

## Book Review:

**Stelian Pașca-Tușa, Bogdan Șopterean (eds.),  
*Studii biblice in honorem Pr. prof. univ. dr. Ioan Chirilă*  
[*Biblical Studies in honorem Rev. Prof. Ioan Chirilă, PhD*]  
(Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2023), 455 p.**

Homage volumes, following the model of the long-established Western ones, are no longer a novelty. It has long been accepted that almost every university professor will have at least one memorial volume dedicated to him or her on reaching the 'round' age of 60, 65, 70 or more. These volumes comprise a series of studies conducted by other academics, sometimes with a central theme and sometimes leaving the authors free to tackle any subject they wish. At the end of these studies, a personal message of congratulations and admiration for the academic personality to whom the volume is dedicated appears. The volumes are also prefaced by a substantial introduction which outlines the portrait of the person being honoured and their work and contribution to scientific research. So, this kind of academic literature has a precise 'recipe'.



The case of the present volume follows entirely the pattern already presented. It is dedicated to Rev. Prof. Ioan Chirilă, PhD, on his 60th birthday, is made up of a series of studies by professors who teach Old and New Testament Studies at theological faculties from Romania and beyond, contains commendatory messages and is prefaced by one of the two coordinators of the volume, a disciple of Rev. Professor.

Given that this type of volume has an exact format, there is not much room for novelty. Therefore, their value does not lay in this. In what follows we will try to highlight elements that make each tribute volume a unique academic endeavour, and not just a practical tradition out of inertia. We believe that two fundamental features that truly give value to such a publication are the quality of the studies contained in the volume and the love with which they are written.

As for the articles collected in this publication, they are as varied as they are complex. The authors of the thirty-one studies deal with a multitude of topics, covering both fragments of the text of Holy Scripture and issues of textual history, biblical canon, translation, the relationship with various Apocrypha, related philosophical notions, patristic exegesis, updating the message and much more. The methodology of the studies harmoniously blends fundamental Orthodox principles of biblical reception and assumption with the tools offered by the Western research environment. At the same time, a closer look at the bibliographies used by each author reveals that they are very consistent, highly topical and diverse. It must also be said that the studies in question are not 'arid' and 'heavy' scientific literature, aimed only at edifying readers, but rather more or less theological thoughts that highlight various elements of the Church's faith: the nature of light, the importance of hermeneutical principles, the value of the name, Scripture as the source and basis of iconographic representations, the use of the Psalms in the spiritual ascent, etc. All these points make the volume dedicated to Rev. Ioan Chirilă to have an extremely valuable, accessible and relevant content for Romanian theology.

As we saw at the beginning, the 'recipe' for designing a tribute volume is not only about academic research but also about the relationship that each author has with the celebrated personality. Looking through the messages that conclude each article, we discover not only the esteem that Romanian Orthodox biblical scholars have for Rev. Ioan Chirilă but also the love with which they relate to him. In general, among the authors, some are proud of the fact that they were able to collaborate with the distinguished reverend, while others 'boast' that they had the chance to be his students. Regardless of their position, those who have produced the studies contained in this volume choose, for a few lines, to detach themselves from the subject matter and open their hearts. This is why, in homage literature, scientific research aims to advance human

knowledge, but also provides a framework for strengthening inter-human relationships. In the present volume, this is seen not only in the messages at the end of the studies but sometimes even in the themes the authors address. An example could be the article by Rev. Al. Moldovan – “‘There was a man sent from God, whose name was John’ (Jn 1:6). The portrait of St. John the Baptist in the prologue of the Fourth Gospel”, which we believe focuses on a biblical John who has something in common with the John we are honouring. Another situation could also be that in our opinion, some studies deal with themes or notions that Rev. Ioan Chirilă himself has given importance to in his work. As examples, we can give the study of Deacon S. Pașca-Tușa, which deals with the relationship between Scripture and Philokalia, and that of Rev. I. Melniciuc-Puică, which deals with the personality of the Prophet Hosea. All these issues show that the love of the disciples and colleagues of Ref. Ioan Chirilă was the driving force behind the publication of this volume.

Knowing all this, we can say with certainty that although this volume is perfectly in line with the academic homage literature, it is not the result of unwritten laws and contextual obligations, but is the fruit of research approaches influenced, among other things, by the personality and work of Rev. Prof. Ioan Chirilă. Therefore, the present work illustrates how scientific knowledge and the sensitivity of the human soul can be combined.

**Cătălin-Emanuel ȘTEFAN**

*Faculty of Orthodox Theology  
Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca,  
catalin.stefan@stud.ubbcluj.ro*