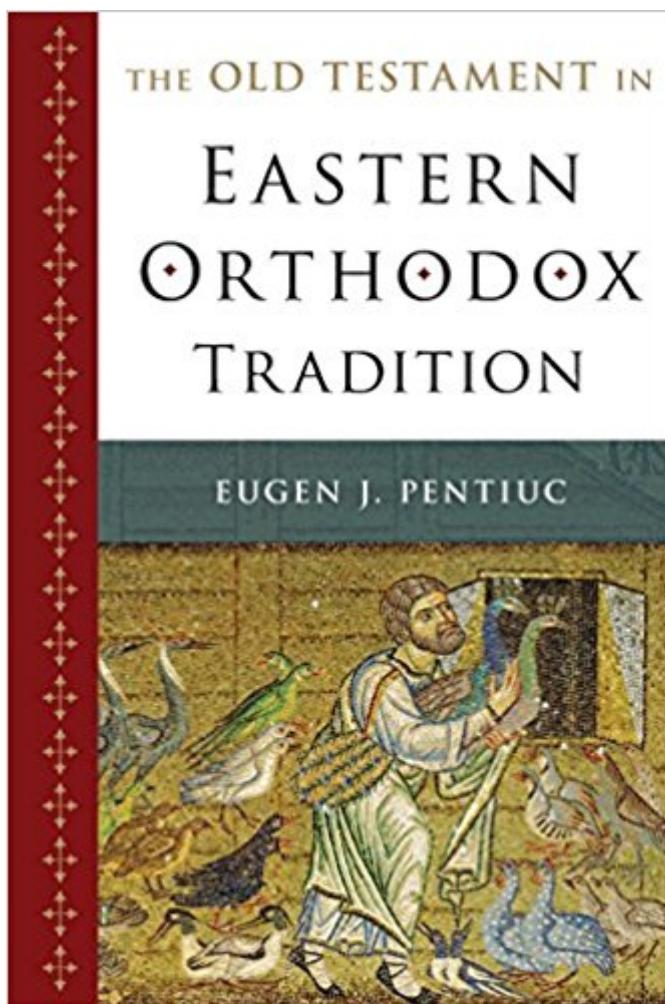


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# The Old Testament In Eastern Orthodox Tradition



## **Synopsis**

This study provides a general overview and a succinct analysis of the primary ways in which the Old Testament has been received, interpreted and conveyed within Eastern Orthodox tradition, filling a vacuum in scholarly literature on the history of biblical interpretation. The book is divided into two parts: Reception and Interpretation. Under Reception issues such as unity and diversity of the Christian Bible, text, canon, and Tradition are considered. The second part, Interpretation, focuses on Eastern Orthodox modes of interpretation: discursive and intuitive. Among the discursive modes, the patristic exegesis is chosen as a case study. The intuitive modes representing the so-called "liturgical exegesis" are subdivided into aural (hymns, psalmody, lectionaries) and visual (portable icons, frescoes, mosaics). A special emphasis is placed on the hallmarks of Eastern Orthodox reception and interpretation of the Old Testament, including: the centrality of Scripture within Tradition, a blend of flexibility and strictness at all levels of the faith community, integrative function and holistic use of the sacred text, a tensed unity of discursive and intuitive modes of interpretation, and a dynamic synergy between formative and informative goals in the use of Scripture.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

"Pentiuc's work is recommended reading to anyone with an interest in the subject. He writes as an ordained member of the Eastern Orthodox Church, as a seminary professor, and as a Hebrew Bible scholar. Hence, his book contains first-hand information from someone within the tradition, it is very accessible, and it is written from a specialist's perspective. Between the historical as well as

thematic breadth of the coverage, and the quality of dialogue with which he engages Jewish and Christians scholars alike, he offers interesting insights for both the past and the present of the Eastern Orthodox Church."--Review of Biblical Literature"Both the study and usage of the Old Testament in the Orthodox tradition is undervalued in academic circles today, and Fr. Eugen's work will serve as an authoritative and much-needed work. A noted expert in both Semitic languages and Old Testament studies, Fr. Eugen's unique blend of scholarly finesse and fidelity to Orthodox tradition makes *The Old Testament in Eastern Orthodox Tradition* a book worthy of our closest attention." --On Behalf of All"In this extraordinarily learned book, Pentiuc sheds much-needed light on an often neglected aspect of the history of interpretation of the Bible. Appropriately, he discusses not just texts, but ritual and art as well, so that reading his book is like walking into a lavishly ornamented Eastern Orthodox church where the Divine Liturgy is being celebrated. This view from the inside is an invaluable contribution." --Michael Coogan, editor of *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Books of the Bible*"This work is a major event: the first comprehensive and thorough analysis of the role of the Old Testament in the Eastern Orthodox tradition, written by the foremost Eastern Orthodox scholar of Scripture, internationally respected within both Church and Academy alike. Opening up the scriptural culture of Eastern Orthodoxy in all its dimensions, this illuminating volume will richly reward every reader." --V. Rev. Dr. John Behr, Dean and Professor of Patristics, St. Vladimir's Seminary"Pentiuc has endowed biblical studies with a profoundly insightful and thoroughly comprehensive exposition of the ways the OT has been read, sung, visualized, and otherwise celebrated in Orthodox tradition. Uncannily, Pentiuc's voice resonates quadraphonically historically from the headwaters of Christianity's Hellenized Jewish and patristic beginnings and from today's Orthodox faith and practice, from deep within the stream of Orthodox tradition as much as from the detached vantage point of his rigorous Harvard training...This book is unparalleled and will not be surpassed anytime soon. Non-Orthodox readers will benefit greatly from its thorough, concise, and highly readable presentation; but for Orthodox adherents, reading it is a must."--Theological Studies"This excellent work of Pentiuc is a worthwhile read for academics interested in traditional hermeneutics and likewise for those among the faithful interested in reading the Scriptures for spiritual benefit. My modest appraisal can in no way do justice to the author's tremendous effort and achievement."--Journal of Religious History"While this book fills a vacuum in the scholarly literature on this subject, it can also be relevant and interesting to the layman reader...In sum, *The Old Testament in Eastern Orthodox Tradition* is a useful study for everyone interested in biblical interpretation and deserves a place on every library shelf and bibliography list devoted to the Old Testament."--Eftimie Murgu "[T]he volume is a must read for any serious student

of Eastern Orthodox tradition as well as anybody interested in learning more about the rich and multifaceted scriptural and liturgical culture of the Eastern Orthodox Church."--Bulletin for Biblical Research

Eugen J. Pentiuc is Professor of Old Testament and Hebrew at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, Brookline, Massachusetts. He is the author of three books: West Semitic Vocabulary in the Akkadian Texts from Emar, Long-Suffering Love: A Commentary on Hosea with Patristic Annotations, and Jesus the Messiah in the Hebrew Bible.

I love this book! The author's "Jesus the Messiah in the Hebrew Bible" was my favorite introduction to the Old Testament until this came out. My favorite part is chapter 6 where (despite what another reviewer suggested) where he describes the necessity of liturgical worship and the liturgical context for understanding scripture. My only complaint is that he did not provide a more comprehensive treatment of each of the feasts and services (but that would have been a very different book!). Well, I do have one more complaint, but that is with and not the book itself: the Kindle version will only play on specific newer devices. I generally only order hard copies of books I'll use for research, teaching, and homily prep, but this one is written well enough to be read straight through for pleasure. - Fr. Anthony Perkins (Professor, St. Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Seminary)

Outstanding book that guides the reader to understand the Orthodox perspective on formation, criticism and interpretation of the Old Testament.

This is an amazing book. Fr. Eugen's scholarship is thoroughly impressive. His approach to the Old Testament is not limited to discursive, textual interpretations. He also looks at the Old Testament in the context of liturgy and through the lens of iconography. Dr. Pentiuc's book advances serious arguments against supersessionist interpretations of the Old Testament. It also appropriately points to the need for Orthodox Christian hierarchies across jurisdictions to lead the effort to get rid of the essentially wrong and shamefully persistent anti-Judaic (and consequently, anti-Semitic) interpretations and elements in Orthodox services. It is about time for such a work to begin. Hopefully, seventy something years since the Shoah is enough time for Eastern Christians to realize how our customary anti-Judaic interpretations and practices give rise to murderous anti-Semitic tendencies. Overall, the book is a real treat -- not only for academics, but for anyone who is seriously interested in the place of Old testament in Orthodox theology and liturgy. This is a great

contribution.

Excellent! It is very scholarly.

A good survey that offers a good introduction of the historical side and thus is a good reading for beginners, It did not cover the use of the OT in the liturgy and why the OT is not used in the Sunday Eucharist servers. This is one main topics that has been ignored by many, and needs to be looked at. Apart from selected Psalms, the OT is read not as one book called the OT, for the Eastern Church have maintained in its lectionaries the Jewish division of the Bible into the Torah, the prophets, and the books. Dr George Bebawi

The author has provided the field of biblical studies with a profoundly insightful and thoroughly comprehensive exposition of the ways in which the OT has been read, sung, visualized, and otherwise celebrated in Orthodox tradition. This book is unparalleled in its scholarly treatment of the subject. As an Orthodox biblical scholar with sixteen years in the field, I am quite sure it will not be surpassed anytime soon. Non-Orthodox readers will benefit greatly from its thorough, concise, and highly readable presentation; but for Orthodox readers, reading it is a must. Nicolae Roddy, PhD, Associate Professor, Hebrew Bible, Creighton University.

Both the study and usage of the Old Testament in the Orthodox tradition is undervalued in academic circles today, and Fr. Eugen's work will serve as an authoritative and much-needed work. A noted expert in both Semitic languages and Old Testament studies, Fr. Eugen's unique blend of scholarly finesse and fidelity to Orthodox tradition makes The Old Testament in Eastern Orthodox Tradition a book worthy of our closest attention.

This is a great book and focuses on an often forgotten part of Holy Scripture, that is, the Old Testament. Fr. Eugene does a great job of analysis and this book should be a must read for Seminarian, Clergy, and laity.

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