

VLADIMIR SOLOVIEV AND GNOSTIC SYMBOLISM
IN THE *TALE OF TSAREVICH SVETOMIR*¹

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Contemporary studies have often noted that the gnostic paradigm of the Russian symbolist mythopoetics was strongly influenced by the philosophy of Vladimir Solovyov.² Mythopoetics of Russian symbolism included the pragmatics of Sophian universal myth (ibid. “Sophian gnosis”), which was formed under the strong influence of Soloviev’s philosophical sophiology.³ This presupposed the reception of the universal mythopoetic tradition by Russian modernism. That is why one can speak not only about the traits of Gnostic philosophy or Biblical tradition, but of a certain sophiological para-

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² *Groberg K.A.* The Feminine Occult Sophia in the Russian Religious Renaissance: A Bibliographical Essay // *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*. 1992. Vol. 26. № 1-4. P. 197-240; *Carlson M.* Gnostic Elements in the Cosmogony of Vladimir Soloviev // *Russian Religious Thought* / Eds. J.D. Kornblatt, R.F. Gustafson. Madison, University of Wisconsin, 1996. P. 49-68; *Poljakov F.* Gnostische Reminiszenzen in der russischen Geisteswelt der Moderne. In J. Verheyden and H. Teule (eds.), *Heresies and Heretics in Ancient and Eastern Christianity. Studies in Honour of Adelbert Davids*. Leuven 2009, 355-367 [*Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 60, 2008 (2009)].

³ We will permit ourselves specify only a few works dedicated to that topic: *Рычков А.Л.* “Софийный гнозис” Серебряного века: источники и влияния // *Va, pensiero, sull’ali dorate...* (Взлети, мысль златокрылая...): Из истории мысли и культуры Востока и Запада: Сборник статей к 70-летию Евгения Борисовича Рашковского. М., 2010. С. 344-363; *Он же.* Александрийская мифологема у русских символистов // *Пути Гермеса. Материалы симпозиума 14 февраля 2008 года*, Москва. ВГБИЛ. М., 2009. С. 151-159, *passim*; *Козырев А.П.* Гностические искания Вл. Соловьева и культура Серебряного века // *Владимир Соловьев и культура Серебряного века: к 150-летию Вл. Соловьева и 110-летию А. Ф. Loseva*. М., 2005. С. 226-240; *Громов М.Н.* Софийные мотивы в творчестве Вячеслава Иванова // *Вячеслав Иванов – творчество и судьба: к 135-летию со дня рождения* / Под ред. А.А. Тахо-Годи, Е.А. Тахо-Годи. М., 2002; *Cioran S.D.* *Vladimir Solov’ev and the Knighthood of the Divine Sophia*. Waterloo, 1977.

digm in such literary images and characters as Dante's *Beatrice*, Goethe's *Das Ewigch Weiblich*, and the *Blue Flower* by Novalis. Nor can one overlook the simple fact that the Gnostic tradition in the culture of Russian symbolism was reproduced in various ways, including the publication of sources, which have been translated into the Russian language – mainly works by the late classical writers against heresies and general works on the history of Gnosticism.⁴

Vyacheslav Ivanov's crafting the *Tale of Tsarevich Svetomir* (further as *Tale*), continued during his work at the *Collegium Russicum* and the *Pontifical Oriental Institute*. He had been working on his *Tale* until his death, but did not have the time to finish this text, planned as a fulfillment of his spiritual testament. Father Philippe de Regis, rector of the Collegium Russicum, emphasized in his letter to Pope Pius XI from 20 January 1938 that the Ivanov's novel connected with the book of Vladimir Soloviev *Russia and the Universal Church* and would have great impact on Russian thought.⁵ In his response letter from February 19, 1938, Ivanov thanked the Pope for the financial support that allowed him to continue working "on a vast book, conceived as the spiritual testament of a poet and Christian thinker with the intention to appeal to the turbid and devastated soul of the Russian people, which *ingemiscit et parturit usque adhuc*, asking it to gain clear look of its true position, gain understanding of the fate of Christ's Church".⁶

It is possible that Ivanov dwelled on some themes and motifs of the novel even longer, beginning his work already in the last years of the 19th century. The *Tale* is a confession of the writer, which reflects his mystical experience in understanding the supernatural world through visions and dreams, this book also reflects his personal biographical experience. The text is quite unique in its genre and design, and can be regarded as historiosophical meditation on Russia's mission. As noted by Sergei Makovsky, Ivanov's contemporary: "the ancient Russian life here is only a vague, artistically-inspired background <...> The symbolism of the story appeals to all mankind and has also eschatological meaning...".⁷

⁴ One of the first books on the history of Gnosticism was written by Julia Danzas, later converted to Catholicism: Николаев Ю. [Ю.Н. Данзас] В поисках за божеством: очерки по истории гностицизма. СПб., 1913; see also thesis of theological dissertation: Писнов М.Э. Гностицизм II века и победа христианской церкви над ним. Киев, 1917.

⁵ Юдин А. Вячеслав Иванов и Филипп де Режиc // Символ (Париж-Москва). 2008. № 53-54. С. 742.

⁶ Поджи В. Иванов в Риме // Символ (Париж-Москва). 2008. № 53-54. С. 695.

⁷ Маковский С.К. Вячеслав Иванов // Маковский С.К. Портреты современников. Нью-Йорк, 1955. С. 301.

The *Tale* is a mythological narrative about a certain Slavic state; it is a story about the destiny of its princely dynasty. Much of the narrative is devoted to Seraphim-Svetomir's parents, Vladar and Otrada, but also to the relationship between his grandmother Gorislava and former hypostasis of Vladar, named Lazarus. As planned by Ivanov, the main narrative would have been devoted to the history of Seraphim-Svetomir; yet, the poet had written only 5 parts. Unfortunately, it is not possible to reconstruct the full plot of the *Tale*. The surviving and completely finished parts present a fictional story of some fantastic kingdom bearing the features of ancient Russian states. The story is rich not only with Slavic folklore themes and motifs, but also with Biblical imagery, it is filled with quotations from the Four Gospels, especially the Gospel of John and the Apocalypse. As Prof. Andrej Toporkov demonstrated in his fundamental study⁸ on the poetics of the *Tale*, the intertextual links of Ivanov's text are extremely suggestive. His detailed scholarly commentary indicates such sources of Ivanov's novel: St. Augustine's *Confessions*, the *Epistle of the Prester John*, Francis of Assisi's *Flowers*, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, *Monarchy*, and the *New Life*. Represented are also Nietzsche, Novalis, as well as Pushkin, Dostoevsky, and Alexander Blok from the Russian literary tradition. Besides, as Andrej Toporkov reasonably pointed out, there were references to at least three major texts by the Russian philosopher Vladimir Soloviev: these are *Russia and the Universal Church*, *Three Conversations* and a poem *Three Meetings*, while Soloviev's poetry became for Ivanov an important source of hidden quotations.

It would seem that for the further understanding of *The Tale's* complex symbolic imagery one should also turn to other numerous Soloviev's articles, including his dictionary entries dedicated to Gnostic sects of the first centuries of Christianity. Soloviev's articles can indeed be considered among the most important intertextual sources, revealing the entire set of the Gnostic ideas that fed Russian symbolism with the intellectual and literary resources of the culture of the Silver Age.⁹

Ivanov did not finish, as he had originally planned, one of the chief story lines of his book, inspired by Soloviev's ideas about the Universal Church.¹⁰

⁸ *Топорков А.Л. Источники "Повести о Светомире царевиче" Вяч. Иванова: древняя и средневековая книжность и фольклор. М., 2012.*

⁹ *Соловьев В.С. Валентин и валентиняне; Вардесан; Василид; Гностицизм; Карпократ; Офиты; Симон Волхв // Философский словарь Владимира Соловьева. Ростов-на-Дону, 1997. С.3-8; 10-11;13-15; 89-94; 200-201; 347; 460-463.*

¹⁰ In this paper we cannot touch the important question of possible crucial influence of Soloviev's book on Ivanov's decision to convert to Catholicism, we only remind that during the corresponding ritual he used Soloviev's creed. This question was discussed in detail in

It is known that the Brussels edition of Ivanov's collected works contains a continuation of the *Tale* written by his close friend and secretary Olga Shor, who recorded the outline of the story from the words of Ivanov himself (I, 371-512). However, this sequel is not authentic and is not sanctioned by the author. That is why it was not included in the critical edition of the complete novel about Svetomir Tsarevich, published in the Academy series "The Monuments of Literature".¹¹

Ivanov's novel contains no open exposition of Soloviev's ideas; there are no direct references to his writings, which are obvious: the "Tale" seems to have no political agenda; it is a work of artistry that lives by its own laws. The Soloviev layer of *Tale* is manifested through the number of implicit motifs and the core of Soloviev's theocratic ideas concerning the coming City of God, the New Kingdom and the universal Church, which will reunite the Eastern and Western branches of Christianity, can be read out in the outline of the unrealized plot.¹² As Andrej Toporkov pointed out,¹³ one of the central ideas of the *Tale* is the problem of the balance between the secular and divine power, formulated in a paraphrase of the famous Gospel words of Christ: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God the things that are God's" (Mat 22:21)". In his conversation with Simeon Hors the prince Vladar says: "Pagan nations worshipped Caesar as God. But the faithful were told to render Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's".¹⁴ Simon Magus replies to this: "This was told when Caesar was prince of this world, and the whole world lied in wickedness, being an image of King of darkness. Light-bearing Caesar is to come, and will come: and all that is Caesar's are God's, and all that is God's are Caesar's".¹⁵ That is: the Ruler of Light is coming, who will bring different laws: that which belonged to Caesar, will belong to God, and that which belonged to God will belong to Caesar. This interpretation goes back to Soloviev's book *Russia and the Uni-*

articles by such researchers as Andrej Shishkin and Alexei Yudin (*Шишкин А.Б. "Россия" и "Вселенская церковь" в формуле Вл. Соловьева и Вяч. Иванова // Вячеслав Иванов – Петербург – мировая культура: Материалы международной научной конференции 9-11 сентября 2002. Томск- М., 2003. С. 159-178; Юдин А. Ibid).*

¹¹ *Иванов В. Повесть о Светомире Царевиче / Изд. подгот. А.Л. Топорков, О.Л. Фетисенко, А.Б. Шишкин. М.: Наука, 2015. (Литературные памятники).*

¹² *Соловьев Вл. Россия и Вселенская церковь / Пер. с французского Г.А. Рачинского. М., Тип. А.И. Мамонтова, 1911.*

¹³ *Топорков А.Л. Источники "Повести о Светомире царевиче" Вяч. Иванова...*

¹⁴ *Иванов В. Повесть о Светомире Царевиче... С. 77.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

versal Church: “Some Gospel texts were so many times interpreted that a passage could mean almost anything... The commandment “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s; and to God the things that are God’s” had been restlessly repeated to consecrate the order of things according to which Caesar received everything, and God – nothing”.¹⁶

The final part of the *Tale*, which describes the kingdom of Prester John,¹⁷ is crucial in eliciting the butt of Ivanov’s creative plans. The *Epistle of Prester John* is rendered with sophisticated grammatical forms of the Old Slavonic language, unfamiliar to the modern reader, and thus deliberately obscuring the narrative and intentionally hiding numerous evangelical allusions. This part of the *Tale* is imitating the well-known medieval story of an Indian Kingdom, a kind of a Theocratic utopia. At the same time, the *Epistle of Prester John* is a hermetic text, almost totally closed in onto itself, this requiring special interpretation and allowing absolute understanding only to the reader equal in his spiritual experience and intellectual background. The *Epistle* repeats the legendary story about ever alive John the Theologian, who is the true ruler of Prester John’s Kingdom. It can be assumed that, at least in this part of the *Tale* the plot contains obvious and clear references to the *Three Conversations*, another Soloviev’s book, which tells the story of the three representatives of Western and Eastern Christianity – John the Elder, Pope Peter, and a Protestant Professor Paul. John the Elder, who unmasked the Antichrist previously acting as a representative of the secular power, was killed by the lightning, but then came alive, and followed with the others the heavenly sign of the “Woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and a crown of twelve stars upon her head” (ibid, 759; see also Rev. 12:1). Besides, according to Ivanov, the legend describing John who came alive had its parallels in the story of the resurrection of Lazarus that established the basis of the tale about Vladar, the ruler of the Slavic Kingdom.

Sergei Makovsky, a literary critic and Ivanov’s contemporary, in his memories renders Ivanov’s plans which he learned from Olga Shor. According to Makovsky, there had to be the story about Svetomir’s spiritual transformation into the being of another world and the ruler of transformed Kingdom. Indeed, if we take that kind of suggested continuation of the *Tale*, in which the protagonist would be Svetomir Tsarevitch, his further fate would be closely linked to his transformation – both spiritual and corporal. The two crucial twists of the plot would correspond to the death of the hero, who at least twice dies and comes alive.

¹⁶ Соловьев Вл. Россия и Вселенская церковь. С. 10-11.

¹⁷ Иванов В. Повесть о Светомире Царевиче... С. 121-142.

In the first part of the continuation of the story it was planned that Svetomir would falsely die and be saved from the tomb by the elder and monk Parthenius, who then sent him to be educated and trained by the wisest Prester John in the distant India. In the next part he dies for real, having passed symbolically the magic arrow of St. George, the fabulous attribute of powerful hero, to the Queen of Heaven. However, the story does not end there, because Svetomir comes alive in a transfigured form of a righteous ruler, Tsar-Devitsa, who is a heroine of folklore and myth. She derived her wisdom from the other world and now rules on earth cleansed of all evil.

This plan was originally implied in the protagonist Svetomir's name, which combined two stems: *svet-* (light) and *-mir* (the world).¹⁸ It is important to note that the opposition light / darkness take a special place not only as the linguistic paradigm in the Gospel vocabulary, but also in the preserved Gnostic texts.¹⁹ It should also be noted, that the semantics of "Light" is extremely significant for Ivanov's poetic morphology; his last book of poems was entitled *The evening Light*. Besides, the "light" is a frequent lexeme in his poetry during the 1900s and 1910s; this feature was pointed out by Andrei Bely in his 1917 study of verse and meter, dedicated to Ivanov.²⁰

In his report from 1909 *The Evangelical meaning of the word 'the Earth'* Ivanov examined in detail the Gospel passages in which Christ was called the holder of light and the world: "Christ is in the world as the Light in the darkness, and "the darkness did not comprehend Him". <...> The light is the Sun that is to shine on at midnight, the Bridegroom approaching at midnight. For the light symbolizes the Bridegroom". Indeed, Ivanov's philological erudition should encourage researchers of his creative heritage to look for further sources of themes, motives and plot lines of the "Tale". As a philologist, Ivanov offers his reader a new type of the plot based on archaic folklore and myth; the crucial role here is given to his emphasis on the polysemantic sources of the symbols.

Professor Toporkov devoted several chapters of his research to the reconstruction of the myth about the Ancestor-Serpent in the *Tale* through the ancient Russian folklore sources. It seems that it would be possible to add

¹⁸ See a special chapter to the onomastics of the *Tale*: *Топорков А.Л. Источники "Повести о Светомире царевиче"* Вяч. Иванова.

¹⁹ *Берестнев Г.И. К проблеме языка ментальных пространств: образ света с когнитивной точки зрения* // Горизонты современной лингвистики: Традиции и новаторство: Сборник в честь Е.С. Кубряковой. М., 2009. С. 143-161.

²⁰ *Белый А. Вячеслав Иванов* // Русская литература XX века. 1890-1910. Т. III. Кн. 8. М., [1918]. С. 114-149.

one more relevant source for the image of the Serpent, which goes back to the system of mythological representations in the Gnostic philosophy of the Ophites. The question of Ivanov's acquaintance with the most important sources on the history of Gnosticism is open, but it is certain that the main sources of information about the Ophites, their rites and teachings are the writings of the Church Fathers. According to Epiphany of Cyprus (in the treatise *Panarion*, the chapter "Against the Ophites, the Seventeenth and Thirty-Seven Heresies"), in the guise of the Serpent, the Ophites worshiped demons: "They honor the serpent as a worthless demon". We would like to draw attention to the interpretation by Soloviev of the symbol of the Serpent in its connection with the idea of the Gnostic Sophia: "Офиты (от *οφις* – змея) – гностическая секта, или группа сект, чтивших в змее образ, принятый верховною Премудростью, или небесным эоном Софией, чтобы сообщить истинное знание первым людям, которых ограниченный Демиург хотел держать в детском неведении". At the same time Soloviev pointed out that the cult of the Serpent was quite widespread among the ancient pagans and was associated with phallism and wedding ceremonies. Soloviev's poem "The Song of the Ophites" was one of the most popular among the Symbolists and is represented by mythological images of the marriage of a Serpent and a Dove; it seems to us, that meets the figurative parallels in Ivanov's "The Tale":

Soloviev <i>The Song of the Ophites</i>	Ivanov <i>Gorislava's song</i> (<i>The Tale</i>)	Ivanov <i>The Tale</i>
Нашу голубку свяжите Новыми кольцами древ- него змея. <...> Чистой голубке привольно В пламенных кольцах мо- гучего змея.	Из-под люта камня горючего <i>Выползала змея свадь- бу правити,</i> Завивалася в кольца при месяце, Зазывала на игры лю- бовные.	"А мы крайники Го- рынские, в сестер Его- рьевых уродились: дол- го в нас мятежится и колдует сила ночная и змеиная, поколе внеза- пу не пронзится лучом Христовым; и <i>тогда</i> <i>голубицею обернется</i> <i>змея</i> ".

The semantics of the struggle between the forces of light and darkness in the *Tale* presents an aspect of spiritual transformation that personages are experienced. In particular, the semantics of the "darkness" includes a specific paradigm of symbolism "she-Serpent / he-Serpent". The legend about the origin of the ancestors of Vladar-Lazarus goes back to the two founders – *Egor / Gregory* and *Serpent Dragon*; this duality is incorporated into the nature of the main characters, which experience the constant dialectical struggle

between good and evil forces. A sharp negative connotation of the “Serpent” quality is associated with witchcraft, and is especially evident in Gorislava’s tendency to sorcery and witchcraft. At the same time, one of Gorislava’s characteristics is *light*, especially when she is manifested after her death in Lazarus’ visions. Her daughter Otrada is also the bearer of Light, which suggests that the female characters of the “Tale” possess ambivalent features pertaining rather to the dual nature of the gnostic Sophia – as the embodiment of Prunikos or Achamoth and the Illustrious Virgo.

One of the female characters, the bearers of the sophianic principle in the *Tale* is Queen Zoe, who enters together with the magician named Simeon Hors. She is also called Helen. It can be shown that Ivanov uses the entries written by Vladimir Soloviev for the *Brockhaus and Efron Encyclopedic Dictionary*. In particular, Soloviev writes that “The general opinion of the ancient Christian writers (Iustin, Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Tertullian, etc.), that Simon Magus was the founder of Gnosticism, and all heresies in the Church”.²¹

It is obvious that the pair *Simeon Hors* and *Zoe/Helen* in the *Tale* is corresponding to the Gnostic legend of Simon Magus accompanied by a woman Helen, a former harlot, whom he bought out and who followed him everywhere he went. Simon Magus witnessed that this was his Soul and the World Soul, and he himself was the Holy Spirit that came to the world to free her. This story is narrated in details in Soloviev’s entry dedicated to *Simon Magus*. On the other hand, the double name of the Queen, *Zoe-Helen*, refers in *The Tale* to a version of Valentinian gnostic interpretation of the myth of the Primal Creation, which is based on the idea of the absolute fullness of God’s Being God, Pleroma, consisting of a pair of Eons. One pair is *Reason* (Λογος) and *Life* (Ζωη), they, in turn produces another pair – *Man* and *Church*. Exactly this interpretation occurs in Soloviev’s entry “*Valentin and the Valentinians*”. Thus, the character Zoe Elena, who in the text of the “Tale” bears on herself the characteristics of a “harlot” (cf. her appearance and a manner of behavior), certainly endowed with a dual function, and in the highest sense symbolizes the aeon “Life” and the aeon “Man” in his subsequent emanation. Thus, the character Zoe Elena, who in the text of the *Tale* bears on herself lowest and highest characteristics certainly endowed with a dual function: on the one hand she is a harlot (cf. her appearance and a manner of behavior), and on the other, the highest sense symbolizing the aeon “Life” and the aeon “Man” in his subsequent emanation. The characteristics of the Gnostic legend of Simon Magus and Helen in *The Tale* could be illustrated by the obvious parallels between Soloviev’s article *Simon*

²¹ Философский словарь Владимира Соловьева. Ростов-на-Дону, 1997. С. 460.

Magus and the 8th part of the *Tale*, which was written by Olga Shore, who in her narration has interpreted Ivanov's intentions, having heard them in discussions with him shortly before his death. One can also sense here the influence of Soloviev's *Valentin and valentinians*, dedicated to the restatement of the general gnostic worldview as the world of Absolute completeness (the Pleroma), or the World of Eons, and their consistent emanation.

Olga Schor

Елена, которую я спас, вырвал из плена злых духов, восставших ангелов, она-то и есть сама верховная Мысль, женская часть Единого Сущего. Сей Единый Сущий есть начало, сила, себя творящая и находящая; он есть вечная разлука и встреча самого с собою; он себе самому отец, мать, сын и дочь.

<...> Сущий раскололся на Ум и Мысль. Вот сия то Мысль его предвечная все доброе в мире и создала. Но ангелы и архангелы, коих она сотворила, духа злого исполнились. Восстали они против своей Творительницы и ее полонили. И стала она их пленницею. Они оторвали ее от небесного спутника, и она, страдальца, в поисках его, бросаясь жертвенно и самозабвенно в проклятую материю, падала все ниже, да ниже.

Одно из ее появлений, воплощений земных тебе ведомо, Светомире; то была Елена Троянская, признавшая в Парисе-соблазнителе суженого Жениха, и ставшая виновницею всех ужасов войны, разрушении, смертей. А вот моя Елена в поисках небесного своего Жениха, сиречь меня, тоскою любовною язвима, но плененная материей, попала в блудный дом развратного Тира. И в то самое время как земная плоть ее терпела мнимые улады, небесная плоть ее испытывала невыносимые истязания.<...>

Soloviev *Simon Magus*

Из Самарии С. прибыл в Тир, где на деньги, отвергнутые апостолами, выкупил из блудилища пребывавшую там 10 лет женщину Елену и объявил ее творческой мыслью (epinoia) верховного Божества, родившего через нее архангелов и ангелов, сотворивших наш мир. Самого себя он выдавал за этого верховного Бога, как являемого в прошедшем, настоящем и будущем (ὁ ἐστὼς στὰς στῆσόμενος), применяясь к христианским терминам, С. объявил, что он есть "отец", "сын" и "дух св." – три явления единого сверхнебесного Бога: как отец, он явился в Самарии в собственном лице С.; как сын – в Иудее, в лице Иисуса, которого оставил перед распятием; как дух св. он будет просвещать язычников во всей вселенной. О нераздельной с ним мысли Божией он рассказывал, что созданные ею космические духи, движимые властолюбием и неведением, не захотели признавать ее верховенства и, заключив ее в оковы чувственно телесного бытия, заставили последовательно переходить из одного женского тела в другое. Она явилась как гомеровская Елена виновницей троянской войны, а через 1000 лет очутилась проституткой в Тире, где С., следивший за всеми ее превращениями, подобрал ее, как добрый пастырь потерянную овцу. <...>

Она была отражением Премудрости в темных водах, и, отвернувшись от ангелов, ею созданных и на нее восставших, она вернулась в Премудрость. Она и есть сама Премудрость – моя предвечная подруга, моя неземная Мысль” (1, 460).

The magician Simon Hors’ entrance in the *Tale* is crucial for the understanding of the formation of the inner journey of Lazarus-Vladar, Svetomir’s father. In the scene of Vladar visiting the witch tent of Hors, the latter tells him the meaning of the symbolic image of the Illustrious Virgo, explaining to him the meaning of the Gnostic myth of Sophia, the Light. According to the remark by Svetlana Titarenko,²² the image of the Russian Orthodox icon of Sophia the Wisdom of God is recognizable in the description of the image of the Illustrious Virgo in the *Tale*:

⁷ Зрелась в небе свода Дева светозарная на престоле выпрннем; долу главу преклонила и венец к ногам уронила в созвездие Скорпия; окрест зодчии горние по окаему выведены, со Скорпием купно двенадцать, и над главою Девы Телец.

⁸ А на скате свода, в нижнем поясе, по сферокружю лазореву, семи власт<ит>елей синклит, и над каждым звезда в диадиме его, и на подножиях престолов имена семи планит (*Tale, III*).

The Illustrious Virgo is endowed with “light” feature, along with other women’s hypostases of the story.

⁷ Знаменует слово, тебе доверенное, света и силы от всех иерархий и архонтов небесных стечение в единый венец славы и державы земной.

⁸ Низведен свет Девы Пресветлой долу и по земле рассеялся, и тьма объяла его. Но душа царственная, нарицаемая по еллински *василики психи*, аки львица алчущая, взыскует свет сей, мшелом, сиречь тленным естеством полоненный, воедино совокупить.

⁹ Собрать желает душа царственная свет рассеянный во единое средоточие и сосуд славы, да паки Дева в конце времен венец свой небесный целокупен примет и землю прозрачну соделает, яко смарагд и сапфир и кристалл непорочный; перстное же и темное да в ничтожество возвратится, к царю тьмы (*Tale, III*).

The Illustrious Virgo is a *Tsar-Devitsa* herself, the person who should be introduced at the end of the story, as Simeon prophesied to the king Vladar: “А наследник твой еще и во гроб спрячется от стрелы Егорьевой, ему в удел назначенной, она и в гробу его настигнет и из гроба воздвигнет;

²² *Титаренко С.Д.* “Фауст нашего века”: Мифопоэтика Вячеслава Иванова. СПб., 2012.

аще и Кефир отринет, сама Дева-Света венец свой на себя наденет и в него вселится и во образе Белого Царя Царь-Деввица восцарствует над всею землею”.

Another important, but incomplete line of the *Tale* that can be traced in Ivanov's text is the image of Kether the Crown (Keter-Malchut), which crowns the Illustrious Virgin: “Кефер – земли венец, из премірных лучей созданный; и кто его на главу возложит, над землею воцарится, яко бор”. This image refers us to the Jewish esoteric tradition of the interpretation of the Tree of Life, or the Sephiroth in the book of Zohar. The Tree of Life (World Tree), or Sefirot, is a composition of the 10 Sefirot, which are 10 emanations, 10 names or 10 channels of God's manifestation. The three higher Sefirot, which form the sphere of the mind, include Kether, Chokmah (Wisdom) and Bina (Understanding). The path from Malchut (the lower Sefirot) to Keter is the path of union with the Divine.

The question of Ivanov's acquaintance with Zohar's book remains open. At the same time, as V. Papernyi notes,²³ it is possible that Ivanov knew about one of the most complete translations of the Zohar book into French.²⁴ However, we dare to assume that Ivanov was not familiar with the Hebrew Kabbalistic doctrine, but with his rather late interpretation, adapted by the tradition of medieval Western European mysticism, in particular alchemy.²⁵

According to author's intention, the young Svetomir, who is metaphorically the Bearer of Light, was to be transformed into a Bearer and Keeper of the Arrow, which belonged to St. Egor (George), and then into the folklore character *Tsar Devitsa*. It should be noted that the name “Tsar Devitsa” is ambivalent and has two-gender formula, combining male (*tsar*) and female (*devitsa*) parts united in one person. This name seems to render the idea of the androgynous nature of gnostic Sophia, who was usually portrayed as a Fiery Angel in the iconography of the Orthodox Church, and whose iconography had common features with the images of Christ and the Virgin Mary, but was never identical with them. At the same time, it is possible to point

²³ Паперный В. 1. Мотивы христианского и еврейского гнозиса (Каббалы) в тексте и контексте поэмы Вяч. Иванова “Человек” // *Jews and Slavs*. Jerusalem; Gdansk, 2008. Vol. 21: Jews, Poles and Russians. P. 230–257; 2. Две заметки об источниках поэмы Вяч. Иванова “Человек” // *На рубеже двух столетий: сб. в честь 60-летия А. В. Лаврова*. М.-СПб., 2008.

²⁴ *Sepher ha Zohar* / Trad. Jean de Pauly. Paris, 1910.

²⁵ Бурмистров К.Ю. 1. Владимир Соловьев и Каббала: к постановке проблемы // *Исследования по истории русской мысли. Ежегодник за 1998 г. М., 1998*. С. 7-104. 2. “Ибо он как огонь плавильщика”: каббала и алхимия. М., 2009;

out the frequent juxtaposition of the images of St. Egory (George) and Sophia in the folklore tradition.²⁶

Vladimir Soloviev was behind the rise of Russian sophiology in the beginning of the XXth century. As is well known, Soloviev's life-long religious quest was not confined to the Christian dogma. He relied on the mystical experience of the Gnostic and Neo-Platonic philosophy of the first centuries of Christianity. The ancient tradition of both Eastern and Western Christian mysticism were continued in Soloviev's doctrine of Sophia. In his article *Auguste Comte's idea of Humanity* Soloviev stated that the ancient cult of the Eternal Feminine principle found its manifestation in the Russian iconography and church architecture, with the image of the "Wisdom of God that becomes close either to the image of Christ or to that of the Virgin Mary, thus preventing complete identity with them both..."²⁷ Soloviev pointed out, that the according to ancient Russian views, Sophia is the "true, pure and complete humanity, the supreme and comprehensive form and the living soul of nature and the universe, eternally united and ever getting united within the temporal order with the Divine and it connecting everything that is".²⁸

"Sophian myth" of Russian symbolism is refracted in a special way in Vyacheslav Ivanov's work. In particular, this perspective defines the final unfinished fabula twist of the *Tale of Svetomir*, where Svetomir comes alive in the form of Tsar-Devitsa. As it was already shown in Toporkov's book, this folklore image correlated with that of Sophia in Vladimir Soloviev's critical article devoted to the poetry of Yakov Polonsky. Soloviev considered Polonsky's poem *Tsar Devitsa* to belong to the worldwide poetic tradition of representation of Sophia. Soloviev believed that Polonsky "<...> demonstrated with clarity the superhuman, transcendental, and at the same time completely valid, and even personal source of pure poetry".²⁹

²⁶ See also about semantically meanings of androgynous in the context of Russian Silver age: Антекман М. "И двое станут одним": еврейская Каббала, мифопоэтический андрогин и Адам Кадмон в поэтике Серебряного века // Дискурсы телесности и эротизма в литературе и культуре: Эпоха модернизма М., [2008] - критика: Богомолов Н. Pro doma sua // НЛО. 2010. № 103; Matich O. Androgyny and the Russian Religious Renaissance // Western Philosophical Systems in Russian Literature. A Collection of Critical Studies / Ed. Anthony Mlikotin. University of Southern California Press, 1979. P. 165-175. (University of Southern California Series in Slavic Humanities № 3).

²⁷ Соловьев Вл. Идея человечества у Августа Конта // Вл. Соловьев Сочинения: в 2-х т. Т. 2. С. 577.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Соловьев В.С. Поэзия Я.П. Полонского // Он же. Стихотворения. Эстетика. Литературная критика. М., 1990. С. 319.

The transformation of the protagonist of the *Tale* had to be considered in line with Ivanov's main idea, which can be comprehended through the prism of his poem *The Man*. Without a doubt, the author planned the story of a man who overcomes his sinful human heredity ("serpent's seed") through the transformation of the flesh and spirit, and is reborn after annihilating of his former "Self". It can be stated that the idea of transfiguration of the flesh through the transformation of the Spirit was quite popular among Russian intelligentsia. Andrej Bely presents the brightest parallel to this phenomenon in developing the same idea in his numerous articles and in his novel *The Notes of an Eccentric* written after the Revolution of 1917 under the strong influence of anthroposophy.

In conclusion, it is thus evident that the *Tale* was strongly influenced by Soloviev's philosophy of the Theocratic utopia and All-Unity; one can also discern in the *Tale* Soloviev's metaphysical idea about the gnostic Sophia to be present not only in a form of the transformed plot about Simon Magus, but also in an androgynous being Tsar-Devitsa, a personage from the Slavic folklore and myth. Vyacheslav Ivanov was unable to fulfill his plan, but it seems remarkable that he was preoccupied with the idea of the Universal Church and the Universal Man until his last days.