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Faculty of Orthodox Theology

***Patriarch Abraham***

***– a paradigm of faith in the three religions of the Book***

Phd Thesis

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# CONTENT

## CONTENT

### INTRODUCTION

### I. ABRAHAM IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. ABRAHAM'S GENEALOGY OR THE UNITY OF THE NATION (GEN. 11:10-26)
2. ABRAHAM'S FAMILIAL CONTEXT (GEN. 11:27-32)
3. CALLING – PROMISE – OBEDIENCE (GEN. 12:1-9)
  - 3.1. The Lord's Commandment and Promise (Ge. 12:1-3)
  - 3.2. Obedience – an increase of the faith (Gen. 12:4-5)
  - 3.3. The Theophanies from Mamvri (Gen. 12:6-7)
  - 3.4. Abraham in Bethel (Gen. 12:8-9)
4. ABRAHAM IN EGYPT (GEN. 12:10-20)
5. ABRAHAM SEPARATES FROM LOT (GEN. 13:1-18)
6. LOT BECOMES A SLAVE THEN HE IS LIBERATED (GEN. 14:1-16)
7. ABRAHAM'S MEETING WITH MELCHIZEDEK (GEN. 14:17-24)
  - 7.1. Abraham is greeted by the king of Sodom (Gen. 14:17)
  - 7.2. Abraham is blessed by Melchizedek (14:18-20)
  - 7.3. The dialogue between Abraham and the king of Sodom (Gen. 14:21-24)
8. ABRAHAM'S FAITH AND THE COVENANT WITH THE LORD (GEN. 15:1-21)
9. THE SIGN OF THE COVENANT: THE CIRCUMCISION (GEN. 17:1-27)
10. THE HOSPITALITY OF ABRAHAM: THE THEOPHANY FROM THE MAMVRI OAK TREE (GEN. 18:1-15)
11. ABRAHAM AS MEDIATOR (GEN. 18:16-33)
12. THE BIRTH OF ISAAC (GEN. 21:1-7)
13. ISHMAEL IS SENT AWAY (GEN. 21:8-21)
14. ISAAC IS OFFERED AS SACRIFICE (GEN. 22:1-18)
15. THE LORD OF ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB

16. ABRAHAM IN THE PROPHETICAL BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

17. ABRAHAM IN THE ANAGINOSCOMENA BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

## II. ABRAHAM IN JUDAISM

### 1. ABRAHAM'S ORIGIN AND YOUTH

- 1.1. Abraham's genealogy
- 1.2. The birth of Abraham
- 1.3. The idolatrous faith of Abraham's family
- 1.4. Abraham's conversion to monotheism
- 1.5. Abraham and astrology
- 1.6. The ejection of the rooks and the salvation of the Chaldean crops
- 1.7. Abraham's marriage
- 1.8. Abraham and the incineration of the idols from the Ur of the Chaldeans
- 1.9. Abraham and the Tower of Babel

### 2. ABRAHAM'S WANDERING

- 2.1. The departure from the Ur of the Chaldeans
- 2.2. Abraham in Damascus
- 2.3. Abraham in Haran
- 2.4. The calling of Abraham: retellings, completions and spiritual interpretations
- 2.5. Abraham's journey through Canaan
- 2.6. Abraham in Egypt
- 2.7. Abraham's procession in the promised land, on God's command
- 2.8. Abraham in Hebron
- 2.9. Abraham in Gerar

### 3. ABRAHAM AS AN ADMINISTRATIVE, MILITARY AND POLITICAL CONDUCTOR

- 3.1. Abraham as a military leader
- 3.2. Abraham as a political organizer
- 3.3. Abraham a founder of the colonies

### 4. ABRAHAM AND MELCHIZEDEK IN THE JUDAIC TRADITION

- 4.1. Abraham and Melchizedek in the intertestamentary Judaism
- 4.2. Abraham and Melchizedek in the rabbinic Judaism

## III. ABRAHAM IN CHRISTIANISM

### 1. ABRAHAM IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

- 1.1. Abraham in the synoptic Gospels
- 1.2. Abraham in the Gospel by John
- 1.3. Abraham in the book of Acts
- 1.4. Abraham in the epistle to Romans by Saint Apostle Paul
- 1.5. Abraham in the Epistle to Galatians by Saint Apostle Paul
- 1.6. Abraham in the Epistle to Hebrews by Saint Apostle Paul

### 2. THE TYPOLOGICAL-CHRISTOLOGICAL VALUE OF ABRAHAM'S LIFE IN THE WORKS OF THE HOLY FATHERS

- 2.1. Abraham's family and youth
- 2.2. The calling of Abraham and his youth
- 2.3. Abraham's wandering reflected in the Christian tradition

- 2.4. Abraham's war with the four kings
- 2.5. Abraham and Melchizedek

#### IV. ABRAHAM IN ISLAM

- 1. ABRAHAM IN THE KORAN
  - 1.1. The beginnings of Abraham's faith in an idolatrous environment
  - 1.2. Historical and spiritual marks from Abraham's life in the version of the Koran
- 2. ABRAHAM'S PORTRAIT IN THE SOURCES OF THE ISLAMIC TRADITION
  - 2.1. Abraham's meeting with Melchizedek in Islamic version

#### CONCLUSIONS

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

KEY WORDS: *Judaism, Christianity, Abraham, Islam*

## ABSTRACT

Patriarch Abraham, our father, is an outstanding personality in the three religions of the book: Islam, Christianity and Judaism. In the Jewish tradition, he is the one through which God seals His covenant with the chosen people. For Christians he is the great patriarch who answers unconditionally to God's calling and who remains, until today, an example of faith for the new chosen people. For the Islamic tradition he is, firstly, the founder of monotheism. The three religions of the book – named as such because each of them claims its origin from a revealed book which constitutes the essence and the foundation of faith – acknowledge Abraham as a personality whose life and activity have had a great influence on the way in which they developed, though differently. This thesis represents an attempt to analyze and understand, as much as it is possible, these three distinctive religious-spiritual ways (Jewish, Christian, Islamic) which reunite in the person of Abraham.

The starting episode of the chapters dedicated to Abraham in the Old Testament, that of the divine calling from genesis 12:1-3, unravels early in the biblical text his overwhelming importance in the history of humanity: God separates Abraham from all the other people, turning him into a universal centre of blessing, because he heralds and comprises within his person not only the Jewish tradition, but the entire history of the salvation of human kind. This moment points to a new stage in the history of the relationship between the lord and humanity and launches theological themes that will be developed within the following chapters of the Old Testament: *calling* and *obedience*, *choice* and *promise*, *blessing* and *curse*. The promise received by Abraham regarding the multitude of his descendants may be interpreted, taking into account the mentality characteristic to that epoch, as a sign of the Lord's will to share his blessing to the entire humanity through Abraham. His unconditional obedience in this episode determinant for the subsequent flow of events, obedience based on a strong faith, may be considered in relationship with the episode of the meeting between Abraham and Melchizedek. Here, two different environments meet, but discover a common point, namely the faith in the same God. This (the faith) remains, in my opinion, the central factor in defining Abraham's personality, the other virtues and values that he promotes being in obvious dependency of it.

The theme can also be found in the interpretations that the books of the New Testament give for the history of Abraham. Here we can find a series of interpretations of Abraham's history and deeds, focused on the following aspects: Abraham's faith and obedience have the value of a model, these two virtues being largely proved by Abraham in different moments of probation that he is subjected to; all those who present a faith similar to that of Abraham, no matter the filiation, age or other factors, may be righteously called "Abraham's sons" and will enjoy the same blessings and fruits of the divine promise; God's promises to Abraham anticipate, through the blessing they imply, the Messianic salvation through which all the nations will be given God's blessing. Thus, faith remains the key element associated to the personality of patriarch Abraham both in the Old and the New Testament. Regarding this aspect there is also agreement with the Islamic tradition in which he is acknowledged, first of all, as founder of monotheism, which is in direct relationship with its faith.

*Motivation of the choice of theme.* The text of the Old Testament, shared by Jewish and Christians, has many prophets common with the text of the Quran, but, of all the prophets, Abraham is the most important and has a special significance for each of the three religions. Thus, even though he is equally presented in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, the manner in which he is perceived and understood differs greatly. The paradoxical situation of the great patriarch to be present, accepted and valued within three religions but, because of different reasons and in different manners, stands on the basis of choosing this research theme, through which I intend to identify, analyzing selectively the most relevant sources of text, common points and essential view-differences between these three modes (Jewish, Christian and Islamic) of understanding Abraham. This research, by the nature of its motivation, belongs to that category of thesis that wish to serve the nowadays interreligious dialogue, thinking that dialogue is today, more than ever, a necessity and a condition of our future existence.

Besides this aspect, one must take into account the fact that patriarch Abraham belongs to a period of the old Testament in which, according to the exegetical literature, the head of the family also had sacerdotal responsibilities. Thus, even though Abraham lived long before the foundation of the Jewish cult and of the category of priests, he fulfilled, by virtue of the characteristics of that period, certain sacerdotal duties.

*Importance and actuality of the theme.* Patriarch Abraham inaugurates the history of the chosen people and may be considered, through this, the most relevant example of the theme of

choice from the Old Testament. Paul Beauchamp expresses the huge stake that his choosing present not only for Israel but for the entire human kind: “The chosen is unique par excellence, the blessed one, but blessed for all the others. Around this individual, of this isolated, the destiny of all the nations of the planet will be played, meaning the destiny of humanity: I will bless those who bless you and whoever curses you I will curse (Genesis 12:3)”<sup>1</sup>. The entire history of Israel will be claimed starting with the figure of Abraham, all will be Abraham’s descendants and will pray (or not) to the Lord of Abraham. And he will be a source of blessing for all the nations of the world. From a Christian perspective, Abraham’s life is important firstly because it offers, in the light of the interpretation of the New Testament<sup>2</sup>, the ultimate model of faith, a virtue so great that he was ready to sacrifice his only son in order to listen to God’s will (Gen. 22). Within Islam, Abraham is very important for he is considered the founder of a monotheist community on earth. These three perspectives emphasize different aspects in the life of the patriarch, corresponding to different ways of theological-spiritual understanding characteristic to the three religions

Besides the importance given to the theme by the special place which patriarch Abraham occupies in each of the three religions, this theme is very interesting and concerns our present times because it offers the opportunity to rediscover the Old Testament as a common field for the interreligious and intercultural dialogue. This effort of rediscovery is built around the figure of the great patriarch and aims to finding common elements that can surpass the differences of understanding, which may be a solution to avoid conflict and even to start a positive dialogue directed towards emphasizing the values of Abraham that we share.

*Content and structure of the thesis.* The PhD thesis is structured on four chapters, framed by introduction, conclusions and bibliography. The first chapter entitled “Abraham in the Old Testament” is of an exegetical nature, analyzing selectively texts from the Old Testaments that I considered to be most important and relevant for the objectives of the research. The presentation is, in general, made in the order of the texts as they appear in the Old Testament, but not exclusively, for there are also chapters constituted thematically, such as the one entitled “The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob”. The biblical texts analyzed in this chapter are extracted from the book of Genesis, from the prophetic books and from the anaginoscomena books of the Old

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Beauchamp, *Cincizeci de portrete biblice*, trans. Claudiu Constantinescu, Ed. Cartier, Bucharest, 2001, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Especially in the light of the texts from *Romans* and *Hebrews*, which we will analyze in the chapters dedicated to the New Testament

Testament, thus widening the range of texts in order to comprise not only those from the time of Abraham, but also those that present the manner of his perception by Israel along history.

The second chapter, “Abraham in Judaism”, describes the figure of the great patriarch referring to resources from the Jewish tradition so that, even though I analyze texts that are already presented in the first chapter (for example, the subchapter “Abraham in Egypt”), here I present comparatively only those aspects which are characteristic to the Jewish tradition. The main resources used in this chapter are: Josephus Flavius, *Jewish Antiquities* and *The Jewish War*, Philo of Alexandria, *De Abrahamo*, *The Talmud*, the midrashic literature, Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed*, The Qumran Manuscripts, *The Book of the Jubilees*.

In the third chapter entitled “Abraham in Christianity” I present the most important texts of the New Testament regarding patriarch Abraham as well as the interpretation of the Holy Fathers which is, to a great extent, directed towards the identification of the typological-Christological value of Abraham’s life. Thus, even though here too I presented again some of the episodes (the example of the episode in which Abraham goes to Egypt appears once more), the perspective and resources are completely different.

The final chapter of the thesis, entitled “Abraham in Islam”, presents several features representative for the manner in which Abraham is perceived within this religion, features taken from the text of the Quran and from the Islamic tradition in general.

*The position of the theme within the preoccupations of the research team.* Through the exegetical characteristic, my thesis belongs to the analytical-exegetical area of the doctoral studies in the field of the Old Testament in Cluj. It is conceived as a completion of the bibliography of the biblical studies which it enriches with the interreligious perspective on the personality of the great patriarch. Secondly, this interreligious dimension of the thesis integrates it within the dialogical direction of the doctoral studies of old Testament, through which common subjects are sought-after which can support a meeting or a dialogical relationship of Christianity with Judaism and Islam. We underline the fact that this direction of study has amplified in the past few years internationally, and thus, from this point of view, the thesis is affiliated to the preoccupations characteristic to the biblical and religious studies usually from the international environment. Hence, both through its exegetical nature and through its interreligious nature, the present study corresponds to the preoccupations of the research team

Scientific objectives assumed during the research. This research is not one of exegetical detail. It uses the instruments of interpretation only there where this contributes to the sketching of a portrait, that of Abraham. The research is not one of theological synthesis either, but underlines the theological aspects only where they unravel an important dimension of the perception of the patriarch in the three religions. The thesis rather wishes to be a broad image from an interreligious perspective on the great patriarch. Thus, the main objectives targeted in the present research are:

➤ Understanding and presenting Abraham as father of the three important monotheistic religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam). The name “father” which both Judaism and Christianity and Islam give to Abraham reflects a spiritual claiming from him, as well as a great affective intimacy, because of his value of model especially: all those who hope to come closer to God, feel themselves naturally close to the one who first answered His calling: Abraham. An essential objective of our thesis is, thus, that of understanding the different manner in which the three religions receive Abraham as their “father”, and what special significance has this name for each of the three.

The name of “father” which the Judaism, Christianity and Islam use when referring to Abraham is in close relationship with the theme of the faith, Abraham is the father of the faithful, he is not only converted to monotheism, but he is its first promoter. Thus, all those who follow his example in their relationship with God, characterized firstly by a firm faith which models the deeds, can receive him as their father and call him as such. The Judaic tradition insists upon this fact inclusively at the level of language, introducing almost every reference to Abraham with the formula “our father”, formula taken from the very words of God: “But I took *your father Abraham* from the land beyond the Euphrates and led him throughout Canaan and gave him many descendants...” (Joshua 24:2). In the prophetic literature, the same expression occurs with reference to God, our true Father (Isaiah 63:15-16). The spiritual paternity of Abraham has its origin in this divine paternity and it is probably best reflected in the expression “father of the faith”. A specific feature of Islam to this respect is to state that Abraham came to faith in his own, detaching himself from the idolatrous environment of his family as a consequence of recognizing God from the nature’s manifestations (Surah 6, 74-89). But the manner in which he came to faith is less important than the fact that he is unanimously considered by the three

traditions as bearer of the responsibility of a spiritual paternity anchored in the spiritual paternity of God in relationship with the human kind.

➤ The systematic presentation of the most relevant texts referring to Abraham, belonging to Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Texts from the Old Testament are chosen and interpreted both from a Judaic and Christian perspective. Also, the writings of the Judaic tradition (Talmud, Midrash, Qumran, Philo, Jospheus Falvius etc.) and those of the Christian tradition are used in order to unravel to the reader the manner in which Abraham was perceived along the centuries, within these two great religions. Finally, within chapter 4, texts from Quran and the Islamic tradition are presented, which, by their nature, require a separate structure within the thesis.

The degree of accomplishment of this objective may be evaluated according to the following main factors: the systematic character of the presentation, the diversity of the source-texts, the equilibrium and objectiveness of the presentation and analysis. The manner of presentation chosen is one that allows a clear orientation both within the biblical narrative, and in the types of texts belonging to the Judaic, Christian, Islamic tradition, and which comprises: the most important fragments of text to which we refer, analytical-exegetical notes, theological stresses, ideatic-theological systematization. Regarding the diversity of the texts characteristic for the three traditions, some reference texts and works are used, such as: *from the Judaic tradition*: Talmud, Midrash, Qumran, Philo, Josephus Flavius etc.; *from the Christian tradition*: Holy Fathers such as Saint John Chrysostom, Saint Maximus the Confessor, Saint Cyril of Alexandria, Saint Justin the Martyr and Philosopher, Saint Ambrose of Milan, Saint John Damascene, Saint Epiphanius of Salamis, Saint Clement of Rome, Saint Augustine, Saint Jerome, writers of the Church: Venerable Bede, Origen, Didymus the Blind, Eusebius of Caesarea, Boethius, Tertullian, spiritual perspectives from Saint Anthony the Great or Mark the Ascetic – thus covering a large amount of time and a variety of styles and interpretative perspectives; from the Islamic tradition: Quran and modern commentaries. This use of a large number of books guarantees the analytical objectiveness, the diversity of the perspectives of interpretation, as well as defining new possible directions of research.

➤ Rediscovering the Old Testament through Abraham, as a common field for the interreligious and intercultural dialogue. Around his personality one may easily identify many different dialogue subjects which start from elements which are generally shared: value, virtue, force of character etc. Through these one may rediscover the Old Testament as the origin of an

efficient interreligious dialogue focused on the rediscovery of paradigmatic values for the restoration of the nowadays society.

The profile of the society today indicates more and more clearly the necessity to promote dialogue. In the case of the intercultural and interreligious dialogue, necessity is all the more stringent as the differences of such nature lead unfortunately, to tensions and conflicts with most serious consequences. Including these reasons, at an international level, special efforts are made in order to identify the common points which may become subjects of dialogue. In the case of the present theme, the potential for dialogue is significant since it implies referring to general-human and religious values which we can find in the portrait of the great patriarch Abraham. The fact that, as we have shown within the thesis, he is accepted and acknowledged by all three traditions as a spiritual father, initiator of the true faith and bearer of several distinguished values, constitutes a special trump in the context of the intercultural and interreligious dialogue. I consider that, during the research, I identified and described these values and virtues which make of the writings of the Old Testament, with Abraham's conveyance, a proper field for dialogue in the quest for unity and harmony which the eschatological images from the books of prophets reflect, when they speak about "kol basar", everybody that will come and bow before God.

These research objectives determined the method of research and the manner of approach of the bibliographical resources. In order to fulfill these objectives and the secondary objectives which originate from them, I especially emphasized those elements which unravel bits of the personality and life of the great patriarch Abraham.

*The present state of the research.* In the Romanian biblical literature, **monographic works dedicated to patriarch Abraham** were written in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, thus: Alexandrescu, Ioan, *Avraam în lumina Bibliei – tâlcuire biblică* (Sibiu: Tipografia Arhidiecezană, 1937), 91 p; Alexandrescu, Ioan, *Părintele Avram și credința sa – tâlcuire biblică* (Sibiu: Tipografia Arhidiecezană, 1938), 60 p.; Tarnavschi, Vasile, *Vieața Patriarhilor* (Cernăuți: Societatea tipografică „Bucovina”, 1902), 117 p.; Ionescu, Ioan, *Religiunea Patriarhilor în Vechiul Testament* (București: Institutul de arte grafice „Eminescu”, 1905), 72 p. besides their essential contribution to the specialized bibliography, the reduced number and their age create a proper environment for a new monography which uses the most recent bibliographical sources and possibilities of biblical research.

A series of **studies are dedicated to the patriarchs of the Old Testament in general:** BABA, Teodor, „Primii Patriarhi ai Vechiului Testament. De la Avraam la Iosif și frații săi”, *Teologia* 3 (2007):15-29; BOLȘACOV-GHIMPU, A. A., „Biblia este confirmată de datele noi ale arheologiei și istoriei Orientului Apropiat. Patriarhii și judecătorii”, *MO* 5-6 (1972): 349-373; CALOIANU, Viorel, „Epoca patriarhilor evrei în lumina descoperirilor arheologice mai noi”, *GB* 11-12 (1973): 1278-1290; CÂRSTOIU, Justinian, „Patriarhii biblici”, *O* 1 (2008); CHIRILĂ, Ioan, „Despre funcția tipică a chipurilor patriarhale ale Vechiului Testament în concepția lui Filon din Alexandria”, în *Orizonturi teologice* (Oradea: Ed. Universității Oradea, 2001), 26-35; MIHĂILĂ Al. „Despre religia patriarhilor în context istoric”, *AFTOUB* VI (2006): 123-144; POPA, Viorel, „Aspectul universal al mântuirii la patriarhii biblici și la profeții Vechiului Testament”, în *In Memoriam Liviu Borcea (1936-2006)*, dascăl și istoric, coord. Pavel Cherescu (Oradea: Universității, 2011).

**Studies dedicated especially to patriarch Abraham**, although extremely important for the specialized literature, are few in number and thus leave room for additional works: BUGA, Ioan, „Personalitatea patriarhului Avraam oglindită în epistolele Sfântului Apostol Pavel”, *ST* 3-4 (1978): 193-204; CHIRILĂ, Ioan, „Avraam și Iisus. Despre sensul static și dinamic al conceptului de popor ales / poporul lui Dumnezeu”, în *Ideje az emlékezésnek. Liber amicorum: A 60 éves Marton Jozsef Köszöntése*, ed. M. Noda et al. (Budapest-Kolozsvár: Verbum, 2010), 47-53; CHIRILĂ, Ioan, „Filoxenia lui Avraam. Exegeza hrisostomică la Facere 18”, *AUCT* 11 (2003); ERBICEANU, C., „Moartea dreptului Avraam (o legendă)”, *BOR* 1 (1906):76-82; HÂRLĂOANU, Paul-Cezar, „Personalitatea patriarhului Avraam în tradiția Sinagogii și a Bisericii”, *AȘUIT* XII (2007): 193-210; NEAGA, Nicolae, „Istoria timpurilor vechi-testamentare. Epoca patriarhului Avraam”, *MA* 3-4 (1957): 193-204; REIT, Aurelian-Nicu, „Patriarhul Avraam și iconomia mântuirii”, *Studia TO* 2 (2010): 33-46.

Regarding the international environment, here the specialized bibliography on this theme is very diverse: commentaries on the book of Genesis<sup>3</sup>, works regarding the period of the

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<sup>3</sup> BRUEGGEMANN, Walter. *Genesis*. INT. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982; CASSUTO, Umberto. *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*. 2 Vols. Trans. I. Abrahams. Jerusalem: Magnes, 1961, 1964; DRIVER, S.R. *The Book of Genesis: with Introduction and Notes*. Westminster Commentaries. London: Methuen, 1904; Hamilton, Victor. *The Book of Genesis*, Chapters 1-17. NICOT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990; Jacob, B. *Genesis*. Trans. E. I. Jacob and W. Jacob. New York: Ktav, 1974; Kidner, Derek. *Genesis*. TOTC. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1967; VON RAD, Gerhard. *Genesis: A Commentary*. Rev. London: SCM, 1972; WENHAM, Gordon J. *Genesis 1-15*. WBC. Waco, TX: Word, 1987; WESTERMANN, Claus. *Genesis: A Commentary*. Trans. J. J. Scullion. 3 vols. A Continental Commentary. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984-86.

patriarchs<sup>4</sup>, works written from an interreligious perspective<sup>5</sup>, works dedicated especially to patriarch Abraham<sup>6</sup>. These categories and titles presented in the footnotes have a demonstrative purpose, the extended international bibliography being used for the entire thesis and given in the footnotes.

Using this previous specialized literature I wish for the present thesis to be a step ahead in the research of the life of patriarch Abraham in a manner of research that will offer the contemporary society the model with restoring force that it needs.

*Methodology of the research.* The initial stage of research implies identifying within the text of the Old Testament – as a normative text for the present research, of the most important texts in order to define Abraham’s personality. This category includes not only texts from the book of Genesis, but also some references to Abraham from the prophetic and anaginoscomena books. The Christian perspective of understanding will be completed by the opinions of the Holy Fathers such as: Saint John Chrysostom, Saint Maximus the Confessor, Saint Cyril of Alexandria, Saint Justin the Martyr and Philosopher, Saint Ambrose of Milan, Saint John Damascene, Saint Epiphanius of Salamis, Saint Clement of Rome, Saint Augustine, Saint Jerome, with opinions of the writers of the Church: Venerable Bede, Origen, Didymus the Blind, Eusebius of Caesarea, Boethius, Tertullian, and with elements of spiritual interpretation from Saint Anthony the Great or Mark the Ascetic. From the Judaic tradition I will use especially the works of Josephus Flavius entitled *Jewish Antiquities* and *The Jewish War*, the work of Philo of Alexandria dedicated to the great patriarch, *De Abrahamo*, different treatises from Talmud, Midrashic literature, the work of Moses Maimonide, *Guide for the Perplexed*, The Qumran Manuscripts, *The Book of the Jubilees*. From Islam I took representative texts from the Quran and from the Islamic tradition. To these sources I added the bibliographical categories

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<sup>4</sup> R.W.L. Moberly, *The Old Testament of the Old Testament: Patriarchal narratives and Mosaic Yahwism*; D. Dimant, Reinhard G. Kratz, *Rewriting and interpreting the Hebrew Bible: The Biblical patriarchs in the Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 2013; A. Pagolu, *The Religion of the Patriarchs*, 1998; J. S. Baden, *The Promise to the Patriarchs*, 2013.

<sup>5</sup> Bruce Feiler, *Abraham: A journey to the Heart of Three Faiths*, 2005; Marvin R. Wilson, *Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith*, 1990; F.E. Peters, *The Children of Abraham: Judaism, Christianity, Islam: A New Edition*, Princeton Classic Editions); J. F. Dirks, *The Abrahamic Faiths. Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Similarities and contrasts*, 2005.

<sup>6</sup> John van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1975; R. Hendel, *Remembering Abraham: Culture, Memory and History in the Hebrew Bible*, 2005; L. E. Goodman, *God of Abraham*, Oxford University Press, 1996.

characteristic to biblical studies: dictionaries, encyclopaedias, concordances, biblical commentaries, specialized volumes and studies.

As I have already mentioned, driven by the wish to have a clear structure of the thesis and to offer the potential readers a good orientation within the thesis, I have structured the thesis on episodes, within the extended chapters, and thus the episodes are reviewed from the perspective of each of the three great religions. It is not a repetition of the information, but a plurality of perspectives.

As an actual method of research I used within the thesis the textual and exegetical analysis – to emphasize the textual aspects and the most important significances from the history of salvation, theological synthesis – to underline the important theological themes associated to patriarch Abraham, such as: the theme of the faith, the theme of the choice, the theme of the blessing etc. –, comparative analysis – in order to emphasize the common and different points between the three perspectives.

Regarding the manner of citation, I used a classic one, used within the Faculties of Orthodox Theology from the Romanian Patriarchate. For the biblical books I will use the abbreviation system from the synodal editions of the Holy Scripture. Magazines or collections of commentaries abbreviated are presented in the list of abbreviation from the beginning of the thesis. The biblical citations in Hebrew are given from : Elliger, Karl et Wilhelm Rudolph, eds. *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. Quae antea cooperantibus A. Alt, O. Eissfeldt, P. Kahle ediderat R. Kittel. Editio funditus renovata, adjuvantibus H. Bardtke ... [et al.] cooperantibus H. P. Rüger et J. Ziegler ediderunt K. Elliger et W. Rudolph; textum Masoreticum curavit H. P. Rüger, Masoram elaboravit G. E. Weil. Editio tertia emendata opera W. Rudolph et H. P. Rüger, Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1987. The biblical citations in Greek are given from: *Septuaginta*. Id est Vetus Testamentum graece iuxta LXX interpretes. Edidit Alfred Rahlfs. Editio minor, duo volumina in uno. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1935. The biblical citations in Romanian are given from *Biblia sau Sfânta Scriptură*. Tipărită cu binecuvântarea Prea Fericitului Părinte Daniel – Patriarhul Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, cu aprobarea Sfântului Sinod, București: IBMBOR, 2008, with the mention that there where I propose nuances of interpretation I will indicate the difference of translation in comparison with the synodal edition, with the natural arguments.

The research accomplished can be continued in the following main directions associated to the theme of the PhD thesis:

- Abraham's image in the prophetic writings of the Old Testament – within the thesis I presented the 7 prophetic texts in which Abraham is mentioned: Isaiah 28:22; 41:8-9; 51:2; 63:16; Jeremiah 33:26; Ezekiel 33:24; Micah 7:20, which I analyzed briefly, because I wanted to present the prophetic perspective on the figure of the great patriarch; the reduced extension of the presentation leaves open this direction of research, for it would be good to have an ample textual and exegetical-theological analysis in order to understand the nuances of the prophetic perspective on the theme.
- Abraham's personality reflected in the anaginoscomena books of the Old Testament. Similar to the situation of the research of the prophetic texts, the direction of thorough investigation of the texts from the anaginoscomena books of the Old Testament, which refer to patriarch Abraham, remains open. Within the thesis I referred to Judah 5:6-9; 8:25-27; Tob. 4:13; I Macc. 2:50-52; 12:21-22; etc., but I only made brief interpretations that deserve to be reviewed and developed.
- Comparative synthesis of the manner of perception of Abraham in the three religions. At the end of the research I consider that it would be useful a presentation of the elements exhibited within the thesis regarding Abraham, elements characteristic to Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Thus, even though, within the thesis, aspects concerning Abraham's life and personality are emphasized, which may constitute themes for the interreligious dialogue, I am convinced that a synthetic presentation of these elements would improve such a dialogue. Because of this, I think that accomplishing such a synthesis may constitute in itself a complementary direction of research.

Of course, to these ideas that can be developed extensively in future researches auxiliary to the theme of the present thesis, one may add other possible themes.

*Unsolved problems.* A challenging area is represented by the consolidation of the convergent points for the Judaic and Christian traditions with the Islamic tradition regarding the personality of Abraham. Even though there are many common points, I consider this relationship to be rather fragile and insufficiently consolidated with research and solid arguments. This fact may transform the problem identified a new research direction in itself.

*Personal contribution.* In the absence of a systematic paper regarding this theme in our country, the personal contribution consists mainly of an extensive study on the theme of an important biblical character, Abraham. This study is of actuality not only because of the fact that it represents an enrichment of the Romanian biblical bibliography, but also of the fact that it implies an interreligious perspective, very interesting for the nowadays society.

At the end of the research endeavor both tiring and fruitful, I express my wish that this paper brings its minimum contribution to the Romanian professional bibliography. The patriarch Abraham, the one who knew God and called Him by His name, remains, over millenniums, an important personality of the spirituality of the three monotheistic religions. He is also a model that bears in itself the restoring force necessary to the man for him to come back to God, Who calls Him ceaseless waiting for each one to come out of his land, of his nation, of his father's house and let himself guided, according to the model of the patriarch, towards the promised land, towards eternal communion and comfort.

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