

## RECEPTION OF GENESIS 2,2–3 IN THE ORTHODOX WORSHIP OF THE HOLY WEEK

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**Abstract.** Orthodox Christians come into contact with Holy Scripture during Great Lent, especially through cultic readings. During this period there are daily readings from Genesis, so the entire book is read during the first six weeks of Lent. The faithful also interact with the Bible through the hymns of Lent, which contain references to Old and New Testament texts. The reception of biblical texts also reveals how they have been understood, so we can consider cultic hymns as a form of interpretation, which newer research calls "liturgical exegesis". This article examines four texts used in Orthodox worship on Good Friday and Holy Saturday that include references to Gen 2,2–3. Both the sung and read texts make connections between the sixth day of creation and Good Friday and between the seventh day of creation and Holy Saturday. Adam's actions in the Garden of Eden determine Christ's response on Calvary. But the hymnographers also affirm a reversed determinism: the present creation achieves its purpose only through the New Creation, the first Sabbath being sanctified through the sanctification of Great Saturday. By reading Gen 2,2–3 through the grid of the Gospel accounts, the cultic authors do not simplify but rather amplify the semantic potential of the text.

**Keywords:** liturgical exegesis, Genesis 2,2–3, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, Orthodox hymnography, Synaxarion.

"The Orthodox don't read the Bible, they pray the Bible." The point of this anecdotal observation, the origin of which I could not specify, is that for practicing believers, interaction with the Bible occurs more frequently in Church worship than in private reading. This observation is most appropriate during Great Lent. The first impression conveyed by the Eastern Church's Lenten rituals is that of long divine services, marked by solemnity and sobriety, but also by a complexity that is difficult to understand even for the Orthodox faithful. The amplitude of the celebration becomes even more evident in the case of the Bible readings. Over the first six weeks of Lent, the books of Genesis, Proverbs, and Isaiah are read almost entirely as daily readings.<sup>1</sup> In Holy Week the biblical readings continue with passages from

<sup>1</sup> At Vespers, passages from Genesis and fragments from Proverbs are read. At the Sixth Hour, passages from Isaiah are read. Eugen J. Pentiuc considers that Genesis, Proverbs, and Isaiah