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ROMANIAN ORTHODOX OLD TESTAMENT STUDIES



## CANON AND CANONICITY

ROMANIAN ORTHODOX OLD TESTAMENT STUDIES  
YEAR 2, NO. 4 (2), 2020

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## CONTENTS

### Editorial

<i>Fr. Ioan Chirilă, Scripture, Canon, and Canonicity .....</i>	<i>6</i>
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### Orthodox Exegesis

1. Fr. Ioan Chirilă and Bogdan Șoptorean, <i>God's Word in the Scriptures – Reference Points on Canonicity, Interpretation, and the Liturgical Text as Vestment of the Revealed Word .....</i>	<i>11</i>
2. Fr. Alexandru Mihăilă, <i>The Orthodox Bible and the Anaginoskomena Books of the Old Testament .....</i>	<i>26</i>
3. Iatan Cristinel, <i>The Fascination of Taboo: a Few Biblical Episodes from the Books of the Anaginoskomena and of the Apocrypha Acknowledged by the Tradition of the Church.....</i>	<i>44</i>
4. Fr. Ion Reșceanu, <i>Canon and Canonicity in the Bibles of Samuil Micu and Andrei Șaguna: Resemblances, Differences and Controversies .....</i>	<i>57</i>
5. Fr. Eugen J. Pentiuc, <i>Should Iron-Age Texts Be Still Read in a Digital Age? The Hebrew Bible and the Power of Metaphor .....</i>	<i>67</i>

### Book Reviews

1. Fr. Maxim Morariu, <i>A Handbook of Old Testament for Students .....</i>	<i>78</i>
2. Bogdan Negrea, <i>Romanian Bibliography for Old Testament Studies.....</i>	<i>80</i>

## EDITORIAL

FR. IOAN CHIRILĂ

*Scripture, Canon, and Canonicity*

## SCRIPTURE, CANON, AND CANONICITY

Contemporaneity has forgotten the foundations on which it was based as God's creation and it has placed man at the centre of all its preoccupations, man, who searches for himself only within creation, disregarding or forgetting about the Creator. From this position, we could put forward all sorts of theories and nothing would remove the appearance of a dead-end, of a closed road, which the perspective of such thinking would generate. Which can be the major cause of such a situation or, in the words of a liturgical song, why have we been given over unto corruption and why have we been wedded unto death? The most simple answer is: by forgetting the life-giving word, by no longer noticing the One Who brings us the supreme Revelation, Christ, the One Who gives us the possibility of seeing God. If one does not get to see God, even in His creatures, one does not see anything, that is to say, one sees only the nothingness that, with limited powers, one does daily. Yet I shall not say that we have lost Him for good; He awaits us all, the prodigal sons, he waits for us to recover from the reverberation of the anamnesis which reminds us of the beauty, the harmony, the hesychia and the goodness/richness found in His Father's house. Not all memories have been erased; when ill-fortune duly comes upon us, we remember how good it was to be in Your house, o God Almighty, and then, the angel's wing comforts us with the breath of the Spirit, which helps us come to our senses.

There are moments in the life of each one of us when we have to try to rebuild the framework of our existence starting from the base, from the foundation of the cultural and cultic creation of the Christian people. And now, when we try to speak about the Scripture from the Orthodox perspective and practical point of view, I believe that, more than ever, we are doing such an exercise; we are going back to the act of establishing the foundations of Christianity. However, we are also doing it for apologetic reasons, since, lately, there have been many voices claiming that the act of establishing the Christian scriptural canon was political and imperial rather than ecclesiastical. But facts, from a strictly chronological point of view, do not give testimony of such a thing.



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And this is why. However, before giving a possible answer to this “why?,” I would like to insert an internal clarification of the meaning of the Scripture for the East: Saint Paul claimed that: “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17) and Saint Peter considered that man had to be aware of the fact that “there are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their destruction, as they do the other Scriptures” (2 Pt. 3:16) and, nonetheless, the Scripture, as “the manifold wisdom of God” must “now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places” (Eph. 3:10). We can also think about the words of Saint Peter of Damaskos: “For there are many mysteries hidden in the divine Scriptures, and we do not know God’s meaning in what is said there. . . . And no one knows the meaning of the passage in question except by revelation” (St. Peter of Damaskos 1976, 165-167), that is by partaking of the Holy Spirit, or we can call to mind the verses adopted by Pavel Florensky: “blessed is he who has preserved the customs of the fathers, their dark tradition, who answers with a tear the singing of the psalm; who, having with his will torn away from the mind’s doubt, reads the Holy Bible with tender devotion” (Florensky 1999, 45). The Eastern Church relates to the Scripture as to a “letter expressing God’s love for man” (St. John Chrysostom, PG 53, 28; 54, 582, our translation). Written through the Holy Spirit’s revelational action over a long period, this letter provides man with the possibility of getting to know its Sender.

The present volume is dedicated to canon and canonicity. We propose five studies and two reviews. In the first study, we offer you the possibility of getting acquainted with the history of canon in the Jewish environment and with how it was received, read, interpreted, and assumed by the Christian Church. We will bring to your attention a study which raises the issue of inspiration and canonicity from an Orthodox perspective. Then, we will also enter a fascinating area of the taboo, in which we will present a few episodes from the books of the Anagignoskomena and the Apocrypha, which caught the attention of the Christian writers from the past. We will also offer the possibility of understanding the historical context which leads to the use of two traditions regarding the reception of the biblical canon in the Romanian space by comparing two editions of the Bible (Samuil Micu – 1795 and the Bible of Șaguna – 1856-1858), which emerged in the multid denominational space of Transylvania. The section dedicated to studies will be closed by the speech given by Fr. Prof. Eugen Pentiuc from Holy Cross Greek Orthodox

School of Theology when he received the title of *Doctor Honoris Causa* of Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca.

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## ORTHODOX EXEGESIS

1. Fr. Ioan Chirilă and Bogdan Șopterean, *God's Word in the Scriptures – Reference Points on Canonicity, Interpretation, and the Liturgical Text as Vestment of the Revealed Word*
2. Fr. Alexandru Mihăilă, *The Orthodox Bible and the Anaginoskomena Books of the Old Testament*
3. Iatan Cristinel, *The Fascination of Taboo: a Few Biblical Episodes from the Books of the Anagignoskomena and of the Apocrypha Acknowledged by the Tradition of the Church*
4. Fr. Ion Reșceanu, *Canon and Canonicity in the Bibles of Samuil Micu and Andrei Șaguna: Resemblances, Differences and Controversies*
5. Fr. Eugen J. Pentiuc, *Should Iron-Age Texts Be Still Read in a Digital Age? The Hebrew Bible and the Power of Metaphor*

## GOD'S WORD IN THE SCRIPTURES – REFERENCE POINTS ON CANONICITY, INTERPRETATION, AND THE LITURGICAL TEXT AS VESTMENT OF THE REVEALED WORD

### Abstract

In the present study, we aim to illustrate how the canon of the Old Testament is regarded in the thinking of the Eastern Church, showing first how it formed in the Jewish tradition and then how it was assumed and read by the Church Fathers. We do not aim to provide a comprehensive analysis of the composition of the biblical canon or to present the differences between the lists of writings from various translations of the Holy Scripture, but we will focus only on the historical moments which are relevant to the conservation and dissemination of the holy writings. We shall, however, insist on how the text of the Old Testament has been received, interpreted, and used by the Christian Church within its cultic structures. These perspectives will allow us to understand that the holy text is meant to be embodied, read, and interpreted.

### Keywords

God's Word, canon, cult, interpretation, Christological reading

### Introduction

The books which the Jews considered to be inspired by God were assumed by the Church and were considered essential for maintaining man's relationship with God. The reference point of both rabbis and the Church Fathers was the fact that the final purpose of reading and interpreting the canonical books is man's communion with God. However, in the thinking of the Church, there are some additional specific notes



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regarding the holy writings, which are due to the revelation provided by God through His embodiment. Thus, besides being inspired by God, the canonical books of the Old Testament have been read from a Christological, soteriological, Trinitarian, typological and ecclesiastical perspective within the Eastern Church. For this reason, in Eastern Christianity, the believer is offered the possibility of embodying the Word in his/her body by reading and assuming the holy text and by experiencing it in the liturgical space.

To capture how the text of the Old Testament is received in the thinking of the Eastern Church, we will resort to the reflections and perspectives provided by Fathers such as St. Justin Martyr and Philosopher, St. Basil the Great, St. Maximus the Confessor or St. Nicholas Cabasilas in their writings. We will also turn to Eastern biblical scholars or theologians who synthesise the experience of the Church in interpreting the holy text. We are considering Father John Breck, Georges Florovsky and Father Constantin Coman, who adhere to the thinking of Greek biblical scholars.

### **Canon and Canonicity in the Jewish Thinking of the Old Testament**

The meaning we presently attach to the term “canon” (Gr. *kanon*, Heb. *caneh*) in the context of biblical studies is that of the catalogue of books which the Church considers to be normative for faith and inspired books. Nonetheless, before gaining its current form, the canon of the Scripture underwent several distinct stages and, here, we must bear in mind its evolution in the Jewish environment from which it was taken. Therefore, according to internal testimonies, there are several key moments, sometimes called moments of religious reform, in the evolution of the corpus of Jewish canonical writings.

The first such moment is during the time of King David (Miller and Hayes, 1986). He brings the ark of the Covenant to Zion (2 Sam. 6:1-19), he erects the Holy Tabernacle and organises the entire cultic life, which must not be reduced only to psalms or songs. At that time, the Torah was already a daily reading, its central position being underscored by psalms which tackle it as the main subject (Chirilă 2015, 15-32) the one called “the Torah Psalm” (Ps. 119), which is dedicated exclusively to the Torah (Pașca-Tușa 2019, 304-345). King David manages to establish the Torah as a living standard within his kingdom. He proves to be a commendable king for the chosen people since the main reference point of his rule is God’s Law. And, through the decisions he makes during his rule, he succeeds in leading his subjects towards the fulfilment of the Law. Through the psalms he composes, he reminds them of its

provisions and, through the establishment of a single place of worship, he protects them from falling into idolatry (Chirilă 2016, 19-27).

A second similar moment takes place in the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC (622-621), during the restoration of the Temple when the Book of the Law is discovered. The event takes place during the rule of Josiah, a king who is compared to David (2 Kgs. 22:2) due to his fidelity to God's will. During the restoration works of the Temple of Jerusalem, the High Priest Hilkiah found the Book of the Law, which the king read in front of the whole people, promising to protect "his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people joined in the covenant" written in the book (2 Kgs. 23:3). We do not know what the content of the Book of the Law was (it is possible that part of the *Nevi'im* and maybe some writings from the *Ketuvim* were added to the *Torah*), but we must have in mind that, due to that moment, it was rediscovered and reconfirmed in the ears of whole people.

A new religious form, which was meant to re-establish "the book, from the Law of God" (Neh. 8:8) at the centre of the Israeli community, was being practised during the activity of Ezra the Priest and of Governor Nehemiah. They were preoccupied with reorganising the society of the Jews who had returned from the Babylonian exile. One of the central points of their mission was also that of establishing the list of writings which were normative for their faith. Scriptural testimonies do not offer us a list of canonical books. Although the text in 2 Maccabees 2:13 mentions three categories of books – those concerning the kings, the prophets and those of David – which Nehemiah assembles, it does not mention however how many they were or which their title was. In the absence of such data, we believe it is necessary to mention certain testimonies of the Jewish tradition, which provide either the number of books considered to be canonical or a list of books kept in the canon of the Hebrew Bible.

The oldest reference made to the number and grouping of the books of the Hebrew Bible is found in historian Flavius Josephus. In his work, *Against Apion* (1, 8), he shows that – unlike Greeks – Jews did not have countless books to contradict one another, but had only twenty-two books, which encompassed the history of the entire world and which were trustworthy. Out of these books, five belong to Moses and 13 to the prophets (Joshua, Judges and Ruth (one book), the books of the Kings (two books), the books of Paralipomenon (one book), Ezra and Nehemiah (one book), Esther, the four Major Prophets, the 12 Minor Prophets (one book) and Job) and the latter ones

to the writings, four belong to authors who praise God and set moral rules for people (Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs). Flavius Josephus underlines their importance and establishes a paradigm according to which one should relate to the profoundly important books. The books might suggest the precariousness/scarcity of Jewish culture but, according to the Jewish historian, they represent more than the Greek works, as they are in harmony.

The final form of the Jewish canon was established at the Sanhedrin of Jamnia (90 AD), under Yohanan ben Zakkai, the founder and first president of the Academy of Jamnia. This would be the list of canonical writings adopted by the Orthodox Church in Laodicea.

The adherence of the Church to the Jewish canon was followed by a long process of defining and crystalising its own hermeneutic “system”, through which the vein of biblical revelation would be extracted from the Scriptures by the teaching of faith of the Church. And this because, according to Orthodox perspective, the Scripture is interpreted in an ecclesiastic environment, the Spirit being the One Who makes the decoding of the message possible (Coman 2002, 13), as He is the interpreter of God's Word. The central point of this hermeneutic system developed in the Eastern space is the act of reading from a Christological point of view, based on the belief of the Church – aptly formulated by Father John Breck – that “the last referent of the syntagm *God's Word* is neither the biblical text nor its interpretation; it is the person of the eternal Logos, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity” (Breck 2003, 70, our translation).

### **Arguments in Favour of a Christological Reading of the Old Testament**

The Eastern Church has granted greater space to divine intervention in history so that the traditional patristic hermeneutics of Orthodoxy does not deem mystery to be separated from rational research. Romanian exegesis is Romanian only through its linguistic form, much the same as the Slavic or Greek one. It remains essentially Orthodox. But Eastern exegesis is pneumatic, being a continuation of Christly exegesis; it is a manifestation of the Spirit of the Ecclesia, thus being ecclesiological; it is a scion of the Liturgy. The scriptural text also has a dynamic side, meaning that it is also the breath of the Spirit, as it is a revealed text, which is why it must speak for past and present times and the exegesis is made for nowadays not for the past. The cultural-religious level of understanding, the current dogmatic framework, the inspiration – the symbolic language – preserve exactly this dynamic side of the message and lead to the



text being received, through temporal transgression into our times, as an eloquent text, as a message which can be interpreted, as a hermeneutic subject, also open, as in the case of the Old Testament, to a “Christly reading”, a “Christological reading” (Lk. 24:27) (Breck 2003, 69-70). In the light of this reading, the border between the Testaments fades away and the dual form of the Scripture is perceived as a strictly formal structure since the message is unique and revealing of the Trinitarian unity of the main and sole author of the revelation (Chirilă 2008,12).

The reading of the Old Testament from a Christological perspective was first done by Jesus Christ our Saviour, Who adheres to texts from the Old Testament concerning His Person and work. Thus, Christ opens the way for this interpretation, encouraging, first of all, the return to the Scriptures: “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me [...] For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me.[...] But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?” (Jn. 5:39,46,47), a passage in which the testifying nature of the Scriptures is evident. The Gospel of Luke presents an interesting episode which took place after the Resurrection. Our Saviour, walking with His disciples, asking about what had happened in Jerusalem and seeing how deep their concern was, reassured them that all those had been announced in the Scriptures: “And he said to them, «O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?» And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself” (Lk. 24:25-27).

In the Pauline writings, the presence of the Old Testament is rich. A series of teachings are formulated by referring to texts, events, or characters from the Old Testament (1 Tim. 5:17-18; Gal. 3:8; 4:27-30; 1 Cor. 6:15-17; Rom. 9:17-18; 10:7-11). In the words of the Apostle, the image of patriarch Abraham shines bright, being a model, which transgresses centuries: “And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, «In you shall all the nations be blessed» (Gal. 3:8), being a representative character for how the one who does justice becomes a source of blessing in the world (and for the world). As for the relation between the two Testaments, Saint Paul certifies the mysterious dimension and the element of preparation of the Old Testament and testifies the fully alethic content of the New Law. He says that “the law was our guardian until Christ came” (Gal. 3:24), a Law which had a „shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these



realities” (Heb. 10:1-4) and assumes the responsibility of revealing God’s Gospel, “which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures” (Rom. 1:2). The manner in which this old Law is linked to Christ’s teaching is expressed, in Paul’s words, through the passage from the Law which was “weakened by the flesh” to the liberating law through which the “Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:2-5).

### ***Florilegium patristicum on the Holy Scripture***

The way we relate to the Scripture in the Eastern space is by the patristic paradigm of understanding and interpretation. The current tendency of going back to the Fathers, as the first exegetes of the Scripture, confirms the validity of their interpreting patterns. This return does not exclude the responsibility of the contemporary interpreter of updating the message but provides the fundamental reference points for an authentic hermeneutic endeavour. Therefore, before putting forward a florilegium of patristic texts, we mention the eight principles of interpretation which were summarised by Father John Breck and to which other Eastern theologians also adhered: ■ The last referent of the syntagm *God's Word* is the person of the Logos (Breck 2003, 69). ■ The Scripture must be understood from a Trinitarian perspective, in the sense that the Three Persons reveal one another (Breck 2003, 69). ■ The Scripture is an environment for the encounter, its message being “the fruit of a synergy, namely of the cooperation between God and human help”. (Breck 2003, 69, our translation). The work of the interpreter takes the form of mediation between God and man. Here comes the hermeneutic filter, which is always new, but along the lines of patristic interpretation, and this approach exceeds spatial-temporal limits: “If the Bible is first of all God’s Word, then the main challenge in understanding it resides not in the obstacles posed by human expression or language – which is indeed subject to that time and environment – but mostly in the possibility of intelligibly receiving God’s Word from the Scripture” (Coman 2002, 14, our translation). ■ The purpose of exegesis is notably soteriological, serving the mission of the Church, which leads man to the saving knowledge of God (Breck 2003, 70). ■ The relation between Bible, Church and Tradition are essential in understanding the authentic call of the Orthodox exegete. The Scripture is interpreted within and by the Church: “If it is separated by the Church and by its ministry *through apostolic succession*, there is no real understanding of God’s Word” (Florovsky 2006, 166, our translation). The Church claims that the writings of the New Testament are normative elements of the Holy Tradition (Breck 2003, 70). ■ A fundamental element of the hermeneutic

instruments is the *typos*, the typological meaning of the Scripture being the most useful one in arguing the unity of the Scripture. “The Church Fathers would claim that the type is characterised by a double meaning, a literal and a spiritual one, which already contains and in a way manifests or reveals the eschatological fulfilment” (Breck 2003, 70, our translation). ■ The Scripture is fully and uniformly inspired by the Holy Spirit. As such, it can be interpreted according to the principle of exegetic reciprocity (Breck 2003, 70). This possibility of interpretation originates in the fact that “the Scripture, meaning true understanding,” (Florovsky 2006, 166, our translation) is accessible only through the Holy Spirit present and active in the Church. Consequently, to offer a lively interpretation of the word of the Scripture, the ecclesiastical experience must be part of the exegete’s life. ■ Father John Breck expresses this idea as an “interpretation from within”, its necessity being based on the fact that the Scripture “prescribes a way of living – *Christ within us*” (Breck 2003, 70, our translation) by participating in the life of the Church and in the life of the Spirit Who blows where He wishes (Jn 3:8).

The prophetic force of the Scripture is a reality which is highlighted in the writings of St. Justin Martyr. In what follows, we would like to put forward a few fragments which are relevant in this respect. Being remarkably familiar with the Scriptures, Saint Justin interprets them firstly for an apologetic purpose, in his effort to demonstrate through internal arguments that they are oriented, in different ways, towards Christ and His work, towards the anticipation and preparation of His coming: “But that it is spoken about our Jesus, even the phrases themselves show. But *your ears are stopped and your hearts are callous* (Is 6:10; Jn 12:40). For as for the phrase, *The Lord sware, and will not repent; Thou art priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek* (Ps. 110:4), God, because of your unbelief, made it clear by an oath that He is High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, that is to say, that just as Melchizedek was written down by Moses as having been priest of God Most High, and was priest of those who were in uncircumcision, and blessed Abraham who was in circumcision and who offered him tithes, so did God make it clear that He who was called by the Holy Spirit His everlasting priest and Lord (Ps 110:1), should be (priest) of those who were in uncircumcision. And those who are in circumcision and go to Him, that is to say, believe Him and seek blessings from Him (Phil. 2:8-9; Lk. 1:52), them too will He accept and bless. And that He will first be a lowly man, and then be exalted, the words at the end of the Psalm make plain. For *of a brook in the way shall He drink*, and, at the same time, *therefore shall He lift up His head* (Ps 110:7)” (Justin Martyr 1930, 65).

In his texts, Saint Justin resorts to a recurrent expression: “these were said about our Christ” (our translation), thus conjuring up scriptural passages and identifying in them the arguments necessary to support his assertion. “And, further, to persuade you that ye have no understanding of the Scriptures, I will mention also another Psalm spoken to David by the Holy Spirit, which ye say is spoken with reference to Solomon who also himself became king. But it too has been spoken with reference to our Christ. Now you deceive yourselves by equivocal forms of speech. For where *the Law of the Lord is said to be blameless* (Ps. 19:8) ye expound it not of that (law) which shall be after the Law given by Moses, but of this itself, though God cries aloud that He will appoint a new Law (Is. 2:3; 51:4; Mic. 4:2) and a new Disposition (Jer. 31:31; Is. 54:3; Heb. 8:7-8). And where there is read: *O God, give Thy judgment to the king* (Ps. 72:1), since Solomon has been king ye say that the Psalm is spoken with reference to Him, though the words of the Psalm distinctly proclaim that it has been spoken with reference to the everlasting King, that is to say with reference to Christ. For Christ is proclaimed as King and Priest and God and Lord and Angel and Man and Chief Captain and Stone and Child born, and liable to suffering at first, then as going up to heaven and coming again with glory and having His kingdom forever, as I prove from all the scriptures” (Justin Martyr 1930, 66).

Saint Justin identifies the correspondence of the texts of the Old Testament to the works of our Saviour mentioned in the New Testament, but also to those which are to come, such as His coming in glory and the inauguration of the Heavenly Kingdom: “And in the *diapsalma* of the forty-sixth Psalm, I said, it is thus spoken of Christ: *God went up with a shout, the Lord with the voice of a trumpet. Sing praises to our God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises. Because God is King of all the earth, sing praises with understanding. God became King over the nations; God is seated on His holy throne. Rulers of (many) peoples were together with the God of Abraham, for the mighty ones of earth are God's, they are greatly exalted* (Ps. 47:5-9). And in the ninety-eighth Psalm the Holy Spirit reproaches you, and informs us that He whom you do not wish to be King is in fact King and Lord of both Samuel and of Aaron and Moses and in fact of all the others” (Justin Martyr 1930, 66).

Extremely important from a theological point of view is the text referring to the sheep of the Passover, an image in which, in accordance with the interpretive Tradition of the Eastern Church, Saint Justin sees a prefiguration of Christ's Sacrifice: “The mystery therefore of the sheep, which God has bidden you sacrifice as the Passover, was a type of Christ, with whose blood they who believe on Him anoint their own houses (Ex.

2:7-21), namely themselves, corresponding to their faith in Him. For that the form in which God formed Adam, became the house of the inbreathing that God gave (Gn. 2:7; 1 Cor. 3:16), you can all perceive. And that also this commandment was given only for a season, I will now prove. God does not allow the sheep of the Passover to be sacrificed at any other place than that on which His name has been called, knowing that there would come a time after Christ had suffered when even the place of Jerusalem would be handed over to your enemies, and all offerings should completely cease to be" (Justin Martyr 1930, 79).

The cultic provisions regarding the way in which the sheep of the Passover should be consumed also have a Christological relevance, which Saint Justin details, illustrating how, in this episode, the image of the Cross appears in a mysterious way: "And that sheep which was commanded to be roasted whole was a figure of the suffering of the cross, by which Christ was to suffer. For when the sheep is being roasted it is roasted arranged in fashion like the fashion of the cross" (Justin Martyr 1930, 80). Even in the episode of the scapegoat, the Saint points to a Christological dimension: "And the two goats' at the Fast that are commanded at the Fast (Lv. 16:5 et seq.), which by God's command must be alike, of which one became the Scapegoat, and the other an offering, where an announcement of the two Advents of Christ; of one Advent, in which the elders of your people and the priests, laying their hands on Him and putting Him to death, sent Him off as a scapegoat; and of His second Advent, because in the same place of Jerusalem you will recognize Him who was dishonoured by you. For He was an offering on behalf of all sinners who wish to repent" (Justin Martyr 1930, 80-81).

And again, in the offering of fine flour brought by those cleansed of the leprous disease (Lv. 10:14,21), the Saint sees a prefiguration of the sacramental bread which Jesus Christ our Lord gave us to bring in memory of the Passions He endured for mankind. In the case of the commandment of circumcision, the interpretation makes the transition to a level of spiritual understanding, similarly to the words of Saint Paul, according to whom "circumcision is a matter of the heart" (Rom. 2:29): "Further, the commandment of circumcision, commanding you to circumcise all infants on the eighth day without fail, was a type of the true circumcision, with which we were circumcised from error and wickedness, by Him who rose from the dead on the first day of the week, Jesus Christ our Lord. For the first day of the week, the first indeed of all the days that ever were is further called the eighth according to the number of all the days of their cycle, and thus it ever remains the first" (Justin Martyr 1930, 82).

We believe these fragments of patristic text are sufficient as testimonies of the Christological reading applied by the Eastern Church to the Scripture, starting with the very first exponents of Christian apologetics. These are paradigms of interpretation built around the centrality of Christ, they are models for the contemporary hermeneutic endeavour, which aims to teach the meaning of God's Word through the revelation of the Spirit.

### **The Liturgical Text – a Vestment of the Word Revealed through the Scriptures**

Saying that the Scripture must be interpreted within the Church, although being a fundamental truth for Eastern theology, does not fully cover the relation, the *continuum* which exists between God's Word and the ecclesiastical environment/experience. And this because, often, the liturgical text takes the form of a vestment of the Word revealed through the Scriptures. A representative for this type of remodelling of the biblical rescript and its integration in the liturgical space is Saint Basil the Great, who, in all his works, provided an extensive commentary on the Holy Scripture. Therefore, in what follows, we propose fragments from the text of the Holy Liturgy which bears his name, to argue for the necessity of achieving the *continuum*, the perennial aspect of the Word in the Liturgy.

However, before actually analysing and presenting the synthesis of the biblical foundations on which this liturgical text is based, we would like to mention the fact that Saint Basil perceived the text of the Scripture in its dynamic dimension, he read it incessantly to embody it, as he believed that its interpretation must always be done within the liturgical framework (Basarab 2005, 120) since the Church is the place where the authentic living of the Scripture takes place. Only interpreted in this environment can the Holy Scripture truly become a source of spiritual enlightenment and unfathomable wisdom. Here lies the explanation for the richness of biblical texture of his liturgical creations.

We have opted for an analysis of the liturgical anaphora and we will very briefly present the biblical formulations introduced by Saint Basil in the two prayers. The first one introduces forms of address whose Scriptural origin can easily be identified: *Master, Lord, God* (Acts 4:24), *Father* (Lk. 23:34), *the Almighty* (Apoc. 1:8), *the only true God* (Is. 37:16), *Master of all things, Lord of heaven and earth, and every creature visible and invisible* (Acts 4:24), *one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven* (Heb. 8:1), *behold the depths* (1 Tim. 1:31), *You have given us to know Your truth* (2 Tim. 2:25). God is *Father of our Lord Jesus Christ* (Rm. 15:6) or simply *Father* (1 Pt. 1:17), *true God* (Jn. 17:3), *Through Him the Holy Spirit was manifested* (Jn. 14:26), *Who*



is the spirit of truth the gift of Sonship (Jn. 14:17) and the source of sanctification (Jn. 7:37-39). Jesus Christ our Saviour is *our hope* (1 Tm. 1:1), *great God* (Tob. 3:16), the *image of Your goodness* (Wisd. of Sol. 7:26) and the *One revealing in Himself You* (Jn. 14:9).

The doxological content of the prayer conjures up new scriptural passages when Saint Basil calls God *invisible* (Col. 1:15), *unchanged* (Jas. 1:17), *word of God is living* (Heb. 4:12), *the life* (Jn. 14:6), *The true light* (Jn 1:9), *sanctification* (1 Cor. 1:30) and when he asserts man's lack of power in *that I may recount all your praises* (Ps. 9:14), *until I proclaim your might to another generation, your power to all those to come* (Ps. 71:18), *at all times* (Ps. 34:1).

In what way does man and the entire creation, both seen and unseen, relate to God? Every creature *serves you* (Sir. 35:17), *You eternal glorification* (Jud. 15:14), *for all things are subject* (Apoc. 7:15), *You are praised by the angels* (Pr. of Man. 1:15), *Roundabout You stand the Seraphim, one with six wings and the other with six wings; with two they cover their faces; with two they cover their feet; with two they fly, crying out to one another with unceasing voices and every resounding praises: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord Sabaoth, heaven and earth are filled with Your glory* (Is. 6:2-3). The responsibility of the human being who is in front of God is summarised in a few formulations taken especially from the book of Psalms: *to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praises to your name* (Ps. 92:1), *I will bless you as long as I live; in your name I will lift my hands* (Ps. 63:5), *to stand in front of Him with a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart* (Ps. 51:17).

The prayer preceding the anamnestic moment could be considered a synthesis of the history of salvation, starting with the creation of man in the image and after the likeness of God and up to his salvation from death through the work of Christ our Saviour. The text of the prayer begins with a series of doxological formulations: *his greatness is unsearchable / are no bounds to the majesty of Your holiness* (Ps. 145:3,5), *You are holy in all Your works, for with righteousness and true judgement You have ordered all things for us* (Tob. 3:2). Then, the fundamental reference points of the history of salvation are being gradually introduced, the first being the moment when God, *having made man by taking dust from the earth* (Gn. 2:7), *having honoured him with Your image* (Gn. 1:27), *You placed him in a garden of delight* (Gn. 2:8.15), *promising him eternal life and the enjoyment of everlasting blessings in the observance of Your commandments* (Gn. 2:16-17). But our proto parents chose to disobey Him: *But when he disobeyed You* (Gn. 3:11) *and was led astray by the deception of the serpent* (Gn. 3:13), *For the wages of sin is death / becoming subject to death through his transgressions* (Rom. 6:23), *expelled him*

*from paradise into this world (Gn. 3:24), that your rules are righteous (Ps. 119:75) and returning him to the earth from which he was taken (Gn. 3:19).*

The punishment for sin is followed by the announcement of the possibility of salvation through *a second birth*, as man's mistakes cannot surpass God's infinite mercy: *nor did You forget the work of Your hands (Is. 64:7), You visited him in various ways (Is. 4:31).* The preparation for the advent of our Saviour was made *in many ways by the prophets (Heb. 1:1), the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes (Ps. 19:8), spirits sent out to serve (Heb. 1:14).* But when the fullness of time had come (Gal. 4:4), *he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world (Heb. 1:2), Who, being the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature (Heb. 1:3), thought it not robbery to be equal with You, God and Father (Phil. 2:6-7), being God before all ages (Jn. 1:1-2), He appeared on earth and lived with humankind (1 Tim. 3:16), Becoming incarnate from a holy Virgin (Mt. 1:25).*

The Son of God's work of salvation is presented in detail: *that He might change us in the likeness of the image of His glory (Phil. 3:21), Your only begotten Son, who is in Your bosom (Jn. 1:18), had to be born of woman, born under the law (Gal. 4:4), to condemn sin in His flesh (Eph. 2:15), so that those who died in Adam may be brought to life in Him (1 Cor. 15:22), He lived in this world, and gave us precepts of salvation (Jn 3:17), Releasing us from the delusions of idolatry (1 Tim. 1:9), He acquired us for Himself, as His chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation (1 Pet. 2:9), having cleansed us by water (Eph. 5:25).* The work of our Saviour reaches its climax in His death, Resurrection and Assumption: *He gave Himself as a ransom to death (Eph. 5:2), descending into Hades through the cross, that He might fill all things with Himself (1 Pet. 3:18-19), He loosed the bonds of death (1 Cor. 15:25-26), He rose on the third day (1 Cor. 15:4), having opened a path for all flesh to the resurrection from the dead (1 Cor. 15:20) since it was not possible that the Author of life would be dominated by corruption (Acts 2:27), he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high (Heb. 1:3), He will render to each one according to his works (Rom. 2:6).* The end of the prayer conjures up the willing death of Christ our Saviour (Jn. 18:4), Who left us memories of His Passion (Lk. 22:19), thus introducing the anamnestic moment (1 Cor. 11:23-24).

We have resorted to this manner of presentation to be able to easily observe how naturally Saint Basil introduces in the anaphora this succession of formulations taken alternatively from the Old and from the New Testament. For us, this is precisely the strong argument in favour of understanding the Holy Scripture as a unitary reality,

due to the conviction of the Fathers that, both in the Old and in the New Testament, it was the same Spirit Who spoke. Nonetheless, in the case of the two prayers, we have the possibility of noticing that the liturgical act makes us contemporary and subject to this wonderful history of salvation, allowing us to distinguish in the profane history the eschatological meaning of the created existence.

The presence of the Old Testament in the liturgical anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil represents an argument for the presence of the Scripture in the Eastern liturgical practice. However, the possibility of partaking in God's Word can also be seen in the other moments of the Holy Liturgy. St. Nicholas Cabasilas speaks about them and their function within the Liturgy. His interpretations regarding the presence and the meaning of Scripture readings within the Liturgy are explicit and give testimony of the organic connection which exists between the revealed Word and the Holy Liturgy. St. Nicholas Cabasilas asserts that the biblical elements introduced in the liturgical order cleanse the eyes of the heart from the fog of materiality: "The readings from the Holy Scripture, which teach us God's goodness and love for people, as well as His justice and judgement, sow and trigger in our souls not only the love for Him but also the fear of Him, thus making us more ardent in the keeping of His commandments." (St. Nicholas Cabasilas 2004, 2, our translation). But St. Nicholas Cabasilas believed these songs and readings from the Holy Scripture, which were introduced in the order of the Holy Liturgy, had a double role; being "godly scriptures and words inspired by God, they sanctify the one who reads and sings them; yet, since they were chosen and ordered in a certain way, they also serve the other purpose, namely that of picturing the advent and life of Christ." (St. Nicholas Cabasilas 2004, 24, our translation) The Holy Gospel announces Christ, but it also embodies Him (St. Nicholas Cabasilas 2004, 29). Thus, "... nothing prevents them (the songs and writings from the Holy Scripture) from doing both things, meaning, on the one hand, from sanctifying the faithful and, on the other hand, from symbolising the *oikonomia* of Christ" (St. Nicholas Cabasilas 2004, 24, our translation).

The importance of reading the Gospel is overwhelming: the praise which both precedes and follows it is given by the faithful as people who know the Holy Gospel embodies Christ and that encountering Him represents the very purpose of our existence. It is towards this climax of encountering Christ that the readings from the Holy Scripture lead us, as they "prepare and cleanse us beforehand for the great sanctification of the Holy Sacraments" (St. Nicholas Cabasilas 2004, 32, our translation). And the end of the liturgical order is also enriched by words taken from the Holy Scripture: "Blessed



*be the name of the LORD...* and the others (Ps. 113:2; Dn. 2:20), which are followed by a psalm full of glory and gratitude: *I will bless the LORD at all times...* (Ps. 34:1 et seq.) (St. Nicholas Cabasilas 2004, 78, our translation).

Saint Maximus the Confessor writes on the reading of the Apostle within the Holy Liturgy, he believes that, by reading the Apostle within the Holy Liturgy, “we find what our duties are”, “we learn the laws of blessed godly fights, by which battling, we are found worthy of being crowned with triumph in the Kingdom of Christ” (St. Maximus the Confessor 2000, 18, our translation). Moreover, the reading of the Gospel “shows, to those who endeavour, the problems they will have for the word. Then, coming upon them from the sky, the Word of contemplation and knowledge, like a High Priest, removes the thought of the body as the sensitive world, chases away their thoughts which are directed towards the earth and makes them look towards the spiritual.” (St. Maximus the Confessor 2000, 19, our translation)

### Conclusions

The text of the Holy Scripture is an accomplishment, a presence, and a partaking of the Spirit. The Scripture is thus an introduction in the scope of the Holy Spirit throughout history, both in the past and in the present, it accompanies us towards knowing God and towards testifying this eternal truth: a truth which the Jewish thinking and, later, the Church confirmed by stating the canonicity of the books of the Holy Scripture. Therefore, we read them – just like the Church Fathers ever since the beginning of the Church – in Christ’s light, it is Him that we find/recognise hidden in their words, it is of Him that we partake in the liturgical space by reading the Scripture – the Word of all words.

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## THE ORTHODOX BIBLE AND THE ANAGINOSKOMENA BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

### Abstract

In Western academic scholarship, the status of the anaginoskomena (the books and additions not found in the Hebrew Bible, but in the Septuagint editions) in the Orthodox Church is not completely understood, especially regarding the differences between the Orthodox churches. For example, an introduction to the Old Testament from 2009 assumes that the anaginoskomena have “incontestable authority”, quoting professor Petros Vassiliadis. Apart from the Hebrew canon, other ten books are reckoned by the Orthodox, eight of them reckoned by the Catholics as well (Judith, Tobith, 1-2 Maccabees, Wisdom of Salomon, Ben Sira, Baruch, and Epistle of Jeremiah) and two books not accepted by the Catholics (3 Maccabees and 1 Esdras / 3 Ezra). The canonicity of other books, such as the Prayer of king Manasseh (with Odes) and Psalm 151 remains debatable. The Greek Church completes the list with 4 Maccabees and the Russian Church with 4 Ezra (Römer, Macchi, Nihan 2009). In another Western introduction, the fine separation of the Orthodox churches is completely unknown. The authors simply assume that the biblical books canonized by the Tridentin council in 1546 were canonized by the Orthodox Church in the council of Jerusalem in 1672 (Dietrich et al 2014). A more articulated view is present in the recent volume of proceedings regarding the biblical canon at the Eastern churches (Farrugia, Vergani 2017). The present paper aims at defining the status of the anaginoskomena in the Orthodox Church.



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### Introduction. Recent Orthodox Bibles

Orthodox editions of the Bible are important in this respect, because they could offer a good glimpse at the nowadays position of the anaginoskomena. The Greek

Old Testament published by the publishing house of the Greek Church, Apostoliki Diakonia, appeared in 1997 under the title *I Palaia Diathiki* (The Old Testament). The books of Daniel and Esther from the Hebrew canon contain the supplements from the Septuagint. Psalm 151 has the specification “out of number” (ἔξωθεν τοῦ ἀριθμοῦ). Besides the ten anaginoskomena books, 4 Maccabees was included as an “addition” (παράρτημα). The first translation in Modern Greek (demothiki), *I Agia Graphi*, was published in 1997. Although the Old Testament was translated from Hebrew, the books of Daniel and Esther include the additions, but Psalm 151 is missing.

The Russian Synodal Bible, *Sinodal’nyi perevod*, follows the Hebrew canon. The books of Daniel and Esther have the supplements from the Septuagint. There is also Psalms 151, while the Prayer of Manasseh is found at the end of the books of the Chronicles. The Bible has an extra-book, 4 Ezra, not found in other Orthodox editions. On the other hand, all the anaginoskomena are marked with an asterisk and considered “non-canonical”.

The Romanian Synodal Bible was published in multiple editions, beginning with 1914. The first synodal edition (1914) followed the Septuagint text (a mixed Septuagint text derived from the Calvinist Frankfurt Bible of 1597 – see below). Beginning with the second edition (1936), the textual source for the translation was changed. Rather than relying solely on the Septuagint, the translators created an eclectic version which combines readings both from the Masoretic text and the Septuagint. The pattern was – as some similarities in translations show – the Russian Synodal Bible. The first two editions (1914 and 1936) have the anaginoskomena, without any mark, grouped at the end of the Old Testament, while the second editions of 1944 and 1968 delineated the anaginoskomena as “uncanonical”. Between 1975 and 2015 the term “uncanonical” disappeared, but it emerged again in the preface of the 2019 edition: “Other 14 books were added to these books, which both [Jewish and Orthodox] traditions consider only as ‘good for reading’, that is soul edifying, their content being not necessary for faith itself. The names of all canonical and uncanonical books of the Old Testament are listed in the table of contents of the present edition” (*Biblia sau Sfânta Scriptură* 2019, 16). Essentially, the Synodal Bible follows the Hebrew canon. Only the book of Esther has the Septuagint additions inserted in the book itself, while the book of Daniel has the additions as separate books (Susanna, the Prayer of Azariah and the Song of Three Young Men, Bel, and the Dragon). The Ps 151 is added as “uncanonical”. The 10 anaginoskomena plus The Prayer of King Manasseh. With all its peculiarity, the Romanian Synodal Bible has 14 anaginoskomena books.

### Orthodox biblical introduction and studies

Professor Kalantzakis argues that the councils of Jerusalem and Constantinople of 1672 accepted the large canon. Due to the Protestant influence in the 18th century, Russian theologians denied canonicity to the anaginoskomena, while the Greek theology remained faithful to the tradition (Kalantzakis 2006, 134). In an article, the position sustained in the Greek church of considering the anaginoskomena as canonical is presented as the official teaching of the Orthodox church in general (Tsekrekos 2013, 223-237).

In Russian biblical scholarship, in Kashkin's introduction, the anaginoskomena are recognized as good and enlightening for catechumens, but not as sources of dogma (Kashkin 2012, 48). In Dobykin's introduction, the anaginoskomena are not inspired by God and the Orthodox Church cannot base its dogmatic and moral teachings on them (Dobykin 2014, 23-24). On the other hand, some articles argue that the Church often bases its teachings on the non-canonical books, for example, the remembering of the dead (2 Mac 12.43; Tob 4.16; Sir 7.36; 38.23) (Smirnov 2015, 25).

The introduction to the Old Testament written in the 1950s in Romania (Prelipcean et al. 2003, 49-51) considers that from the traditional vantage point only 39 books could be accepted as canonical. Out of zeal the participants of the Synod of Jerusalem (1672) sought to defend the value of the anaginoskomena and adopted an exaggerated opinion, but "almost all theologians of the Orthodox Church", "the handbooks of dogmatics and introductions", for example, the Synod of 1878 that adopted the catechism of Metropolitan Filaret (Drozdov) of Moscow, defend the "traditional" understanding. Only in the Greek church, where the Septuagint is regarded as canonical and authentic, "there is a propensity manifested by some theologians to reckon the anaginoskomena as inspired and canonical, calling them 'deutero-canonical'". The new introduction into the Old Testament printed by the Romanian Orthodox Church continued this direction: "Regarding the anaginoskomena, the positions of the Orthodox varied slightly over the time, since no final decision has been met with general effectiveness. Some regarded them close to the canonical books, others close to the Apocrypha. Nevertheless, their status remained well defined in the Eastern tradition. Although they do not have the character and the value of canonical writing, they have been adopted and used by the Church for their moral and catechetical help" (Chirilă et al. 2018, 75). So, the introduction coordinated by professor Chirilă used the title "non-canonical" (*necanonice*) and "anaginoskomena" for these books.

The first pan-Orthodox conference (Rhodos, 1961) for preparing the Holy and Great Synod of the Orthodox Church proposed that the discussion about the status of the anaginoskomena to be included as a theme (Ioniță 2013, 163). The proposal, published in 1972, states as follows: “The Orthodox Church declares and decides that these books must be separated from the canonical and inspired books concerning the authority of their divine inspiration, but they should be considered as part of the Holy Scripture, useful and good for the believer” (*La Bible* 2010, 1647).

### The biblical canon in the first millennium

The newest monograph of Gallagher and Meade concerning the biblical canon in the early Church represents a valuable source for the literary sources (Gallagher, Meade 2017). There are twenty early sources, eleven in Greek and nine in Latin: in Greek – the Bryennios list, Melito of Sardis, Origen, Eusebius of Caesarea, St Cyril of Jerusalem, St Athanasius of Alexandria, the synod of Laodicea, the apostolic canons, St Gregory of Nazianzus, St Amphilochius of Iconium and St Epiphanius of Salamis; in Latin: the canonical list in codex Claromontanus (4<sup>th</sup> century), the Mommmsen catalogue or the Cheltenham list (before 365), St Hilary of Poitiers, St Jerome, Rufinus, the synod of Carthage or *Breviarium Hipponense*, St Augustine and Pope Innocent I. Moreover, one can add the Greek codices comprising the entire Bible: Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Vaticanus, Codex Alexandrinus, Ra 68, Ra 106, Ra 122, Ra 130 (XII-XIII centuries, without the Psalter), Codex Venetus (VIII century, without the Psalter), Ra 46 (XIII-XIV centuries, without the Psalter).

I shall focus only on the main synodal decisions. First, canon 59 of the Synod of Laodicea summoned in 363 stipulates: (Τὰ) τῆς παλαιᾶς διαθήκης· α' Γένεσις κόσμου· β' Ἐξοδος ἐξ Αἰγύπτου· γ' Λευιτικόν· δ' Ἀριθμοί· ε' Δευτερονόμιον· ς' Ἰησοῦς τοῦ Ναυῆ· ζ' Κριταί, Ρούθ· η' Ἑσθήρ· θ' βασιλειῶν α' β'· ι' Βασιλειῶν γ' δ'· ια' Παραλειπομένων α' β'· ιβ' Ἑσδρας α' β'· ιγ' βίβλος ψαλμῶν ρν'· ιδ' Παροιμίαι Σολομῶντος· ιε' Ἐκκλησιαστής· ις' Αἶσμα ἁσμάτων· ιζ' Ἰώβ· ιη' οἱ δώδεκα Προφῆται· ιθ' Ἑσαΐας· κ' Ἱερεμίας, Βαρούχ, Θρηνοὶ καὶ ἐπιστολή· κα' Ἰεζεκιήλ· κβ' Δανιήλ. (Joannou 1962, 154-155) / “(The books) of the Old Covenant: one, the Genesis of the world; two, the Exodus out of Egypt; three, Leviticus; four, Numbers; five, Deuteronomy; six, Joshua of Naue; seven, Judges, Ruth; eight, Esther; nine, first and second of Kingdoms; ten, third and fourth of Kingdoms; eleven, first and second of Paraleipomena; twelve, first and second of Esdras; thirteen, the Book of One-Hundred-and-Fifty Psalms; fourteen, The Proverbs



of Solomon; fifteen, Ecclesiastes; sixteen, The Song of Songs; seventeen, Job; eighteen, The Twelve Prophets; nineteen, Isaiah; twenty, Jeremiah, Baruch, Lamentations, and Epistle; twenty-one, Ezekiel; twenty-two, Daniel” (Gallagher, Meade 2017, 132-133).

The number of the Old Testament books follows the numbering of the Hebrew canon in the first century AD: twenty-two books (Flavius Josephus, *Against Apion* 1.8), according to the letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

The second source in importance is St Athanasius of Alexandria, *Festal Epistle* 39.17 [or 39.9 or 39.4], written in 367: “Ἔστι τοίνυν τῆς μὲν παλαιᾶς διαθήκης βιβλία τῷ ἀριθμῷ τὰ πάντα εἰκοσιδύο, τοσαῦτα γάρ, ὡς ἤκουσα, καὶ τὰ στοιχεῖα τὰ παρ’ Ἑβραίοις εἶναι παραδέδοται, τῇ δὲ τάξει καὶ τῷ ὀνόματι ἔστιν ἕκαστον οὕτως· πρῶτον Γένεσις· εἶτα Ἐξοδος· εἶτα Λευιτικόν· καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο Ἀριθμοί· καὶ λοιπόν, τὸ Δευτερονόμιον· ἐξῆς δὲ τούτοις ἔστιν Ἰησοῦς ὁ τοῦ Ναυῆ· καὶ Κριταί· καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο ἡ Ῥούθ· καὶ πάλιν ἐξῆς, Βασιλειῶν βιβλία τέσσαρα· καὶ τούτων τὸ μὲν πρῶτον καὶ δεύτερον εἰς ἓν βιβλίον ἀριθμεῖται, τὸ δὲ τρίτον καὶ τέταρτον ὁμοίως εἰς ἓν· μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα, Παραλειπομένων πρῶτον καὶ δεύτερον, ὁμοίως εἰς ἓν βιβλίον πάλιν ἀριθμοῦμενα· εἶτα Ἑσδρα πρῶτον καὶ δεύτερον ὁμοίως εἰς ἓν· μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα, βιβλος Ψαλμῶν· καὶ ἐξῆς Παροιμίαι· εἶτα Ἐκκλησιαστής· καὶ Ἄσμα ἁσμάτων· πρὸς τούτοις ἔστι καὶ Ἰώβ· καὶ λοιπόν, Προφῆται, οἱ μὲν δώδεκα εἰς ἓν βιβλίον ἀριθμοῦμενοι, εἶτα Ἡσαΐας, Ἰερემίας, καὶ σὺν αὐτῷ Βαρούχ, Θρῆνοι καὶ ἐπιστολή, καὶ μετ’ αὐτὸν Ἰεζεκιήλ καὶ Δανιήλ (Joannou 1963, 72-74) / “There are, then, belonging to the Old Testament in number a total of twenty-two, for, as I have heard, it has been handed down that this is the number of the letters in the Hebrew alphabet. In order and by name they are as follows: first, Genesis; then, Exodus; then, Leviticus; and after this, Numbers; and finally Deuteronomy. After these is Joshua, the son of Nun; and Judges; and after this, Ruth; and again, next four books of Kingdoms, the first and the second of these being reckoned as one book, and the third and fourth likewise being one. After these are First and Second Paraleipomenon, likewise reckoned as one book; then First and Second Esdras, likewise as one. After these is the book of Psalms; and then Proverbs; then Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs. After these is Job; and finally the Prophets, the Twelve being reckoned as one book; then Isaiah; Jeremiah, and with it, Baruch, Lamentations, and the Letter; and after it, Ezekiel and Daniel” (English translation – Brakke, 2010, 60; revision of the English translation – Gallagher, Meade, 2017, 122-123; Old English translation – Schaff, Wace, 1892, 552; Romanian translation – Sf. Atanasie de Alexandria 2013, 284).

It is obvious that St Athanasius depends upon the Hebrew canon, referring to the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet. The book of Esther is missing, but the book of

Jeremiah is reckoned as canonical with all the Greek additions: the book of Baruch and the Letter. Nothing similar is specified about the content of the book of Daniel.

The third source is Apostolic Canon 85 (found in *Apostolic Constitutions* 8.47.85). Its wording, in the critical edition, is as follows: πε'. Ἐστω δὲ ὑμῖν πᾶσι κληρικοῖς καὶ λαϊκοῖς βιβλία σεβάσματα καὶ ἅγια τῆς μὲν παλαιᾶς διαθήκης Μωσέως πέντε· Ἰησοῦ δὲ τοῦ Ναυῆ ἓν, τῶν Κριτῶν ἓν, τῆς Ρούθ ἓν, τῶν Βασιλειῶν τέσσαρα, Παραλειπομένων τῆς βίβλου τῶν ἡμερῶν δύο, Ἐσδρα δύο, Ἐσθήρ ἓν, Ἰουδίθ ἓν, Μακκαβαίων τέσσαρα, Ἰώβ ἓν, βιβλὸς Ψαλμῶν ἑκατὸν πεντήκοντα καὶ ἑνός, Σολομῶντος βιβλία πέντε· Προφῆται δέκα ἕξ· Ἐξωθεν ὑμῖν προσιστορεῖσθω μαθάνειν ὑμῶν τοὺς νέους τὰς Σοφίας τοῦ πολυμαθοῦς Σιράχ. (*Les constitutions apostoliques* 1987, 306, 308) / “85. Now let the venerated and holy books be for all of you, clerics and laypeople. Of the Old Covenant: Five of Moses; now one of Joshua of Naue, one of the Judges, one of Ruth, four of the Kingdoms, two of Paralipomenon of the book of days, two of Esdras, one of Esther, one of Judith, four of Maccabees, one of Job, Book of One-Hundred-and-Fifty-One Psalms, five books of Solomon; sixteen Prophets; beyond these, let it be added to you as further instruction that your youth learn the Wisdom of Sirach, the polymath.” (Gallagher, Meade 2017, 137)

But in the ecclesiastical traditional text of the Orthodox Church the texts are as follows: πε'. Ἐστω ὑμῖν πᾶσι κληρικοῖς καὶ λαϊκοῖς βιβλία σεβάσματα καὶ ἅγια, τῆς μὲν Παλαιᾶς Διαθήκης, Μωυσέως, πέντε· Γένεσις, Ἔξοδος, Λευιτικόν, Ἀριθμοί, Δευτερονόμιον· Ἰησοῦ Ναυῆ, ἓν· Κριτῶν, ἓν· Ρούθ, ἓν· Βασιλειῶν, τέσσαρα· Παραλειπομένων, τῆς βίβλου τῶν ἡμερῶν, δύο· Ἐσδρα, δύο· Ἐσθήρ, ἓν· Μακκαβαίων, τρία· Ἰώβ, ἓν· Ψαλμῶν, ἓν· Σολομῶντος, τρία, Παροιμίαι, Ἐκκλησιαστής, Ἰσμία Ἀισμάτων· Προφητῶν, δώδεκα· Ἡσαΐου, ἓν· Ἰερεμίου, ἓν· Ἰεζεκιήλ, ἓν· Δανιήλ, ἓν· Ἐξωθεν δὲ ὑμῖν προσιστορεῖσθω μαθάνειν ὑμῶν τοὺς νέους τὴν Σοφίαν τοῦ πολυμαθοῦς Σειράχ. (*Canoanele Bisericii Ortodoxe I* 2018, 133; the Greek text is taken from Ῥάλλης, Ποτλῆς 1852, 109; the text already found in the first edition of the Pedalion of St Nicodemus the Hagiorite – Πηδάδλιον 1800, 69-70 / “85. Now let the venerated and holy books be for all of you, clerics and laypeople. Of the Old Covenant: Five of Moses; one of Joshua of Naue, one of the Judges, one of Ruth, four of the Kingdoms, two of Paralipomenon of the book of days, two of Esdras, one of Esther, three of Maccabees, one of Job, one of Psalter, three of Solomon: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs; twelve of the Prophets; one of Isaiah, one of Jeremiah, one of Ezekiel, one of Daniel; outside of these, let it be added to you as further instruction that your youth learn the Wisdom of Sirach, the polymath.” (modified translation based on Gallagher, Meade 2017, 137)



The Syriac version of the 85<sup>th</sup> apostolic canon, preserved in a manuscript dating from the VIII-IX centuries, has further particularities:

(de Lagarde 1856, 8-14)

The Wisdom of Sirach or Ben Sira, although outside (ἐξωθεν / ٥٠) the canonical books, might be use for the instruction (μανθάνειν / ٥١) of the young (τοὺς νέους / ٥٢).

## ROOTS

two books. Job. Psalter. Of Solomon, five books. Book of The Twelve Minor Prophets. Also, Isaiah. Jeremiah. Ezekiel. Daniel. Tobit. Judith. Esther. Of Ezra, two books. Of Maccabees, two books.” (Gallagher, Meade 2017, 223)

The traditional ecclesiastical text of the canon has some differences: Εἰσὶ δὲ αἱ κανονικαὶ Γραφαὶ αὗται. Γένεσις, Ἔξοδος, Λευϊτικόν, Ἀριθμοί, Δευτερονόμιον, Ἰησοῦς ὁ τοῦ Ναυῆ, Κριταί, Ῥούθ, τῶν Βασιλειῶν βίβλοι τέσσαρες, τῶν Παραλειπομένων βίβλοι δύο, Ἰώβ, Ψαλτήριον, Σολομῶντος βίβλοι πέντε, τῶν Προφητῶν βίβλοι δώδεκα, Ἡσαΐας, Ἱερεμίας, Ἰεζεκιήλ, Δανιήλ, Τωβίας, Ἰουδῆθ, Ἑσθήρ, Ἑσδρα βίβλοι δύο. (*Canoanele Bisericii Ortodoxe II* 2018, 149; text taken from Ῥάλλης, Ποτλής 1852, 368) / “The canonical Scriptures are these: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua of Naue, Judges, Ruth, of Reigns four books, of Paralipomenon two books, Job, Psalter, of Solomon five books, twelve books of the Prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Tobit, Judith, Esther, of Ezra, two books.” (modified translation based on Gallagher, Meade 2017, 223)

Again, there is an interesting difference between the Latin and the Greek editions: the Greek edition omits the books of Maccabees altogether. Regarding the five books of Solomon, beside the book of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Wisdom of Solomon, it should be expected that the Wisdom of Jesus son of Sirach is included.

From the selected sources the anaginoskomena are not widely accepted. Given the lingering doubts about them, they might be named more fittingly antilegomena (disputed). Nevertheless, although sporadically, their canonicity is attested by synods, patristic authors, and ancient codices. The book of **Baruch** and The **Epistle of Jeremiah** are found in Codex Vaticanus and Alexandrinus, are mentioned by St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Athanasius the Great, St. Epiphanius of Salamis and by the synod of Laodicea. **3 Ezra** is included in Sinaiticus and Vaticanus as 1 Esdras, followed by 2 Esdras (Ezra + Nehemiah). **Tobit** and **Judith** are found in Sinaiticus (only Judith), Vaticanus, Alexandrinus and Venetus, and are included in the list of Claromontanus, Mommsen catalogue, and are mentioned by the synod of Carthage and St. Augustine. **1-4 Maccabees** are present in: Sinaiticus (1 and 4 Maccabees), Alexandrinus and Venetus; the canonical list of Claromontanus (1-2 and 4 Maccabees), Apostolic Canons (1-4 Maccabees); only 1 and 2 Maccabees in Mommsen catalogue, St Augustine, synod of Carthage and pope Innocent I. The **Wisdom of Solomon** and the **Wisdom of Sirach** are found in Sinaiticus, Vaticanus and Alexandrinus; the list of Claromontanus, probably in the Mommsen catalogue, St. Augustine, probably the synod of Carthage (five books of Solomon).

### Middle Age

The real challenge to the unresolved and unclear status of the anaginoskomena came with the publication of the Luther's Bible in 1534 in Wittenberg. For the father of the Reformation, the only acceptable biblical canon was the Hebrew one, while the anaginoskomena are placed at the end of the Old Testament with an explanation: "Apocrypha. Das sind Bücher: so nicht der heiligen Schrift gleich gehalten: und doch nützlich und gut zu lesen sind" / "Apocrypha. These are books which are not equally received as the Holy Scriptures and yet are useful and good to read". The apocryphal books are set in a special order: Judith, Wisdom of Solomon, Tobit, Sirach, Baruch, 1-2 Maccabees and the additions to Esther and Daniel (Luth[er] II 1534, 371).

The reaction from the Catholic Church, the Counter-Reformation, culminated in the council of Trent (1545-1563). In the fourth session, held on April 8, 1546, the council took an unprecedented decision, declaring that all the anaginoskomena are canonical: "They [the books received by the synod] are as set down here below: of the Old Testament: the five books of Moses, to wit, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy; Josue, Judges, Ruth, four books of Kings, two of Paralipomenon, the first book of Esdras, and the second which is entitled Nehemias; Tobias, Judith, Esther, Job, the Davidical Psalter, consisting of a hundred and fifty psalms; the Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Canticle of Canticles, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Isaías, Jeremias, with Baruch; Ezekiel, Daniel; the twelve minor prophets, to wit, Osee, Joel, Amos, Abdias, Jonas, Micheas, Nahum, Habacuc, Sophonias, Aggaeus, Zacharias, Malachias; two books of the Maccabees, the first and the second" (*The Canons* 1848, 18). The list contained the following titles, interspersed between the old canonical books, in the manner attested by the traditional Bible codices: Tobit, Judith, the Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus (the Wisdom of Jesus Sirach), Baruch and 1-2 Maccabees.

The first printed Orthodox Bible, the Slavonic Bible of Ostrog (1581), has strong Catholic influences and, as Thompson put it, "its Old Testament contents conform to neither the Catholic, the Protestant nor even the Greek Orthodox understanding of the canon" (Thomson 1998, for the Ostrog Bible see pp. 671-686, for the canon especially pp. 684-685). As in the Vulgate, Ezra is separated from Nehemiah. 3 Ezra of the Vulgate (= 1 Esdras of the Septuagint) is numbered as 2 Ezra, while an extra Ezra book is added (4 Ezra, found only in Latin, numbered in the Ostrog Bible as 3 Ezra). Regarding the Maccabees, it comprises three books (as opposed to two in the Latin Bible or four in the Septuagint). The Prayer of Manasseh is added at the end of the Chronicles, Psalm 151 is

added at the end of the Psalter with a short note about the Odes, which are nevertheless not included (See a scanned copy of the Ostrog Bible at <https://txt.drevle.com/bible/ob1581>). The Ostrog Bible set the path for the content of the modern Russian Synodal Bible, the key difference being the status of the anaginoskomena, whose canonical status in the Ostrog Bible is explicitly rejected in the Synodal Bible.

The next important step is the Confession of faith drafted in 1625 by Metrophanes Kritopoulos (1589-1639), as part of his exchange with the Lutherans of Helmstädt (Ică 1973, 208-473; Davey 1987). Concerning the anaginoskomena, he notes as follows: Τὰ λοιπὰ δὲ βιβλία, ἅπερ τινὲς βούλονται συγκαταλέγειν τῇ ἁγίᾳ Γραφῇ, οἷον τὸ τοῦ Τωβίτ, τὸ τῆς Ἰουδῆθ, Σοφίαν τοῦ Σολομῶντος, Σοφίαν Ἰησοῦ υἱοῦ Σιράχ, Βαρούχ καὶ τὰς τῶν Μακκαβαίων, ἀποβλήτους μὲν οὐχ ἡγοούμεθα· πολλὰ γὰρ ἠθικὰ, πλείστου ἐπαίνου ἄξια, ἐμπεριέχεται ταύταις· ὡς κανονικὰς δὲ καὶ αὐθεντικὰς οὐδέποτε ἠπεδέξατο ἡ τοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἐκκλησία, ὡς μαρτυροῦσι πολλοὶ μὲν καὶ ἄλλοι, μάλιστα δὲ ὁ τε ἅγιος Γρηγόριος ὁ θεολόγος καὶ ἅγιος Ἀμφιλόχιος καὶ τελευταῖος πάντων ὁ ἅγιος Ἰωάννης ὁ Δαμασκηνός. Διὸ οὐδὲ τὰ δόγματα ἡμῶν πειρώμεθα ἐκ τούτων παραστήσαι, ἀλλ' ἐκ τῶν τριάκοντα τριῶν κανονικῶν καὶ αὐθεντικῶν βιβλίων· ἃ δὴ καὶ θεόπνευστον καὶ ἁγίαν Γραφὴν καλοῦμεν. (Karmires 1968, 529-530) / “The other books, which some want to add to the Holy Writ, namely Tobit, Judith, Wisdom of Solomon, Wisdom of Jesus son of Sirach, Baruch and Maccabees, we do not discount, because they contain many ethical things, worthy of great praise. But the Church of Christ didn’t receive them as canonical and authentic, as many and varied people testified, especially St Gregory the Theologian and St Amphilochius and the last of them St John Damascene. We do not prove our teachings from them, but from the thirty-three canonical and authentic books, which indeed we call God-inspired and holy”.

In 1629 the ecumenical patriarch Cyril Loukaris (1572-1638) published in Latin in Geneva a Confession of faith translated into Greek in 1631. Although there are doubts concerning the authenticity of the confession, Cyril Loukaris himself signed the Greek text preserved in the public library in Geneva (Kkokhar 2015, 5; see also: Germanos 1951; Χατζηαντωνίου 1954). In the answer to question no. 3, we read: Ἐρώτησις 3. Ἐρὰν γραφὴν ποῖα βιβλία καλεῖς; Ἀπόκρισις. Ἐρὰν γραφὴν πάντα τὰ κανονικὰ βιβλία λέγομεν, ἅπερ ὡς κανόνα τῆς πίστεως ἡμῶν καὶ τῆς σωτηρίας παρελάβομεν καὶ κρατοῦμεν· μάλισθ' ὅτι θεόπνευστον ἡμῖν προβάλλουσι τὴν διδασκαλίαν, καὶ αὐτάρκη κατηχήσαι, φωτίσαι καὶ τελειῶσαι τὸν τῇ πίστει προσερχόμενον. Ταῦτα δὲ τὰ κανονικὰ βιβλία τοσαῦτα τὸν ἀριθμὸν εἶναι πιστεύομεν, ὅσα ἡ ἐν Λαοδικεῖᾳ σύνοδος ἀπεφῆνατο,

καὶ ἡ τοῦ Χριστοῦ καθολικὴ καὶ ὀρθόδοξος ἐκκλησία ὑπὸ τοῦ παναγίου πνεύματος φωτισθεῖσα μέχρι τοῦ παρόντος ὑπαγορεύει. Ἄπερ δὲ ἀπόκρυφα λέγομεν, διὰ τοῦτο τὸ ἐπώνυμον οὕτως ἔχουσιν, ὅτι τὸ κῆρος παρὰ τοῦ παναγίου πνεύματος οὐκ ἔχουσιν ὡς τὰ κυρίως καὶ ἀναμφιβόλως κανονικὰ βιβλία, ἐν οἷς ἡ τοῦ Μωϋσέως πεντάτευχος, καὶ τὰ ἀγιογράφα, καὶ οἱ προφῆται, ἅτινα ὥρισεν ἀναγινώσκεσθαι ἡ ἐν Λαοδικεῖᾳ σύνοδος, ἀπὸ τῆς παλαιᾶς διαθήκης βιβλία εἴκοσι δύο [...]. Καὶ ταῦτα μὲν εἶναι τὰ κανονικὰ βιβλία κρατοῦμεν· καὶ ταῦτα ἱερὰν γραφὴν λέγεσθαι ὁμολογοῦμεν (Michalcescu 1904, 275-276). / Question 3: What books do you call Sacred Scripture? Answer: We call Sacred Scripture all the canonical books, which we received and held as canons of our faith and salvation, especially because they provide us with an inspired doctrine, sufficient for teaching, enlightening and making perfect that which is received through faith. We believe that the canonical books are in the number decided by the synod of Laodicea and proclaimed until today by Christ's Catholic and Orthodox Church, being enlightened by the holy Spirit. Those called apocrypha have this name, because they do not have the seal of the Holy Spirit as the canonical books, Moses' Pentateuch, and the Hagiographa, and the Prophets, which the synod of Laodicea appointed to be read, twenty-two books of the Old Testament [...] We hold that these are the canonical books and we testify that these are called the Sacred Scripture”.

A Synod summoned in Constantinople in 1672 took a similar position. In the decisions, the participants referred to the anaginoskomena and their disputed status in the following terms: καὶ περὶ τῶν ἀμφισβητούμενων τῆς παλαιᾶς Διαθήκης βιβλίων, Τωβίου, Ἰουδῆθ, Σοφίας, Ἐκκλησιαστοῦ, Βαρούχ καὶ Μακκαβαίων, εἴ γε μέρος Γραφῆς λογιζόμεθα ταῦτα, ἢ ὡς ἐθνικά τινα ἀποβάλλομεν (Karmires 1968, 689). / “about the disputed books of the Old Testament – Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch and Maccabees – whether we consider them as part of the Bible, or we reject them as profane”. The council decreed the following: Περὶ δὲ τῶν γραφικῶν βιβλίων διαφόρους ἀπαριθμήσεις εὐρίσκομεν παρά τε τοῖς ἀποστολικοῖς κανόσι, καὶ τοῖς τῶν ἱερῶν συνόδων τῆς ἐν Λαοδικεῖᾳ Ἐκκλησίας καὶ τῆς ἐν Καρθαγένῃ, ἐξαιρουμένων τῶν διὰ τοῦ Κλήμεντος διαταγῶν, ἃς ὁ δεῦτερος τῆς ἑκτης συνόδου κανὼν ἀπαγορεύει, διὰ τὸ νενοθευθῆναι ταύτας ὑπὸ τῶν αἰρετικῶν, οἷον ἔξεστιν ὑποκῦσαι τῷ βουλομένῳ καὶ καταμαθεῖν τὰ ἐγκρινόμενα τῶν βιβλίων. Ὅσα μέντοι τῶν τῆς παλαιᾶς Διαθήκης βιβλίων τῇ ἀπαριθμήσει τῶν ἀγιογράφων οὐ συμπεριλαμβάνονται, οὐκ ἀποτροπιάζοντες ταῦτα ἔνεκεν τούτου ὡς ἐθνικά τινα καὶ βέβηλα, ἀλλὰ καλὰ καὶ ἐνάρετα προσαγορεύεται, καὶ οὐκ ἀπόβλητα τυγχάνουσι διόλου (Karmires 1968, 693). / “Regarding the biblical books

we find different reckoning lists in the apostolic canons, holy synods of the Church of Laodicea and of Carthage, except for Clement's constitutions, which the second canon of the sixth synod refuted, because they have been corrupted by heretics. It is indeed allowed to the interested person to appreciate the accepted books and to observe them well. Whatever books of the Old Testament are not included in the reckoning list of the holy writings, they are not thereby eliminated as profane and harming, but are considered good and useful and are not rejected at all".

The decisions are not unambiguous. In a previous introduction to the Old Testament, just as professor Kalantzakis, I assumed that the synod recognized the anaginoskomena mentioned by the synods of Laodicea and Carthage as canonical (Mihăilă, 2017, 30). But it seems that the synod indeed denied canonicity to the anaginoskomena, merely describing them as "good and useful (καλὰ καὶ ἐνάρετα)."

We can argue that the first confessions of faith (Kritopoulos, Loukaris) and the synod of Constantinople were influenced by the Protestant view about the anaginoskomena. In fact, patriarch Cyril Loukaris has many contacts with Calvinists. The year 1672 is a turning point of the Orthodox identity in the modern times, through the Confession of faith authored by Patriarch Dositheos II and the synod of Jerusalem held in 1672, that ratified the anti-Loukaris confession (Melloni 2016, 267-279).

In question and answer no. 3 of Dositheos' confession of faith we read: Ἐρώτησις γ': Ἱερὰν Γραφὴν ποῖα βιβλία καλεῖς; Ἀπόκρισις: Στοιχοῦντες τῷ κανόνι τῆς Καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἱερὰν Γραφὴν καλοῦμεν ἐκεῖνα πάντα, ἅπερ ὁ Κύριλλος ἀπὸ τῆς ἐν Λαοδικείᾳ συνόδου ἐρανισάμενος, ἀριθμεῖ, καὶ πρὸς τούτοις ἅπερ ἄσυνέτως καὶ ἀμαθῶς, εἴτουν ἐθελοκακούργως, ἀπόκρυφα οὕτως ἀπλῶς καὶ ἀδιορίστως κατωνόμασεν, ἥτοι τὸν Τωβίαν, τὴν Ἰουδήθ, τῆς Ἑσθήρ πρὸς τοῖς δέκα ἕτερα κεφάλαι ἕξ, τοῦ Ἑσδρα ἕτερον βιβλίον ἓν, τὸν Βαρούχ, τὴν ὥδην τῶν τριῶν παίδων περιεχομένην εἰς τὸ τρίτον κεφάλαιον τοῦ Δανιήλ, τὴν ἱστορίαν τῆς Σωσάννης, τὴν ἱστορίαν τοῦ δράκοντος, ἥτοι τοῦ Βήλ, τὴν Σοφίαν τοῦ Σολομῶντος, τὴν Σοφίαν τοῦ Σειράχ, καὶ τὰ τρία βιβλία τῶν Μακκαβαίων. Ἡμεῖς γὰρ μετὰ τῶν ἄλλων τῆς θείας Γραφῆς γνησίων βιβίων καὶ ταῦτα γνήσια τῆς Γραφῆς μέρη κρίνομεν· ἡ γὰρ παραδόσασα Καθολικὴ Ἐκκλησία τὰ τε θεῖα καὶ ἱερὰ Εὐαγγέλια καὶ τᾶλλα τῆς Γραφῆς μέρη ἀληθῆ εἶναι, καὶ ταῦτα γνήσια τῆς Γραφῆς μέρη εἶναι ἀναμφιβόλως παρέδωκε, καὶ τούτων ἡ ἄρνησις ἐκείνῳ ἐστὶν ἀθέτησις. Εἰ δέ που δοκεῖ μὴ αἰεὶ πάντα ὑπὸ πάντων συγκαταριθμεῖσθαι, οὐδὲν ἦττον ὅμως καὶ ταῦτα παρὰ τε συνόδων καὶ πολλῶν ὄσων τῆς Καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας παλαιοτάτων τε καὶ ἐγκρίτων θεολόγων ἀριθμεῖται καὶ συγκαταριθμεῖται τῇ πάσῃ Γραφῇ, ἃ πάντα



καὶ ἡμεῖς κανονικὰ βιβλία κρίνομεν, καὶ ταῦτα τὴν ἱεράν Γραφὴν εἶναι ὁμολογοῦμεν (Karmires 1968, 769-770; cf. Michalcescu, 1904, 175). / “What Books do you call Sacred Scripture? Following the rule of the Catholic Church, we call Sacred Scripture all those which Cyril [Loukaris] collected from the Synod of Laodicea, and enumerated, adding to Scripture those which he foolishly and ignorantly, or rather maliciously, called Apocrypha; specifically, “The Wisdom of Solomon,” “Judith,” “Tobit,” “The History of the Dragon” [Bel and the Dragon], “The History of Susanna,” “The Maccabees,” and “The Wisdom of Sirach.” For we judge these also to be with the other genuine Books of Divine Scripture genuine parts of Scripture. For ancient custom, or rather the Catholic Church, which has delivered to us as genuine the Sacred Gospels and the other Books of Scripture, has undoubtedly delivered these also as parts of Scripture, and the denial of these is the rejection of those. And if, perhaps, it seems that not always have all of these been considered on the same level as the others, yet nevertheless these also have been counted and reckoned with the rest of Scripture, both by Synods and by many of the most ancient and eminent Theologians of the Catholic Church. All of these we also judge to be Canonical Books, and confess them to be Sacred Scripture.” (Bratcher 1899)

Nevertheless, the influence of Protestant theology did not fade away. The first Greek Bible printed by the Orthodox is the Bible of Venice, printed in 1687 with the financial support of voivode Șerban Cantacuzino of Wallachia in the printing house of Nikolaos Glykys, a Greek of Ioannina, established in Venice. The 1687 edition is a reissue of the 1597 Greek Bible printed in Frankfurt by a Huguenot editor, Wechel, whose family emigrated from Strasbourg to Frankfurt. In this Bible, the anaginoskomena books are called apocryphal, as in the Luther Bible and all the subsequent Protestant editions that still preserved them: Ἀπόκρυφοι αἱ παρ’ ἑβραίοις ἐκ τοῦ τῶν ἀξιόπιστων ἀριθμοῦ συγκαθίστανται / “Apocrypha, which are counted outside the number of the trustworthy [books]” (Τῆς θείας Γραφῆς 1597, 760). A Romanian translation of the Frankfurt Greek Bible appeared the following year in Bucharest, 1688 – Bible of Bucharest. The anaginoskomena are also called “apocryphal”: “Ascunsele ceale ce-s la jidovi. Den numărul celor vreadnice de credință să află” / “For the Jews the hidden ones [apocrypha], [which] are counted outside the number of the trustworthy [books]” (*Biblia* 1988, 614 – a facsimile and transcription with the Latin alphabet of the Bucharest Bible, 1688).

In 1795 a revision of the Bucharest Bible was printed by the Greek-Catholic church, the so-called Bible of Blaj. Its perspective on the much-debated issue of the anaginoskomena was brought into line with the Catholic teachings: it excluded 4

Maccabees but introduced the prayer of Manasseh. This edition was adopted by the Orthodox Church too: its text was reprinted with minor changes in 1819 as the Bible of St. Petersburg (by the Russian Bible Society), in 1854-1856 as the Bible of Buzău (by bishop Filotei) and between 1856-1858 as the Bible of Sibiu (by St. Andrei Șaguna, the metropolitan of Sibiu). The first Romanian Synodal Bible (Bucharest, 1914) also represented a revision of the Blaj Bible.

Throughout the long centuries of Turkish domination, the Orthodox Church in Greece was not allowed to print ecclesiastic books. After the war for independence, the first Greek Bible printed by the Orthodox Church appeared in Moscow, in 1821, with the blessing of the Russian synod and the support of the Russian Bible Society, which had enlisted generous donations by the Zosimas brothers, two Greek merchants (Kalantzakis 2006, 134). The Moscow edition followed Codex Alexandrinus printed by Grabe (Oxford, 1707-1720), containing the anaginoskomena without any comment. For example, it has 4 Maccabees as in Codex Alexandrinus without further specification regarding the canonicity as for example in the modern Greek editions of the Old Testament (Septuagint).

### **Conclusion. The case for the canonicity of the anaginoskomena**

The status of the anaginoskomena in the Orthodox Churches is not easy to grasp, because their canonicity is disputed. In my opinion, there are strong arguments in favours of their canonicity. The anaginoskomena are considered as canonical by some synods, some Church Fathers and are even included in ancient Bible codices. Even if there is no consensus about their number, they are mentioned in the Old Testament canon lists.

There are public readings from the anaginoskomena in the Orthodox Churches, especially from the Wisdom of Solomon. Although fewer in comparison to the undisputed biblical books, patristic commentaries, and homilies on the anaginoskomena survived until the present day (St. Ambrosius of Milano, *On Tobias*; Pseudo-Augustin, *Sermons* 47 About Tobias; *Sermons* 48-49 On Judith; St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Fragments in catenae to Baruch*; Theodoret of Cyr, *Explanation to Baruch*; Severian of Gabala, *Homily on the Three Youths and the Furnace of Babylon*; St. Hippolytus of Rome, *Fragments on Susanna*; Asterius of Amasea, *Homily VI to Daniel and Susanna* – Datema 1970, 240-249).

Even if confessions of faith (Kritopoulos, Loukaris) and local synods (Constantinople 1672) stressed that they are excluded from the biblical canon, an



important step confirming their canonicity was made by the Confession of faith written by patriarch Dositheos II and adopted by the synod of Jerusalem (1672).

The final decision is still pending. It would be within the scope of a pan-Orthodox synod's responsibility to settle the status of the anaginoskomena and adopt a view common to all the Orthodox Churches, but the arguments in favour of their canonicity are certainly compelling.

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## THE FASCINATION OF TABOO: A FEW BIBLICAL EPISODES FROM THE BOOKS OF THE ANAGIGNOSKOMENA AND OF THE APOCRYPHA ACKNOWLEDGED BY THE TRADITION OF THE CHURCH

### Abstract

The extension of the biblical canon in Orthodoxy represents a thorny, still unsolved, and probably unsolvable issue. Its history begins with the translation of the Old Testament from Hebrew into Greek (the Septuagint) when, during the Second Temple period, after Ezra generally established the books received by Judaism, several books, mostly in Greek, which we call Anagignoskomena, meaning “acknowledged” or “worthy of reading”, were added to the Greek manuscripts. Moreover, in the deuterocanonical period, Judaism produced a series of other writings which largely circulated within the people, but in secret, unofficially, and which were not inventoried or later included on the lists of acknowledged books or in the official manuscripts containing the canonical books or the books of the Anagignoskomena. Nonetheless, the fascination they held and the authority some of them had were stronger than those of canonical writings. Some lacunal canonical biblical texts were being enriched or explained by them, sometimes offering many helping elements “from tradition”. The present study is intended to be an incursion into the world of these writings, which first influenced certain canonical writings, namely those acknowledged initially by the synagogue and then by the tradition of the Church. We will be surprised to find out that, although they are officially denied, the Christian writers from the past and, later, Christian and contemporary tradition have absorbed elements from them. Throughout the history of the biblical canon, there has been a certain attraction towards the forbidden or the taboo. Therefore, up to the life of the modern Christian, we will find notions and teachings which come from tradition, but which initially originate in these writings, to which official theology avoids granting too much importance.



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canon, Baruch, Enoch, angels, tradition

**Introduction**

When speaking about the Canon of the Old Testament, the old textbook on the study of the Old Testament, which is used in theological institutes and which was the only one until two years ago, initially has a resolute approach about the quoting of (sic!) uncanonical writings (this is how the Anagignoskomena are called) and of the Apocrypha in the New Testament, claiming that “this is an assertion which cannot be proved” (Prelipceanu et al 1985, 36). Then, we are offered a few examples supported by the opposing party. Mt 4:4 would quote Wisd. of Sol. 16:26; 6:14 would quote Ecc 28:3; 6:17 would quote Ecc 7:14 (sic!) etc. Supposed quotations from Tobit, the Apocrypha the Assumption of Moses and the Book of Enoch are also mentioned. The authors support their position by reasoning that none of these quotations is introduced by the formula “as written”, “the Scripture says” or “the Holy Spirit says”. Later, things seem less categorical: “it is true that many (biblical, emphasis added) writers often use all or some of the uncanonical books as “Scripture” (Prelipceanu et al 1985, 37). Unfortunately, in this case, we are not offered an example. The starting point of the explanation is the evolution of the canon, namely the fact that neither the Holy Apostles nor the Saviour Himself mentioned the precise number of canonical books and that the Septuagint, with its extended canon, made the sanctified authors of the New Testament have an improper orientation concerning the extension of the canon. In other words, they were wrong using these books, which were only later removed from the canon, or maybe they were a priori fascinated by the taboo they contained. Therefore, our predecessors at the Department of Old Testament Studies cannot present a solid explanation regarding the use of these writings both by the authors of the New Testament and by the Fathers of the Church, being confused especially by the fact that the *textus receptus* of the Orthodox Church is the Septuagint version, which also includes the books of the Anagignoskomena.

This short study aims first to follow the historical evolution of the writings of the Anagignoskomena and the Apocrypha on the lists of canonical books of the primary Christian tradition and then to provide a few concrete examples to demonstrate how, over time, the tradition of the Church has incorporated some of the episodes they present. The novelty of the study resides in the fact that it underscores the idea that,



although at a quasi-official level, the Church seems to reject these writings, especially in dogmatic formulations, and regards them as its step (Anagignoskomena) or illegitimate (Apocrypha) daughters, the writers of the Church and the Saints of the past and even the faithful of our times have used and continue to use them.

The study is structured in several subchapters: the position of the books of the Anagignoskomena and the Apocrypha on the canonical lists of the first centuries, a few biblical episodes acknowledged by tradition, which are present only in the books of the Anagignoskomena and the Apocrypha, a few canonical episodes dealt with in-depth in the books of the Apocrypha and acknowledged by tradition and some brief conclusions on the canonicity of the Anagignoskomena and the Apocrypha.

### **The Position of the Books of the Anagignoskomena and the Apocrypha on the Canonical Lists of the First Centuries**

As we have mentioned, the debate regarding the canon originates in the translation of the Septuagint (the Alexandrian “canon”), which has some additional books, besides those which were in Hebrew (the Hebrew “canon”). Some were written directly in Greek, whereas others were translated from a lost Hebrew original, in the period following Ezra (4<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> BC) How did they get to us, nowadays? First, they were mentioned on the lists of books of various Christian authors. And if they are present on their lists, that means those communities used them in their local cult and readings.

The oldest lists of normative books can be found in the Jewish authors of the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> c. AD. Flavius Josephus, in about 95 AD, in his paper *Against Apion* (1.37-42), and the Babylonian Talmud (3<sup>rd</sup> AD), in the *Baba Batra* 14b tractate etc. (Gallagher, Meade 2017, 57-69). It is not surprising to see that the Hebrew lists, which are faithful to Ezra’s “canon”, do not comprise the Anagignoskomena and the Apocrypha. The first lists are written in Greek, Bryennios’ list (100-150 AD) and Melito of Sardis’ list from *Extracts* (170 AD), include neither the Anagignoskomena nor the Apocrypha (Gallagher, Meade 2017, 70-83). Origen (184-254 AD) has a list of normative books in his *Commentary on Psalm 1*, but it includes neither the Anagignoskomena nor the Apocrypha, except the books of the Maccabees (τὰ Μακκαβαϊκά) (we do not know which and how many), which he names using the Hebrew title: *Sar bet sabanai el* (Σαρβηθσαβαναιελ) and of the Epistle of Jeremiah (καὶ τῇ Ἐπιστολῇ). The books of the Maccabees are “outside” (ἔξω) the list. Thus, one of the books of the Anagignoskomena (the Epistle of Jeremiah) is on the normative list and others (Maccabees) are not. St. Cyril of Jerusalem, in *Catecheses*



4.33-36 (~ 350 AD), does not include the Anagignoskomena or the Apocrypha on his list, except the books of Baruch and the Epistle of Jeremiah, both regarded as part of the book of Jeremiah (καὶ Ἱερεμίου μετὰ Βαρούχ ... καὶ Ἐπιστολῆς). Therefore, two books of the Anagignoskomena are on the list of normative books. Moreover, St. Cyril also included in the book of Daniel the two additions from the Anagignoskomena: Susanna and Bel and the Dragon, considering them to be normative. For instance, he quotes from Dn 13:45, the longer version of Theodosius, from Sus. 1:44, using the special formula employed for normative books “it is written” (γέγραπται): “for it is written: The Lord raised the holy spirit of a young boy” (Gallagher, Meade 2017, 115). St. Athanasius the Great, in *Festal Letters* 39.15-21 (~ 367 AD), include neither the Anagignoskomena nor the Apocrypha on the list of normative books, except the books of Baruch and the Epistle to Jeremiah, which he incorporates in the book of Jeremiah (Ἱερεμίας, καὶ σὺν αὐτῷ Βαρούχ ... καὶ ἐπιστολή). Likewise, he mentions and quotes Sus. 1:42, from Theodosius’ version, as being part of Daniel (ἐν δὲ τῷ Δανιήλ). Therefore, three books of the Anagignoskomena are on the list of normative books. The mysterious Council of Laodicea (4<sup>th</sup> AD) lists the normative books in the 59<sup>th</sup> (Gallagher, Meade 2017, 131) or 60<sup>th</sup> (Perşa 2018, 99) canon. The list includes neither the Anagignoskomena nor the Apocrypha, except the books of Baruch and the Epistle to Jeremiah, which it includes in the book of Jeremiah, as being only one (κ’ Ἱερεμίας, Βαρούχ ... καὶ ἐπιστολή).

The 85<sup>th</sup> apostolic canon (~ 375-380 AD) contains the first most extensive list regarding the Anagignoskomena and the Apocrypha. The following are mentioned among “holy books” (βιβλία ἁγία): Judith, 1-4 Maccabees, Psalm 151, Wisdom of Solomon and Tobit (in the Syriac version of the canon). “Outside” (ἔξωθεν) these canonical books, the following are enumerated: Sirach and, in the Ethiopian version of the canon: Wisdom of Solomon, Judith (it is no longer considered to be canonical), the three books of *Kufâlê* (*Book of Jubilees*) and Sirach (Gallagher, Meade 2017, 136-139). St. Gregory of Naziansus, in *Carmina Dogmatica* 1.1.12 (~ 381-390 AD), does not include on his list either books of the Anagignoskomena or of the Apocrypha, except the book of Baruch. Amphilochius of Iconium, in *Iambics to Seleucus* 251-320 (~ 350 AD), does not include on his list either books of the Anagignoskomena or of the Apocrypha, except the book of Baruch. St. Epiphanius of Salamis has three lists of canonical books in his papers *Panarion* 8.6 (~ 376 AD) and *On Weights and Measures* 4-5 and 22-23 (~ 392 AD). Neither of the three lists includes books of the Anagignoskomena or the Apocrypha, except the books of Baruch and the Epistle of Jeremiah. In *Panarion* 8. 6, he

also speaks about two controversial books: “Wisdom of Sirach and Solomon” (εἰσὶ δὲ καὶ ἄλλαι δύο βίβλοι παρ’ αὐτοῖς ἐν ἀμφιλέκτῳ, ἡ Σοφία τοῦ Σιράχ καὶ ἡ τοῦ Σολομῶντος) and “other Apocryphal books” (χωρὶς ἄλλων τινῶν βιβλίων ἐναποκρύφων), without however mentioning one. Sixteen years after he had written *Panarion*, St. Epiphanius seemed to change his mind, as he then called the two controversial books “useful and beneficial” (χρήσιμοι καὶ ὠφέλιμοι), saying that “they had not been kept in the Ark of the Covenant” (ἐν τῷ ἀρῶν ἐνετέθησαν, τουτέστιν ἐν τῇ τῆς διαθήκης κιβωτῷ) (Gallagher, Meade 2017, 141-173), probably like the other canonical books. However, historically speaking, it was not even possible, as, during the Second Temple period, when the Jewish canon was created and when the two books were written, the Ark of the Covenant was no longer present in the Holy of Holies (acc. 2Mac 2:4-8).

The lists written in Latin also mention some of the books of the Anagnoskomena and the Apocrypha. Codex Claromontanus (4<sup>th</sup> AD) contains the following on the list of canonical books: Wisdom of Sirach, Wisdom of Solomon, 1-2 and 4 Maccabees, Judith and Tobit and St. Hilary of Poitiers, in *Commentary on Psalm 15* (~ 364-367 AD), enumerates Baruch and the Epistle of Jeremiah as part of the book of Jeremiah and, on Tobit and Judith, he says that “some add them to have 24 books, which is the number of letters of the Greek alphabet” (quibusdam autem uisum est, additis Tobia et Iudith, uiginti quattuor libros secundum numerum graecarum litterarum connumerare) (Gallagher, Meade 2017, 183-197). Blessed Jerome has three lists of canonical books in *Prologus Galeatus* (390 AD), *Letter 53* (395 AD) and *Letter 107* (403 AD). The most extensive one is in the Prologue. Jerome is very emphatic and considers as “Apocryphal” and “outside the canon” the following books: Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach, Judith, Tobit, the Shepherd of Hermas and 1-2 Maccabees (... inter Apocrypha seponendum. Igitur Sapientia, quae vulgo Salomonis inscribitur, et Iesu filii Sirach liber et Iudith et Tobias et Pastor non sunt in canone. Maccabeorum primum librum hebraicum repperi, secundus graecus est, quod et ex ipsa φρασιν probari potest) (Gallagher, Meade 2017, 197-216). Rufinus, in *Commentary on the Apostles’ Creed* (404 AD), calls for the first time “the uncanonical books” (non canonici) “ecclesiastic books” (sed ecclesiastici). Here, he includes: Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach, Tobit, Judith, Maccabees (we do not know which). Finally, Blessed Augustine, in *On Christian Doctrine* 2. 8. 12. 24-13. 29 (397 AD), mentions Tobit, Judith and 1-2 Maccabees among the historical canonical books (haec est historia ... Tobias ... Iudith et Machabeorum) and the Wisdom of Solomon and that of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) among the prophetic books

(deinde prophetae ... nam illi duo libri, unus qui Sapientia et alius qui Ecclesiasticus) (Gallagher, Meade 2017, 216-230).

After going through these lists, we conclude that each local Church decided upon the books used and had its canon, mostly identical with that of the other Christian communities. Between the minimalist canon of Blessed Jerome, influenced by the Hebrew canon (39 books) and the maximalist one of the 85<sup>th</sup> apostolic canon, influenced by the Septuagint (as found in Codex Alexandrinus – Swete 1914, 202), we find all the other lists of canons presented. To summarise, Tobit is canonical in the 85<sup>th</sup> apostolic canon, in Codex Claromontanus and for Blessed Augustine. For Blessed Jerome, it is Apocryphal, it is mentioned by St. Hilary and for Rufinus it is ecclesiastic. Judith is canonical in the 85<sup>th</sup> apostolic canon (but also uncanonical – the Ethiopian version), in Codex Claromontanus and for Blessed Augustine, it is Apocryphal for Blessed Jerome, ecclesiastic for Rufinus and it is mentioned by St. Hilary. Baruch is mentioned on most lists and it is canonical every time, namely for St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Athanasius, the Council of Laodicea, St. Gregory, Amphilochius of Iconium, St. Epiphanius and St. Hilary. Likewise, the Epistle of Jeremiah is canonical on all the lists on which it is mentioned: Origen, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Athanasius, the Council of Laodicea, St. Epiphanius and St. Hilary. The Wisdom of Solomon is canonical in the 85<sup>th</sup> apostolic canon (but also uncanonical – the Ethiopian version), in Codex Claromontanus and for Blessed Augustine, it is ecclesiastic for Rufinus, controversial for St. Epiphanius and Apocryphal for Blessed Jerome. Sirach is canonical in Codex Claromontanus and for Blessed Augustine, ecclesiastic for Rufinus, controversial for St. Epiphanius, uncanonical in the 85<sup>th</sup> apostolic canon and Apocryphal for Blessed Jerome. Susanna is canonical for St. Cyril and St. Athanasius. Bel and the Dragon are canonical for St. Cyril. The books of Maccabees are canonical for Origen, in the 85<sup>th</sup> apostolic canon, in Codex Claromontanus and for Blessed Augustine. Rufinus calls them ecclesiastic and Blessed Jerome Apocryphal. The 85<sup>th</sup> apostolic canon lists Psalm 151 as canonical and the book of Jubilees as uncanonical. St. Epiphanius also mentions the Apocryphal books, without naming any.

### **A Few Biblical Episodes Acknowledged by Tradition, which are Present Only in the Books of the Anagignoskomena and the Apocrypha**

I shall mention here only two examples, one from the books of the Anagignoskomena and the other from the Apocrypha.

### *The Prophecy of Baruch (3:38)*

As we have seen, the book of Baruch has always been canonical, as an *addendum* to the book of Jeremiah. Probably this was due mostly to the prophecy in 3:38: “afterwards he was seen upon earth and conversed with men” (μετὰ τοῦτο ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ὤφθη, καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις συνανέστράφη). The author praises the wisdom given through law to the Israelis, which they abandoned (3:9,12,13 et seq.). In the last verses of the chapter, it is said that the personified Wisdom descends from heaven, more precisely “from the clouds” (v. 29) and that no man, besides Him (v. 32), can know her mission and her paths (v. 31). She, Wisdom, or He, God (in Greek, the subject is not specified), was seen upon earth and conversed with men (v. 38). According to patristic teaching, Christ is prefigured in the sapiential literature under the form of divine Wisdom (Prv 8-9), which indwells the people. Although they do not provide us with solid reasons, modern Bible exegetes regard the addition in v. 38 as a late Christian interpolation (Moore 2008, 301). The fact is that v. 38 is quoted by many Fathers and it was used in the Arianistic debate, as it is the only one to speak explicitly about the Embodiment. In the Syriac version, the subject is masculine (“God showed Himself and was seen”) (Charles 2004, 591). The text of the prophecy is remarkably like Jn 1:14: “and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us”. Given that it was quoted many times by the Fathers of the Church, it could not be left outside the canon, at least not on the lists of the first four centuries! Therefore, the fascination for this book of the Anagignoskomena is not related only to its instructive, moral value, but also to its prophetic character or to its dogmatic teaching (it was used in the Arianistic debate). Moreover, the fragment 3:36 – 4:4 is also used in the Orthodox cult, being read twice, first during the Third Hour on Christmas Eve, between the Prokeimenon and the Apostle, and during the Vespers held on December 25<sup>th</sup>, between the prophecy of Isaiah 11:1-10 and Daniel 2:31-36, therefore between two paroemia from canonical books. There are many such examples from the Anagignoskomena, which are acknowledged by tradition.

### *The Names of Angels*

The second example is from the Apocrypha. Here, things are clearer from the point of view of their mentioning on the lists. Only Ps. 151 is canonical and the book of Jubilees uncanonical (the 85<sup>th</sup> apostolic canon). Nonetheless, tradition has acknowledged certain episodes they present. I shall refer here only to the names of angels. According to the Scripture (Rv 1:20) and the Orthodox tradition (Alexandra

2012, 31), there are seven saint archangels: Michael (“Who is like God?” – Hebr. מיכאל), Gabriel (“God is my strength” – Hebr. גבריאל), Raphael (“God has healed” – Hebr. רפאל), Uriel/Ouriel (“God is my light” – Hebr. אוריאל), Selaphiel/Salathiel/Sealtiel/Selatiel (“I have asked God” – Hebr. שאלתיאל), Jegudiel/Jhudiel/Jehudiel (“Laudation of God” – Hebr. יהודיאל) and Barachiel (“the Lightning of God” – Hebr. ברקאל or ברקיאל) (Bulgakov 2009, 108). Probably the list of names of the seven archangels appears for the first time with the Gnostics (Davidson 1971, 338), but, according to Düsterdieck: “in 1460, their names (Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel, Sealtiel, Jehudiel and Barachiel) were revealed to a certain Amadeus, who was chosen for his holiness, miracles and prophecies” (Düsterdieck 1887, 101). Michael, “the prince of Israel”, and Gabriel, “the Archangel”, are mentioned in Dn 10:13,21 and Dn 8:16; 9:21, which is a canonical book. Raphael is mentioned for the first time in Tob. 3:17, which belongs to the Anagignoskomena, and in 1 Enoch 10:4 and 20, which is Apocryphal. Uriel is only mentioned in the Apocrypha: 4 Ezra 4:1; 5:20; 10:28 (the Apocalypse of Ezra) and 1 Enoch 72:1 etc., but, in the Apocryphal 2 Enoch 22:11, he is called Pravuil/Vrevoil and in Qumran, Suriyel/Suriel/Sariel (1) (שוריאל Q33 9:15-16). Salathiel is mentioned in the Apocryphal 4 Ezra 3:1 and in the Apocryphal Book of Adam and Eve 31:6, being one of the seven archangels responsible for the movement of heavenly bodies. In the Book of Adam, Salathiel and another angel, Suriyel (סוריאל) (Babylonian Talmud, *Berakhot* 51a), brought Adam and Eve, who had been tempted by the devil, from the top of a mountain to the cave of treasures (Davidson 1971, 254). Jegudiel/Jhudiel/Jehudiel only appears in tradition. No Apocryphal book mentions him. His name and icon are present in St. Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv and he is holding a crown in his hand (Bulgakov 2009, 108). Finally, Barachiel, under the form of Baraqel, is mentioned in the Apocryphal 1 Enoch 6:7 etc. and, under the form Baraqiel, in the Apocryphal 3 Enoch 14:4 and 17:3. Nowadays, there is general information regarding the names of the seven angels available on the Internet and there is even an “Apocryphal” akathist in this respect, meaning that it is not acknowledged by the Church. Thus, of the names of the seven archangels, two are known to us from canonical writings (Michael, Gabriel), one from the Anagignoskomena (Raphael), three from the Apocrypha (Uriel, Salathiel, Barachiel) and one from the tradition of the Church (Jegudiel). The influence of the Apocrypha and the Anagignoskomena on the tradition of the Church is also visible in this case.



## **A Few Canonical Episodes Dealt with in Depth in the Books of the Apocrypha and Acknowledged by Tradition**

### ***“The Fall of the Angels” (Gn 6:1-4)***

The Apocrypha also left their imprint on the early Christian exegesis, for instance, on the mysterious passage of “the fall of the angels” (Gn 6:1-4). Often, Apocryphal books take pieces of information from the canonical books and try to explain and to analyse them in-depth, bringing elements from tradition and thus becoming a sort of official biblical commentaries (midrashim). Subsequently, these additional commentaries can become part of the official tradition or not. The history of the interpretation of this passage is eloquent in terms of the fascination caused by the information provided by these taboo writings. In the beginning, all opinions were convergent, then slightly divergent, only to become discordant. The oldest interpretation we have is in the Apocryphal 1 Enoch (2<sup>nd</sup> BC). “The Sons of God” who interbred with the daughters of men are called here “angels”, “sons of heaven” (6:1-8) or “watchers” (1:5 etc.). Likewise, in Jubilees 4:15 (~ 150 BC), the Genesis Apocryphon of Qumran (1 Qap Gen<sup>ar</sup> 2:1) (1<sup>st</sup> BC), 2 Enoch 18:4 (1<sup>st</sup> BC – 2<sup>nd</sup> AD), the Testament of Rubens 5:6 (2<sup>nd</sup> AD) and 2 Bar. 56:12-16 (2<sup>nd</sup> AD), which are all Apocryphal. Philo, in *De gigantibus* 2.6, and Flavius Josephus, in *Ant.* 1.3.1, embrace the same idea of interbreeding between angels and men. The New Testament seems to evoke the episode in 2 Pt 2:4 and Jude 6, without however giving details. The Fathers of the first two centuries also support this idea: St. Justin Martyr, Tertullian, St. Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Lactantius, St. Cyprian, St. Ambrose (Walton 2003, 794). The Talmud (Babylonian Talmud, *Yoma* 67b etc.) continues along the same path. Also, the only great uncial codex of the Septuagint to keep the beginning of Genesis (the beginning of Genesis is missing from Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus), Codex Alexandrinus (5<sup>th</sup> AD), was deliberately altered by a reviser to read “the angels of God” (οἱ ἄγγελοι τοῦ θῦ – sic!) instead of “the sons of God” (οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ θῦ – sic!). So great was the influence of Enoch’s book, that his interpretation also penetrated the official reading of the codex and thus the reading of the Church, at least that of Alexandria! However, from the 2<sup>nd</sup> AD, things started to gradually change, with the translation of Targums. For Onkelos and Neofiti, “the sons” were no longer “angels”, but “the strong ones” (Gn 6:2). St. Cyril of Alexandria would give us the official interpretation of the Church, namely the Seth Theory, according to which “the sons of God” would be the very descendants of Seth and Enos, who were seen as pure or, in the view of those from the past, “divine beings” (Paton 1910, 19-20). Could we say that, for hundreds of years, the Synagogue and the Church have been fascinated by this taboo interpretation?

*The Dispute over the Body of Moses (Jude 9)*

We end the examples with an episode from the New Testament. According to Deut 34:6, Moses died in the land of Moab and: “he buried him in the valley in the land of Moab opposite Beth-Peor; but no one knows the place of his burial to this day”. There is nothing in the Old Testament related to any dispute over his body or to any supposed assumption to heaven. Yet the New Testament comes with an additional piece of information in the Epistle of Jude (end of the 1<sup>st</sup> c. – the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD) (Bauckham 1998, 13; Bruce 1996, 626; Neyrey 2008, 30). In Jude, the context speaks of ungodly people who spoke blasphemy as not even the devil did when disputing with the archangel Michael over the body of Moses: “but when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgement, but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you’”. Exegetes believe this piece of information originates either in the lost Apocryphal paper the Assumption of Moses or the Testament of Moses (the majority) or in an oral tradition. If the majority claims that the Assumption was written in the first part of the 1<sup>st</sup> c. AD (Silva, Tenney 2009, 332; DeSilva 2000, 1192 etc.), then the canonical episode could have been influenced by this Apocryphal paper. The main problem which burdens research is the fact that, in the only written manuscript discovered so far, the Latin one, the end of the paper has been lost (Priest 1992, 920), which is precisely where the supposed text quoted by Jude was. We know this from the writings of those from the past. Thus, the historian and bishop Gelasius of Caesarea, after quoting from the Testament (1:14) in *Ecclesiastical History* (2.17,17), he also makes reference to the dispute between the archangel Michael and the devil over the body of Moses (DeSilva 2000, 1193), the episode being also present in the Testament. The fact that the text of the Apocryphon was complete and that it was used is proved by its being quoted on the lists of Apocryphal books in the first Christian millennium: Anastasius of Sinai (640-700 AD), in *Quaestiones et Responsiones*, and Nicephorus I of Constantinople (806-815 AD), in *Chronography* (Russell 1964, 391-393).

Even if this supposed influence from the Apocryphon had not existed, although most Bible exegetes claim it did, we see that the event present in oral tradition becomes official by entering canonical writing, which contradicts the version of the Deuteronomy. It is the same fascination for a story with no historical foundation or a biblical foundation in the Old Testament. However, if the Epistle of Jude is dependent on the Assumption of Moses, then this fascination gains the value of a taboo.



## Conclusions

These few examples provide us with a heterogeneous perspective on the writings which have a biblical character in Christianity. The diversity of lists in the early Church is reflected nowadays in the variety of positions concerning the Anagignoskomena and the Apocrypha. If for Catholics the Anagignoskomena are deuterocanonical (second canon) and for Protestants they are Apocryphal, for some Orthodox they are worthy of reading, meaning that they can only be used for the moral examples they contain and in no way for their dogmatic, canonical value. This is the official discourse of most Orthodox exegetes of the Old Testament. Yet, by analysing the position of the Fathers of the Church over the centuries, we see that things are not that clear-cut. Many of the Anagignoskomena were canonical and were used as Scripture. As for the Apocrypha, for instance, the book of Enoch is canonical in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (The Ethiopian Orthodox use a small canon – identical with the Hebrew one –, and a wider canon, which also includes Enoch, 4 Ezra and the Jubilees) and many episodes from other Apocrypha influenced the canonical writings.

We would like to conclude by saying that the Orthodox Church have felt much freer concerning the issue of the extension of the canon since, in the cult, they read from this comprehensive corpus (i.e. Baruch, in our case, but also Enoch, in the case of Ethiopians). I believe that, if we were to imagine a staircase of canonicity and inspiration of biblical writings, on the first step we would have the 39 books from the small, Jewish canon, then, in the middle, the books which are worthy of reading and, on the last step, almost falling from the staircase, the Apocrypha. Therefore, could we say that the Anagignoskomena and the Apocrypha contain inspired elements? We have seen that the answer is yes, which, however, as we have said, does not make us place them on the same level as the canonical ones. Yet the Ethiopian Orthodox do! I remain of the opinion that we must analyse the issue of their canonicity and inspiration more in-depth, especially concerning how they are acknowledged by the Church in the cult and daily readings; this research should cause, in an honest way and without a priori preconceived ideas, a rethinking of the canon of the Old Testament. I dare to risk saying that we are dismissing these writings without knowing them almost at all, especially since the Apocrypha, except some of them, are not even translated into Romanian (the best-known ones are the book of Enoch and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs). Irrespective of the contemporary official position of biblical theology, the fascination for them existed in the past, especially among the people, and will continue to exist, regardless of their canonical value.

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## CANON AND CANONICITY IN THE BIBLES OF SAMUIL MICU AND ANDREI ȘAGUNA: RESEMBLANCES, DIFFERENCES AND CONTROVERSIES

### Abstract

The present study aims to carry out an analysis of the relation between the Bibles of Samuil Micu and Andrei Șaguna from an isagogic perspective, with a particular focus on the canon and canonicity of the books of the Holy Scripture. We believe that, through such an analysis, we can observe what they have in common, but also what differentiates the two Transylvanian editions of the Holy Scripture so that we can help those interested in understanding the reasons behind the current controversies as to the relation between them. Although these controversies refer to the biblical text of the two Scriptural editions, the fact that the attitude towards it was caused by denominational factors, whose doctrinal background is represented by two different traditions of understanding the biblical canon, has been overlooked. This is why we find that the evaluation of how the two Romanian editions of the Holy Scripture (the Bible of Samuil Micu, 1795, and the Bible of Andrei Șaguna, 1856-1858) relate to the canonical tradition of each Church and cultivate their isagogics is fundamental for the establishment and understanding of the relation between them.



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### Keywords

the Bible of Samuil Micu (1795), the Bible of Andrei Șaguna (1856-1858), isagogics, canon, canonicity

### Introduction

After the publication of the Bible of Bucharest in 1688, as the first complete translation of the Scriptural text, the Bible of Samuil Micu of 1795 is considered a reference point for the Romanian translations of the Bible. Eugen Munteanu called it “the mother of Romanian Bibles” (Munteanu 2008, 514). All subsequent editions up until 1914 borrowed

the text of the Bible of Samuil Micu, the one who had managed to provide, through his translation, a coherent Romanian biblical text, and updated it to some extent. This is what happened with the Saint Petersburg edition (1819) or with the Buzău edition of 1854-1856, which, unlike the edition printed in Russia, also took the isagogics of the Bible of Samuil Micu, this being one of the factors which triggered the publication, soon afterwards, of the Bible of Andrei Șaguna, in Sibiu, between 1856 and 1858. The Șaguna's edition adopted the exact text and biblical canon of the Saint Petersburg Bible.

The fact that the introduction of the Sibiu edition does not mention anything about the 1795 Blaj edition triggered a reaction from Ioan Chindriș, who, in his introductory study to the jubilee edition of the Blaj Bible (2000) called "The Centuries of the Blaj Bible", labelled this act as "the all-time greatest literary theft of our culture" (Chindriș 2000, 67). This opinion was received as such and it also started to spread progressively, especially in the fields of philological research. This has led to a genuine interest in the research on the relation between the Bibles of Samuil Micu and Andrei Șaguna, which is now only incidentally tackled in the area of theological studies, as, for instance, in Emanuel Conțac's recent study (2011). Other more or less recent studies (Basarab 1972, Tofană 2003, Schneider 2008, Basarab 2008) do not tackle the relation between the two editions directly but deal with each Bible separately, both at an isagogic and ecclesiological level, also bearing in mind the historical, cultural and denominational context in Transylvania. As such, we believe the subject we have chosen is of interest both for ecclesiastical and for cultural and scientific environments in Romania and beyond, as they offer the possibility to understand the reasons which have structurally led to how the Greek Catholic and the Orthodox Church of Transylvania relate to the text and the biblical canon. We can thus observe the resemblances and the differences between them and, of course, what has triggered the controversial aspects of the relation between the two Transylvanian editions of the Holy Scripture, the one from 1795 and the one from 1856-1858, respectively.

In terms of methodology, we shall present the general aspects related to canon and canonicity in the two Bibles separately, to be able to draw relevant conclusions concerning the relation between them, focusing, especially on the controversial textual aspect.

### **The Biblical Canon in the Translation of Samuil Micu – 1795**

The Greek-Catholic United Church took the first steps to translate and print the Bible in Romanian under the shepherding of Bishop Petru Pavel Aron. With the help of

the educated monks and cantors from the Holy Trinity monastery of Blaj, he managed, in a relatively short period, to translate the entire Scripture in 1760. The source he used was the Vulgate, which shows the translators' desire to abide by the spirit of the Western, Roman-Catholic tradition. However, this would be the very reason why Petru Pavel Aron's translation would become outdated, the Greek-Catholic Church being forced to discontinue its printing, in the context of tribulations caused amongst Romanians in Transylvania by Sofronie's uprising.

Unlike his predecessors, Samuil Micu, the erudite monk from Blaj, had a better understanding of the spirit of biblical tradition among the Romanians – even those united with Rome – and initiated a personal project of translating the Bible based on the Septuagint. As I. Chindriș (2000, 57) observed, his project targeted all Romanians, having a national, trans-denominational character, to follow and fulfil the same functions as the Bible of Bucharest (1688).

Samuil Micu translated the entire Holy Scripture between 1783 and 1790, the main source he used being the Septuagint, the Franeker edition of renowned scholar Lambert Bos. In parallel, he used the Bible of Bucharest to bring the Romanian Scriptural text in line with the literary standards of his time. Although Samuil Micu was aware of Bishop Petru Pavel Aron's Romanian translation of the Scripture, which was based on the Vulgate, he chose to completely ignore it. He chose the Septuagint and not the Vulgate as his source, in the spirit of the Eastern Church, possibly understanding much better than his predecessors that the Greek-Catholic Church could not give up on a biblical tradition well established among the Romanians of Transylvania by replacing it with one which was not in line with its liturgical and cultic specificity, which is defining for the United Church.

As to the canon followed by Samuil Micu in the Bible printed in 1795, it is difficult to tell which standards he intended to use. The reason is that, through the translation based on the Septuagint, but with an introductory critical apparatus rather specific to the Vulgate, the two great biblical traditions, the Eastern (Orthodox) and the Western (Roman-Catholic), seem not only to meet but also to come into confrontation with each other.

This is because the isagogics (the introductory notes on the Holy Scripture) were not made and added to the final text of the Bible by Samuil Micu, but by the censorship committee, led by Bishop Ion Bob. That committee, consisting of Gherman Peterlaci, Dimitrie Căian and Vasile Filipan – strongly contested by Petru Maior (Chindriș 2000,

61) – managed to overlook the translator's intentions and to apply Western isagogics to a biblical text which falls within the Eastern tradition.

Thus, in the *Commentary on the Books Called Apocryphal* of the Blaj edition, the books of the Holy Scripture are classified as protocanonical, “meaning the first canonical ones”, and deuterocanonical, “the second canonical ones” (the Bible of Blaj 1795, Jubilee edition 2000), following the Roman-Catholic model. The former is found in the Jewish canon and are not contested, whereas the deuterocanonical ones are not found in the Jewish canon. The reason was that, in the past, there had been voices in the Church contesting their canonicity, but this was no longer valid at that time: “In former times, there was doubt in the Church, but now there is none left, even if they are introduced in the Bible using the name apocryphal; for many Holy Fathers bring testimony from these books as from the Holy Scripture” (The Bible of Blaj 2000). Therefore, once this doubt has been overcome, even deuterocanonical books are like the canonical ones. They are the following: Tobit, Judith, Letter of Jeremiah, Baruch, Wisdom of Solomon, Wisdom of Sirach, Susanna and the Elders, Bel and the Dragon, the Song of the Three Holy Children, 1 and 2 Maccabees and the Prayer of Manasseh. The books 3 Esdras, 3 and 4 Maccabees and Psalm 151 are also mentioned among the apocryphal ones, with the following specification: “Even now there is doubt and, even if they are introduced in the Bible, they are not part of the Holy Scripture, neither are they godly (canonical)” (The Bible of Blaj 2000). The Fourth Book of the Maccabees is also labelled to be apocryphal and kept just like the aforementioned ones (3 Esdras, 3-4 Maccabees and Psalm 151), to remain as close as possible to the text of the Septuagint, which it follows, but also to that of the old 1688 Romanian edition. The Prayer of Manasseh is now introduced in the Romanian translations of the Holy Scripture, being labelled as deuterocanonical, just like in the Roman-Catholic editions.

Therefore, it is easy to notice the compromise between the text translated by Samuil Micu and the isagogics developed by the censorship committee. This occurred because Samuil Micu wanted his translation to be in direct connection with the Septuagint and with the old Romanian Bible, whose traditions he wanted to continue, while the censorship committee wanted the Bible printed by the United Church to fall within the doctrinal spirit of the Roman-Catholic tradition, which was considered to be topical. In other words, a Western canonical tradition, which was assumed by the Greek-Catholic Church by printing the Bible of Blaj in 1795, was applied to an Eastern textual tradition. From that moment on, the Greek-Catholic Church fully assumed the



biblical canonical norms of the Roman-Catholic Church. Thus, the Bible of Samuil Micu remained connected to the Eastern biblical tradition through the text, but not through the canon.

### **The Bible of Andrei Șaguna (1856-1858)**

The Bible of Andrei Șaguna was printed in Sibiu, between 1856 and 1858, basically immediately after the Bible of Buzău was printed by Bishop Filotei between 1854 and 1856.

The Șaguna edition was intended to be an Orthodox reaction, more specifically a sort of revival and assertion of the authentic canonical Orthodox tradition, severely affected by the partial translation of the Holy Scripture made by Ion Heliade Rădulescu and especially by the Buzău edition. If Ion Heliade Rădulescu's translation was strongly contested because it was outside the authority of the Church (Marcu 1958, 806-810; Munteanu 2008, 449-486; Ciurea 2011, 227-228), the Buzău edition reactivated for the Romanian Orthodox area the isagogics of Western origin of the Bible of Blaj. This was also the reason why, following a very complex and intense exchange of letters, Metropolitan Andrei Șaguna asked Bishop Filotei to withdraw the unsold copies of the fifth volume of the Bible of Buzău, in which the "Commentary on Holy Scripture" from the Bible of Samuil Micu had been included, bidding him replace it with the *Foreword* of the Șaguna edition. This *Foreword* is an extensive introduction to the books of the Holy Scripture, which defends and develops the Orthodox tradition concerning the biblical text and canon.

The text featured in the Bible of Andrei Șaguna is adopted in its entirety by the edition printed in 1819 in Saint Petersburg, which is a small republishing of the Samuil Micu edition, with small alterations, without the Fourth Book of the Maccabees and, of course, without the introductory elements. The originality of the Bible of Andrei Șaguna also resides in the fact that the Scriptural text is accompanied by illustrations, following the German model, which was considered to be a more attractive form for the masses, since it could facilitate the conveying of the Scriptural message.

The contribution concerning the biblical canon is also defining for the Bible of Andrei Șaguna, its *Foreword* being a competent Orthodox reaction to the "Commentary on the Holy Scripture" of the Blaj edition, which was also included in the Buzău edition. In this respect, we can understand why it was necessary to have an extensive introductory apparatus, with clear and concise specifications regarding the canonicity

of the Holy Scripture, accompanied by very solid, patristically well-founded arguments. A clear distinction is made between canonical – inspired – books and the books of the *Anagignoskomena*, which continue to be called apocryphal and to be considered uninspired, but honoured and used in the Church for “the strengthening of worshippers in their faith”. The latter is not honoured as much as the canonical ones because of the doubts expressed by the Church concerning them, as they are not used “for the strengthening of Christian dogmas” (The Bible of Andrei Șaguna, V).

The criteria according to which these books are “profitable reading” are the following: “1. The lack of inspiration, as they were made up by wise men who used the canonical books for their creation. 2. Christ and His Apostles did not quote from them. 3. Their absence from the Jewish canon. 4. The fact that they comprise events which contradict the teaching revealed in the canonical books determined many of the Church Fathers to display from the very beginning certain doubts concerning them.” (Basarab 1972, 66)

As in the case of the canonical books – inspired by the Holy Spirit – about which an entire series of testimonies from the patristic epoch are brought (the Apostolic Canons, canon 59 of Laodicea, canon 24 of Carthage, Origen, Saint Athanasius, Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, Saint John Damascene and others), Andrei Șaguna also makes brief but enlightening presentations of all the books of the *Anagignoskomena*, bringing to the attention of the reader numerous patristic testimonies regarding the attitude of the Church towards these books and their place and role in the life of the faithful (Basarab 1972, 67).

Thus, it is shown that, although in the West, the Wisdom of Solomon was included in the canon through the Council of Carthage, it was rejected by the Eastern Church, with the mention that it was not retained in the Jewish canon. Likewise, the testimonies of Origen, Saint Athanasius, Saint John Damascene, Saint Gregory of Nazianzus, Saint Epiphanius, Saint Jerome and the Council of Laodicea, based on which the Wisdom of Solomon is not considered to be among the books inspired by the Holy Spirit, despite being appreciated for the depth of its reflections, are also mentioned. The same is the case of the Wisdom of Sirach which, though considered to be “praiseworthy, it is not God’s appropriated word”. Moreover, the Councils of Laodicea and Carthage do not retain it as inspired, while the Apostolic Canons prescribe it “only for the moral betterment of the young”. As for the Book of Judith, it is shown that it is not “mentioned” in the Apostolic Canons, nor by the Council of Laodicea, the same mention being made for the Book of Tobit. Furthermore, it is specified that no council considered 2 and 3 Esdras

to be “canonical”. The three books of the Maccabees “are not inspired by the Holy Spirit, for the author himself confessed that with great effort he shortened the five parts written by pagan Jason of Cyrene (2 Macc. 2: 24-27)”. The Book of Baruch is not retained by the Church as inspired, for “many of the fathers have doubts”, but it is mentioned among the canonical books by the Council of Laodicea and by the First Council of Nicaea. Psalm 151 is mentioned among the books/additions which are still called “apocryphal”, yet in the sense of uncanonical / Anagignoskomena, with the remark that the Church Fathers unanimously enumerate only 150 Psalms. Also, the seven chapters and ten verses at the end of chapter ten of the Book of Esther, which is known to be canonical, are mentioned as “apocryphal” (uncanonical / Anagignoskomena). Susannah and Bel and the Dragon are mentioned among the uncanonical additions to the Book of Daniel, which are uncanonical by Saint Jerome. According to Saint Jerome, the Song of the Three Holy Children “is not found with the Jews... but since it does not contain anything against the Gift of the New Law, it can remain untouched” (The Bible of Andrei Șaguna, VI). The *Foreword* does not mention anything about the canonical character of the Prayer of Manasseh or the additions to the Book of Job (Basarab 1972, 66).

Although there is any inconsistency between the 49 books of the Old Testament mentioned in the introduction and the number of books which we find in the content, the Bible of Andrei Șaguna comprises all the books and additions of the Anagignoskomena which have been used by our Church to this day: Tobit, Judith, 3 Esdras, Letter of Jeremiah, Baruch, Wisdom of Solomon, Wisdom of Sirach, the Song of the Three Holy Children, Susannah and the Elders, Bel and the Dragon, 1-3 Maccabees, the Prayer of Manasseh.

Therefore, the Bible of Andrei Șaguna keeps the text and canon of the Bible of Saint Petersburg (1819) as such, while also introducing the Prayer of Manasseh, which was included in the Romanian editions by the Bible of Blaj, and rejecting the Fourth Book of Maccabees.

This textual and canonical standard of Slavic origin, which was brought or, better yet, brought back into the Romanian cultural and ecclesiastical area by the Bible of 1819, would be fully assumed by the Bible of Andrei Șaguna. Although Șaguna attributes great importance to the Bible of Bucharest, as the first complete translation into Romanian, he does not follow it entirely from a canonical point of view, as the edition of Sibiu introduces the Prayer of Manasseh, which does not exist in the Bible of Bucharest, and abandons the Fourth Book of Maccabees, which is present both in the Bible of 1688 and in that of 1795. Thus, although much has been said about the intentions of Metropolitan

Andrei Șaguna concerning the printing of the Bible, we cannot but notice the fact that the great Transylvanian hierarch remained coherent as to his project of developing, protecting and asserting the specificity of the canonical standards of the Orthodox Church in a delicate cultural, ecclesiastical and denominational context.

### Conclusions

When speaking about the relation between the Bibles of Samuil Micu and Andrei Șaguna, the canonical aspect must be acknowledged as having paramount importance, all the other isagogical and textual aspects being connected to it. Bearing in mind this defining aspect, we believe that Ioan Chindriș's accusation against the Bible of Șaguna of taking over the edition of Blaj without any acknowledgements, which he considers to be the greatest literary theft in the history of national culture, is exaggerated and accompanied by that denominational fervour which we reckon should be discarded by all of us nowadays. Eugen Conțac, a biblical researcher whom we consider, to be honest from a scientific point of view and equidistant as far as a denomination is concerned, demonstrates through synoptic research that Andrei Șaguna used the 1819 edition in particular and not exclusively that of Samuil Micu for the text of the Holy Scripture, as renowned Cluj researcher Ioan Chindriș accuses (Chindriș 2000, 67). According to E. Conțac (2011, 190), the same conclusion had been reached by older biblical researchers such as I. Ianoviciu (Ianoviciu 1878, 205), I. Onciul (Onciul 1889, 335) or V. Tarnavschi (Tarnavschi 1928, 180).

Metropolitan Andrei Șaguna does not wish to enter an open confrontation with the Greek-Catholic Church on the subject of the canon, but he finds himself forced to take a stand on the isagogics it indirectly assumed through the introduction of such isagogics in Bishop Filotei's Orthodox edition of Buzău. Thus, for Andrei Șaguna, the main issue is not that of taking a stand against the biblical canonical standards assumed by the Greek-Orthodox Church through the Bible of Blaj, but that of putting his own Orthodox Church in order concerning the biblical canon at a national level.

Although he could have done it, Andrei Șaguna does not mention the Bible of Samuil Micu among the previous Romanian translations because, "technically" speaking, he was probably not bound by usages to do so. He only mentions the editions belonging to his Church and not those belonging to other Churches, in this case, the Greek-Catholic one. The fact that Andrei Șaguna wishes to avoid a confrontation with the Greek-Catholic Church on the canonical issue is also made clear by his not

mentioning the edition of Blaj; otherwise, he would have been put in the position of making the necessary comments related to the Western isagogics assumed in its pages.

Moreover, we do not consider Andrei Șaguna to be lacking in honesty when claiming that “the languages of the Bible can only be forged once for a people if the great barrier of faithful and well-understood translation has been overcome and if the people have received that language, making it their own; then, those who come afterwards have nothing else to do but to renew it and amend it just as the first translator of the Bible would have renewed and amended it, had he lived until their times” (The Bible of Andrei Șaguna, VI).

As such, given the aforementioned, we believe that a debate on so-called plagiarism (Chindriș 2000, 67) is much exaggerated and remains irrelevant for the true issue of the relation between the Bibles of Samuil Micu and Andrei Șaguna, which is, in essence, a canonical one.

Albeit separated through the canon, the Bibles of Samuil Micu and Andrei Șaguna remain united through text, both fulfilling their mission of bringing God’s word to the Romanian people. Through the canon assumed in the Bible of Blaj, the Greek-Catholics would drift away from the tradition which was well established among Romanians and would challenge and determine the Orthodox people to reassert the specificity of their biblical canon in the Bible of Andrei Șaguna. By using the text of the Blaj edition via the Bible of 1819, Andrei Șaguna managed through his Bible to bring all Romanians in Transylvania together, unintentionally fulfilling Samuil Micu’s wish of having a Bible for all Romanians. Therefore, let us keep in mind that, beyond all our human weaknesses, God works to keep us together and to everyone’s benefit.

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## SHOULD IRON-AGE TEXTS BE STILL READ IN A DIGITAL AGE? THE HEBREW BIBLE AND THE POWER OF METAPHOR

### Abstract

Hebrew Bible has been used in the past often and almost exclusively to foil a New Testament passage, thus overemphasizing on messianic prophecies, to fuel and defend a dogmatic statement, thus resorting to allegory and typology as the key hermeneutics, or to criticize, (and even demonize) the Jews as Christ haters, while not plumbing the Hebrew Bible for its own identity and intrinsic relevance. In the following lines, I bring forth a few examples of what I call “the power of metaphor of the Hebrew Bible”. And I will do this with deep respect to this literary-religious corpus that has never lost its “best-seller” status, while looking at these ever ancient, ever new biblical texts with the eye of a student of Bible and Semitic philology, but at the same time struggling to listen to the child in me, to return to those days when at my mother’s knees (literally!) I heard for the first time about Noah and the Flood story. What comes next is a brief immersion into the Hebrew Bible theological grammar with no claim whatsoever of *ex-cathedra* authority in selecting the texts.



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### Keyword

metaphor, Hebrew Bible, prophetic perfect, Yahweh, humanity

### Introduction

American theoretical physicist Lawrence Kraus, former director of “Origins Project at Arizona University,” wants us to see poetry in science while entirely overlooking the poetry of those “Iron-Age writings,” as he derogatorily calls the Christian Bible. One of the main goals of Lawrence Kraus’s latest book, *The Greatest Story Ever Told* – a condensed history of physics, from The Big Bang to Einstein and beyond, is just that: to detect and proclaim the poetry of the subatomic physics. This is a great and



salutary endeavor, any, indeed almost every believer shares it: to see in God's creation an opened hymnal book, the book of nature, that is. "The heavens recount the glory of God" exclaims tirelessly the old psalmist (Ps 19/18:2/1) reminding all that God is the greatest Artist who expresses himself through his creation. Nevertheless, any believer sees in God's eternal Word, vested in human words of Scriptures, so quickly discarded by Kraus as outmoded texts, a great deal of poetry infused by deep theology.

Is the Scripture – and here I mean above all the Hebrew Bible or the Old Testament according to 2 Tim 3:16 – just an antiquated religious corpus reflecting simplistic views of some Iron Age peasants, as Kraus prematurely labels the biblical writers as a whole?

"God made man because he loves stories" – thus begins Elie Wiesel his famous book *The Gates of the Forest*. The famous author and 1986 Nobel Peace Prize laureate remind us that the Scripture is the great story man is repeatedly telling God with neither storyteller nor listener getting bored since both are exchanging hats, in taking turns by speaking and listening to one another.

While reading the Bible as the greatest story ever told, I must though agree with Brent A. Strawn, the author of *The Old Testament is Dying: A Diagnosis and Recommended Treatment* that the Hebrew Bible is more poetry than story due to its four characteristics which define poetry in general: 1) candor; 2) ambiguous and contradictory language; 3) contemporaneity; and 4) continuation. The last characteristic is, perhaps, the most important. Hebrew Bible as poetry invites its reader to be a co-writer, as it were, along with its initial writers via hermeneutics of continuous reflective reading and re-imagination.

In any event, stories and poems are made of metaphors, stylistic vehicles carrying the reader beyond the words – if one considers the etymology of the Greek term *metaphora*, from verb *metaphērō*, "to transfer, change, alter," literally, "to carry over, beyond." Where to? To an ineffable space-time-state continuum, where the reader can recapture and luxuriate in the "sense of wonder." To such a "sense of wonder" does Jesus allude when he challenges his listeners: "Unless you turn (*straphēte*) and become (*genēsthe*) like children (*paidia*), you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 18:3). Children alone have their unique way to conjugate insatiate inquisitiveness with sheer excitement at life's wonders.

Sometimes, these images and metaphors are so peculiar, even startling or scandalizing, that Philo of Alexandria's phrase *hupēchountos heterou* "echoes of another [voice]" (*Quis rerum divinarum heres sit*, 1:259) may accurately apply to the imaginative poetry of Hebrew Bible.

### The Prophetic Perfect and Its Theology (Done and Unfolding)

The verb system in Hebrew is aspectual, namely, there are two aspects (though not tenses) of the verb: perfective and imperfective. In a language with the tense category, time is perceived as linear having a beginning and an end and many moments between, perhaps with a climactic or middle point on the one-direction arrow of time. However, in Hebrew, time is seen as aspectual. Perfective aspect indicates that an action was, is, or will be completed. Imperfective aspect expresses an action that was, is, or will be incomplete or is still unfolding. As one can notice, the point in time is unspecified in either of the two aspects. What matters is the structure of the action or state: completed or unfolding.

So when the eighth century BC prophet *Yeša'yāhû* (Isaiah) of Jerusalem exclaims, in God's name, "My people went into exile!" (Is 5:13) using the perfective aspect *gālāh* "went into exile," he considers the event (going into exile) already completed in God's mind, yet remaining to become reality, which in fact will occur much later, in 586 BC, following the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple.

This way to convey future events or actions using the perfective aspect of the verb, commonly termed *perfectum propheticum*, the "prophetic perfect" (cf. Is 10:23; 11:9; 19:7; Job 5:20; 2 Chr 20:37), conveys a profound theological idea: If God looks at the action from inside as something completed, man looks at the same action from outside as something *yet* to be completed, and, hence, the usual rendition of this phrase with a future tense: "My people will go into exile." Because of these two different perspectives (i.e., human or divine) from which an event can be evaluated, the Hebrew Bible knows two ways of looking at time: aspectual (from God's perspective inside the event) as a simultaneity of points in time and tense-wise (from man's perspective outside the event) as the well-defined past, present and future points on the one-direction arrow of time.

### Yahweh, God's Unfinished Name

By the end of Late Bronze age (13<sup>th</sup> c. BC), when biblical scholars usually place Moses and the exodus-event from Egypt, Ancient Near Eastern people used to think of their gods and goddesses in terms of quite concrete and mundane needs, getting to divinize any important aspect of creation that could offer them health, fertility, abundant offspring: from "river" (Nahar) to "sea" (Yam), from "sun" (Shamash) to "dawn" (Shahar), from an "almighty" being (El) to a daily "lord" of fertility (Baal).

However, in such a naturist religious context, Exodus 3 tells us a quite different and intriguing story about a Hebrew fugitive from Egypt named *Mošeh* (Moses), who while shepherding the flock of his father-in-law the priest Jethro, somewhere in Midian, in the thick of the Arabian desert (today, Saudi Arabia), came upon a fascinating yet terrifying sight: a bush blazing all in flames that were burning and yet unconsumed by the blazing fire. Coming closer to that awesome appearance, Moses hears a voice from the midst of the burning bush. He is told to return to Egypt and lead the Hebrews out of slavery. When asked about his name, the mysterious voice reveals his identity, though somehow reservedly and gradually.

“And God said to Moses, ‘*I am who I am*.’ And he said, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘*I am being* has sent me to you.” Moreover, God said to Moses, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: “Yahweh [*He is being*] God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This *is* my name forever, and this *is* my memorial to all generations” (Ex 3:14-15 [NKJ]).

The revelation of God’s name occurs in three steps: 1. “*I am who I am*” – or as I read it: it is not your business who I am; 2. “*I am being*” – I am with you, this is what you should now; and 3. *Yahweh* “*He is being...*” – I am the source of all what exists, but I cannot tell you more about myself: I have my reservations.

One may reasonably argue, “What is so impressive with this name *Yahweh*? Is not it just another name among many other divine names human history recorded in its thick book of ancient religions!” Not quite so, I would say.

First, this is the *personal name* of God. It is not a generic name based on man’s concrete needs and thus referring to a divine attribute. Exodus 3 represents a unique situation in the history of world religions when a deity comes forward and reveals its personal name to a human being. It is as if God would say, “Call me *Yahweh*!” – quite different than, for example, “*Elohim* created the heavens and earth” (Gn 1:1) – *Elohim* being one of the many generic names of Israel’s God, meaning “the Almighty.”

Second, God uses the verb “to be” portraying himself in terms of “existence” (*Yahweh*, “He is being...”) rather than in a concrete way (i.e., “sun,” “dawn,”.). This is an abstract, almost philosophical way in which God is depicted, as pure existence and source of everything that got into existence through his almighty word (see Gn 1). Existence is more than life. Existence is a vast ocean while life is just a raindrop.

Third, the name *Yahweh* is not a late literary invention dated to the exilic or post-exilic period (6<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> centuries BC), as the 19<sup>th</sup> century biblical scholarship wanted us to believe.

Yahweh is a much older name going back quite likely to the Late Bronze period, to Moses' days. And this can be demonstrated on linguistic grounds. As it appears, *Yahweh* is the imperfective aspect of an old, frozen form of the Hebrew verb, "to be," namely the form *hawah*. Later on, during the biblical period of Hebrew language, due to a Northwest Semitic phonetic shift, -w- turning into -y-, the verb "to be" altered its outlook from the archaic *hawah* to the new form *hayah*. So, the presence of the consonant -w- instead of more common -y- in the name *Yahweh* testifies to its archaic origin – not a post-exilic literary construal, but rather a Late Bronze lexical item. And the archaic origin makes this name unique and hard to understand within the Near Eastern religious context unless one subscribes to Philo's explicative phrase, "echoes of another voice."

Fourth, *Yahweh* "*He is being ...*" is an unfinished name, an incomplete, grammatically incorrect nominal clause with no predicate whatsoever. But in the very incompleteness of this archaic name lies one of the most profound lessons of theology. The absence of the predicate in the nominal clause *Yahweh* means that God of Exodus 3 could be nothing or everything that humans could imagine. The divine name shows God's condescension: He is willing to share with us his attributes. We are called to identify what God could be for us in various moments of our lifetimes. *Yahweh* is blank check (so Yves Congar) offered to an always insecure, fragile and needing humanity: for an orphan, *Yahweh* means: "He is... my father"; for a widow, "He is... my husband"; for a sick person, "He is... my healer" and so on.

But the personal divine name *Yahweh* may signal something even more ominous. The imperfective aspect "He was/is / will be being ..." (i.e., unfolding action or state) along with the lack of a predicate paints the God of Hebrew Bible as shrouded in mystery, on a steady search of man and perhaps of himself, since the day he entered in a covenantal relationship with the humanity created in his image (Gn 1:26-27) – which makes me think of Abraham Heschel's seminal work *God in Search of Man*.

### All Wrapped in Time (His Holiness, the Time)

When the Hebrew Bible opens with the well-known incipit, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth," the emphasis falls syntactically on "beginning." Beginning of *what*? Ancient Jewish and Christian interpreters would *sola voce* reply: "beginning of time." Although not clearly stated, Genesis 1:1 implies that time was created before or at the same time with heavens and earth. If so, then time functions as the stage or matrix of the creation. All God created space-wise is wrapped up in that primordial time.

Remarkably, out of all creatures, Time is the only one that God *sanctifies*, namely, *sets aside* (from Hebrew verb *q-d-š* “to cut, to separate”) as the most representative of his six-day creative framework. No enigmatic moon, no shining sun, no solid earth, no blue-white heaven, not even an *imago Dei* human, but time alone is sanctified. According to Genesis 2:2-3, the institution of *Shabbat* is related to the sanctification of time or differently put it, *Shabbat* is that portion of time God *sets aside*, next to him. Hebrew *qādōš* “holy” is perhaps the most emblematic attribute of God, and the time comes second in terms of *holiness* or transcendence.

Abraham Heschel is quite right when, in his bestseller *The Sabbath*, he asserts almost prophetically, “Time is eternity in disguise.” The Hebrew Bible depicts the sanctified, quasi-divinized time or the “eternity in disguise” as “bracketed” by a relative beginning and a transformative *finale*-process.

It is worth noting that Gen 1:1 uses a construct phrase *be-rēšît*, literally, “in a beginning,” conventionally rendered as definite, “in the beginning.” Moreover, the expression *be-’achărît hay-yāmîm* (e.g., Hos 3:5) is commonly translated, following the Septuagint reading (*ep’ eschatōn tōn hēmerōn*), “in the last days,” or more accurately, “in the end of the days.” But *’achărît* “in the end,” maybe also rendered “on the other [side] of the days” (related to *’achēr* “other” and *’achar* “behind”). As time in Hebrew is more aspectual than linear, “other, behind” could intimate “parallel to” rather than “after, following” the flow of time. The image thus painted is that of time as a hanging curtain parallel to and concealing the serene eternity or the sanctified time (*Shabbat*).

One may then conclude that space and even eternity itself is all wrapped up in time. However, God is the only one who is enthroned above and is ahead of this all-governing time. Daniel 7:13 briefly describes God with the Aramaic phrase *’attîq yômāyā*’ unanimously translated, following the Theodotion reading (*palaïos tōn hēmerōn*), “Ancient of Days.” Yet, the participle *’attîq* derives from verb *’ātaq* “to move on,” related to the Akkadian *etēqum* “to go ahead, advance.” Thus, the phrase may be more accurately rendered, “the one who is *ahead* of days.” Time expressed here by “days” is in an incessant race with God-- but the latter is always “ahead” the forward-running and never-returning arrow of time.

I might mention that Hebrew Bible’s paramount fascination with the elusive notion of time in relation to space and God is unique within the grand Ancient Near Eastern religious chorus.

### Three Steps in Fashioning Humanity

Fashioning humanity in three steps is one of the most complex and significant stories that Hebrew Bible puts forward – one of its unmistakable tenets when one compares the religion of ancient Israel with any other Ancient Near Eastern counterpart.

In the following lines, I would like to dwell on Hebrew Bible with few references to the Old Greek translation (Septuagint), which slightly yet significantly differs from the former. What we are told in the two accounts on the creation of humanity, namely, Genesis 1 and 2, could be again considered, to use Philo's coinage, an "echo of another voice" – so bizarre and singular this story is when the two accounts are read jointly following the canonical approach while paying special attention to the metaphorical language as part of the rhetorical approach.

According to the Hebrew text of Genesis 1-2, the story of fashioning humanity runs this way.

#### Step One

According to Genesis 1:26-27 (i.e., the Priestly source, composed around 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC), God deliberates by addressing someone or other, in the attendance, "Let us make humanity in our image and likeness" (v. 26), where the phrase "image (*šelem*) and likeness (*demût*)" is a hendiadys which should be rendered "in the very image." Thus, God's initial intention was to "make" (verb *'ś-h*) "humanity" (*'ādām*, collective noun) "in [his] very image." However, something happened that humanity was eventually "created" (verb *b-r-*) only "in the image" of God, with "likeness" left outside (v. 27). The disparity between intention and action suggests that somehow humanity has been from the onset "lacking (verb *ch-s-r*) a little (*me'aṭ*) less than [becoming] God (*mē-ēlōhīm*)" (Ps 8:6/5). Hence humanity's tenacious longing after God, its prototype, even archetype.

Notably, the humanity that God created, though not distinguished as gender from the very beginning, did nevertheless contain the spores of the male-female distinction: "In the image of God he created it [i.e., the humanity]; male and female, he created them" (Gn 1:27).

The other creation account, Gn 2:7 (the Yahwistic source, composed around 10<sup>th</sup> c. BC) describes vividly and theologically the "fashioning" (verb *y-š-r*) of humanity from the "dust" (*āpār*), unlike the animals that were made from the "ground" (*'ādāmāh*, cf. Gn 2:19). The "dust" metaphor intimates that humans somehow do not have a permanent place here but rather they vacillate, similar to the pulverized dust, between



earth and heaven in search for the “permanent city (*menoussan polin*) yet to come (*tēn mellousan*)” to use St. Paul’s own words (Heb 13:14).

God breathes his “breathing of life” (*nišmat chayyîm*) so that a piece of dust divinely touched turns into a “living breath” (*nepeš chayyāh*) of God – one of the most beautiful metaphors of humanity ever imagined! The “living breath” metaphor speaks volumes about humanity’s “inescapable” link to its Creator. St. Paul expresses so well this tight relationship between humanity and God when he addresses the Athenians: “In him we live (*zōmen*), and move (*kinoumetha*), and have our being (*esmen*)” (Acts 17:28). As “living breath” of God, humanity becomes part of God’s “respiratory system” if one wants to reflect further using the theologically loaded term *synkatabasis* (divine condescension).

### Step Two

In Genesis 2:18, God surprisingly acknowledges that something is not quite good (or yet good enough) with the humanity monad-like he fashioned out of dust: “And God said, ‘It is not good (*lō’-tōb*) that *the* humanity (*hā-’ādām*) be alone or isolated (*lebadō*). I will make a helper (*’ezer*) like its opposite (*ke-negdō*).’”

At that stage, humanity was still “isolated” from the rest of the living world distinguished as gender from the very beginning.

Genesis 2:21-22 describes the moment when God decides to configure the two genders already included in the primordial humanity (Gn 1:27). And he does so by creating the woman out of humanity. First, he brings a “deep sleep” (*tardēmāh*) upon humanity, and as a surgeon, he takes “one of its ribs” (*šēlā’*) (v. 21), and by an additional creative act, he “builds” (verb *b-n-h*) it into a “woman” (*’iššāh*) (v. 22).

The paradoxical phrase “helper like its opposite” alludes to the woman’s most important role vis-à-vis man, to be a partner of dialogue with him. Instead of flat monologue-like relationship, God wants woman and man to be engaged in a live, constructive dialogue even though dialogue sometimes implies opposition of ideas.

### Step Three

But where is *the man* in whole this story?

Genesis 2:22 paints God as a best man and priest who officiates the first marriage in the Garden of Eden. God takes the woman he created and brings her to “*the* humanity” (*hā-’ādām*), which exclaims rather passionately: “This one at last is bone



of my bones and flesh of my flesh. This one shall be called woman, for from man was she taken” (v. 23).

The last part of this verse is a pun or play on words, linking “man” (’iš) to “woman” (’iššāh) due merely to sound similarity. But this “folk etymology” underlines an important theological idea: Man is the result of his self-realization. When put in front of the first woman, the humanity identifies itself with a man. In other words, God creates the first woman (Eve), while the first man (Adam) is the result of his self-realization.

In sum then, the story on creation of humanity, as recorded in the two biblical accounts is fraught with great theological ideas: humanity’s unity underlined; woman being created by God and her important role as partner of dialogue; man realizes his gender distinction vis-à-vis the female counterpart; and, as a sort of finale, marriage as part of creation story seeks to restore the humanity’s initial unity and beauty.

### Conclusion

I began my reflections by mentioning Lawrence Kraus and his crusade to promote science-poetry while reducing the Bible to mere Iron Age peasant stories. I tried to show that Scripture poetry overlooked intentionally by “new atheists” and regrettably by not few modern biblical scholars becomes obvious at a rigorous analysis of the rhetoric structure of biblical stories and its daring metaphors. Although written during the Iron Age, these stories have a paradigmatic value and can address the human person searching for meaning in any period, including our digital age.

Strangely, the Bible’s stories do indeed simultaneously open and close themselves to our existential questions. Maybe here, in the very ambivalent movement of these stories lies the fecund power of the metaphor – for a few minutes open as a flower allowing the reader to savor its fragrance – then hidden again in its unfathomable mystery.

And we are left once again with those “echoes of another voice” reverberating until a new reading begins.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

1. Fr. Maxim Morariu, *A Handbook of Old Testament for Students*
2. Bogdan Negrea, *Romanian Bibliography for Old Testament Studies*

## A HANDBOOK OF OLD TESTAMENT FOR STUDENTS

**Fr. Maxim Morariu**

Ioan Chirilă (coord.), Dumitru Abrudan, Petre Semen,  
Oancea Constantin, Remus Onișor și Mircea Basarab,  
*Introducere în Vechiul Testament* [Introduction in Old Testament]  
(București: Basilica, 2018), 870 p.

Since most textbooks used in the Romanian Faculties of Orthodox Theology were published in the communist period and scientific research has developed very fast in the past years, proposing, for many topics, new keys of interpretation or offering additional information, there is a clear need for updated works which can not only guide students but also provide them with an overview of the most recent achievements and direct them towards an updated bibliography.

This was the reason why the Romanian Orthodox Patriarchate decided to publish new and updated books on all the important topics taught in the Romanian Faculties of Theology. One book dedicated to the Old Testament is coordinated by Fr. Ioan Chirilă from “Babes-Bolyai University” (Cluj-Napoca) and contains texts he wrote, together with other important theologians such as Fr. Dumitru Abrudan, Fr. Petre Semen, Fr. Constantin Oancea, Fr. Remus Onișor and Fr. Mircea Basarab, who are active in the most important centres of theological research from the Romanian area.

Being divided into eight chapters and many sub unities and containing, according to contemporary scientific standards, a foreword signed by the coordinator (p. 21-28), where he speaks about the relevance of the Old Testament for the theological context and summarises the content of the book, a “note on the edition” (p. 29-32) and a list of “abbreviations” (p. 33-36), the book starts with a few introductory notions (p. 39-91) and offers to the reader a detailed presentation of the context, the critical reception and other isagogic aspects related to all the books of the Old Testament.

While the first chapter emphasises aspects related to the methodology of research and the general bibliography (p. 47-48), the history of the texts (p. 59-50), the original language of the books investigated (p. 50-51), the history and the critical authority of the Hebraic text (p. 51-52) or the history of its translations (p. 53-66), together with aspects related to keywords such as inspiration and revelation (p. 77-91), the second chapter (p. 92-130) is dedicated to general exegetical and hermeneutical landmarks. Here, the

authors clearly state the meaning of these two important concepts and their area of research (p. 93-95) and present the main schools and exegetical directions which exist in the Jewish and Christian areas (p. 95-105), before linking them with the principles of biblical hermeneutics found in the Eastern Orthodox area (p. 105-113), the meanings of the Holy Bible (p. 114-117) or the quality which any of its interpreters needs to have (p. 119-126).

Furthermore, each book of the Old Testament canon is presented according to a pre-established structure, inside the category where it belongs and after describing the generalities of its genre. Therefore, for example, in the case of the *Pentateuch*, the authors of the book speak about its title (p. 132), the author (p. 133-134), its internal structure and the content (p. 134-135) and, afterwards, they start to offer information about each book, concerning its title (p. 136, p. 157, for example), its structure and content (see: p. 136-148, or 157-165) and its reception in the Tradition of the Church and the writings of the Church Fathers (p. 149-156, p. 167-171). Each book, in turn, is segmented in several subdivisions, according to the criteria already established by the exegetes, which helps the reader understand aspects related to the context, the preservation of the manuscripts, potential interventions, the authors and the schools of thought etc.

After presenting the Pentateuch (p. 131-258), the historical books (p. 259-404), the didactical-poetical (p. 405-515) and the prophetical books (p. 516-752), the authors also offer a presentation of the category of the “Anaginoscomena” (p. 753-843) and the Apocrypha (p. 844-870), inviting the reader to understand the complexity of the context of the Old Testament and to have a view of certain texts which could be useful in given situations if they are seen as complementary or additional literature.

Well-written, with dense content and a rich bibliography, the book *Introduction to the Old Testament*, coordinated by Fr. Ioan Chirilă and published by the Basilica Publishing House from Bucharest in 2018, is a useful tool for scholars, students or readers who are interested to find more about this topic and its influence on the entire theology. Therefore, we can only recommend it and underline its main qualities, inviting the readers to find more about how the Old Testament and its theology is developed in the New Testament.

## ROMANIAN BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR OLD TESTAMENT STUDIES

Bogdan Negrea

Fr. Ioan Chirilă (coord.), Paula Bud, Stelian Pașca-Tușa, Bogdan Șopterean,  
*Vechiul Testament în scrierile bibliștilor ortodocși români – ghid bibliografic*  
[The Old Testament in the Writings of Romanian Biblical Orthodox Scholars]  
(Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2018).

A bibliographical guide is, essentially, a working tool which any researcher should bear in mind when he/she begins his/her activity in each field. Consequently, significant fields of research have seen the emergence of papers which gather the existing bibliographical references, process them, and arrange them according to specific subjects to make their analysis easier. Thus, through the bibliographical guide entitled “The Old Testament in the Writings of Romanian Biblical Scholars”, biblical theology enjoys a real systematisation of representative writings in the Romanian area.

This guide represents the result of consistent work done by a group of researchers in the field of biblical theology, who belong to the Faculty of Orthodox Theology of the Babeș-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca. Fr. Ioan Chirilă, who is the coordinator of this project, has committed and taken care to make Orthodox biblical teaching stand out also through the ease with which it can be known by those who seek to explore it. Sharing the same desire, Mr. Stelian Pașca-Tușa, Bogdan Șopterean and the worthy of remembrance Paula Bud joined the project and, through their work, managed to offer research support to all students, theologians and to all those who are passionate about the biblical studies which exist in the Romanian theological literature.

*Presa Universitară Clujeană*, the remarkable publishing house of Babeș-Bolyai University, printed this guide, marking a continuity of this kind of papers in the Romanian biblical area. This is the second edition of “The Old Testament in the Writings of Romanian Biblical Orthodox Scholars”, which shows the usefulness and the echo the first edition has had in the Romanian biblical theology. We have written about the pilot edition, which was edited and published in 2014 by *Eikon* and *Școala Ardeleană* publishing houses, both based in Cluj-Napoca, in a review published in *Studii Teologice* [Theological Studies] journal, the fourth issue, October-December 2017, (pp. 265-271), thus marking the success of this thematic compendium in the first years following its “birth”.

Keeping an identical structure, a simplistic, yet limited, content, the abovementioned bibliographical guide is structured in five chapters, which are representative of the lines of research. As the *Foreword* also mentions, the guide was thoroughly completed, updating the information it puts forward: “The volume has been enriched with approximately 50 specialised volumes and with more than 350 studies. A consistent bibliographical contribution was made by the 400 references made to patristic resources, which, together with the already existing sources, provide sufficient reference points to introduce the researcher into an area of research which is peculiar to Eastern Christianity.”

The first chapter (pp. 15-92) presents the thematic writings found in periodicals and specialised magazines, mentioning: the author, the title of the article, the magazine in which it was published, the issue, the year of publication and the page. Compared to the first edition, the bibliographical guide has only been updated in terms of date of publishing and no new journals have been inserted; only those which are representative to the Romanian biblical area have been kept: *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* [The Romanian Orthodox Church], *Revistă Teologică* [Theological Magazine], *Studii Teologice* [Theological Studies], *Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei/Teologie și Viață* [The Metropolitan Church of Moldavia and Suceava/Theology and Life], *Mitropolia Olteniei* [The Metropolitan Church of Oltenia], *Altarul Banatului/Mitropolia Banatului* [The Altar of Banat/The Metropolitan Church of Banat], *Ortodoxia* [Orthodoxy], *Glasul Bisericii* [The Voice of the Church], *Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai. Theologia Orthodoxa, Teologia* [Theology], *Ortodoxia Maramureșeană* [Orthodoxy in Maramureș], *Cercetări Biblice* [Biblical Research], *Tabor* [Tabor] and *Sacra Scripta*. The writings found in periodicals are presented according to their date of publishing (using target intervals of ten years, for instance, 2000-2009), their distribution/sorting being preceded by a short description of the given journals.

The second chapter (pp. 93-105) presents the thematic writings found in the *Annals of the Faculties of Orthodox Theology*. By building an image of the academic echo of the studies carried out by Romanian Biblical Scholars, this chapter is meant to provide researchers with a true updating of the message of Biblical Theology within the Schools of Theology across the Romanian Patriarchate. An element worth mentioning, as compared to the first edition of the Bibliographical Guide, is the fact that, besides the *Annals of the Faculties of Theology* which belong to the Universities of Cluj-Napoca, Iasi, Bucharest and Sibiu, this chapter also contains the *Annual of the University of Craiova*, which includes a section on Theology (AUCT).



The third chapter (pp. 106-232) presents the Biographies and Bibliographies of Romanian Orthodox Biblical scholars who specialise in the Old Testament. Unlike the first edition, this one introduces seven new names which are prominent in the Romanian Biblical Theology. The importance of this chapter resides in the fact that, besides acknowledging the merits of the Romanian biblical scholars from the Old Testament Department, it also outlines the research profile of the aforementioned Romanian theologians, thus showing that, through assiduous research, one can reach unknown heights in the Theology of the Old Testament. The approach of the guide is classic, making a presentation of the profile of each biblical scholar and then mentioning their writings (volumes, studies, translations, reviews, forewords etc.).

The fourth chapter (pp. 233-437), which is also the most notable one in terms of length and procedure (partition), is dedicated to thematic systematisation. The structure of this chapter is identical to that of the first edition of the Guide, observing four areas of analysis of Biblical Theology: the Holy Scripture, the Old Testament, Biblical Archaeology and Biblical Theology. Only additions are made to these four areas, the aim being, just like in the case of the first edition, to offer information and patristic reference points to those who study Biblical Theology, in particular, the Old Testament.

The fifth chapter (438-441) systematises the writings on the Romanian Biblical Teaching of the Old Testament and its personalities. This last chapter presents the fruitful activity of Romanian biblical scholars, as written down by their successors. In the Romanian area, Biblical Theology – both that of the Old Testament and that of the New Testament – was built due to the efforts and preoccupation of the Fathers and Professors, who tried to make known and clarify the scriptural message, which is necessary to live according to the rightful law of Christ.

This bibliographical guide represents a testimony of the interest Romanian Theology has in the study of the Old Testament. Likewise, for any student, researcher or theologian, this guide represents the gateway to the scientific baggage of the Romanian Biblical Theology of the Old Testament and this does not only motivate its usefulness, but it also underscores the necessity of consulting it for one to improve his/her scientific, academic and theological path. I share the same hope as the authors of the guide, namely that: “this paper will be a useful working tool for those who understand that the fruit of their encounter with the Word will only be attained by unwearily searching for meaning”.

