PRESENT AND PAST IN THE STUDY OF RELIGION AND MAGIC

Edited by
ÁGNES HESZ
ÉVA PÓCS

BALASSI KIADÓ
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Poster proclaiming 15 August as the “Day of the Armed Forces”, Tinos, Greece, August 1994.
Photo by Evy Johanne Håland.

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Introduction

The present collection of papers is based on the proceedings of an interdisciplinary conference held in 2017. The basic theme of the event was provided by the talks given by members of the “East-West” research group on religious ethnology, which was based at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences Institute of Ethnography as part of the project “Vernacular Religion on the Boundaries of Eastern and Western Christianity” funded by the ERC. Members included folklorists, anthropologists and historians whose main research goal was to conduct complex, parallel examinations of present and past from the varying perspectives of historical anthropological/folklore studies. This was inspired by the insight that both the efforts of history in studying the past, and of folklore studies in looking often for traces of the past in the present may prove incomplete and one-sided without a mutually fruitful co-operation; and we may well also mention here the discipline of anthropology, which focuses mainly on understanding present societies. Works produced in this vein by our research group provided the idea to organise the conference Present and Past to which we also invited a few other scholars both from Hungary and the international scene. The main aim of this conference was to explore the complex interconnections of present and past, the interactions between contemporary research and the historical perspective. We were seeking to answer how and whether it is possible to study the present with the help of the past and to probe into the past with the help of the present; how the present may be understood with the help of the past and, vice versa; what connections between present and past could be studied today, and how and for what purposes present day societies “use” the past.

Examining the interconnections of the present and the past has been a much-felt presence in European folklore studies ever since the beginning (and, more covertly, also in history and religious studies). The “beginning” primarily meant studying the living relics of the past in the present, of “traditions” and their origin, no matter what purpose drove or what method served our learned forebears in doing so. Historical and cultural historical investigations, comparative historical analyses and their con-


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**The Creation of Man**

**Antique Literacy – Modern Folklore**

The epic folk tradition of creation does not exclusively consist of adaptations of biblical texts. One can find pre-Christian mythologies, narratives of ancient, medieval, even apocryphal theological works among them. These written sources are often rooted in orality. This might be impossible to prove irrefutably from the distant perspective of several hundreds or even more than a thousand years; one can, nonetheless, argue for it.

"It could be argued that Slavonic folklore versions of the Book of Genesis not only exemplify the encounter between the written canon and the local tradition, but also represent the unfolding of a certain oral Ur-hypertext, the earliest existence of which preceded the actual formation of the Biblical text itself." In fact, the Bible represents only one among many of the subsequent metamorphoses of this oral Ur-hypertext, traces of which can be found in later Judaic tradition (i.e. some midrashim, and the Aggadah), in Christian tradition (i.e. in a number of apocryphal texts, as well as patristic writings) and in Islamic tradition (the Qur’an and the Hadith). It can be further argued that these written offspring of the original oral Ur-hypertext have their folklore counterparts, which never ceased to exist in vernacular traditions of the three Abrahamic religions. All the different layers of the prototext "have functioned throughout centuries independently, yet coherently bound, still evidently retaining certain inner, clandestine links of mutual interdependence, despite of the different languages and dialects through the means of which they were transmitted".

Alan Dundes formulated a similar observation as well: "Orally transmitted folklore such as proverbs and legends can survive relatively intact for centuries with no help from written sources". This idea and its opposite ("the thesis is impossible to verify,
the trajectories of those narratives cannot be retraced") have been expressed by many. According to Magdalena Lužanska, for instance, these richly varied narratives "were not self-generated ... from an original Ur-source (or its variants) transmitted locally down the generations, but rather were popularized by the religious elites", and by the popular literature in the nineteenth century. The transmission and popularisation of written texts can sometimes be demonstrated (popular prints, calendars, chap books, etc.), but not always. In the former case, the readings can be considered as direct antecedents of the variants written down from orality.

This paper examines the occurrences of certain motifs in the narratives about the creation of man in early written sources and in modern folklore; the latter will be analysed using several Hungarian and other examples. The connection among the texts, which are far apart in time and space, can be explained in various ways, although it is no small challenge to do so. The fieldwork began in the last decade, for instance among Muslims living in Bulgaria, which resulted in a very rich text corpus that suggests that, like the Folk Bible, there exists also a Folk Qur'an. The narratives about the first pair of human beings is much more diverse than those included in the Qur'an. Their sources include commentaries on the Qur'an (tafsir), histories (tarikh), lifestories of prophets (in the Islamic tradition, Adam was the first man and the first prophet). Some of them are based on the book of Bereshit/Genesis, the Christian Apocrypha and Jewish midrashic narratives. "Muslim writers writing about Adam and Hawwa were probably inspired by The Life of Adam and Eve/Vita Adae et Evae (fifth and sixth centuries), a Syriac text entitled The Cave of Treasures (sixth century), and the Coptic text Encomium ... Presumably, the Slavic Apocrypha known in Bulgaria including A Word on Adam and Eve - Slovo za Adam i Eva ot načaloto do svršeca (tenth and eleventh centuries), On the Sea of Tiberias - Za Tiveriadskoto More (probably from the eleventh and twelfth centuries); a Word from John Chrysostom on How Michael Vanquished Satanate - Slovo na sveti Joan Zlatoust za tova kak Mikhail pobedi Satanata (earliest known copy dates back to the sixteenth century), and The Beginning of the World - Početie sveta (seventeenth century). ... Given the heterogeneous nature of beliefs concerning Adam and Hawwa, however, it is difficult to identify the different layers or their origins with any degree of certainty."

We cannot find such a rich diversity in apocryphal documents of the Old Testament in the Hungarian history of literature; their narrative tradition, unlike the narratives known from the New Testament did not appear later, neither in baroque sermons, nor in the popular culture. We can mention the chapter based on the Vita Adae et Evae of the Teleki Codex (1525-1531), or other manuscript versions of this work, such as those in the Cathedral Library of Esztergom. However, over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries collectors have recorded, surprisingly, an impres-

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7 Lužanska 2015, 174.
8 Ibid., 178.
9 Katona 1904.
the Devil kicked up a piece of dirt, and it became a frog. The frog started to jump around. — You see, I can create, too! — Good — said God — but we also need to create man. Then the holy God kicked a piece of dirt and it became a man. The man started to talk, and this is how man was created on Earth. The elders told so.15

Now the Earth was empty. They should create a man. They started to wash their hands; they scraped out the dirt from under their nails, the Devil and God as well. The Devil also made a man, and the God made one, too. God breathed into the mud, and the Devil did the same with his. One of them became the man, the other the woman; and they let them to the earth and they still live there today.16

God creates man from earth (sand, mud) as in the Bible, but in these texts the earth comes from the sea. The vivification of the body by God’s breath also appears in the Hungarian folklore variants. The creation of the woman in the variant from Klézse is significantly different from the biblical narrative, but also from the other Hungarian folklore texts: here the woman is the creation of the Devil.

There are three redactions of the Legend About the Sea of Tiberias apocrypha, two of which contain the episode of the creation of man.

**Russian redaction A-2**, it was discovered in the city of Cheboksary by V. Grigorovich, it was part of a miscellany dating back to the eighteenth century, which “betrays palpable features of an earlier Bulgarian protograph”.17

After the fall of the angels:

V. And the Lord substituted the fallen host with mankind. Righteous men were called for, and instead of Satan himself, God created man of flesh — the primordial Adam — from the earth’s soil, with bones from stone, blood from the Red Sea, thoughts from clouds, eyes from the sun, and breath from the wind. And the Lord went to his Father in heaven for the Holy Spirit [to breathe it into Adam] and then the Lord went to Adam on earth, and he saw Adam, who was covered with wounds, having been pierced by [Satan’s] finger. And the Lord said to Satan, “Why did you, O forlorn Devil, do that? I created man as pure and blameless, without blemish.” And Satan said to the Lord, “He will forget you, but if some part [of his body] starts aching, he will pray [to you], “Lord, have mercy upon me!” And the Lord turned [man] inside out and fixed him with skin and inserted into him the Holy Spirit and vivified Adam.18

**The Russian redaction, Type B**, ms, compiled in the period 1776–1780.

III. And the Lord planted Paradise in Eden to the East (Gen. 2:8), and Lord created Man from eight components: first, a body from earth; second, bones from stone; third, blood from the Red Sea; fourth, eyes from the sun; fifth, breath from wind; sixth, thoughts from clouds; seventh, warmth from fire; eighth, reason from the moon. Having created the body of Adam, the Lord went to Heaven, to His Father “for Adam’s soul”. And the Devil came to Adam’s body, and not knowing what to do with him, poked his body with his finger, causing wounds in it. The Lord came from Heaven and saw Adam’s pierced body and the Lord said to the Devil, “How dare you do that to my creation?” And the Devil replied, “My Lord, Adam will have children, and they will have children and from them people will breed on Earth. From these wounds, sickness will originate in man, in Adam’s kin. If people forget you, Lord, as soon as something aches in them, they will remember you, saying “God have mercy on me and save me!” [The Lord] turned Adam inside out with his wounds within [and vivified him], and from this moment, there is sickness inherent in every human.19

The homologies of earth and flesh, the implementation of “bone” as a corporeal alloform for “stone”, the derivation of blood (i.e. the bodily fluids = the liquid elements of macrocosm) from sea/salty water (i.e. the liquid elements of macrocosm) as rendered in Indo-European anthropologies (with special emphasis on the “homologic causality” encoded in them), the mythopoetic relationship between “thoughts” and “clouds”, the attestation of “Sun” as macrocosmic alloform for “eyes” in Indo-European languages and mythologies are mentioned and alluded in footnotes.20

The motif of “seven substances employed in composition of human body”: Thompson Mot. A 1260.1.4. This aspect also appears in the Jewish tradition when God creates Adam from clods of earth from the four corners of the world. (Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer).

Caput 11: If a man should come from the east to the west, or from the west to the east, and his time comes to depart from the world then the earth shall not say. The dust of thy body is not mine, return to the place whence thou wast created. But (this circumstance) teaches thee that in every place where a man goes or comes, and his end approaches when he must depart from the world, thence is the dust of his body and there it returns to the dust.21 This also appears in Syriac and Arab sources.22

17 Badalanova Geller 2013, 70.
19 Ibid., 110.
20 Ibid., 87.
This tradition never appears independently; it is usually integrated into larger medieval works for the purpose of education, usually presented in a question-and-answer form (erotapokriseis). The earliest texts were written in Latin and Irish (the coincidence of two such different languages points to a Greek origin) and aside some minor differences they show great similarities: variation only occurred later. Slavic tradition (manuscripts from the twelfth to eighteenth centuries) is more ambiguous. It is preserved in the Conversation of the Three Saints (Beseda treh svjatitelej) and the manuscript variants of the related question and answers, erotapokriseis-type Wisdom (Razoumnik) texts; the latter are known from the sixteenth century on.

The relationship of the Adam Octopartite/Septipartite narrative and the 2 Enoch 30:8–9 is complicated. The 2 Enoch (or Second Book of Enoch) is an apocalyptic work of ancient Judaism inherited by Christianity and transmitted in Slavonic ecclesiastic manuscripts. There is a much bigger probability of the ancient text being in Greek than in Hebrew or Aramaic. This tradition related to the Septuagint was influenced by the ideology of Byzantine Christianity. It was presumably translated into Old Church Slavonic in the tenth century in Bulgaria. The Slavonic manuscripts (nine or ten, depending on whether we include one of the fragments; there are several fragments) are from a later age, between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries; the newly discovered Nubian Coptic manuscript is from the twelfth century. A Glagolitic Croatian fragment, also from the twelfth century, “provides modest evidence for a South Slavic translation of 2 Enoch circulating at any early stage.” The manuscripts were already written in various dialects of ecclesiastical Slavonic (not in Old Church Slavonic). Reconstructing the path of a text and the presumption of an Ur-text requires a very complex and interdisciplinary approach “that locates the textual problems within the wider context of theology of the book as a whole, but also within the historical and theological frameworks of the various cultures that may have played a generative role in the text’s history; Jewish, Christian, Byzantine and Slavic.”

The longer redaction of Adam’s creation narrates the following: “his flesh from earth, his blood from dew and from the sun; his eyes from the bottomless sea; his bones from stone; his reason from the mobility of angels and from clouds; his veins and hair from grass of the earth; his spirit from my spirit and from wind.”

Research considers 2 Enoch to be the source of the Adam Septipartite and Octopartite tradition widely known in medieval literature, as well as one of the sources of Sea of Tiberias. A Bulgarian example of a modern variant collected from orality in 1979:

After God created the earth, the sky and the water, he sent out four of his angels in four directions to bring back clay. He mixed it and created man/people. Then he sent one of them to the East, another to the West, a third to the South and the one who remained to the North. Thus he filled the four corners of the earth with people.

In Hungarian folklore there are only faint traces of the idea according to which the characteristics of men or their body parts reflect or symbolically represent the material they were made of.

After having created the earth, God was talking with the archangel. They discussed the matter of man. The archangel said if there is a man then he should have a counterpart. So that he does not become lonely. God agreed, but they were debating what material to use for the woman. They agreed upon making the woman from the man. The Lord God said that it would be best to use the bone of the head. The archangel said, it would make the woman the head of the house, so they should not use that. The Lord God replied that in that case they could also use the bone of the foot. But then she would become the foot-rag of man, said the archangel. Finally they agreed on using the man’s rib to make the woman.

There are several variants of the legend type in which God created the woman from a dog’s tail: the characteristics of the dog remained with the creature, but we will not discuss this widely known narrative type here.

In every manuscript of the Legend About the Sea of Tiberias containing anthropogenic narratives we find that the Devil in God’s absence puts sickness in Adam’s body, which is one type of the other narratives discussing the origin and cause of illnesses (Thompson Mot. A 1293). There is a Bulgarian manuscript of the Legend About the Sea of Tiberias in which God having returned to Earth and finding Adam damaged, repaired the injured human body by turning it inside out, thus healing the wounds caused by the Devil, as it happened in the Russian text cited above. There are numerous known Bulgarian variants among the etiological texts recorded from the second half of the nineteenth century. “The indigenous storytellers further elaborated and developed this tale, making it part of their narrative ethnomedicine and ethnopharmacology. Popular belief held that, despite being covered by God with flesh and skilfully concealed under man’s skin, the sores inflicted by Satan are to remain hidden within man’s body forever.”

The legend motif is also known by Finno-Ugric and eastern Slavic peoples; independently from the earth-diver type of the Legend About The Sea of Tiberias. The quest for the soul is also present in Siberian Turkic legends; and in one of the Hungarian

33 Macaskill 2012, 97; 2013a
34 Macaskill 2013a, 32.
35 Macaskill 2012, 83.
36 Ibid., 95; 2013b, 9.
39 Badalanova Geller 2011, 79.
40 Ibid.
41 Dähnhardt 1907, 98–106.
God left the dog to guard the lifeless body while he went to get some mud. The Devil made the temperature so cold that the dog could not stand it. The Devil offered him fur if he left the body alone for a moment. The dog received the fur, and the Devil spat on the body, hence creating all human illnesses.32

However, the motif of the man corrupted by the Devil is undoubtedly present in Hungarian folklore:

I heard that God created the world together with the Devil, but the Devil betrayed him. When God turned away, the Devil injected a lot of bad things into the man, similar to the thorns in a rose. He shaped the man at the same time as he interfered with the rose, which is why the rose has spiky thorns. He implanted the two at the same time, so that the soul of the man becomes as prickly as the thorns of the rose.33

The list could go on, breathing life into the body, the agreement between God and the Devil concerning the living and the dead, etc. But these are topics to be discussed in another study.

The far-reaching and intricate literary transmission of the Sea of Tiberias apocryphon explains sufficiently its position within the Orthodox Slavic culture (and in that of the Muslims living with the Christians in the Balkan region), and the existence of diverse variants; however, the narrative supply of Hungarian folklore is especially difficult to explain lacking such a background. The occurrence of the discussed motifs independently of Christianit and of Islam, for instance in Finno-Ugric or Turkic mythologies, testifies to the possible existence of orality before written sources. Nonetheless, the interaction between religious literary texts and their folklore variants, as well as the effect of “borrowing” from one another among neighbouring peoples, is indisputable.

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32 Dahnhardt 1907, 99.
TATIANA MINNIAKHMETOVA–Margarita Suleimanova

The Revival and Persistence of Traditional Healing Methods among Bashkirs and Udmurts:
Some Contemporary Issues

Historical review

Multiple ethnic groups including the Turkic, Finno-Ugric and Russian communities inhabit the Volga-Ural region in Russia. Nowadays this represents a common historical-ethnographic area. In the past centuries, active interactions between the Finno-Ugrian and Turkic tribes occurred in the context of close geographical locations. This ensured that these ethnic groups have experienced historically similar developmental processes.

One aspect of the changes in the traditional worldviews of these ethnicities relates to the religious policy of the Russian State. This policy regarding the religious life among the communities began in the middle of the sixteenth century after the accession of the lands inhabited by the pagan (Mordvins, Maris, Udmurts, Chuvashs) and the Islamised (Bashkirs, Tatars) folks, and with the beginning of the forced Christianisation of these ethnic groups. Such processes provoked the beginning of interactions between traditional beliefs and religious worldviews of the local Finno-Ugric (Udmurt, Mari, Mordva) and Turkic (Chuvash) peoples with Orthodox Christianity and it favoured the gradual addition and composition of syncretic forms of religious expression. Similar processes, with the adoption of the Islamic religion had been experienced among the Bashkirs and Tatars several centuries earlier. The Islamisation among these Turkic folks began at the end of the ninth and the early tenth centuries.

During the Soviet period the policy of “militant atheism” was implemented resulting in the destruction of all faiths and closure of religious institutions. Despite the repressive and severe conditions of life, indigenous peoples have managed to preserve the basic elements of their culture and religion. This thesis is based on the surviving layer of traditional conceptions and practices that in varying degrees is quite successfully being revived.