scholarly study.” (1941, 360) Puukko concluded that “we Finns who fight for our homes, land of the fathers, and faith in God, have a firm belief and living hope that the judgment of God is becoming real in front of our eyes.” (1941, 361)

According to Puukko, every generation “will experience in its own way God's power and guidance in its history.” This happened in 701BC when Sanherib attacked against Jerusalem and the psalmist (in Ps 46) has seen how it will happen at the end of the time. Puukko summed up that the same message is reminded in the hymn of Martin Luther, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our

God". Thus "it is good to remember both in the days of victory and defeat, that God is leading the history of our nation".

The article is clearly focused on the Old Testament themes and based on general scholarly knowledge of that time. Puukko obviously hesitates to apply the Old Testament texts directly into the Finnish context. This is especially clear in Gog and Magog section (Ezek 38– 39). On the other hand in many occasions Puukko assimilates the biblical text and ancient history. Prophetic texts describe, at least in some occasion, the message of the God spoken through the prophets in certain historical moments.

Puukko does not say why it possible to deny contemporary application of the text in one occasion (Gog, Magog) and accept it in another. If the first one was not clear enough for the scholarly reasons was there actually more scholar grounds apply other texts? The actual method Puukko used in his article was a combination of analogy and assimilation. Thus in same way as the Holy Land was taken from the Canaanites who had defiled the land, in same way the readers can assume that if Finns fulfill high ethical norms they can beat an atheistic power, the Soviet Union. However, this is not said directly but in between the lines.

3. Summary of the analyzed sources

Used biblical texts and images

The analysis of the sources revealed various Old Testament texts that have been used in *Kotimaa* and *Teologinen Aikakauskirja* during the latter part of 1941. The major results are as follows.

Large source material contains plenty of references into the Bible and also quotes from the biblical passages. First impression after the analysis was, however, that the most expected texts, biblical references into the conquest stories and occupying the promised land, did not have a specific role. Actually there are only few direct references to DH: Achan-story (Josh 7) and two references about Saul (1 Sam 15). All these were applying the story in an individual and pietistic way and warned Finns about unethical behavior. This happens even in those occasions when the text of DH is not so individualistic. Obviously the personal application is growing from Finnish war time context and is not coming from biblical texts, at least not in this scale.

Secondly, the chosen texts represented warnings and threats, not promises about the land.

Against the research hypothesis the national agenda about the conquest of land (as in Joshua and Judges) does not appear at all in the studied texts in *explicit* way. This means that no direct references or quotes – first or second category of the reception – to the conquest stories in DH exists sources.

When the reception of the prophetic books and other Old Testament texts was studied the pattern turned upside down. In several occasions explicit references given by God about the promised land were used in the Finnish war context: Ezek. 36:33– 35; texts from several prophetic books quoted by Puukko (Amos, Isa, Deutero-Isaiah, and Ezekiel) and Ps. 107:19, 21.

For a reason or another there seemed to be much more interest to use prophets than historical books. This can be explained in several ways. The historical books may have been seen just as past historical stories, not as analogies or promises for the future. We have to also remember that the DH ends up with a catastrophe in Kings. Moreover, the prophetic books were understood to contain special value: it was possible to read them easily as promises for the Finnish situation as well. This became were clear in the text of Hannes Anttila, quoting Ezek. 36:33– 35. He openly spoke about Karelian ruined cities which were promised to be rebuilt.

In the analyzed sources several texts used expressions like Holy War, God's guidance, God as ruler of History. These references belonged to the third and/or fourth category of reception (Ideological connections or Ambiguous connections). Expression Holy War is used by several authors. Writers never connected the expression with Old Testament but the connection is real. Unlike the title of Gerhard von Rad's work *Holy War in Ancient Israel* assumes, in the Old Testament context expression adequate expression is the war of Jahweh. Specific idea of holy war occurs prophetic texts like Jer 6:4 and Micah 3:5 but the central idea appears also in DH like in Josh 10:14 "for the Lord fought for Israel" (יהוה נלחם לישראל). Deuteronomistic ideology of ban (חרם) was not mentioned in Finnish texts but the (priestly) tradition of cleanness was a common idea. Most of all the basic assumption of all writings was the trust in God's power to help in a desperate situation (cf. Niditch 1993, 134–149). Such a view resembles with Old Testament texts like 2 Chr 20.

Same theme was continued when several texts repeated the idea that God is the ruler of the history and above all nations and that Finland is a weapon in Gods hand to punish atheistic Soviet government. Furthermore this view led to the idea that Finland had a crusade against ungodly forces in order to protect Christianity and freedom of the gospel.

Quite large amount of the analyzed writings in *Kotimaa* and *TAik* belong to the fourth category of the reception. Good example of these is the article written by A.F. Puukko. Especially when Puukko describes the Israelite conquest of the land with such expressions which do not have direct connections to Joshua or Judges (say, that Canaanite were sexually wild but somehow flabby). Also the reference to Finnish Continuing War is not articulated. And still Puukko seems to have a clear but hidden intention to connect the Finnish war against the Soviet Union with Israelite conquest story.

In many writings the various expression about God as the ruler of history or ruler of the nations have actually connection to the OT, although the connections were implicit. In these Finnish texts there are no direct references to Joshua or Judges saying that God will fight on behalf of us like he fought on behalf of the Israelites.

Political, colonial and postcolonial reflections [outline of the last sections]

- historical background of the terms "holy war" and "crusade" in Finnish politics: terms used also by the commander-in-chief of Finnish army, C.G.Mannerheim in June 1941
- expression "crusade against bolshevism" used by A. Hitler in June 1941
- religious background coming from the OT was interwoven with political rhetoric; biblical and religious terms were used by political and military leaders as a part of ideological propaganda

Colonial background of the conquest story in Joshua

- historical question of the Israelite conquest stories in Joshua: according to "remarkable consensus" of scholar the conquest was not a real historical even but a myth (Collins 2005, 46)
- whatever was the context of the origin of the conquest myth it aimed to promote national coherence, stimulate fight spirit to have the land and keep it

Conclusions

- final remarks about the comparison of Joshua and Finnish usage in war context

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