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***Gynesis in Genesis***

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**forma formans**  
Studi in onore di **Boris Uspenskij**

*a cura di*  
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# FLORENTINA BADALANOVA GELLER

## *Gynesis in Genesis*

### **1. Holy Writ and vernacular Slavonic exegetical narratives<sup>1</sup>**

The plot of the creation of woman (i.e. the *Gynesis* narrative) is the only one to appear in the canonical biblical cosmogony in two separate versions (*Genesis* 1, 26-28 and *Genesis* 2, 21-25)<sup>2</sup>. These parallel renditions are presented autonomously. They are embedded in two alternative accounts, reflecting two opposite, conflicting modes of interpretation. Whilst the first one advocates gender egalitarianism, the second is anchored in the hierarchical paradigm of gender subordination<sup>3</sup>. Although these two models are outlined as different narrative entities, as if independently inserted into the textual body of the biblical text, folk exegesis tends to decipher their meaning in a way which offers metatextual reconciliation between traditions. Slavonic ethnohermeneutics interpret the two divergent versions of the *Gynesis* narrative in a complex way; they are not regarded as antithetical, but as complementary. In fact, indigenous oral traditions do not appear to be concerned with conflicting readings of the binary pattern of the Old Testament cosmogonic plot; instead, the storytellers seem to have effortlessly domesticated the canonical “discrepancies”. The two differing *Gynesis* versions are put together into a complex storyline, revealing, at each new performance, details which may gravitate to either egalitarian or hierarchical models of biblical anthropogenesis. Furthermore the Old Testament narrative of the Matriarch may be perceived by vernacular ethnohermeneutics in accordance with Christian typology; it is often regarded as a pre-figuration of the idea

<sup>1</sup> This article incorporates some results of the research project *The Folk Bible*; it is concerned with verbal, iconographic and ritual parameters of folk Christianity and focuses on description and analysis of popular dimensions of Holy Writ in *Slavia Orthodoxa* (once part of the Byzantine Commonwealth). The work is based predominantly on texts I have recorded during field research over the last three and a half decades in Bulgaria and the former Soviet Union. The present essay comprises some of my observations and comments on the relationship between folk religion and the *Book of Genesis* (encompassing both the canonical narrative and its apocryphal renditions).

<sup>2</sup> Another – similarly exceptional – case is represented by the Synoptic Gospels, in which the story of the life of Jesus is narrated three times; see in this connection KELBER [1997] and BAUCKHAM [2006].

<sup>3</sup> Cfr. KVAM, SCHEARING AND ZIEGLER [1999: 6-9].

of the salvation of mankind<sup>4</sup>, with the image of the Virgin Mary as the second Eve<sup>5</sup> being its ultimate centre.

In this article I will focus on the two canonical Old Testament accounts of the creation of woman and consider their vernacular versions, as attested in Slavonic oral tradition of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. My analysis will be based on folk versions of *Genesis*; these are presented from the point of view of unlettered believers and are therefore perceived from a perspective which (may) differ considerably from that of the learned theology. Oral renditions of the *Gynesis* theme will be examined within the vernacular framework of indigenous Slavonic ethnohermeneutics, with special emphasis on the ways in which gaps or repetitions in the canonical narrative were interpreted by native, homegrown Christian exegetes. Although most of them could not read the scriptural text, they instead sang and story-told what they imagined to be “the Bible”. Unlike its canonical counterpart, this unwritten Holy Writ was as intangible as it was incorporeal. Its oral hypostases were incessantly changing their appearance at each new performance. In fact, it was “the Bible” ever imagined, but never held. It was the *Book of God Written by no Human Hand* – a verbal “Ubrus” – upon which the word of the Lord was orally “imprinted”. This unwritten “Bible of the folk”<sup>6</sup> was considered by unlettered believers to be the ultimate source-compendium revealing the divine truth about the origins of Universe and mankind, and the wisdom behind the intertwined existence of the macrocosm and the microcosm. Elsewhere I have argued that this kind of vernacular interpretations of the Holy

<sup>4</sup> This concept was set out as a theological framework by one of the first Christian philosophers, Justin Martyr (d. 165), in his *Dialogue with Trypho*:

For Eve, being a virgin and uncorrupt, conceived the words spoken of the serpent, and brought forth disobedience and death. But Mary the Virgin receiving faith and grace, when the angel Gabriel brought her the good news that *the Spirit of the Lord should come upon her, and the power of the Highest should overshadow her, wherefore also that Holy Thing that is born of her is Son of God*, answered, *Be it unto me according to Thy word* [trans. WILLIAMS 1930: 210].

In the second century, Irenaeus of Lyons also elaborated on the Eve-Mary parallel. In his work *Against Heresies: On the Detection and Refutation of the Knowledge Falsely So Called* (Book III), he contemplates the idea of the “Incarnation-as-a-recapitulation” and concentrated on the recycling that Mary effected for Eve. The Eve-Mary parallel was further developed by Tertullian in the third century, in his *De Carne Christi*. For a survey of the Eve-Mary parallelism as a subject of patristic teaching, see GRAEF [1963: 37-100]; for the vernacular folklore counterparts of patristic writings in *Slavia Orthodoxa*, see BADALANOVA [2003b: 173-185; 2004: 211-215].

<sup>5</sup> For a general survey of theological discussions related to the idea of Mary as the ‘New’ or ‘Second Eve’, see O’CARROLL [1983: 139-141]. The typology of Mary as ‘the Second Eve’ (as an extrapolation from the classic Pauline definition of Christ as the Second Adam) is treated by PELIKAN [1996: 14-15, 39-52] and WARNER [1976: 59-61, 245, 254], while MEYENDORFF [1983: 146-149] discusses the concept of the ‘New Eve’ in Byzantine patristic tradition. For the parallelism Eve-Mary as a concern for both Christian theology and cultural anthropology, see BENKO [1993: 18, 168-169, 195, 229-262], BARING, CASHFORD [1991: 537-539].

<sup>6</sup> See in this connection UTLEY [1945: 1-17].

Scripture enables us to eyewitness the unfolding of the proto-biblical oral hypertext from which the canonical corpus eventually sprang; I have further argued that vestiges of this Ur-text can be traced in apocryphal writings and rabbinic tradition (*midrashim*). So far scholarly consensus holds that there are no surviving oral witnesses to the ancient proto-biblical oral heritage; my position, however, does not conform with this current academic trend, since some recently recorded Bible-related folklore texts present a serious challenge to such a postulation. It is my conviction that many modern oral counterparts of Holy Writ still “remember” the earliest stages of its pre-literary existence; furthermore oral attestations of biblical narrative tradition (as recorded by folklorists and ethnographers in the 19th-20th centuries)<sup>7</sup> suggest that the canonical scriptural text coexisted for centuries with its clandestine, constantly evolving oral “twin”, the *Folk Bible*.

The picture gets even more complex when one considers the fact that the canonical text of *Gn 1* appears to be an inversed version of *Gn 2*. If in *Gn 1* the emergence of earthly vegetation and the appearance of animals precede the creation of human beings, in *Gn 2* it is made clear that, although the seeds of plants and herbs had been already planted in the soil by the time Adam was created, nothing was to grow, “for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground” [*Gn 2, 5*]. The creation of Adam unlocks the womb of the pregnant earth; furthermore, this cosmogonic act heralds the creation of Paradise. The Bible makes it clear that the sole purpose of the existence of the Garden of Eden was to accommodate the needs of man and to serve as his habitat; his only duty was to be its groom. So far there is no mentioning of woman; Eve is still absent from the biblical cosmogonic scenario when God plants the Tree of the Knowledge and the Tree of Life in the middle of Paradise. These two trees are to mark the *axis mundi* of the Universe in which Eve is yet to make her appearance; the consumption of their fruits is also the only taboo Adam is to observe in Paradise. *Gn 2* also stipulates that Earth, Man and Paradise share the same *materia prima*: they are made of the same substance<sup>8</sup>; this is not the case with Eve. According to *Gn 2*, the fashioning of Earth/Heavens/Man/Paradise is followed by the emergence of animals, whilst the birth of the woman is to take place at the very end of Creation; this appears to be an inversed version of the cosmogonic scenario revealed in *Gn 1*, according to which the fashioning of animals precedes the creation of human beings. If in *Gn 1* (the bodies of) man and woman are created simultaneously, and they are the last to be molded, in *Gn 2* the forma-

<sup>7</sup> For a general survey of sources (in chronological order), see VESELOVSKII [1883: 1-461; 1889: 1-367], MOCHUL'SKII [1886 (4): 197-219; 1887 (1): 113-180; 1887 (2): 365-406; 1887 (3): 41-142; 1887 (4): 171-188; 1894: 1-282], DRAGOMANOV [1892: 257-314; 1894: 3-68], RADCHENKO [1910: 73-131], IVANOV [1925: 327-382], TOMICKI [1976: 47-97; 1979: 169-184; 1980: 49-119], NAGY [1986-1988: 17-47], TOLSTAIA [1998: 21-37], KUZNETSOVA [1998], ZOWCZAK [2000], BELOVA [2001: 118-150], BADALANOVA [2008: 161-365].

<sup>8</sup> See entry A 1241 (Man made from clay/earth) in THOMPSON [1955].

tion of man precedes not only the appearance of animals, but also the origin of woman; she is created after him – just like the Garden of Eden – for the sake of his needs. She thus appears to be the final product of God's Creation. This particular detail allows some Jewish commentators to suggest that woman was an improved version of man (since she was made last)<sup>9</sup>; this concept was also attested in many Slavonic vernacular texts<sup>10</sup> (along with the opposite idea, that woman was inferior to man)<sup>11</sup>. Moreover since man was made *from* earth and *on* Earth, but not *in* Paradise (as clearly stated in *Gn 2*), whereas woman was fashioned not from earth, yet *in* Paradise, she was also implicitly regarded to be the perfect anthropomorphic icon of the Garden of Eden<sup>12</sup>. Accordingly, the Slavonic folk Bible may further employ phytomorphic/floral imagery in orally transmitted *Gynesis* narratives<sup>13</sup>. As we shall see later, vernacular Christian anthropogony equally considers both *Gn 1* and *Gn 2*, except that it does not confine itself to either of these two antagonistic axiological models. In fact, along with the egalitarian female of *Gn 1* (which is scarcely represented), two other hypostases of the Matriarch can be encountered in Slavonic oral legends of creation: “the inferior Eve” and “the superior Eve”<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> Rabbinical exegesis hints at the concept of Eve being an improved version of Adam; see the text of the c. fifth century Midrash “Genesis Rabbah” [18, 1], which offers one of the most palpable examples of this type of approach to the image of the first woman: “Because it is written in Scripture, «*And the Lord God built the rib*» which teaches that the Holy One, blessed be He, endowed the woman with more understanding than the man”. This detail implicitly views the rabbinic Eve as the last (i.e. the most highly developed) “piece” of God's work.

<sup>10</sup> The Matriarch Eve as is considered to be the last, that is, the most highly developed of God's work in a cluster of Bulgarian folk narratives contemplating the “who-is-to-give-birth” issue. According to them, after his having initially given menstruation and childbirth to Adam, God realizes that man cannot cope with these duties and entrusts them to women who appear to be more sensible, intelligent and wise. Still, the “complete human” is imagined in terms of neither male nor female. The perfect humankind is defined as a heterosexual bonding within the marriage, whereas the husband-wife unit is envisioned as a manifestation of divine wisdom.

<sup>11</sup> See in this connection the discussion in TOMICKI [1980: 56-61], ZOWCZAK [2000: 57-64], СНОМИСКА [2008: 33-40].

<sup>12</sup> This idea is further developed in the symbolic portrayal of the Virgin Mary as ‘the closed garden’ (“Богоматерь Вертоград Заключенный”); see also the discussion below.

<sup>13</sup> Further on phytomorphic hypostases of Eve in Slavonic folk narratives see CHUBINSKII [1872: 145-146], TOMICKI [1980: 63-64, especially footnotes 48 and 52], TOLSTAIA [1998: 34], KABAKOVA [1999: 3]. See also the folklore legend “From what did God created Adam and Eve” (“З чого Бог створив Адама та Єву”) from Dmytro Yavornytsky’s manuscript collection “The Ukrainian simple folk and its lore”; the text was recorded in 1904 in the village of Handalivka, Pavlogradkii Uezd [YAVORNYTSKY 2005: 10-11]. This type of texts play with phonetical closeness (even homonymity) between the local variants of the name of the first woman, Eve (Ева / Йиіва) and some Slavonic dialectal phytonyms (e.g. “иіва” = ‘willow tree’).

<sup>14</sup> There were many attempts to describe, explain and justify the discrepancies between *Gn 1* and *Gn 2*. One such explanation can be traced to early medieval Hebrew midrashic sources, and to *The Alphabet of Ben Sira* (around 10th cent AD) in particular. According to this text, *Gn 1* relates to the creation of the first wife of Adam (Lilith), who wanted to dominate her husband by having sex in the ‘superior position’ on top. Once Adam was rid of Lilith, he then took Eve as his wife. Subsequently Lilith became

The next part of this study is devoted to the analysis of the two biblical *Gynesis* narratives – the egalitarian *Gn 1* and the hierarchical *Gn 2* – through the prism of Slavonic ethnohermeneutics.

## 2. The egalitarian *Gynesis*

According to the anthropogonic account of *Gn 1*, 26-28, woman is created together with man, simultaneously with him, and as his equal counterpart<sup>15</sup>. They are both made at the same time, and neither of them was designed with any special characteristics of supremacy, as they both are created in the image of God, and by God. Here follows the actual biblical text:

- 26. And God said: Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let **them** have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the flying creatures in the air, and over the cattle, and over the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.
- 27. And God created man in its own image, in the image of God created he

the prototype of a demon dangerous to Eve and all other women hereafter:

When God created his world and created Adam, He saw that Adam was alone, and He immediately created a woman from earth, like him, for him, and named her Lilith. He brought her to Adam, and they immediately began to fight: Adam said, “You shall lie below” and Lilith said, “You shall lie below, for we are equal and both of us were [created] from earth”. They did not listen to each other. When Lilith saw the state of things, she uttered the Holy Name and flew into the air and fled. Adam immediately stood in prayer before God and said: “Master of the Universe, see that the woman you gave me has already fled away”. God immediately sent three angels and told them: “Go and fetch Lilith; if she agrees to come, bring her, and if she does not, bring her by force”. The three angels went immediately and caught up with her in the [Red] Sea, in the place that the Egyptians were destined to die. They seized her and told her: “If you agree to come with us, come, if not, we shall drown you in the sea”. She answered: “Darlings, I know myself that God created me only to afflict babies with fatal disease when they are eight days old: I shall have permission to harm them from their birth to the eighth day and no longer, when it is a male baby: but when it is a female baby, I shall have permission for twelve days”. The angels would not leave her alone, until she swore by God’s name that wherever she would see them or their names in an amulet, she would not possess the baby [bearing it]. Then they left her immediately. This is [the story of] Lilith who afflicts babies with disease. [Quoted after KVAM, SCHEARING AND ZIEGLER 1999: 204]

Further on the image of Lilith see GINZBERG, vol. 1 [1909: 65f.], vol. 2 [1920: 233], vol. 3 [1911: 280], vol. 4 [1913: 5], vol. 5 [1925: 87f., 143, 385], vol. 6 [1928: 284] and GELLER [2005: 62f.]. A brief survey of midrashic sources suggests that Rabbinical tradition contemplated at length the issue of “correct” coital positions, usually referring to the hierarchical gender model of *Gn 2*; below follows a relevant fragment from *Nidah* 31b:

And why does the man lie face downwards and the woman face upwards towards the man? He [faces the elements] from which he was created and she [faces the man] from whom she was created. [Quoted after KVAM, SCHEARING AND ZIEGLER 1999: 204].

<sup>15</sup> Cfr. motif-type A 1212 (Man created in Creator’s image) in THOMPSON [1955].

him, male and female created He them.

28. And God blessed them; and God said unto them: Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it.

This biblical segment does not tell us anything about the substance from which the first people are made. In contrast to *Gn* 2, where it is stated that the first man was “formed from the dust of the ground”, nowhere in *Gn* 1 is it mentioned that the first people were made of mud, or clay, or ashes, or other earth-related components, and the absence of this detail appears to be of great importance for oral tradition, as it leaves room for further speculation. As we shall see later, the *materia prima* from which Adam and Eve were made was not always believed to be earth. At the same time, according to Slavonic folklore tradition, the first people can be self-created<sup>16</sup>, or made by a single Creator (either God the Father or God the Son)<sup>17</sup>, or by two competing demiurges (God and Satan)<sup>18</sup>, or by a “congregation” of creators<sup>19</sup> (whereupon God is assisted by either anthropomorphic or zoomorphic helpers). In the latter case, the bodies of Adam and Eve may be fashioned by a group of wise animals helping the Creator<sup>20</sup>; this is often the case with the legends concerned with the creation of woman, and with the bawdy tales of the creation of the vagina in particular<sup>21</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> See the folk legend recorded by the Bulgarian intellectual Tsani Ginchev in the region of Túrnovo; it was published in SbNU, vol. 2 [1890: 161, text № 1]; see also BADALANOVA [1993: 116-117; 2008: 262-267].

<sup>17</sup> This is the most popular and widespread type of Bible-related folk accounts (narratives and chants) concerned with anthropogony. See for instance the “Book of the Dove” (“Голубиная книга”) spiritual stanzas [DANILOV 1977: 208-213, text № 60; OKSENOV 1908: 304-311], along with the legends published by FEDEROWSKI [1897: 200, text № 780], ROMANOV [1891: 1-3], YAVORNYTSKY [2005: 8-12] (among others); similar notion is advocated in Bulgarian legends published by Kuzman SHAPKAREV in his *Sbornik* [1894: 337-339, text № 194], by Ilia Danev in SbNU, vol. 4 [1891: 128, text № 1], by Marko Tsepenev in SbNU, vol. 8 [1892: 180-181, text № 2] and SbNU, vol. 15 [1898: 96-97, text № 6], by Mikhail Arnaudov in SbNU, vol. 27 [1913: 322, text № 6; 327, text № 15]. Related texts are recently collected by BADALANOVA [1993: 117-133; 1995: 144-153], BUSHKEVICH [2002: 10-11], KASPINA [2002: 5-7]; see also the discussion in KUZNETSOVA [1998: 159-163].

<sup>18</sup> See the legend recorded by Petko Slaveikov and published in SbNU, vol. 2 [1890: 164-165; text № 1]; recently similar texts were registered by BADALANOVA [1993: 137-139], ZOWCZAK [2000: 61-62], VANIAKINA [2002: 8]; see also the discussion in TOMICKI [1980: 54-57].

<sup>19</sup> See the texts of Bulgarian folk legend “When God created the first people He summoned a council of all saints to seek an advice as to how people may multiply” (“Когато Деда Господ на́нпрет създал човеците, събрали се сичките свети на съвет, та да определа, кико да се плода и размла-жаваия човециите”); it was recorded by D. Stoikov in the region of Sofia and published in SbNU, vol. 5 [1891: 150, text № 1]. Another legend, entitled “The woman comes from Satan’s tail” (“Жената е отъ дяволска опашка”) also features the creation of first people as an outcome of actions performed by a group of demiurges; it was recorded by A. Kostentsev in the region of Shtip and published in SbNU vol. 9 [1893: 155] (see text № 3 in the Appendix). Similar texts are recently recorded and published by BADALANOVA [1993: 140-142].

<sup>20</sup> Cfr. BADALANOVA [1993: 133-137; 1996: 115; 2008: 288-297].

<sup>21</sup> One such example provides the text I recorded in 1989 in the village of Govezhda, North-Western Bulgaria:

To return to the first chapter of *Genesis*, the scarce pieces of information given to us in relation to the creation of woman emphasize that:

- a. both the first man and woman were made concurrently, not consecutively;
- b. they both were made by God;
- c. they both were created in the image of God.

In the anthropogonic narrative of *Gn 1*, the issue of “gender” is presented in a way which leads us to believe that both sexes are immanent to God’s constitution and are encompassed by God’s nature. This detail is quite significant, as the issue of “male-female” division appears to have been mentioned in the *Genesis* here for the first time. So, if we compare this particular component of the biblical narrative with the previous lines (in which the creation of various animals is described, such as the creation of birds flying in the firmament of heaven, or the sea-monsters, or the animals living upon earth), we notice that there is no reference to a “male-female”

God decided to create the *pizhulina* [the female part]. He brought together the goat, and the bee, and the fox, and the polecat, and the donkey. So they were wondering where to put it. Where to put it? If they put it on the forehead, everyone will want to reach out and touch it, everyone will make a grab for it: it is an easy place. Then God said: “Let there be a nosegay here! And whoever desires to touch the *pizhulina*, should first and foremost desire to touch the nosegay!” So they [decided to] move it further down [putting it on the neck], but it was still quite easy to reach. Then God said: “Let there be a necklace here, but not the *pizhulina*! Yet whoever desires to touch the *pizhulina*, he should first desire to touch the necklace!” Then they went further down. They considered putting it between the breasts. But God found the place to be too easy again. You reach into the bosom and there it is... Anyone might [wish to] do it. And God said again, “It will not be here! It will be further down! Yet whoever desires to reach the *pizhulina*, will first desire to reach for the bosom!” So they went further down. They thought of putting it right in the midriff. But if they put it on the navel, it would still be easy [to reach]. So God decreed so, “It shall not be here! It shall be further down! There will be a waistband here, not the *pizhulina*! And whoever desires to reach for the *pizhulina* shall first desire to undo the waistband!” They went further down to the place which is the least possible to reach, to the most secret place. Yes indeed it is such a hard place to get at! But it was God Who said it was to be in a hidden place, so that these things would not be easy. So, at length they decided: it would be underneath, between the legs. Thereupon the goat said, “I will tread on it to give it its shape!” <...> The goat stepped in between the woman’s legs. And when it did so, there was a mound of earth in between the hooves, there was some earth between the hooves, and that earth came off and shaped the *pizhulina*. Then the fox said, “I will brush it with my tail and put hair on it! So it will be as soft as my tail!” And God gave His blessing, “So let it be!” And the fox went over the *pizhulina* and brushed [it with] its tail, making it as soft as the fox’s tail. And the bee said, “I will hum so that it will be as sweet as honey!” Then God gave His blessing, “So let it be!” And the bee hummed and the *pizhulina* became as sweet as honey.

In fact, in Slavonic oral tradition there exists a vast number of bawdy texts functioning as a vernacular counterpart of God’s blessing, “be fruitful and multiply”; they describe the appearance of the generative organs, and the origin of sexual intercourse. In them the creation of the vagina is described as a joint venture in which a group of wise animals help God in His endeavours.

division<sup>22</sup>. The animals seem to be somehow “genderless”, regardless of the formulaic expression marking the end of the segment describing their creation, that is, the formulaic expression “Be fruitful and multiply”; it appears for the first time in *Gn* 1, 22. It therefore seems that the issue of gender becomes an issue only in relation to biblical anthropogenesis. This, in turn, suggests that gender category in *Genesis* is not regarded as biological but cultural.

### 2.1. The primordial (wo)man-mushroom

According to some Bulgarian folklore legends the first people grow from mushrooms. Thus a text which I recorded in 1989 in the village of Leskovets, North-Western Bulgaria, describes the creation of mankind in the following way:

A long time ago, Adam and Eve were begotten from mushrooms and then created the world you see now. All from mushrooms, out of the ground... They sprouted up as mushrooms: one was a boy, and the other was a girl... And so mankind was begotten. Children were born. They all came from them, from Granny Eve and Granddad Adam. And so folks began to procreate, from one day to the next, and from the next – to the day after... From mushrooms. That's how I've heard it – it all started with mushrooms sprouting up from the ground. They began a generation. A whole generation – from Adam and Eve. Have you heard it said too? That is the story that has been told since times of yore...<sup>23</sup>.

Indicative in this respect are the strategies of vernacular Slavonic ethno-paedagogy; biblical creation is explained to children as a framework of local ethno-history. The aetiological legends related to the origin of mankind were narrated as sacred texts, which were believed to have come straight from Holy Scripture. Here follows a text supporting this observation; it was recorded in the mountain village of Replyana, Belogradchik region, North-Western Bulgaria, in 1988. The actual account was given to me as an answer to the question “What did your grandparents tell you when you asked them, *How did the first man and woman come into being and of what substance they were made?*”:

When we were children, we used to ask our granny: “Granny, what is man made of?” And she would say: “The Bible says that Man originated from a mushroom. Mushrooms sprang up there [and she pointed towards the hills we could see from the windows of the room in which we were sitting and talking] – it was over there, in the field. They came up from underneath – and a human was formed. Man comes from a mushroom, from the earth – and that's why the earth takes him back. Earth has made him and earth takes him

<sup>22</sup> This concept was previously discussed in BADALANOVA [2008: 210].

<sup>23</sup> This account was given to me by Magdalena Ilieva Todorova, an old woman who was born in 1908 in the same village; she had no formal education, but was regarded as one of the best story-tellers in her village.

in.... So my granny used to tell me this story... Male and female mushrooms sprang up – and then the world was made. And they also gave birth to children, a generation – and later, after them, the world was founded<sup>24</sup>.

As we can see from the above quoted texts, the origin of mankind is believed to be related to the local landscape; in many legends, the first people were believed to have appeared in the local neighbourhood of the storytellers. Thus biblical imagery envelopes vernacular ethnohistory.

## 2.2. The (wo)man of cloth and God the Tailor

Along with texts about the self-created mushroom-mankind, there also exists in Slavonic oral tradition a corpus of narratives maintaining that the first people were like cloth tailored in the Creator's hands. This type of legends further provides the framework for the plot of the origin of sexual intercourse. Thus, according to the text of the tale I recorded in the village of Gaganitsa (North-Western Bulgaria), the first people were considered to be fabric created by God:

When God started creating the [first] man, He thought it over this way. The body was in two halves, and they were as if taken out of a cast. And Granddad Lord took a length of thread and attached them together. But then there was a piece of thread left and He said, "Well, I shan't cut it off! May it hang like this in front of the man's body. Let it be his only soft spot!"... And that is how Granddad Adam came to be. And that is why men have no blemish, yet still this may be their only soft spot. So God started on another human being: this time it would be perfect. And He took some thread again and ensured it to be shorter. Off he went sewing but this time he ended up short of thread [to complete the body of the woman]. And thus Granny Eve ended up with a bit of a gash under there. So you see: there was a bit [of thread] left over in Granddad Adam, and a bit [of thread] left under for Granny Eve. That's why the saying goes: there was a bit of thread that God was short of when He created the woman. And it was left to man to make it up. But how was he to make it up? He would make it up by threading her. Then the thread which was apparently redundant found its rightful place. That's how it happened that men and women connect their thread. That's how folk were begotten. That's the story of God's thread. And it is so to this day<sup>25</sup>.

A similar folklore legend from Southern Bulgaria, entitled “Why woman has a gash below?” (“Зашо жена има отворено”) is published by Friedrich S. Krauss in the first volume of his famous *Anthropophytéia* [1904: 135-136, text № 112]; according to Krauss, the tale was narrated by a “peasant from Rumelia” (a geographical term referring to the southern Balkan regions of the Ottoman Empire, most prob-

<sup>24</sup> The above legend was narrated by the female storyteller Vita Georgieva Tsvetina, born in 1928 in the village of Replyana, North-Western Bulgaria.

<sup>25</sup> See also the discussion in BADALANOVA [2008: 286-88].

ably Thrace in this case). Along with the Bulgarian legend about the “sewn mankind,” Krauss offers a parallel (Serbian) text on a related topic, entitled “From where did man get his penis and woman her vagina?” (“Od kuda ljudima kurac a ženata pička”) [1904: 134-135, text № 112]. Another version of the legend of “textile people” was recorded in the city of Prilep (now in Macedonia) at the end of the 19th century by the local intellectual Marko Tsepennkov, whose manuscripts are partially preserved in the Archives of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences Central Library (see the Appendix, text № 1). On the other hand, Petko Slaveykov’s collection of Bulgarian folklore narratives (compiled in the nineteenth century) indicates that the motif of the “sewn mankind” often functions as a backbone of a series of erotic tales. According to one of them, “God left them [the first man and the woman] to sew each other”, because once, when He created humankind – and when people looked very much like rag dolls – “He did not finish sewing their bodies; it was left for them to complete His job” [Slaveykov 1982: 146]. According to another legend, also published by Slaveykov, “as God was sewing the woman, His thread was not enough, and when he sewed the man, He had more thread than needed, and then He said, “Let them sew each other!” [Slaveykov 1982: 250]<sup>26</sup>.

Surprisingly enough, the Slavonic anthropogonic folk legends about “the sewn (wo)man” have (almost *verbatim*) parallels in Hungarian oral tradition<sup>27</sup>. The parallel existence of Slavonic and Hungarian narratives anchored by the motif of the “tailor-demiurge” is intriguing. Whether these parallel motifs reflect cross-cultural contact, or whether they stem from a common compendium of cosmogonic/anthropogonic knowledge (as it is the case of dualistic Finno-Ugrian and Slavonic creation myths) is a question which needs further, much more detailed investigation.

### 2.3. The (wo)man of dough and God the Kneader

According to some Belorussian, Ukrainian and Polish folk legends the substance from which the bodies of Adam and Eve were created was considered to be dough<sup>28</sup>. This belief corresponds to a similar concept in medieval Hebrew commentaries (and in particular in the explanations of Rashi, a 10th century Bible commentator) according to which the act of creation was regarded as identical to the act of kneading; in this, the Creator was seen as a “kneader”, whereas His macrocosm and microcosm were perceived as entities originating from a dough-like *materia prima*.

In some Slavonic texts, however, dough is regarded as substance from which

<sup>26</sup> For further information, see vol. 6 of the full edition of his Collected Works [SLAVEYKOV 1982].

<sup>27</sup> See the Hungarian folk legends recorded and analysed by NAGY [1986-1988: 25-27]; the analysis of these tales, however, is beyond the scope of this article.

<sup>28</sup> For a survey of East Slavonic (Russian, Ukrainian and Belorussian) folklore texts concerned with the concept of the creation of primordial man out of dough (“О творении из теста”), consult KUZNETSOVA [1998: 162-163]; see also the discussion in TOLSTAIA [1998: 27]. The same motif is attested in Polish folklore tradition [ZOWCZAK 2000: 61-64; CHOMICKA 2008: 35].

only the body of Eve is made, whereas the body of Adam is believed to be made of earth [Kuznetsova 1998: 163, type 5 b]. Thus the difference between sexes is made explicit: male flesh is equated to earth, while female – to dough; in this way folklore anthropogenesis transforms the egalitarian biblical statement of *Gn* 1 “male and female created He them” into “earth and dough created He them”. This suggests that the very *materia prima* from which the macrocosm and the microcosm emerged is imagined by storytellers as representative of two primordial substances, with no supremacy given to either of them.

#### **2.4. The (wo)man of earth and God the Potter**

The story of the creation of the first people out of clay by God the Potter is one of the most widespread and best registered tales present in Slavonic biblical folklore. Along with the versions suggesting that only the body of Adam is made out of dust, whereas Eve emerges from his rib (to be analysed below), a corpus of complementary texts maintains that both man and woman were simultaneously molded, and both are made of earth. In the latter case the creation of male and female generative organs may become the focus of the narrative. According to some Bulgarian legends<sup>29</sup>, after his having created the bodies of the first people in an identical manner, God struck the woman with an axe between her legs; that was how the vagina appeared. As for the substance which exuded from between the woman’s legs, it was put between the man’s legs, and hence the origin of sexual intercourse was an act in which pristine human flesh was restored.

However, according to some Polish legends of creation of mankind, the origin of “private parts” is related to Satan’s intervention<sup>30</sup>; hence the vernacular perception of sexual intercourse as the “Devil’s doing”. Still, no supremacy is given to either Adam or Eve by this type of texts; the first people are equally “blemished”, since both of them appear to be harmed by the anti-Creator at the very beginning of the emergence of the Universe. Man and woman are thus united in their imperfectness, equal in their deficiency. After all, as maintained by the indigenous Slavonic exegesis, they are to be just “humans,” not “divine beings”.

#### **3. The hierarchical Gynesis**

The hierarchical paradigm of gender subordination is outlined in *Gn* 2 in a rather clear way. The following points of the biblical narrative ought to be emphasized in this connection:

- a. that the creation of man preceded the creation of woman, which implicitly indicates that, since the male was made first, it was the male gender that was granted the supremacy over the female one;

<sup>29</sup> The text of one such Bulgarian legend was recently published by BADALANOVA [2008: 297-298].

<sup>30</sup> See the texts recorded and published by ZOWCZAK [2000: 61-62].

- b. that man was formed by God of the dust of the ground, whereas woman was created from man's body as a secondary product (*Gn 2, 21-24*)<sup>31</sup>;
- c. that God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life and man thus became a living soul; a detail which, again implicitly, indicates, that the "breath of life" was given to man only, not to woman.

An interesting parallel can be drawn here with the issue of gender as a grammatical category, which, at vernacular level, is perceived as related to the biblical account of the creation of mankind; thus, in some Slavonic languages and dialects, and in Polish in particular, apart from the case endings, which are gender inclusive, there is even a special plural verbal ending for past tense forms indicating whether the subjects are male or non-male. In this, a special sub-gender category, often ironically described by philologists as "female-animal-objects" is implied. To make things even more complicated, when referring to only male animate or inanimate subjects, the verb has one type of ending, the masculine ending; when referring to only female animate or inanimate subjects, or animals, or objects, the verb has another type of ending, the non-masculine one; but when the group consists of at least one male being plus "the others", regardless whether these are female beings, or animals, or objects, the ending would be again masculine. The same is the case in Hebrew, as in many other languages. This may be the reason that, in some villages in Eastern Europe, I was told, "that's why only men can be priests, not women, as the Spirit of God entered him, not her". Of course, apart from these texts, a vast amount of other narratives, implying the opposite idea, that both male and female bodies were regarded as vessels of the Holy Spirit, can be encountered among Slavonic peoples.

To return to the canonical biblical text, according to *Gn 2, 8*, after His having created man, God planted the Garden of Eden, and placed him in it, so that he can be its keeper; this detail leads, in turn, to the following puzzling detail, which is that when God commanded man, saying "Of every tree of the Garden you may freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die", woman was not yet created. Here an important, but often neglected aspect of the biblical text becomes "visible"<sup>32</sup>. How did the woman have learned of God's command? Who told her and when? The only indication that she was aware of the taboo related to the act of eating fruits from "the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil" appears much later, in the dialogue between her and the serpent, in *Gn 3, 2*. It seems to me that the question of woman's awareness of God's prohibition is one of the unsolved puzzles in post-biblical interpretation of the canonical biblical account of the creation of mankind, a puzzle which is also related to the issue of Original Sin, and of the identifying woman as the one who first trespassed God's command.

<sup>31</sup> See motif-type A 1275.1 (Creation of first woman from man's rib) in THOMPSON [1955]; for iconographic representations of this motif in *Slavia Orthodoxa*, see Tabs 1, 2, 3, 4.

<sup>32</sup> See also the discussion in BADALANOVA [2008: 213].

But what does the second chapter of the Book of Genesis actually say about the creation of the first woman? According to the canonical text, after His having created man, God intends to create a helpmate for him, “as he was alone”. Yet neither of the living creatures to whom man gives names are suitable to become his helpmates. And here for the first time the Biblical text refers to the man as Adam; here, in *Gn* 2, 20 he is named for the first time, in the episode preceding the creation of woman:

But for Adam there was not found a helpmate for him. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the place with flesh instead thereof. And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from the man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man. And the man said: “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man. Therefore man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh”.

It is also in this paragraph that the woman is given a social status – the status of a wife [*Gn* 2, 21-24]. Significantly, she still has no name. The following paragraph is the last one in which the first people are described as innocent beings: “And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed” [*Gn* 2, 25].

Let us now see how the creation of woman is described in Slavonic oral tradition. The legends about the creation of the first man out of clay and the first woman out of his rib/side are extremely popular. Their story-line embraces not only themes and motifs from the *Genesis*, but also from the apocryphal *The Sea of Tiberias*. Thus, according to the sixteenth century redaction of this text,

**И потомъ сотвори Г҃дъ ран<sup>33</sup> на востоце, и помысли Г҃дъ сотворити первозданного члвка Адама<sup>34</sup>. И сатвори тѣло его ѿ седми частей: ѿ земли тѣло, ѿ камени кости, ѿ моря кровь, ѿ солнца очи, ѿ шблака мысли, ѿ ветра дыханіе, ѿ огня теплота<sup>35</sup>. И понде Г҃дъ на нбса ко ѿцу своемъ по дшу Адама.**

<sup>33</sup> According to one sixteenth century Bulgarian/Serbian *Erotapokriseis*, God created Heaven and Earth on Sunday (“Въ н(а)лоу сътвори єй нбс и землю”); on Monday the creation of the Sun, the Moon and the whole celestial realm took place (“Въ пон(а)лкъ сънце и м(а)цъ и вса нб(а)ла”); He then planted Paradise on Tuesday (“Въ торни(к) насади ран”). On Wednesday God placed the waters on (into?) the sea (“Въ срѣ(д) въстави води въ морѣ”), on Thursday He formed all the animals (“Въ чѣкъ повѣле и създаше се вси скоти и гади”), and on Friday He created the body of Adam (“Въ пет(к)ъ създад адама”). On Saturday God gave Adam a soul (“Въ съвотъ въдаде илюг душу”). See the text of the “(Р)азоумни(к) въ все(м) упросе въ(ч)е,” from the *Tikveshky Miscellany*, edited and published by N. NACHOV [1892: 402]; see also the survey of related apocryphal sources in IATSIMIRSKII [1909: 288-290].

<sup>34</sup> Medieval Slavonic apocryphal tradition maintains that Adam was created on Friday; see the above note.

<sup>35</sup> For further details see IVANOV [1925: 308-309], DRAGOMANOV [1894: 55], PETKANOVA [1005: 24-28] and MILTENOVA [2004: 254-255, 335, 344-345].

**Сотона невѣдала что сотворити емъ: истыка тѣло Адамово персты. И прїиде Г҃дь к своему созданію, к тѣлу Адамову, и видѣ тѣло истыкано все, и рече Г҃дь: о дїаволе! Како еси смѣлъ надъ моимъ созданіемъ тако сотвори(ти)? И ѿвѣща дїаволъ: Г҃ди аще та кой члвкъ чыгнеть что заболилъ и тотъ да тебя поманетъ. И Г҃дь повороти Адама виѣтръ ранами, и ѿтоле зачатса болѣзнь. Сотона сотворилъ, аще оу кого заболитъ и тотъ да воздохнеть: охъ, охъ, Г҃ди помилуй! Ожи Г҃дь Адама и дастъ ему облость въ раю надъ всѣми птицами и звѣрьми и скоты. И видѣ Г҃дь яко неоудобно Адамъ единомъ въ раю быти, и восхотѣ сотворити ему сопрѹгъ. И вложи во Адама сонъ и вына изъ него рѣбро и сотвори ему сопрѹгъ. [Barsov 1886].**

God created Paradise to the East and thought of creating primordial man, Adam. And He created his body from seven parts. He made his flesh [lit. body] of earth, his bones of stone, his blood of the sea, his eyes from the sun, his thoughts from the cloud, his breath from the wind, his warmth from fire. [Then] God went to the sky, to his Father, for Adam's soul<sup>36</sup>. Not knowing what to do to him, Sotona pierced Adam's body with his fingers<sup>37</sup>. God came to his creation, to Adam's body and saw that his body was all pierced, and God said, "O Devil, how did you dare do this to My creation?" The Devil answered, "God, as soon as man has an ache somewhere, he will mention Your name". God then turned Adam inside-out, with his sores inside, and that is how illness originated<sup>38</sup>. This is what Sotona did, [and that's why] when someone is ill, he would sigh and say, "Oh, oh God, have mercy upon me!" God brought Adam to life and gave him to reign in Paradise over all the birds, beasts, and domestic animals. And God saw that it was not convenient for Adam to be on his own in Paradise and He decided to create a spouse for him. He put Adam to sleep and took a rib from him and created a wife for him.

As in the canonical text, the question whether woman appeared from the right or from the left side of Adam appears to be irrelevant in the above quoted Barsovian account of *The Sea of Tiberias*; it is only briefly stated that Adam's wife (unnamed in this context) appeared from one of his ribs. So far she is marginal; by the time the nameless woman is first called Eve in this apocryphal narrative, even the animals have acquired their own names. Adam's taxonomy precedes the naming of woman, a clear indication of her inferior status and supplementary role;

<sup>36</sup> Cfr. A 185.12 (Deity provides man with soul) in THOMPSON [1955].

<sup>37</sup> See also the text of the legend recorded by Yordan Kovachev in the village of Vakarel (Western Bulgaria), and published by him in 1914 in SbNU 30 (1914), 49; in connection with the above, consult Thompson's *Motif-Index*, and in particular A 60 ("Mar-plot" of creation: an evil opponent attempts to undo or mar the work of the Creator), and A 63 (Devil as mar-plot at creation).

<sup>38</sup> For parallel (apocryphal and folklore) readings of this motif, see DRAGOMANOV [1894: 55-57], PETKANOVA [1978: 157-159], TOMICKI [1980: 51-56].

her only function is to be Adam's subordinate. According to yet another (eighteenth century) version of *The Sea of Tiberias* from Northern Russia (published by Sreznevskii), the woman was made out of the left (i.e. crooked / bad / evil)<sup>39</sup> rib of her spouse Adam; however, unlike the Barsovian edition, this text states that God breaths His Spirit not only in man, but also in woman:

сотвори Г̄дъ члка плотна первозданного Адама ѿ осми частей: ѿ земли тѣло, ѿ моря кровь, ѿ камени кости, ѿ облакъ мысли, ѿ солнца очи, ѿ вѣтра дыханіе, ѿ свѣта дхъ, ѿ огна теплота. И прїиде Г̄дъ на нбса посла стый свой дхъ, и прїиде Г̄дъ на землю ко Адаму; и огзрѣ Г̄дъ Адама ранами огнезвлены, ѿ сатаны персто(м) истыканы. И рече Г̄дъ сатанѣ: диаволѣ шкаинничѣ, почто тако сотворилъ еси, азъ сотворихъ члка чиста и непорочна, неболѣзнена? И рече сатана ко Г(с) Г̄дъ: забудетъ тева Гда, и кое мѣсто поболи(т), и онъ молвитъ: Гди помилуй. Гдъ же повороти виѣтъ и подернѣвъ кожею и вложи въ него дхъ Стыни. И живиѣ Ада(м). И вопроси Г̄дъ Адама: что еси видѣлъ во снѣ? И рече: видѣхъ Гдъ во Іер(с)лимѣ распата на крестѣ, а Петра ап(с)ла стремъглавъ повѣшена, а Павла ап(с)ла въ Дамасцѣ. Введе Гдъ Адама въ ран; Адам же въ ран огненѣвъ сномъ. Гдъ же вземъ оу Адама лѣвое ребро и сотвори ему жену Евву. И вложи Гдъ Егъ дхъ свой Стыни; Адам же возбнѣвъ ѿ сна и рече: Гди, что есть сиѣ? И рече Гдъ Адаму: то есть тѣбѣ жена, живи ты съ нею. [Sreznevskii 1904: 102].

God created a man of flesh, the primordial Adam, from eight parts: body from earth, blood from the sea, bones from stone, thoughts from clouds, eyes from the sun, breath from the wind, the spirit from light, and warmth from fire. Then God came and sent to Heaven His Holy Spirit. God [then] came to Earth, to Adam, and God saw that Adam suffered from sores created by Satan's fingers piecing his body. And God said to Satan, "O cursed Devil, why did you do that? I created man, pure and without blemish, and whole". And Satan said to God, "He will forget about You, God, but whenever something starts to ache, he will utter, «God, have mercy upon me!»" God turned the man's body inside out and pulled up the skin and put within him the Holy Spirit. And Adam came to life. God asked Adam, "What did you see in your dream?". [Then Adam] said, "I saw the Lord crucified on a cross in Jerusalem, while Apostle Peter was hung with his head down, whereas Paul was in Damascus". God conducted Adam into Paradise and Adam fell asleep in Paradise. God took a left rib from Adam and created a wife for him – Eve. The Lord God then implanted His Holy Spirit [into Eve]. Adam woke up from his dream and said, "God, what is this?" And God said to Adam, "This is woman, for you; live with her".

<sup>39</sup> See in this connection TOLSTOY [1995: 151-166; 1997: 144-152].

In the above quoted apocryphal accounts of *The Sea of Tiberias* the story of the creation of mankind follows a dualistic narrative pattern, which is well attested in a rich corpus of Slavonic folklore legends about the eternal rivalry between the two competing demiurges. One such tale was registered by Romanov in Byelorussia:

And He took some red clay, and from this red clay He made Man. And God turned to one side, and at this time, the cursed Devil spat onto Man. Then God said: "O cursed One, you are cursed. Watch now what your God will do!". And He put inside this man, a soul, wise and eternal <...> After this, God gave the first man a name – Adam. He breathed on him, and he stood, alive, and went with God into Heaven. But he became lonely and sad. When God found out that Man was lonely in Heaven, He waited until Adam was asleep, and appeared in his sleep, and took one of his right ribs and made him a woman called Eve [Romanov 1891: 2].

According to another text, which was recorded by M. Federowski in the second half of the nineteenth century, the creation of mankind is described in a similar way:

in the beginning God made man out of clay, in His own image. Then He breathed on him, and thus was made man. For a while, he lived alone, but God felt sorry for him, sent him to a deep sleep, took a single rib from his right side, placed it next to him, and thus was made woman – Eve [Federowski 1897: 200; text 780].

According to yet another version, again recorded and published by M. Federowski, the first woman, the mother of all living, Eve, was created out of another (much "lower") part of man's body; she was made out of the tail he was believed to have had at the beginning of times, when God had first brought him into being:

when God made Adam in the beginning, he made him with a tail, but then He realised that it was not appropriate for both animals and men to have tails. He sent Adam to sleep, cut off his tail, placed it next to him, and this is how Eve came into being. That's why the saying goes that women originate from a man's tail [Federowski 1897: 201; text 781]<sup>40</sup>.

On the other hand, there exists a rather elaborate cycle of complementary Slavonic legends featuring the creation of woman out of dog's tail<sup>41</sup>; the latter portray Eve as a semi-human/semi-bestial creature; she is regarded as a being of zoomorphic/bestial, not anthropomorphic/human lineage. This indicates that on many occasions woman is being assigned by Slavonic ethnohermeneitics a status which is much lower not only in comparison to Adam, but also to the primordial animal world, over which

<sup>40</sup> The text is analysed by TOLSTAIA [1998: 33]; see also the discussion in KABAKOVA [1999: 3].

<sup>41</sup> See the folklore texts published by ZOWCZAK [2000: 63-64].

man was granted dominion from the very beginning of his existence.

Parallel with anthropogonic narratives, according to which Eve was created from either the tail of Adam or a dog, she emerged out of Satan's tail in another cycle of texts<sup>42</sup>; in the latter the origin and indeed nature of woman is intertwined with the origin/nature of Satanic forces.

One further point. During the last twenty years, many new versions of the biblical story about the creation of Eve have been registered in Slavonic villages by a number of scholars. In all of them mythopoeic imagery is intertwined with Judaeo-Christian tradition in a specific, unique way, thus shaping a distinct system of religious beliefs which envelopes the everyday life of Slavonic peasant communities, as well as their cultural identity and ethno-philosophy. In many of these legends the Matriarch can be either of divine, or of demonic origin; yet she can also be a creature combining both the divine and demonic elements, thus embodying the enigma of man's creation and indeed nature.

#### 4. The Fall of Mankind: Eve the sinner [Gn 3]

The story about how God placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden where they lived in a state of innocence and grace is extremely widespread among the Slavs and richly reflected in the iconography. They were naked and unashamed, until the Serpent, who "was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made" [Gn 3, 1], tempted the woman to eat the forbidden fruit<sup>43</sup>. Like in the Bible, the tree which produced the forbidden fruit is usually unidentified in folklore and apocryphal texts<sup>44</sup>. Some narratives claim that it was an apple tree<sup>45</sup>, or a fig

<sup>42</sup> See the text of the legend recorded in the city of Shtip by the Bulgarian intellectual A. Kostentsev, published in vol. 9 of the SbNU folklore collection [1893: 155] (text № 3 in the Appendix).

<sup>43</sup> For iconographic renditions of this motif in *Slavia Orthodoxa*, see Tabs 5.

<sup>44</sup> See for instance the texts of various Slavonic editions of the apocryphal *Life of Adam and Eve* in PYPIN [1862: 1-7]; TIKHONRAVOV [1863: I, 1-16, 298-304]; PORFIR'EV [1877: 89-96, 208-216]; IVANOV [1925: 207-219]. In the apocryphal *Sea of Tiberias* it is likewise not made clear what kind of fruit caused the Fall. In most sources, however, it is emphasised that the Forbidden Tree was also the tree from which the Cross was made, upon which "Christ the New Adam" was crucified five and a half thousand years after the fall of the First Adam; thus the original sin of the First Adam was annulled by the Second Adam; see in this connection the discussion in PORFIR'EV [1877: 31-40, 47-50].

<sup>45</sup> According to the traditional stereotypes of folk religion in *Slavia Orthodoxa*, as expressed in legendary narratives interpreting *Genesis* (and their visual counterparts depicted in local churches), the apple is considered to be the most palpable emblem of the Fall of Adam and Eve. In Western Christian tradition, this idea is spelled out both verbally and pictographically. This tradition may be reinforced by the fact that the Latin word for apple, *malum*, is a homonym with Latin *malus* 'evil'. Furthermore, within the visual "hypertext" of Bible-related iconographical tradition of medieval Europe, the apple is an emblem of both the Original Sin (when depicted either in the hands of Adam and Eve, or in the mouth of the serpent), and of the Salvation of the World (when held by either the Infant Jesus, or the Virgin Mary). Hence the apple is regarded as one of the most popular visual conceptualisations of the image of Christ as a New Adam and, correspondingly, of the Virgin Mary as the New Eve. It is considered to be a symbol of the "Forbidden Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge" as well as redemption from the sins of the first Adam.

tree<sup>46</sup>, or a grapevine<sup>47</sup>, etc. In almost all cases, however, it was stated that Eve – and not Adam – was to be blamed for the loss of Paradise and immortality, since she was the one who not only picked up and tasted the forbidden fruit, but also seduced Adam, thus bringing death to man<sup>48</sup>. Here follows the passage of a Belorussian legend (typical for this class of narratives), which describes how sin entered the world of the first people:

And they lived together and knew no hardship, neither did they sin. But the Devil started trying to get there and to tempt them. The Devil touched the tree which God had forbidden to all, and thus became a snake. And so he touched the tree and said [to Eve]: “Come and take an apple from the forbidden tree, try it”. God found out about this and ordered this tree to lift up its branches, so that they could not be reached. And then the snake appeared

<sup>46</sup> See for instance the seventeenth century texts **О дръвѣ разумнѣмъ** in PORFIR'EV [1877: 2005-2006]. The same concept is seen in *The Book of Jubilees* (second century BC), hinting at the fig as the forbidden fruit, since Eve covers herself “with the leaves of the aforementioned fig” [Jub. III, 21]; see the translation of R. H. Charles and C. Rabin in SPARKS [1984: 20, footnote 14]. This idea is made even stronger in some early Christian extra-canonical texts, and in some Old Testament pseudepigraphy, such as the Greek version of *The Life of Adam and Eve* from the fourth century (also known as *The Apocalypse of Moses*, the earliest Old Church Slavonic version of which appeared in Bulgaria in the tenth century). According to one of the sixteenth-century Bulgarian versions, after Eve had tasted the forbidden fruit, the only tree that does not withdraw its leaves from her is the same tree which produced that fruit, ie. the fig tree. The story of the Fall is presented as a monologue delivered by Eve in front of her sons:

And at that very moment my eyes were opened and I knew that I was naked. And I wept <...> I looked for leaves so that I might cover my shame, but I did not find any from the trees of Paradise, since while I ate, the leaves of all the trees of my portion fell, except those of the fig tree only. And I took its leaves and made for myself skirts; they were from the same plants of which I ate [IVANOV 1925: 214].

As we can see, according to *The Life of Adam and Eve*, it is the fig tree which bore the forbidden fruit and is hence acknowledged as the “Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil”. The belief that the Tree of Knowledge was the fig tree, appears to have influenced the classical thesaurus of Christian symbolic language. Having acquired distinct metaphorical dimensions in the early Christian period, the fig tree later becomes one of the most powerful cultural emblems of Original Sin in both literature and art. One of the earliest iconographic representations of the Fall in which Eve covers her nakedness with a fig leaf is dated as early as the third century. This scene can be seen painted on the walls of the Roman catacomb of Priscilla. Similar iconographic representations of the Fall can be found in many churches in the Balkans, and this detail indicates once again that the motif of the fig tree functions as one of the preferred symbols of Paradise Lost for centuries. This may not just be due to the tradition of the fig leaf covering Adam and Eve's nakedness but because, in some circles at least, the fig also served as the forbidden fruit.

<sup>47</sup> This motif is attested in a number of Slavonic apocrypha and folklore texts; see the seventeenth century text *About the Tree of Knowledge* (**О дръвѣ разумнѣмъ**) in PORFIR'EV [1877: 205-6], the text *About the grapevine and how it grew* (**О виноградѣ и како ростяше**) in PYPIN [1862: 7-8], the *Apocalypse of Baruch* [Чътъніе стъго Бароха, кгдъ посланъ бы къ нему ангъл Панохиль оу стъгъ гороу Сиашю на рѣцѣ, кгдъ плака се въ плачени Европъмъсциемъ. Ги блосви], etc.

<sup>48</sup> See for instance the sixteenth century text of the *Discussion Between the Three Saints* (MS № 68) from the Sofia National Library [ARKHANGEL'SKII 1899: 122].

before the Woman once more, and said: "Eve", he said, "try this apple from this tree". And Eve asked the snake: "What will happen if I do?" "You will become God. What God knows, you will know too". And Eve replied: "How can I, o cursed snake, when the branches have lifted so high above me?" And then the snake told her, in a cunning way, that with his power he could do that: "I can get you an apple". "Well, if you can, then get me one". And he got one. She took a bite from this apple, from the forbidden tree, and she became as we are now, the sinful ones. The first people had skin like our nails, and later it became like we are now. And she covered her body with grass, for she was ashamed. She went then to Adam and said to him: "Come and try of what I have eaten!" Adam listened to her, and tried it, and so he too sinned. He covered himself with grass. His body became as ours, the sinners', as now. <...> And then God came and said to them: "Adam and Eve, come here". And Adam answered Him: "God, we have sinned". "Although you have sinned, still, come here". And they came to Him, covered with grass, and God asked: "Adam, what has happened, what tempted you?". And he answered: "Oh God, Eve gave me half the apple to eat, and because of this, I too am a sinner". God asked her: "Eve, what tempted you?" "God, the snake came and began these adventures". And then God said: "Snake, come here". And so the snake came to God. And God told him: "Snake, because of this, men will always tread on you. And you, Adam, here is a shovel, go to the Earth and leave Heaven. Go and dig the earth. And you, Eve, you will bear fruit by your husband, you will obey him, and your life will be hard". And Adam cried as he left Heaven, and he turned to God and said to Him: "Thank you God, [but] I will no longer see the light of Your Heaven, nor hear Your Godly voice" [Romanov 1891: 2-3].

As is often the case with oral interpretations of the Bible, in this episode the narrator offers a unique specimen of a folklore version of the biblical plot. This elaborate rendering encapsulates a number of extra-canonical details (such as the motif of God's command to the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil to lift up its branches so that they could not be reached), as well as some specific Slavonic popular beliefs, the roots of which, most probably, might be traced back to the legendary repertoire of the local folklore tradition.

### 5. The post-Edenic Eve

The *Gynesis* vernacular legends emphasise the idea of the sexual division of labour as one of the components of the biblical creation story. Man is to plough, woman is to spin and weave<sup>49</sup>. She is also the one who was supposed to give birth to children. The gendered division of labour is seen as a framework for biological reproduction. Thus, according to the account given to me in 1981 in the Bessarabian village of Korten, the creation of mankind is described in the following way:

<sup>49</sup> For iconographic representation of this concept in *Slavia Orthodoxa*, see Tabs 4 and 6; see also the discussion in VÁLKÁ [1998: 99-110].

Once God gathered a little dust, scraped it out from under His nails, spat into it and made clay. He made a man and a woman, two people. And then He breathed into them, and the Holy Spirit went into them. And they came to life. That is why they say we are dust and will return to dust. And they became living creatures, out of the dust. They were like beasts, with hair all over. They stayed in the forest, and were told: "You will eat in the woods, you will be My people! But, there is a tree in the middle of Heaven, from which you shall not eat! These apples you shall not eat. You shall not sin!". They were there for a week or two. Then a serpent came and said, "On this tree, the apples are the best! Eat from it! Do not listen to God! He is lying!" The serpent was the Devil! And Eva said: "Let's try and see! If the serpent says so!" At that time the serpent walked upright, like the beasts, on all four legs. She [Eve] took an apple, had a bite, and gave it to Adam to try. And as they ate, their hair started falling off. They were left naked. And then – what could they do? They covered here [the private parts] with one hand, and their heads with the other... That is why we have hair there [on the genitals], on the head, and on the armpits. And Adam did so – he put one hand on there covering the private parts, and the other on his head... They felt too ashamed to look at each other, for they were naked... Yet God knew about them, He knew how they did it. He knows everything. He descended and said: "Adam! Eve! Where are you?" They knew not what to do... And they said, "Lord! We are here! We have sinned! We are too shy to come out! We are naked!" "Come out", He said. "I know! I knew it already! I knew it before you! What is your sin?" And they said, "We ate from this tree!" "Who made you eat?" "No one!" "Not true! It was the serpent who made you!" And He cast a curse on the serpent: "You will crawl on the earth and whoever sees you will kill you!" So the story goes, if you kill a serpent you are absolved of forty sins. And God said to them, to Adam and Eve, "You will work and sweat to cover your bodies! And you will be the masters of all this!" Eve was to spin and weave, Adam was to plough and dig... That is to say that they were to become the ancestors of all of mankind, and man would be the master of everything. What is it that man does not do? It is all God-given. So He said, and so it has been ever since.

## 6. Conclusion

Slavonic folk exegesis adds important new insights into biblical narratives about the origin of gender and the creation of both man and woman. The sex roles and stereotypes usually associated with the Bible story are occasionally presented in an alternative way. The oral traditions cover both of the biblical creation accounts (*Gn 1* and *Gn 2*) and harmonise some of the contradictions which appear in the canonical text, thus making the stories familiar parts of local cultural heritage.



## Appendix

### Text № 1

#### **Госпо коа го напраи мажо и жената**

Госпо коа го напраи мажо, го напраи на две, полоини. Со пјрво му и наредил сите алати што и има натре: Цигъеро, чкъембето, превата и се што има другото; от коа го нареди како што треба, и застави двете полоини, една до друга и зеде една игла самарџиска, вдена еден сицим од најдебелете, го подврждал, на крајно, со еден дебел јазол, та го заватил да го шие, от под гуша, на удолу; го ши, го ши, дури удолу и артириса от сицимо, колку една педа; го подврждал сицимо, со два јазла и другъги краи, побарал околу него нешто ножици, да го пресечи, не нашол ножици; се позамислил малце и го благосоил крајо от сицимо и рекол: “ај итака не ми се згодиа домене ножици, да го пресечим крајо, от сицимо, нека му се стори месо и низ него да се цеди водата, што кье ја пије и да му вјрши најголема работа, за множенье на лугъето. а пак двата јазла, да се сторат, две јајца, во едно кълце и тие да се за голема потреба”. От коа го благосоил мажо и го оживел; ја сошил и жената, арно ама не дофтасал от сицимо да а дошие, до краи, ами остана три, четири пјрсти, не дошиена и незел векье сицим другач, даа дошива, ами ја оставил не дошиена; от коа се помислил малце и неа ја благосоил и рекол: “ај, од ова не сошиено место, нека ѝ се цеди водата, што кье ја пије и от тоа место да се ражда чоекот. Замноженье векот”. Кој можи сега да речи оти не бил благосојен мажо, така и жената. Чункъи ова нешто сије намегдан. За јазоло што је подгуша у секого му се познаа, кого да видиш, се кье се увериш оти подгуша над гјрклано има јазол.

## When God created man and woman

When God created man, He made him into two, in two halves. First of all, He arranged all the guts, [that is] the liver, stomach, intestines, and everything within. As soon as He designed him as he was to meant to be, He joined two halves together, next to each other, and took a pack-saddle needle, threaded it with rope from the thickest ones, then tied it at the end with a massive knot. He started to sew him, from the neck downwards; He sewed and sewed until He reached the bottom [of the body], but one span of rope was surplus; He then tied the rope into two knots at the bottom end and started looking for scissors, in order to cut it off, yet He didn't find scissors. He then pondered a bit and blessed the end of the rope and said, "Since I have no scissors to hand to cut off the end of the rope, may it turn into flesh and may the water drunk by him be drained through it. May it also be most useful for propagation of people. As for the two knots at the bottom, may they turn into two eggs [i.e. testicles] in one pouch, and may they be of major use". As soon as He had blessed man, He vivified him; [then] He also tailored woman. So far so good, but there was not enough rope to finish sewing her until the end and there was a three/four fingers [gash] left. He didn't take a second rope to sew her up but left her unsewn there. Then He pondered a bit and blessed her and said, "May water which she drinks drain from this unstitched spot and may man be born from this spot, for the propagation of people". Who can now say that man wasn't as blessed as woman; isn't it rather obvious? As for the knot in the throat [Adam's apple], it is observable in everyone. Whomever you see, you can be sure that there is a knot on the windpipe in the neck.

*The text of this legend was recorded in the 19th century in city of Prilep (now in Macedonia) by the local Bulgarian intellectual Marko Tsepenekov. It comes from his manuscript collection, part of which is preserved in the Archives of the Library of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.*

**Text № 2****Адамъ дава име на сички божи творения**

От кога создал Господ веков, создал и чоекот (Адама), создал и сите животинки, што се по веков и му и принесол пред Адама, да му клаит на секое името. “Адаме, Адаме, еве ти и принесов сите животинки што сум и создал на земява, да му клаиш на секое името и презимето, му рекал Господин Бог, и да си одбериш едно от животинките за другар да ти биди тебе; гледа сега арно, отвори си очите, да си бендисаш еден другар, за векот со него да си го поживеиш, арно, лошо, ти си знаиш. Тука отвори си очите, отбери си, кое те бендисуат, тоа земи си, за тоа ти принесуам толку многу животинки да си бендисаш еден другар”.

Седнал Адам на еден стол висок и зел да прегледуа секое от животинките и да и кърштаа со име и презиме. Първо ватил от нац малото да го кърштаа и да го бендисуа. Іа видел мравата, оти е мала, іа кърстил: мравичка (от малечка). Го видел цжрвот, дека прилегал на црево, го кърстил: цжрв. Свикал Адам на дружите животинки: “я прогоорете, бре животинки, му рекол да ве чуям, кои каков збор имате?” Сите животинки беше прогоориле, секое спорет гласот свои, што си го имале. Кога чу Адам от сите животинки гласот и на спорет гласот им кладе иминъята. “Мъау”, сторила мачката, іе клал името: мачка. Рикнало магарето и спорет риканьето му клал името. Загугала гукучката: “гугучко”, іе клал името: гугучка. Заграчил гарванат: “гра, гра”, му клал името: гарван. Закукала кукаїцата: “куку, куку”, іа кърстил: кукаїца. Запупал пупунецот: “пупу, пупу”, го кърстил: пупунец. Зауткала утката: “ут, ут”, іа кърстил: утка. Забуал буот: “буух, буух”, го прекърстил: “бу”. И така на сите животинки Адам беше му клал именъята и презименъята, спорет како што беше му чул на сите гласот. Сите беше и прегледал едно по едно, за да бендисат едно, да му бидят другар. Арно ама ни едно не беше бендисал.

От кога іа свършил работата, беше дошол Господ каі него и беше го прашал да ли я свършил работата. “Е, Адаме, што стори? Дали я свърши работата што ти я дадов?” – “Іа свършив Господи, ама не а довършив, чункъи другар не бендисав; туку седам и се чудам, Господи, му рекол Адам, како едно животинче не ми се залепи за сърцето!” – “Іа аі легни си да преспиеш, Адаме, му рекол Господ, да коя къе станиш, белкъим къе бендисаш некои другар или другарка”. Си легнал Адам и заспал. Зел Господ и я напраил Ева. “Іа стани, Адаме” му рекол Господ. Станал Адам от сонот и я видел Ева испраена на спорет него, на неколку чекори скраіа, дал вик по неа: “ела, ела, ела вамо (Ево, Ево, Ева тук), оти ти си ми за сърцево”. Како на сите животинки што му кладе именъя Адам, така и на Ева беше е клал и беше си я зел за другарка.

## Adam names all God's creatures

When God created the world, He also created man, Adam. He created all the living creatures which are in the world and brought them before Adam, for him to name each of them. "Adam, Adam, here I bring before you all the living creatures I created on Earth, so that you give each of them a name and surname," said Lord God, "so that you may choose yourself a companion among the creatures. Look now carefully and open your eyes, so that you can select a companion, so that you live your lives together, for better or for worse, which you know better. Now open your eyes, select whatever you like and take it. This is why I brought to you so many creatures, for you to pick out a companion from among them".

Adam sat on a high stool and began inspecting the creatures, to "baptise" them with name and surname. He began with the smallest ones to be "baptised" and inspected them. He saw the ant [=мрава], and because of her being small [=мала], he called her "*mrvichka*" [=мрвичка], from "*malechka*" [=малечка, "the small one"]. He looked at the worm which was [crawling] on its belly [=ирево, pronounced as "*tsrevo*"] and hence called him "*tsûrv*" [=чжрв, i.e. "the one who is crawling on its belly"]. Adam summoned other creatures, "Speak up, creatures," he said, "so that I can hear the sound of your voices". All the creatures spoke, each according to its own given voice. When Adam heard the voices of each creature, he gave them names accordingly. The cat said "meow" [=мъя] – and thus he gave her the name "*machka*" [=мачка, from "meowing"]. The donkey brayed and because of [the sound of] his braying he named him "*magare*" [=магаре, a noun which sounds like braying]. The turtle-dove began cooing, [producing a sound] like "*guguchko*" [=гугучко] – and he named her "*guguchka*" [=гугучка]. The raven croaked "gra-gra" – and he gave him the name "*garvan*" [=гарван]. The cuckoo-bird began calling, "cuckoo, cuckoo" – and he gave her the name "*kukaitsa*" [=кукаица]. The hoopoe-bird went "pupu, pupu" – and he named him "*pupunets*" [=пупунец]. The duck began quacking, "ut, ut" – and he named her "*utka*" [=утка]. The owl began screeching "boochoo, boochoo" – and he was named "*boov*" [=був]; and so on with all the creatures, to whom Adam gave names and surnames, according to the voices he heard from them. He examined them one-by-one, so that he could select one for a companion, but he didn't fancy any of them.

As soon as he finished the task, the Lord came to him and asked whether he had finished. "Well, Adam, what did you do? Have you finished the assignment I gave you?" "I have finished it, God, but not quite, since I didn't select a friend. I am sitting and wondering, God", said Adam, "how it is that not a single creature came close to my heart" "Why don't you lie down and have a nap, Adam?" – said God, "and when you awake you will hopefully select a male or female companion for yourself". Adam lay down and fell asleep. God set off and made Eve. "Get up, Adam!" said God. Adam awoke from his sleep and saw Eve standing before him, a couple of paces away,

and he called to her, “Come, come, come here<sup>\*</sup>, because you are in my heart.” In the same way that Adam named all the creatures, so he named Eve and took her for a companion.

*The legend was recorded in the city of Prilep by Marko Tsepennov in the second half of the 19th century. According to his explanatory notes, this account was given to him by Dimeto Ustadzhim (“Прикажена отъ Димета Устаджима”). The text was published for the first time in Sofia in SbNU folklore collection, vol. 8 [1892: 180-181, text № 2].*

\* Come here = Bulg. *еља*, which is an imperative form of the verb *доидам/идвам* (pronounced in this case as *ева*, which is phonetically close to the local vernacular version of the name *Eve*).

## Text № 3

**Жената е отъ дяволска опашка**

Жената била направена от гъвавска опашка, за това била много гъвавол, и за това прикажуват човеците овакваа приказна за неа.

Дедо Госпот, откако направил от земъ първнио човек, што се кажува Адам, и како дуунал на него, и он оживел и станал како нас жив човек. После рекжл си Госпот: “на оваи човек сака да му дадам един другар, за да си прикажува со него, за да не му се саклетисува душата”. Викнал Госпот еден ангел и му рекжл овака: “слушай овамо, ангеле, што ке ти кажам. Ти сега от овдека ке отидеш при Адам у башчата, и ке го наидеш дека спие, та ке земеш полеецка и ке му извадеш едно ребро от левата страна, и ке ми го донесеш овдека; ама слушай овамо: гледай арно, да го не разбудеш!”.

Ангело се поклонил на Госпот и търчеики отишел при Адама у башчата, дека спал и му извадил полеецка едно ребро, без да го усете Адам и го донесе на Госпот; но и Госпот бил заспал, та ангело не смеял да го собуде и застанал на вратата, да го чека да се собуде.

Кута гледа ангело свети гъваволо, дека се качуе по мердивено и доогъа при него и му вика: “што седеш тува на вратата и заошко не улезеш у натре?” Ангело му рекжл: “боiam се да не собудам Госпот”. – “Ами што е овоа, што джриши у раката?” попрашал го гъваволо. – Ангело му рекал: “овоа е реброто на Адам”. – Гъваволо му рекжл: “мольям ти се, ангеле, кам да го видам, какво е”. Ангело се излажжал и му го дал, и гъваволо тай саат пърснал да бега и ангело се пушчили по него. Бре тута – бре там, гъваволо напрещ со реброто бега, ангело по него търче да му го от[не]ме, и гъваволо се шукнал у една дупка, и ангело го фанал за опашката. Гъваволо се бута надоле, ангело го тегле нагоре за опашката – теглил, теглил и му искубал опашката на гъваволо, и гъваволо се скрил у дупката. “Ами сега, какофон джувап ке дадам на Госпот?” викал си по пато ангело. Како отишел при Госпот, наогъа го дека спие ошче. “Ке го собудам” си рекжл ангело, “та какво сака, нека ми праве; да не би да ми рече: заошко ме не скорна отпрееска?” И тогаи фанал да вика: “Господи, Господи!” и Госпот му речел мижеики: “аиде, оди си, това што ти е у раците да стане това, што сум рекжл”? И така, гъваволската опашка станала на жена, и ставиле името Ева.

## Woman is from the Devil's tail

Woman was made from the Devil's tail, which is why she is so devilish, and for this reason people tell the following story about her.

When Granddad Lord created the first man from earth, whose name was Adam, He breathed into him; he came alive and became a living person, like us. Then God said to Himself, "I need to give this man a companion, so that he talks to him, so that his soul doesn't fidget". God summoned an angel and said as follows, "Listen to Me, angel, to what I am going to tell you. Go now to Adam in the orchard and you will find him asleep. You will carefully take a rib from his left side and bring it to Me here. But listen to Me, be careful that you don't wake him".

The angel bowed before God and, running, went to the orchard where Adam was sleeping, and quietly took a rib from him without Adam feeling it and went to deliver it to God. But God had also fallen asleep, and the angel did not dare wake Him up, and stood at [the threshold of] the door, waiting for Him to awaken.

Then, all of a sudden, the holy angel saw the Devil ascending and approaching and saying to him, "Why do you stand by the door and not go in?" The angel said to him, "I am afraid to wake up God!" The Devil asked him, "What is that you are holding in your hand?" The angel replied, "This is Adam's rib". The Devil said, "O angel, I beg you, give it to me so that I can see it up close". The angel was deceived and gave it to him, and at this very instance the Devil rushed away, scurrying off, and the angel ran, pursuing him. Here and there, the Devil was running ahead with the rib, with the angel running after him to get it back. Then the Devil slipped into a hole and the angel caught him by the tail; the Devil was pushing himself further down while the angel was pulling upwards on his tail. He pulled on the Devil's tail until pulling it off, while the Devil hid in the hole. "Well, now, what am I supposed to tell God [and how am I to explain what happened]?", said the angel to himself. When he approached God, he found Him still asleep. "I'll wake Him up," said the angel to himself, "and let Him do to me whatever He wants, or else He may ask me, «why didn't you wake me sooner?»". He began calling out, "God, God?" God said, keeping His eyes closed, "Well, go your way and may whatever is in your hands become what I had ordered to come about". And so, the Devil's tail became woman and they named her Eve.

*The text was recorded in the city of Shtip by the Bulgarian intellectual A. Kostentsev. According to his commentaries, he was given this account by his own father ("слушаалъ отъ бауя cu"). The text was published for the first time in Sofia, in vol. 9 of the SbNU folklore collection [1893: 155].*

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## IMMAGINI



Tab. 1

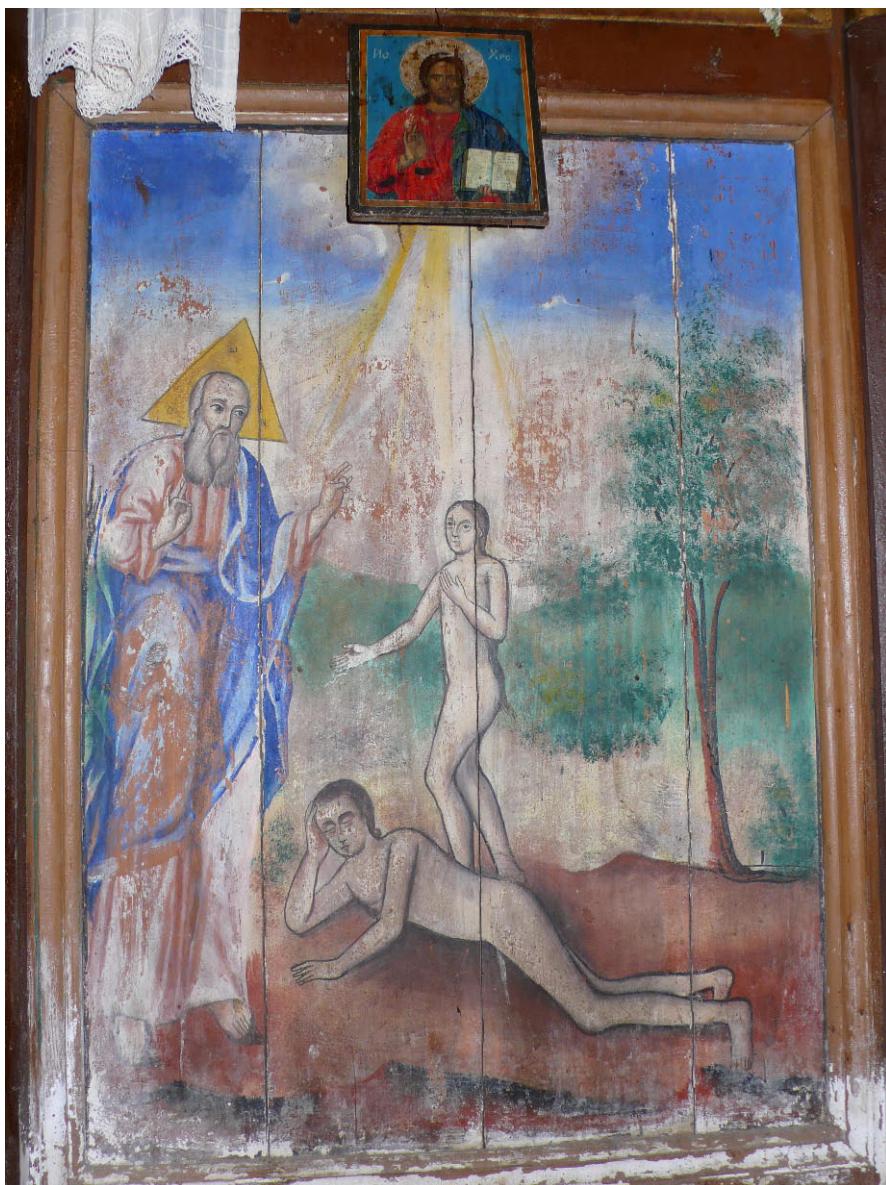
*The Creation of Eve, fresco in the open gallery of Rila Monastery, Bulgaria, mid-19th century.  
La creazione di Eva, affresco nella loggia del monastero di Rila (Bulgaria), metà del XIX secolo.*



**Tab. 2**

*The Creation of Eve*, an icon from the plinth panel ensemble of the iconostasis of the Church in the village of Palat, Sandanski area, South-Western Bulgaria, turn of the 20th century.

*La creazione di Eva*, icona dipinta sui pannelli dello zoccolo dell'iconostasi nella chiesa del villaggio di Palat, presso Sandanski (Bulgaria sud-occidentale), fine del XX secolo.

**Tab. 3**

*The Creation of Eve*, an icon from the plinth panel ensemble of the iconostasis of the Church in the village of Sveta Bogoroditsa, Sandanski area, South-Western Bulgaria, turn of the 20th century.

*La creazione di Eva*, icona dipinta sui pannelli dello zoccolo dell'iconostasi nella chiesa del villaggio di Sveta Bogorodica, nei pressi di Sandanski (Bulgaria sud-occidentale), fine del XX secolo.



Tab. 4

*The Creation*, an illustration from an illuminated manuscript written and designed by Priest Puncho from the village of Mokresh, Lom area, North-Western Bulgaria, 1796 (Sts. Cyril and Methodius National Library of Bulgaria, Ms. № 693, Fol. 280) [courtesy of the Bulgarian National Library].

*La creazione*, illustrazione tratta da un codice miniato, scritto e decorato dal prete Punčo del villaggio di Mokreš, nei pressi di Lom (Bulgaria nord-occidentale), 1796 (Biblioteca nazionale della Bulgaria “Ss. Cirillo e Metodio”, ms. № 693, Fol. 280) [per gentile concessione della Biblioteca Nazionale della Bulgaria].



Tab. 5

*The Fall*, an illustration from an illuminated manuscript written and designed by Priest Puncho from the village of Mokresh, Lom area, North-Western Bulgaria, 1796 (Sts. Cyril and Methodius National Library of Bulgaria, Ms. № 693, Fol. 282) [courtesy of the Bulgarian National Library].

*Il peccato originale*, illustrazione tratta da un codice miniato, scritto e decorato dal prete Punčo del villaggio di Mokreš, nei pressi di Lom (Bulgaria nord-occidentale), 1796 (Biblioteca nazionale della Bulgaria “SS. Cirillo e Metodio”, ms. № 693, Fol. 282) [per gentile concessione della Biblioteca Nazionale della Bulgaria].



Tab. 6

*Eve Spinning*, an illustration from an illuminated manuscript written and designed by Priest Puncho from the village of Mokresh, Lom area, North-Western Bulgaria, 1796 (Sts. Cyril and Methodius National Library of Bulgaria, Ms. № 693, Fol. 283) [courtesy of the Bulgarian National Library].

*Eva che fila*, illustrazione tratta da un codice miniato, scritto e decorato dal prete Punčo del villaggio di Mokreš, nei pressi di Lom (Bulgaria nord-occidentale), 1796 (Biblioteca nazionale della Bulgaria “SS. Cirillo e Metodio”, ms. № 693, Fol. 283) [per gentile concessione della Biblioteca Nazionale della Bulgaria].





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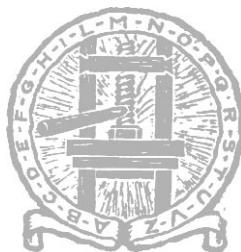
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Linguista, filologo e semiologo di fama mondiale, Boris Uspenskij è erede della grande tradizione culturale russa del Novecento. Il suo iniziale interesse per la tipologia strutturale delle lingue, formatosi all'università di Mosca, si è gradualmente evoluto in prospettiva semiotica, anche grazie agli stretti rapporti di amicizia e collaborazione con personalità del calibro di Roman Jakbson, Michail Bachtin, Petr Bogatyrev, Lev Žegin. Particolarmente fecondo è stato il sodalizio con Jurij Lotman nell'ambito della cosiddetta scuola di Tartu-Mosca, che diede vita a una semiotica della cultura basata su principi linguistici. In questa prospettiva, gli interessi scientifici di Boris Uspenskij si sono estesi ai campi più diversi, spaziando dall'arte, alla letteratura, alla mitologia, alla slavistica, alla semiotica della storia. In particolare, lo studioso ha posto al centro delle sue ricerche il riconoscimento della lingua come sistema modellizzante primario della cultura, approfondendo l'isomorfismo esistente tra arti verbali e visuali; al contempo, ha continuato gli studi di linguistica generale e slava, dedicandosi soprattutto alla storia della lingua letteraria russa. Attualmente Boris Uspenskij si occupa di semiotica della comunicazione, con particolare riferimento al fenomeno della deissi, per il quale ha rintracciato illuminanti paralleli nelle modalità di interazione tra diversi punti di vista, proprie delle arti figurative.

Dopo aver insegnato presso gli atenei di Vienna e Graz, in Austria, e presso le università di Harvard e Cornell, negli U.S.A., Boris Uspenskij ha svolto a lungo la sua attività didattica presso l'Università degli Studi di Napoli "L'Orientale".

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