

THE LIVING GOD IN THE PENTATEUCH

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Elena ONEȚIU, *Dumnezeul cel viu în Pentateuh. Exegeza unui concept*
[*The Living God in the Pentateuch. The exegesis of a concept*]
(Cluj-Napoca: Cluj University Press, 2024), 332 p.

Elena Onețiu is a young scholar who has already published valuable titles in her research field [1] fact that made her referred several times. With the publication of the book entitled: *Dumnezeul cel viu în Pentateuh. Exegeza unui concept* (*The Living God in the Pentateuch. Exegesis of a concept*), at Cluj University Press in 2024, she comes to fulfil a complex profile of a theologian specialized in the Old Testament studies, but having in the same time an inter-disciplinary background.

Having as a basis the doctorate thesis of the author, the book is forwarded by Rev. Prof. PhD. Ioan Chirilă (p. 11-20), one of the most notorious names in the field of the Biblical Studies from the Romanian space, the presents a topic that has not been previously investigated in the theological scholarship, in an attractive form and a complex way. After taking into attention aspects like the methodological ones (like: the actual stage of the research or the motivation of the demarche), the structure of the research, the evolution of the key concept or the literature used, he underlines the multiple values of the investigation. Among other, he insists on the fact that:

“A first positive aspect of the work is that the author carries out a rigorous exegetical analysis, starting from the semantic study of the relevant terms in Hebrew and reaching the theological interpretation of the texts. Thus, the reader can follow, in detail, how the expression the *living God* appears in certain key passages in the Pentateuch and what are the deep meanings that the characterization of God as living acquires here - meanings related to His relationship with the chosen people, of His attributes as Savior and Creator, covenant, etc. Another positive aspect is the double perspective, Western and Eastern, from which the author approaches the subject. In addition to the Western academic bibliography used, an important place is occupied by the references to the writings of the Holy Fathers, which complement and deepen the understanding of the analysed texts. This combination gives an added interpretive value. Last but not

least, the theological synthesis carried out in the final chapter of the volume points out the essential ideas derived from the previous analysis. The author correlates them with the theology of life from the Old Testament, showing the connection between the expression the *living God* and the understanding of life in the Old Testament vision.” (p. 19).

Segmented into four big chapters and accompanied by a rich bibliographical list (p. 295-331), the book realizes, as the author of the foreword shows, a complex exegesis with inter-disciplinary value. After an introductory part where Elena Onețiu (p. 27-44) presents the actual stage of the research, addresses the methodological question, speaks about the objectives of the research, and other practical aspects, in the first chapter she emphasizes the terminological delimitations of the expression „The Living God” (p. 45-72). Here, she provides an investigation of the use of verb „to live” (p. 450) and its use in the Old Testament (p. 51-72).

Later in the second chapter, the same expression is followed during the Pentateuch (p. 73-148). There the author deals with aspects like „listening God’s voice and remaining alive” (p. 75-123), from the book of Deuteronomy, 4, 33, or with aspects like the one from Deuteronomy 5, 26, which summarizes the Sinai Revelation and the answer of Israel people. (p. 124-48). The third chapter of the research is dedicated to an important topic, namely the oath on Jahwe’s name (p. 149-230). Following a methodology already developed in the previous thematic unities, Elena presents the perspective of Numbers 14:21 and 14:28 (p. 149-94), or Deuteronomy 32:40 (p. 195-230).

The last part of the book (p. 231-290) is dedicated to the dynamics of the relationships between the key topic of „the living God” and the way how the theology of life is encountered in the Old Testament. Elena Onețiu manages there that, thorough the exegesis of passages like the ones from Exodus 20:13 or Deuteronomy 5:17, presented in parallel and in connexion with the Old Testament to invite to analysis, debate and investigation (p. 231-247). In the same time, due to the presentation of topics like the Providence and Salvation (p. 248-256), or the „Word of God” (p. 278-290), she points on aspects that have also relevance in the understanding of the New Testament.

By bringing into attention a topic that has not been approached until now in the Romanian Biblical scholarship, but also due to the fact that realizes a complex investigation and a corelation between the exegesis and the theological approach. For this reason, Elena Onețiu’s book, deserves both to be read, analysed and discussed and may constitute the departing point for future other investigations.

Note

[1] Ioan CHIRILĂ, Stelian PAȘCA-TUȘA, Elena ONEȚIU, „Reconstitution of Melchizedek's History In Rabbinic and Christian Traditions,” *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies* 16.48 (2017): 3-15.

Stelian PAȘCA-TUȘA, Paula BUD, Elena ONEȚIU, „The Mystery of alterity reflected in Christian Teachings (Învățătură Hristianicești, 1700),” *Philobiblon* 25.2 (2020): 305-319.

Dan BENȚA, Paula BUD, Elena PLATON, Stelian PAȘCA-TUȘA, Elena ONEȚIU, Alin MIHĂILĂ, Felix FLOCA, „Challenges in Proofing the Cyrillic Macro Resources-Equability Between the Technical Component and the Role of the Researcher.” *Philobiblon* 25.2 (2020): 337-53.

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