



**JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY
FOR ORTHODOX CHURCH MUSIC**

Vol. 6 (1), Section I: Peer-reviewed Articles, pp. 71–90

ISSN 2342-1258

<https://doi.org/10.57050/jisocm.113081>

**“THE MIDST OF THE EARTH”:
PS. 73:12B (LXX) IN PATRISTIC AND LITURGICAL
UNDERSTANDING**

SERAFIM SEPPÄLÄ

University of Eastern Finland
serafim.seppala@uef.fi

The verse “You have wrought salvation in the midst of the earth” (Ps. 74/73:12) occurs in numerous liturgical texts of the Orthodox Church. In current practice, it appears in Triodion (prayer of the sixth hour; Wednesday of the first week, Ode 4, heirmos), Octoechos (Wednesday and Friday Matins, tone 2), canons of Sunday matins (Fourth plagal echos, Troparion after the seventh ode, second canon), and the Feast of the Cross on Aug 1 (verse for stichera aposticha in vespers). The verse is used also in matins for the third Sunday of Lent (Veneration of the Cross), in the Aposticha (idiomelon, second echos). Finally, and most remarkably, the verse appears just before the twelfth Gospel reading in the evening service on Great Thursday (i.e., Friday matins).

In historical terms, the principal usages are those that are mentioned in (the oldest printed versions of) the Typikon of Mar Saba. The verse occurs in the Feast of the Cross (14 September) among the verses sung between the second and third antiphons of the liturgy, as well as on the third Sunday of Great Lent (Sunday of the Cross) at the end of the canon (before the repetition of the first stichira) in matins, and again in the liturgy, as the Alleluia verse before the Gospel reading, in addition to Great Thursday (i.e. Friday matins).¹ That is to say, the verse occurs in contexts that are directly or indirectly related to the Cross.

¹ See the tremendous translation and commentary of the Typikon of St Sabbas by Damaskinos (Olkinuora) of Xenophontos, *Sabbas Pyhitetyin Typikon* (Joensuu: Ortodoksinen seminaari, 2021), 159, 387, 419.

This article aims to outline the patristic understanding of this verse and the cosmological visions related to it, with some remarks on the Jewish background of the idea. The analysis is based on a wide variety of Greek (Origen, Eusebius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Pseudo-Athanasius, John Chrysostom, Theodoret of Cyrrihus, Pseudo-Methodius), Syriac (Ephrem the Syrian, Book of the Cave of Treasures, Jacob of Sarug) and some Latin sources (Augustine, Cassiodorus). The subject opens in various directions from creation to eschatology, but the present discussion is focused on this particular biblical and liturgical verse which is both thematically and historically at the heart of these wider issues.

THE BIBLICAL VERSE

Initially, the biblical Psalm was voiced in the Babylonian captivity, where the Jewish community implored God to remember Sion and sought inspiration from recalling the ancient salvific acts of God. The Hebrew reading itself appears rather straightforward, but it does offer some nuances for varying interpretations, some of which are not present in the Septuagint.

וַאלֹהִים מֶלֶךְ מִקֶּדֶם פֶּעַל יְשׁוּעוֹת, בְּקֶרֶב הָאָרֶץ
 “Yet God is my King of old,
 working salvation² in the midst of the earth.”
 Ps 74:12.

ὁ δὲ θεὸς βασιλεὺς ἡμῶν πρὸ αἰῶνος
 εἰργάσατο σωτηρίαν ἐν μέσῳ τῆς γῆς
 “God is our King forever:
 You have wrought salvation in the midst of the earth.”
 Ps. 73:12 LXX.

The significant difference between the two texts is that in Hebrew, “salvation” is in plural (יְשׁוּעוֹת), referring to salvific acts, such as crushing the sea monsters in the following verses, but the Greek σωτηρίαν is singular (accusative), which favours a more focused understanding: if an entity is one, then it is situated in one position, in one way or another.

In Hebrew, the key expression בְּקֶרֶב הָאָרֶץ offers various possibilities, for the actual usages of the phrase are rather far from the etymological starting point. Specifically, the word *qerev* comes from the root QRB, indicating nearness and vicinity, but this particular word customarily refers either to interiority (“inside”) or being in the middle of something. For *b^e-qerev*, the basic translation is “in the middle of”, in the wider sense of being among something, but without excluding the idea of being in the centre. The English “midst of” is an excellent equivalent. In Judaism, the expression has typically been understood in the wider sense: God is able to commit salvific acts anywhere on earth. Perhaps surprisingly, the Rabbinic expositions of this verse do not connect it with the Temple and its sacrifices, even though the

2 Literally, “a worker of salvific acts”.

beginning of the Psalm would fit with such an interpretation.³ Accordingly, the Syriac Psalter has “who decrees salvation for Jacob (*purqāneh d-ya‘qob*)”, which appears to be based on a Jewish interpretative rendering.

In the Septuagint, ἐν μέσῳ (corresponding to Latin *medius*) may indicate a sense of being among something or between something, the basic translations being “in the middle of”, “in the midst of”. Therefore, the Greek is more apt to be read in the sense of referring to the central point, which would be a somewhat artificial reading for the Hebrew original. This is one of the many instances where the Septuagint happens to offer better opportunities for Christian interpretations than the Hebrew text.

Accordingly, the alternative nuances are present in the ways in which the patristic authors understand the basic meaning of the verse. At times, ἐν μέσῳ τῆς γῆς is taken in the sense of “in the centre of the earth”, while some fathers read it in a wider sense, “among the [areas of the] earth”, and thus “in the sight of the whole world” (examples below).

Nevertheless, the meaning of the verse cannot be completely defined on the linguistic level, but one must enter the world of theological ideas. It seems that the verse is surprisingly seldom discussed or even mentioned in patristic studies,⁴ even though it connects with various important topics. There are at least two reasons for this. First, there is the unfortunate coincidence that the sections dealing with this very Psalm are more or less lacking in the partially surviving commentaries or homilies on Psalms by John Chrysostom, Jerome⁵, and Diodore of Tarsus⁶. Secondly, when this verse is commented on in patristic works, it happens that some of the most important sources have not been available in English translations, with the result that these works have left fewer traces in theological scholarship. This applies to the relevant writings by Eusebius, Pseudo-Athanasius, and Theodoret of Cyrrhus (until 2001).

When we turn from this particular verse into wider discussions on the idea of the centre of the earth, *omphalos mundi*, there is no lack of material. In addition to the Greek works, relevant material can be found from the Syriac texts and early Jewish sources, in addition to archaeology and cartography. I concentrate on discussing the aspects related to this

3 David Kimhi (Qimḥi, 1160–1235, known as Radak) and Meir Leibush ben Yehiel Michel Wisser (1809–1879, known as Malbim) see in the expression a reference to God’s exceptional, miraculous interventions in order to save the Jewish people in the middle of nations. In the Aramaic Targums, the verse reads עֲבִיד פּוֹרְקָנָא בְּגוֹ אֶרְעָא , “making redemptive acts in the midst (or even, “inside”) of the land”. The mikraot gedolot version of the Aramaic text is available in https://www.sefaria.org/Aramaic_Targum_to_Psalms.

4 One of the exceptions is Grypeou & Spurling, who somewhat surprisingly lay so much stress on this particular verse that they see the whole idea of Golgotha as the centre of the earth as being “based on exegetical speculations on Ps. 74:12 (LXX 73:12).” However, it is more reasonable to maintain that because of much wider theological concerns, the idea was finally connected with this verse. See Emmanouela Grypeou & Helen Spurling, *The Book of Genesis in Late Antiquity: Encounters between Jewish and Christian Exegesis* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 74.

5 Jerome in his excerpts on Psalms (CCSL 72, 247–361) did not comment on the verse.

6 The manuscript tradition of Diodore’s commentary has caused much confusion, as some manuscripts have been preserved under the name of Anastasios of Nicea and others with no name at all. Jean-Marie Olivier’s critical edition (*Diodori Tarsensis commentarii in psalmos*, CCG 6, Turnhout, 1980), and the subsequent translation by Robert Hill (Diodore of Tarsus, *Commentary on Psalms 1–51*, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), covers Psalms 1–51.

verse that are (1) related to the idea of the place of the Cross as the centre of the earth, (2) early enough to be historically related to the emergence of the idea, and (3) may have some kind of relation with the Jewish background of the idea.

BACKGROUND: THE FIRST CHRISTIANS AND THE CENTRE OF THE EARTH

To find the Jewish and Christian meanings of the verse, one has to go to Jerusalem. In Judaism, all aspects of religion are directed towards one central point; spirituality, thought and praxis are geographically focused in a unique way. According to the classical Rabbinic definition, the centre of world is Jerusalem, the centre of Jerusalem is the Temple Mount, the centre of the Mount is the Temple, the centre of which is the Holy of Holies.⁷ These all function as zones of sanctity defining the levels of sacredness, meticulously analysed in the Rabbinic sources. It was self-evident in late antiquity Judaism that there was one – and one only – focus for the pilgrimages, prayers, biblical interpretations, cosmic speculations and other fields of spirituality from storytelling to *halacha*.

In early Christian thinking, the idea must have been known in general terms, but there are also some surviving textual links with the Jewish idea of Jerusalem as the centre of the earth, which appears already in Ezekiel.⁸ Of the Jewish sources, Christian authors were well familiar with Josephus, who called Jerusalem the “navel of the country” (ὀμφαλός τῆς χώρας).⁹ Likewise, in the *Book of Jubilees* Mount Zion is “the centre of the navel of the earth”.¹⁰ This text was known to early Church fathers such as Justin the Martyr, Theophilus of Antioch, Epiphanius, and Jerome, for whom Jerusalem was the geographical centre of the world.¹¹ In the Eastern Church, at least some ideas of the *Book of Jubilees* were known still in Middle Byzantine times.¹²

Even regardless of specific texts, Jerusalem had in any case a unique function for Christians, for the most central events of Christian faith and liturgy had taken place in Jerusalem: Palm Sunday, Last Supper, Crucifixion, and Resurrection were Jerusalemite events. In that sense, Jerusalem did remain at the focus of Christian faith, even when this was not expressed in any explicit *axis mundi* terminology.

7 According to the famous Talmudic verse (Tanhuma to Leviticus, Qedoshim 10), “As the navel is in the middle of the person, so is Eretz Israel the navel of the world, as it is written, ‘That dwell in the navel of the earth’ (Eze 38:12). Eretz Israel is located in the centre of the world, Jerusalem in the centre of Eretz Israel, the Temple in the centre of Jerusalem, the *heikhal* in the centre of the Temple, the ark in the centre of the *heikhal*, and in front of the *heikhal* is the even *shetiyyah* from which the world was founded.”

8 Eze 38:12.

9 Josephus, *Jewish Wars* 3.52. For more discussion on the idea of Jerusalem as the navel of the earth, see Philip S. Alexander, “Jerusalem as the *Omphalos of the World*: On the History of a Geographical Concept,” in *Jerusalem: Its Sanctity and Centrality*, ed. Lee Levine (New York: Continuum, 1999), 104–119. Alexander suggests that Jubilees is the first source where Jerusalem is explicitly the navel (omphalos) of the earth, and that this was inspired by the Greek idea of Delphi as the omphalos of the world.

10 Jubilees 8:30 (8:19).

11 There is some discussion in James M. Scott, *Geography in Early Judaism and Christianity: The Book of Jubilees* (Society for New Testament Monograph Series 113, Cambridge University Press, 2002), 23–43, 126–34, 164.

12 E.g. Georgios Synkellos (ninth century); Eutychius of Alexandria (tenth century), Georgios Kedrenos (eleventh century).

The early Christians inherited from Judaism the idea that the cosmos does have a centre which is defined in religious terms. In the first centuries, the belief was typically manifested through an antithetical counterreaction: our Jerusalem is in heaven,¹³ our religion is not limited by geographic entities such as the Holy Land. However, this did not abolish the specific character of Jerusalem as the place of central events in salvation history.

Perhaps the most urgent application of these views was the direction of prayer. The first Christians of Jerusalem faced a dilemma: in Judaism, the prayers were directed towards the Temple and its cult, but these started to lose their significance in Christian eyes. In Judaism, even the destruction of the Temple did not challenge the focus, but the Christians had to find a new direction for their prayer, perhaps already during the heyday of the Temple. In any case, the East became the direction of prayer at an early date, for the custom was already widespread in the second century. If it is true that this custom was adopted from Essenes and perhaps other Jewish ascetic groups such as Therapeutae, as one reading in Josephus may suggest, it would in fact indicate that the first Christians, or their leaders at least, largely came from an Essene background.¹⁴

However, there seems to have been also another early solution. An architectural detail preserved in Jerusalem may tell of the change of direction of prayer among the first Christians. On Mount Sion, there are remains of what is supposed to be an early – even first century – Jewish Christian synagogue with a prayer niche directed not towards the Temple but towards Golgotha and the Holy Sepulchre. The synagogue building probably stands on a place where the first Christians used to meet; centuries later in the Christian Jerusalem, it was preserved as a chapel next to the altar of a huge Byzantine basilica, which indicates that it was considered a distinctive holy place.¹⁵ Nowadays the remains belong to the complex known of the so-called Tomb of David, although the connection to David emerged only in the late Middle Ages.

The small niche hints that in the eyes of the early (Jewish) Christians of Jerusalem, the centre of the world literally shifted from the Temple Mount to Golgotha and the Holy Sepulchre. It seems rather obvious that the early Christians of Jerusalem used to visit the Sepulchre and gather there for prayers, even though the textual witnesses are either indirect¹⁶ or late. Pseudo-Cyril of Jerusalem, a fifth century Coptic text, may still hit the mark

13 An illuminating, detailed discussion is found in Robert L. Wilken, *The Land Called Holy: Palestine in Christian History and Thought* (Yale University Press, 1992), 46–72.

14 The key evidence is in Josephus, *Jewish Wars* 2.8.5, mentioning that “before the rising of the sun” the Essenes “direct certain ancestral prayers towards it (εἰς αὐτόν)”. The verse, however, is open to various readings, even sun-worship (!), and it has been translated also: “before sun-rising they [...] put up certain prayers which they have received from their forefathers, as if they made a supplication for its rising”. For discussion, see Todd S. Beall, *Josephus’ Description of the Essenes Illustrated by the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 52–53; Paul F. Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer in the Early Church: A Study of the Origin and Early Development of the Divine Office* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2008), 11, 38, 58.

15 For more discussion, see Oskar Skarsaune, *In the Shadow of the Temple: Jewish Influences on Early Christianity* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 185–190.

16 It has been suggested that the Gospel of Mark is structured for readings on the Tomb of Christ. See Colin Morris, *The Sepulchre of Christ and the Medieval West: from the Beginning to 1600* (Oxford University Press, 2005), 9–10.

in stating that “the disciples used to go into the tomb daily, and they prayed there by night secretly”.¹⁷

In spite of the scantiness of early sources, the first Christians obviously based their faith on the fact that what had happened at Golgotha and Holy Sepulchre was more significant than the entire sacred history of the Temple.¹⁸ Therefore, it was only logical to think about Golgotha as the centre of the earth, even though the significance of this view could be debated or applied in varying ways. Now we may proceed to ask: how did this idea relate to the discussions on Ps. 74/73:12?

THE EARLIEST PATRISTIC INTERPRETATIONS

As for the pre-Nicene material, we may first note that, perhaps surprisingly, the verse is not discussed in the dialogues of Justin Martyr and his Jewish opponent Trypho. However, we are fortunate enough to have access to the collection of Origen’s 29 homilies on Psalms, which has recently been discovered, with a discussion on Ps. 74/73:12. Origen is known to represent the extreme antithesis of Jerusalem-centred spirituality: for him, all references to “inheriting the land” in the sacred scriptures refer to spiritual realities. Therefore, it is not surprising that, for him, the expression “the midst of the earth” does not mean a particular place on earth. In Origen’s paradigm, it was somewhat extraordinary to consider the idea that God does operate not only in transcendence but also in time and space, in this world, while we are in the body. Therefore, Origen reads the verse as a reference to spirituality in universal terms, and in a temporal rather than a spatial sense: God is bringing salvation in the midst of the earth “whenever he works out the salvation of souls.”¹⁹

However, the understanding of the verse became more focalized immediately after the Holy Sepulchre was rediscovered in Jerusalem. Already Eusebius (d. 339) in his post-Nicene commentary on Psalms seems to have hinted at this idea by referring, though somewhat opaquely, to the fact that salvation has been realized “according to a manifest place” (κατὰ τοῦ δηλωθέντος τόπου).²⁰ At the time when he was writing, the place was manifest indeed but the Church of the Holy Sepulchre had not yet been completed. It was there that the verse was given its crucial meaning.

CYRIL OF JERUSALEM AND THE CENTRE OF THE EARTH

It is fitting that the Orthodox understanding of the verse seems to have manifested, perhaps even originated, literally on the spot – in the very centre

17 Ernest Alfred Thompson Wallis Budge, *Miscellaneous Coptic texts in the dialect of Upper Egypt* (London: Oxford University Press, 1915), 782.

18 Of course, the process was slow. For years, the apostles continued to visit the Temple, honouring its sacred history. However, it seems probable that the early Christians started to distance themselves from the Temple cult already before the destruction of Jerusalem, and in any case during the Jewish Wars.

19 Origen, *Homilies on the Psalms: Codex Monacensis Graecus 314* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2021), 198.

20 Eusebius, *Commentaria in Psalmos* (PG 23:31). The word δηλωθέντος, a passive participle from δηλόω (“to show”), could also mean “revealed”, “disclosed”.

of the earth. The idea may have been in the air for a long time, but in the field of surviving texts, it is Cyril of Jerusalem who, circa 350, explicitly used this very verse to argue that Golgotha is the solemn centre of the earth, and he did this while teaching in the very place.

He stretched out His hands on the Cross, that He might embrace the ends of the world; for this Golgotha is the very centre of the earth (τῆς γὰρ γῆς τὸ μεσώτατον ὁ Γολγοθᾶς). It is not my word, but it is a prophet who has said, *You have brought salvation in the midst of the earth* (εἰργάσω σωτηρίαν ἐν μέσῳ τῆς γῆς).²¹ He stretched forth human hands, He who by His spiritual hands had established the heaven; and they were fastened with nails, that sin might die with His manhood, which bore the sins of men, having been nailed to the tree and died, so that we might rise again in righteousness.²²

For Cyril, Golgotha was indeed the centre of the earth, a truth confirmed by the prophetic scriptures and by the place itself.

In Cyril's time, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre had been standing for a few decades around the tomb and the rock of Golgotha, and he could address his flock in the very place where God had wrought salvation. The crucifixion, burial and resurrection, all focalized events, had been at the heart of Christian thinking for three centuries, but after the consecration of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (13 September 335) the same realities became also the centre of Christian pilgrimage and spirituality in practical terms. Therefore, it was reasonable to view the place as the centre of the (Christian) world. Consequently, it was easy to see this truth reflected in this particular Psalm verse, as the Greek wording admitted such a reading.

There was no any obvious reason to challenge this charming idea, and hence the verse was to be utilised in the liturgical tradition particularly in contexts related to the Cross and crucifixion in the emerging praxis in Jerusalem. However, I leave it to scholars of liturgical manuscripts to consider in detail how this process developed in the liturgical texts of later eras.

In addition, it may be of interest to note here that the verse had liturgical usages also in the Jewish tradition. In the synagogue worship, the use was related to Passover and New Year, the function being to recall salvific events of the past. Curiously, the latter feast happens to fall very close to the Feast of the Cross (Sept 14) in which the same verse was recited with another function.²³

21 Cyril has here εἰργάσω (2nd sg), as the prevalent biblical reading is εἰργάσατο (3rd sg). In both cases, the verb is aorist indicative medio-passive.

22 Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech.* 13:28 (PG 33: 805b). The classical translation of 1839 slightly amended. Some discussion in Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony, *Encountering the Sacred: The Debate on Christian Pilgrimage in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley–Los Angeles–London: University of California Press, 2005), 60.

23 First, Psalm 74 is recited on the second day of Passover in certain traditions. See *Tehillim: A New Translation with a Commentary anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic and Rabbinic Sources* [Psalms 73–150] (Artscroll Tanach Series, Mesorah Publications, 1969), 329. Secondly, verse 12 has a solemn function on the second day of the New year (*Rōš ha-šānā*) when it is recited just before the Jewish credo (*Shema Israel*). See *The Complete Artscroll Machzor for Rosh Hashanah* (New York: Mesorah Publications, 1985), 271. It may be noted that, perhaps surprisingly, Rashi's commentary, which is the prime Jewish commentary on Psalms, leaves the line 12b ("worker of salvations in the midst of the earth") uncommented on. See *Tehillim with Rashi's Commentary 2* (Feldheim Publishers, 2009), 506.

OTHER PATRISTIC INTERPRETATIONS

Among the early fathers, it was Ephrem the Syrian who gave the most magnificent expression to the idea of Golgotha as *axis mundi*. In his mid-fourth century *Commentary on the Diatessaron* – the only patristic commentary of Gospel text other than the four standard ones – he explicitly defined Golgotha as the central point of the world:

[...] when he was crucified, he was standing erect in the centre of the Cross, like the stone on the high priest's breast. Jerusalem is the centre of the earth (*meṣ'at ar'ā*). because of the Just one who put His Law there so that His rays might go forth to all the ends [of the earth]. Because, in the very same place. Grace fixed his Cross so that he might extend its arms to every side, and lift up souls from every part [of the world].²⁴

The vision is a solemn one, albeit somewhat imprecise. As Ephrem was far from Jerusalem, he did not emphasise the difference between the places inside the Holy City (Temple Mount and Golgotha). On the contrary, he stressed the continuity of the old and new covenants in their being centred to Jerusalem.

The bloom of Christian literature in the fourth century generated plenty of works commenting on Ps. 74/73:12b. Antiochians such as John Chrysostom employed the verse in more universal contexts, omitting the strictly focused and topographical aspect of the salvation appearing in the midst of the world.²⁵ Likewise, Theodoret of Cyrrhus in his *Commentary on Psalms* defined the key expression “in the midst of the earth” to mean “with everyone looking on”. Theodore's interpretation focuses on the universalist aspect: what Christ has done for men is visible to all those who see.²⁶ The Antiochian readings seem to be a kind of compromise between the Jewish basic understanding of the verse and its Christian Christ-centred interpretation.

Among the early Church fathers, the most peculiar, and at the same time perhaps the most profound, exposition is that of Epiphanius of Salamis in his *Homily on the burial of the Divine Body*. Starting with the Psalm verse, he takes ἐν μέσῳ in the sense of “between”, and connects it with Golgotha, making a series of sublime proclamations on how “Jesus the Child of God” has become known in the midst of two lives (“life from the life”), midst of Father and the Spirit, angels and humans, law and prophets, present life and eternal one, and so forth.²⁷ This interpretation is like a multifaceted exposition of Cyril's idea of Golgotha as cosmic centre, covering all levels of existence.

It seems that the more an author was connected with Jerusalem (Cyril, Eusebius) or the Holy Land (Epiphanius), the more explicitly he connected this verse with the event and place of the Cross. Therefore, it is interesting to note that this “Jerusalemite” interpretation occurs also in a few texts of

24 Ephrem the Syrian, *Comm. Diat.* 21:14. Cf. Ex 28:15–30. The Syriac text is in Louis Leloir, *Commentaire de l'Évangile concordant, texte syriaque (Manuscrit Chester Beatty 709)*, Chester Beatty Monographs 8 (Dublin: Hodges Figgis & Co 1963), 218. Translated in Carmel McCarthy, *Saint Ephrem's Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 324.

25 John Chrysostom, *Expositiones in Psalmos* (PG 55:394); *In adorationem venerandae crucis* (PG 62:748).

26 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Interpretatio in Psalmos* (PG 80:1460, cf. 1464). Robert C. Hill, trans. *Commentary on the Psalms* (Washington: Catholic University of America, 2001), 14.

27 Epiphanius, *In sabbato magno* (PG 43:441).

disputed origin. *Responsa of Athanasios the Great to Antiochus* is a famous text that patristic authors from John Damascene onwards have taken as a genuine work of Athanasios the Great, though nowadays it is widely considered unauthentic. The author used the verse in connection with the crucifixion, arguing that Christ was to be crucified in the midst of the earth.²⁸ Likewise, in another dubious work preserved in the name of Athanasios, “Expositions of Psalms”, the verse is explained by noting that Jerusalem is the navel (*omphalos*) of the earth.²⁹ However, it seems that the dating of this work cannot be earlier than the late fifth century, so most likely it is influenced by a couple of centuries of pilgrimage to Jerusalem. However that may be, both of these works witness to the idea of Jerusalem and Golgotha being the centre of the world, the Psalm verse being a banner of this belief. And as we have seen, the idea itself seems to be Jerusalemite by origin.

As for the later Byzantine texts, the most noteworthy case one is Euthymios Zigabenos’ twelfth century *Interpretation of Psalms*, which is widely considered as the most important Middle Byzantine commentary of the Psalter. However, the work comments on this particular verse only briefly, the idea of Golgotha being omitted altogether, as the author concentrates on the historical meaning in rather laconic terms: “*In the midst of the earth, meaning, ‘in the midst of people’, ‘openly’. Salvation is what (David) calls the redemption of the Jews from slavery in Egypt.*”³⁰

THE PLACE OF ADAM

What, then, does it mean and imply that the world has a central point? The idea of the centre of the earth is not only about geography, not even about the salvific act of Christ, but it opens new ways of viewing the whole theological tradition. Logically speaking, a central point functions as a kernel which connects all the outlying and tangential areas, thus creating connection and unity among them. Therefore, the idea affects areas of theological thought from creation to eschatology, in addition to biblical instances.

In Judaism, the navel of the earth was, to begin with, the place of the creation of man. Accordingly, it was coherent and relevant for the early Christians to consider the possibility of Adam having been created on the spot on which the Cross was later erected. The creation of man and the new creation in Christ were parallel in any case, and so were Adam’s fall and redemption in Christ; therefore, it was only a matter of time when they

28 Ὅτι δὲ ἐν μέσῳ τῆς γῆς ἔμελλεν ὁ Χριστὸς σταυροῦσθαι, ἐν οἷ ψαλμῷ γέγραπται· Ὁ δὲ Θεὸς βασιλεὺς ἡμῶν πρὸ αἰῶνων εἰργάσατο σωτηρίαν ἐν μέσῳ τῆς γῆς. Athanasios, *Quaestiones ad Antiochum* (PG 28:696). The origin of the responsa letter is spurious, but there are more than 200 manuscripts from the tenth to the sixteenth century (seven listed in https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/work_718). For a discussion, see Caroline Macé & Ilse de Vos, “Pseudo-Athanasius, Quaestiones ad Antiochum 136”, in Markus Vincent (ed.), *Studia patristica* 66:14 (Leuven: Peeters, 2013). There is also an Arabic version: MS. Greaves 30, ff. 1v-59v (Bodleian Library, Oxford University).

29 Εἰργάσατο σωτηρίαν ἐν μέσῳ τῆς γῆς. Ἐντεῦθεν λαβόντες τινὲς ἀπεφῆναντο τὰ Ἱεροσόλυμα ὀφθαλμὸν εἶναι τῆς γῆς. Athanasios, *Expositiones in Psalmos* (PG 27:336). For discussion on this writing, see G. S. Stead, “St. Athanasius on the Psalms”, *Vigiliae Christianae* 39 (1985), 65–78; Gilles Dorival, “Athanasios ou Pseudo-Athanasios”, *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa* 16 (1980), 80–89.

30 My own translation. Euthymios Zigabenos, *Comm. Ps.* 73:12.



Figure 1. The altar at the traditional site of Golgotha.
(Photo: Иерей Максим Массалитин, Wikimedia Commons)³¹

would be connected concretely. These ideas became prevalent after the construction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, but there are textual hints suggesting that the idea was known already in the earlier period.

Moreover, there were early Jewish traditions and beliefs about Adam being not only created but also buried in Jerusalem.³² From Julianus

31 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calvary#/media/File:Голгофа.jpg>.

32 According to another Jewish tradition, Adam was buried in the cave of patriarchs at Hebron. This seems to be built on a curious reading of *ha-adam ha-gadol* in Joshua 14:14-15, reflected in Jerome's Vulgata. For a discussion, see Pieter Van der Horst, "The Site of Adam's Tomb", in *Studies in Hebrew Literature and Jewish Culture*, ed. Martin F. J. Baasten & Reinier Munk (Dordrecht: Springer, 2007), 251-255.

Africanus we know that the Christians knew about these traditions in circa 220, and in all likelihood the first generations of (Jewish) Christians had been familiar with them. In the words of Julianus, “It is said that he (Adam) was the first to be buried in the earth, from which he had been taken, and a certain Hebrew tradition narrates that his tomb is in the land of Jerusalem.”³³ The first Christian author who identified the burial place of Adam explicitly with Golgotha was from the same period. Origen seems to have obtained the tradition from the Jewish Christians, so it probably has deep roots.

[Information] has reached me about the place of the Skull, that the Hebrews have a tradition that the body of Adam has been buried there, so that, ‘since we all die in Adam, and Adam has risen, we all may be made alive in Christ’ (1 Cor 15:22).³⁴

What does this imply for the story of Adam as a whole? This was discussed in detail in *Book of the Cave of Treasures*, a Syriac collection of apparently early traditions preserved in a circa fifth century recension. In this text, Golgotha is the place in which God created Adam into His own image and likeness with His own hands, the angels being deeply moved when seeing his beauty. The glorious first man was set into his place as the sovereign ruler of the creation on the hill of Golgotha. When the newly created Adam stood up, his face was shining like the sphere of Sun, his eyes like two suns, his body brilliant as crystal.

When Adam stretched out, he was standing in the centre of the earth (*m^eša’tā d-ar’ā*). His both feet were on the same spot in which the Cross of our Saviour was erected. There he was clothed with the robe of kingdom, there the crown of glory was set on his head, and there he was made king, priest and prophet. There God let him sit on the throne of his kingdom.³⁵

As the central event of history had taken place on Golgotha, it was inevitable that it became the focus of Christian cosmology, and therefore it was logical to view it as the symbol of the beginning of man and his sacred history. Once the creation of man was connected with Golgotha, it was not surprising that the idea of its being his burial place emerged as well. What we have in textual sources, however, is only a few crumbs of discussions

33 Julius Africanus, *Chronographiae*, ed. M. Wallraff (GCS NF 15, Berlin & New York: De Gruyter, 2007), 42–43. See also Nikolai Lipatov-Chicherin, “Early Christian Tradition about Adam’s Burial on Golgotha and Origen”, in *Origeniana Duodecima: Origen’s Legacy in the Holy Land – A Tale of Three Cities: Jerusalem, Caesarea and Bethlehem*, ed. Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony et al (Leuven: Peeters, 2019), 155–156. For the early Jewish belief that Cain was not buried before Adam, see *Jubilees* 4:29; *Apocalypse of Moses* 40:3–7.

34 Περί τοῦ Κρανίου τόπου ἦλθεν εἰς ἐμέ, ὅτι Ἑβραῖοι παραδίδοσι τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Ἀδάμ ἐκεῖ τετάφθαι, ἵν’ ἐπεὶ ἐν τῷ Ἀδάμ πάντες ἀποθνήσκομεν, ἀναστῆ μὲν ὁ Ἀδάμ, ἐν Χριστῷ δὲ πάντες ζωοποιηθῶμεν. The text has been preserved in three different versions, two Greek ones and a Latin translation; the section given above is a common element between all three. Shorter Greek version in *Matthäuserklärung* II, ed. E. Klostermann (GCS 38; Origenes Werke 11, Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1933), 265, 1–8. See also Fragmentum in catenis 551.II (Mt 27:33) in *Matthäuserklärung* III, ed. E. Hälfte (GCS 41; Origenes Werke 12, Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1941), 225. Longer Greek version in Origenes, *Fragmentum in catenis* 551.III (Mt 27:33), GCS 41, 225–226. For the Latin version, see *Matthäuserklärung* II (GCS 38), 264–265. English translation adopted from Lipatov-Chicherin, “Early Christian Tradition”, 159.

35 *Cave of Treasures* 2:15–19, ed. Su-Min Ri, *Le Caverne des Trésors: les deux recensions syriaques* (CSCO 486, Louvain: Peeters, 1987), 18–19. My translation follows the so-called western manuscript (Ms. Oc.) tradition. The eastern one (Ms. Or.) is here shorter but ends solemnly: “There God gave him power over all the created.” Cf. E. A. Wallis Budge, *Book of the Cave of Treasures* (London, The Religious Tract Society, 1927), 52–53.

and speculations from various eras. The idea seems to have spread slowly and tentatively. Eusebius of Caesarea, who was familiar with Jerusalem and the Holy Sepulchre, did not mention it at all (to my knowledge),³⁶ and the same applies to the surviving works of Cyril of Jerusalem.

In Antioch, circa 390, John Chrysostom formulated it carefully: “Some say that there Adam had died and lay buried, and that Jesus set up His trophy over death in the place where death had begun its rule.”³⁷ Chrysostom clearly did not want to confirm the belief or to declare it historically valid, but he also did not want to renounce or deny it, because it was thematically delicious and, in its own way, theologically coherent.

Moreover, there is the tradition reported in the *Commentary on the Prophet Isaiah* attributed to Basil the Great. There are some doubts concerning the authenticity of this work, which casts a shadow on its dating. Be that as it may, the text reflects earlier traditions in explaining the name “Place of the skull” by referring to the burial of Adam. This may also be the earliest text that explicitly mentions Adam’s skull beneath the Cross, the other early witnesses being Epiphanius of Salamis and Jerome,³⁸ both from the late fourth century.

The following story has been preserved in the Church in an unwritten tradition, claiming that Judaea had Adam as its first inhabitant, and that after being expelled from Paradise he was settled in it as a consolation for what he had lost. Thus it was first to receive a dead man too, since Adam completed his condemnation there. The sight of the bone of the head, as the flesh fell away on all sides, seemed to be novel to the men of that time, and after depositing the skull in that place they named it Place of the Skull.

It is probable that Noah, the ancestor of all men, was not unaware of the burial, so that after the flood the story was passed on by him. For this reason, the Lord having fathomed the source of human death accepted death “in the place called the Place of the Skull” (John 19:17) in order that the life of the kingdom of heaven should originate from the same place in which the corruption of men took its origin, and just as death gained its strength in Adam, so it became powerless in the death of Christ.³⁹

In a symbolical sense, the belief hits at the kernel of Christian faith, and this is why it is shown in the Orthodox Golgotha icon. However, it did become a part of tradition in concrete terms as well. Still today one may see the burial cave of Adam under the chapel of Golgotha in the Church of Holy Sepulchre.

36 As the bishop of Caesarea, Eusebius had his own ecclesiastical reasons to downplay the significance of Jerusalem and especially Golgotha. See the analysis in Ze’ev Rubin, “The Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Conflict between the sees of Caesarea and Jerusalem,” in *The Jerusalem Cathedral. Studies in the History, Archaeology, Geography and Ethnography of the Land of Israel* 2, ed. Lee I. Levine (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi Institute, 1982), 87–91. See also P. W. L. Walker, *Holy City, Holy Places? Christian Attitudes to Jerusalem and the Holy Land in the Fourth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

37 John Chrysostom, *In Ioannem*. 85, trans. Sister Thomas Aquinas Goggin (FC 41, 428).

38 Epiphanius of Salamis, *Panarion* 46.5.1–6. Jerome, *Ep.* 46:3. The epistle is dated to 386. However, twelve years later Jerome clarified his position, arguing that the tradition was “attractive and soothing to the ear of the people” but “not true”. Jerome, *Comm. Matt.* 27:33. For discussion, see Grypeou & Spurling, *Book of Genesis*, 77.

39 Basil the Great, *Commentarius in Isaiam* V, 141 (PG 30:348c–349a). Translation of this passage in Lipatov-Chicherin, “Early Christian tradition”, 162–163. See Grypeou & Spurling, *Book of Genesis*, 75–76.



Figure 2. The rock under Golgotha in the Chapel of Adam.
(Photo: Fallaner, Wikimedia Commons)⁴⁰

THE PLACE OF ABRAHAM AND ISAAC

In Judaism, the Temple Mount was understood as the same place as Mount Moriah in the *aqedah* episode of Abraham and Isaac. For Christians, however, Moriah was profoundly related to Golgotha. In terms of meaning, this was obvious, due to the rich thematic parallelism, developed by various Church fathers and customarily utilized in Church art. From the theological and artistic parallels there was only a short step to identify Moriah and Golgotha as one and the same place in concrete terms. But who would dare to take that step?

The idea appears first, somewhat opaquely, in the fragments attributed to Eusebios of Emesa (d. 360) and Diodore of Tarsos (d. c. 390) who build on Josephus's identification of Mount Moriah as the site of the Temple area.⁴¹ The earliest well-known Church father who identifies Mount Moriah with Golgotha in a fully surviving work is Theodoret of Cyrrhus (d. 457) in the first half of the fifth century. However, he framed his words carefully: "And they say that the [same] mountain-top was considered worthy for both sacrifices."⁴² It is of note that all three authors are from around the Syro-Antiochian area.

40 https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Holy_Land_2016_P0588_Adams_Chapel_Golgotha_Stone.jpg.

41 Josephus, *Antiquities*, 7:13. Discussed in Grypeou & Spurling, *Book of Genesis*, 74–75.

42 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* 3 (PG 83: 252).

The identification of Moriah and Golgotha seems to have been widespread in the Syriac-speaking Middle East. The main witnesses are from the late fifth century. In addition to the *Book of the Cave of treasures* (29:4–9), Jacob of Sarug (d. 521) called Golgotha “the mountain of Isaac”, stating that Isaac was bound at the same spot in which the crucifixion took place. For Jacob, as for many others, the reason why the whole episode had happened in the first place was that Isaac, tied on wood, was a *typos* of Christ who was nailed to the wood at the same spot.⁴³

Similarly, the famous fifth century East Syrian poet Narsai (d. 502) wrote that the outward eyes of Abraham were shown a place for the sacrifice of his own son, but at the same time, his inner eyes were provided with a view to the times to come: “On this place, Christ would be sacrificed, too.”⁴⁴ In later eras, up to modern times, the tradition has also been kept alive by the Ethiopian monastic community living on the upper outer sections of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

AN ESCHATOLOGICAL CENTRE

The idea of cosmic centre has eschatological implications as well. In Judaism it goes without saying that Jerusalem and the new temple are the epicentre of messianic times and eschatological events. In Christianity, the connection between Golgotha and eschatology is not as easily backed by biblical argument, but there is a connection. The idea is not very well known in the contemporary Orthodox world, not to mention western Christianity, but it has had considerable relevance and popularity in history.

The main representative of Golgotha-centred eschatology is the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodios*, originally a Syriac work from the 690’s, written as a prophetic and apocalyptic response to the rise of Islamic power. The work was soon translated into Greek and Armenian and consequently into Latin and Slavonic, and it was very widely read throughout mediaeval times, especially in times of turmoil.

The eschatological vision of the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodios* was meant for the consolation and hope of medieval Christians under Islamic rule. The main idea is that the “King of the Greeks”, namely the Byzantine Emperor, regains the power in the Middle East,⁴⁵ re-establishes the glory of Christianity and returns the Holy Cross to Jerusalem. The world recognizes Christ, and after the last battles the emperor rises to Golgotha with the true Cross, setting it in its original place and leaving his crown on the Cross. Rising his hands towards heaven, the emperor delivers his kingdom to God.⁴⁶ When set in its place, it is as if the Cross revives and arises to heaven. Here

43 Jacob of Sarug, *Homiliae Selectae* III, 311.

44 Narsai, *Homiliae et Carmina* I, 20.

45 It is good to keep in mind that the Middle East was still mostly Christian by population around the eighth century AD.

46 Pseudo-Methodius, *Apocalypse* 14:2–6. The Greek text is edited and translated by Benjamin Garstad in *Pseudo-Methodius, Apocalypse, An Alexandrian World Chronicle* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2012). The Syriac text is in G. Reinink, *Die syrische Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius* (CSCO 540–541, Louvain: Peeters, 1993).

the vision connects with biblical evidence: after the very last apocalyptic fight against Antichrist, all nations shall see the sign of the Son of Man (Mt 24:30), which is the original Cross in the sky.⁴⁷

The cosmic elevation of the Cross, in turn, became a famous topic in the imagery of Byzantine and especially Georgian churches; in Georgia, the theme even took the place of Pantokrator in the main dome of some churches.⁴⁸

Regardless of the fantastic details, the vision of Pseudo-Methodios by its mere existence tells a great deal about the significance of Jerusalem, Golgotha, and the Holy Sepulchre as the cosmic centre of the Eastern Christianity. The idea of final restitution seemed to imply that there can be no cosmic fulfilment outside the mystical centre of the Church and the geographical centre of the world. Likewise, the return of the original Cross to its original place was seen as the key to eschatological events. At the time when the vision was written, the wood of the Cross had probably already been cut into pieces and was being distributed around Christendom as relics. Such a vision tells of a certain kind of despair when history appeared to develop in the wrong direction in the Muslim-controlled Christian heartlands.

How is it possible that this kind of messianic utopia was accepted and taken extremely seriously for a millennium? Of course, faith in the victory of Christ is the basis of Christianity, and the same can be said about the belief in the power and cosmic significance of the true Cross. In the Orthodox vision since Paul and Irenaeus, the history of creation was expected to have a glorious ending, and there is no glory without the Cross. However, I dare to suggest that belief in apocalyptic fantasies may also have something to do with the fact from which we started: liturgical celebrations of the Cross. Perhaps the dramatic use of the Psalm verse in liturgical life contributed in its small way to faith in the cosmic power of the Cross, which in pious imagination grew into an eschatological triumph.

SOME REMARKS ON THE WESTERN FATHERS

In the Latin sources, however, the understanding of the verse was blurred to a very general level. The Western traditions from Augustine to modern Bible translations usually take Ps. 74/73:12b in a most general sense, “among all nations”, “in the sight of all nations”.⁴⁹ Consequently, there is a considerable difference between the Eastern and Western (Augustine, Cassiodorus) interpretations of this verse. And this despite the fact that the Vulgate reading *Deus autem rex noster ante saecula: operatus est salutem in medio terrae* would allow the reading “centre of the earth”.

47 Pseudo-Methodius, *Apocalypse* 14:13.

48 Perhaps the most famous example is the cathedral of Nikortsminda.

49 For example, “he brings salvation on the earth” (NIV); “bringing salvation to the earth” (NLT); however, KJV has “working salvation in the midst of the earth”. The modern Finnish translation (1992), known for free solutions and blunt expressions that efficiently exclude traditional Christian and Jewish readings, reads “sinä teet suuria tekoja kaikkialla” (“You make great deeds everywhere”).

For Augustine, the verse was indeed Messianic, but only as a general reference to the incarnation, which took place in earthly substance, as he explains in *The City of God*:

But God, our King before the worlds, has wrought salvation *in the midst of the earth*; so that the Lord Jesus may be understood to be our God who is before the worlds, because by Him the worlds were made, working our salvation in the midst of the earth, for the Word was made flesh and dwelt in an earthly body.⁵⁰

Accordingly, when Augustine discussed the verse in relation to man, he focused on the “earth”, ignoring the idea of being “amidst” or in the middle.

[...] *in the midst of the earth* appears to me to be said of the time when every one lives in the body; for in this life every one carries about his own earth, which, on a man’s dying, the common earth takes back, to be surely returned to him on his rising again. Therefore *in the midst of the earth*, that is, while our soul is shut up in this earthly body, judgment and justice are to be done.⁵¹

After Augustine, Flavius Magnus Aurelius Cassiodorus (490–c. 585) provided the verse with two possible meanings, both being of rather general nature. First, he offers the possibility of interpreting it “as relating to the miracles he performed, which he is known to have achieved before people’s eyes”. Secondly, and preferably, the verse can be taken to refer to the “salvation of the souls which he achieved by his life-giving preaching.”⁵² In other words, the verse is for Cassiodorus an unspecific, vague reference to the words and actions of Christ in general.

The main reason behind the difference, I believe, is that those who never saw Jerusalem, Church of the Holy Sepulchre and other holy places were simply less accustomed to express or define the Christian faith in concrete geographical and topographical terms. This is to some extent true even today.

CONCLUSION

The idea of Jerusalem as the centre of earth is of Jewish origin, though it seems to have become predominant only in the era of the Second temple. One may suppose that in the Early Church those Christians who were familiar with Jewish ideas took it for granted. For Christians, however, the salvation was brought not in the Temple but in Golgotha and the Holy Sepulchre, and therefore it was easy to see the verse “You have wrought salvation in the midst of the earth” as having been fulfilled in that place, all the more so when the very same place started to function as the centre of global Christian pilgrimage. Therefore, there is still today a concrete *omphalos mundi* in the Anastasis Church, located between the Holy Sepulchre and Golgotha.

⁵⁰ Augustine, *City of God* 17:4.

⁵¹ Augustine, *City of God* 17:4.

⁵² Cassiodorus, *Expositions of the Psalms* 73.12. ACW 52, 217.



Figure 3. Omphalos mundi in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem.
(Photo: Sergey Serous, Wikimedia Commons.)⁵³

The expression “midst of the earth” (ἐν μέσῳ τῆς γῆς) is open to two different main readings, a general one (“among all”, “in the sight of all”) and a focused one (“at the centre”). It seems that the latter reading was a natural one in the vicinity of Jerusalem, as the universalist reading could gain hold elsewhere in Christendom. On the other hand, Jerusalemite influences were fast to spread, and this shows in many interpretations (Pseudo-Athanasius, Ephrem, and various Syriac sources from circa fifth century).

As liturgical texts and practices related to the Cross and Great Week evolved in Jerusalem and its immediate surroundings, it is obvious that the liturgical use of the verse follows the Jerusalemite understanding. This is why it is connected with the Cross, which in Jerusalem meant the concrete original wooden Cross. The fact that the liturgical use of the verse was

⁵³ https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Пуп_земли.jpg.

related to the Cross in turn made it the prevalent Orthodox understanding of the verse, even against various patristic interpretations that were more general in character, displaying Christ as the universal redeemer.

The basic idea of the Jerusalemite understanding of the verse is open to many directions such as beliefs on the creation and burial of Adam, the sacrifice of Abraham and Isaac, or eschatological events – all of which are related to the Temple Mount in Judaism. In that sense, the Jewish beliefs were being reflected in the Christian tradition, resulting in distinctive Christian variations on Jewish themes.

The verse itself is apt to give an expression to the very core of Christian faith. On account of its rich history in patristic interpretation, in addition to architectural and archaeological aspects, pious stories and colourful legends, the verse is exceptionally inspiring in many ways. Once one becomes familiar with these dimensions, his/her experience of chanting or listening to this verse in liturgical settings will certainly become more profound and colourful.

This in turn exemplifies a wider phenomenon. Liturgical life largely consists of biblical and other verses following each other, flowing through the liturgical space, gently touching those present, making something significant present for a fleeting moment. Now each of these verses is a semantic microcosm of its own, constituted by centuries of patristic thinking and its ecclesiastical, literary, and cultural applications. However, the subject matter is scattered in endless sources and not easily graspable. Perhaps one day there will be electronic service-books in which one can open each such microcosm with a gentle touch. The line “You have wrought salvation in the midst of the earth” will certainly be an interesting click.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alexander, Philip S. “Jerusalem as the *Omphalos of the World*: On the History of a Geographical Concept.” In *Jerusalem: Its Sanctity and Centrality*, edited by Lee Levine, 104–129. New York: Continuum, 1999.

Aramaic Targum [mikraot gedolot]. Sefaria. Accessed December 22, 2021. https://www.sefaria.org/Aramaic_Targum_to_Psalms.

Athanasios, *Expositiones in Psalmos*. PG 27, 59–590.

— *Quaestiones ad Antiochum*. PG 28, 597–698.

Augustine. *The City of God*. Translated by Henry S. Bettenson. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1984.

Basil the Great. *Commentarius in Isaiam*. PG 30, 118–169.

Beall, Todd S. *Josephus' Description of the Essenes Illustrated by the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Bitton-Ashkelony, Brouria. *Encountering the Sacred: The Debate on Christian Pilgrimage in Late Antiquity*. Berkeley–Los Angeles–London: University of California Press, 2005.

Bradshaw, Paul F. *Daily Prayer in the Early Church: A Study of the Origin and Early Development of the Divine Office*. Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2008.

Budge, Ernest Alfred Thompson Wallis. *Book of the Cave of Treasures*. London: The Religious Tract Society, 1927.

— *Miscellaneous Coptic Texts in the Dialect of Upper Egypt*. London: Oxford University Press, 1915.

Cassiodorus. *Explanation of the Psalms*. Translated by P. G. Walsh. ACW 52. New York: Paulist Press, 1990.

The Complete Artscroll Machzor for Rosh Hashanah. New York: Mesorah Publications, 1985.

Cyril of Jerusalem. *Catecheses*. PG 33, 331–1058.

Damaskinos (Olkinuora) of Xenophontos, *Sabbas Pyhitetyn Typikon*. Joensuu: Ortodoksinen seminaari, 2021.

Dorival, Gilles. "Athanasie ou Pseudo-Athanasie." *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa* 16 (1980), 80–89.

Ephrem the Syrian. *Commentaire de l'Évangile Concordant: texte syriaque (manuscrit Chester Beatty 709)*. Edited by L. Leloir. Dublin: Hodges Figgis, 1963.

Epiphanius of Salamis. *In sabbato magno*. PG 43, 439–464.

— *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis*. Book I (Sects 1–46). Tr. F. Williams. Nag Hammadi Studies 35. E. J. Brill. Leiden 1987.

Eusebius. *Commentaria in Psalmos*. PG 23, 11–1396.

Euthymios Zigabenos. *Psalter Commentary*. Edited by John Raffan. Accessed December 22, 2021. https://www.academia.edu/25967928/Zigabenus_Psalter_Commentary_Parallel_Text [Published exclusively in academia.edu only.]

— *Psalter Commentary*. Translated by John Raffan. Accessed December 22, 2021. https://www.academia.edu/25967905/Zigabenus_Psalter_Commentary_English_Text [Published exclusively in academia.edu only.]

Grypeou, Emmanouela & Helen Spurling. *The Book of Genesis in Late Antiquity: Encounters between Jewish and Christian Exegesis*. Leiden: Brill, 2013.

Jacob of Sarug. *Homiliae Selectae Mar-Jacobi Sarugensis Tomus III*. Edited by Paulus Bedjan. Leipzig & Paris: Otto Harrassowitz, 1907.

Jerome. *Commentary on Matthew*. Translated by Thomas P. Scheck. FC 117. Washington: Catholic University of America, 2008.

— *Epistles*. Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 6. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1893.

John Chrysostom. *Expositiones in Psalmos*. PG 55, 39–498.

— *Commentary on Saint John the Apostle and Evangelist: Homilies 48–88*. Translated by Sister Thomas Aquinas Goggin. FC 41. Washington: Catholic University of America, 1959.

— *In adorationem venerandae crucis*. PG 62, 747–754.

— *In Joannem*. PG 59, 23–482.

Josephus. *The Jewish War Vol. I: Books 1–2*. Loeb Classical Library 203. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1927.

— *The Jewish War Vol. II: Books 3–4*. Loeb Classical Library 487. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1927.

Julius Africanus. *Chronographiae*. Edited by M. Wallraff. GCS NF 15. Berlin & New York: De Gruyter, 2007.

- Leloir, Louis. *Commentaire de l'Évangile concordant, texte syriaque (Manuscrit Chester Beatty 709)*. Chester Beatty Monographs 8. Dublin: Hodges Figgis & Co, 1963.
- Lipatov-Chicherin, Nikolai. "Early Christian Tradition about Adam's Burial on Golgotha and Origen." In *Origeniana Duodecima: Origen's Legacy in the Holy Land – A Tale of Three Cities: Jerusalem, Caesarea and Bethlehem*, edited by Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony. Leuven: Peeters, 2019.
- Macé, Caroline & Ilse de Vos. "Pseudo-Athanasius, Quaestio ad Antiochum 136." *Studia Patristica* 66:14. Edited by Markus Vincent. Leuven: Peeters, 2013.
- McCarthy, Carmel. *Saint Ephrem's Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Morris, Colin. *The Sepulchre of Christ and the Medieval West: from the Beginning to 1600*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Narsai. *Homiliae et Carmina*. Edited by Alphonse Mingana. Mosul: Typis Fratrum Praedicatorum, 1905.
- Origen. *Homilies on the Psalms: Codex Monacensis Graecus 314*. Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2021.
- *Matthäuserklärung* II. Edited by E. Klostermann. GCS 38. Origenes Werke 11. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1933.
- *Matthäuserklärung* III. Edited by E. Hälfte. GCS 41. Origenes Werke 12. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1941.
- Pseudo-Methodius. *Apocalypse: An Alexandrian World Chronicle*. Edited and translated by Benjamin Garstad. Dumberton Oaks Medieval Library 14. London: Harvard University Press, 2012.
- Reinink, G. J. *Die syrische Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius*. CSCO 540–541. Louvain: Peeters, 1993.
- Ri, Su-Min. *Le Caverne des Trésors: les deux recensions syriaques*. CSCO 486, Louvain: Peeters, 1987.
- Rubin, Ze'ev. "The Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Conflict between the Sees of Caesarea and Jerusalem." In *The Jerusalem Cathedra. Studies in the History, Archaeology, Geography and Ethnography of the Land of Israel 2*, edited by Lee I. Levine, 79–105. Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi Institute, 1982.
- Scott, James M. *Geography in Early Judaism and Christianity: The Book of Jubilees*. Society for New Testament Monograph Series 113. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Skarsaune, Oskar. *In the Shadow of the Temple. Jewish Influences on Early Christianity*. Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2002.
- Stead, G. S. "St. Athanasius on the Psalms." *Vigiliae Christianae* 39 (1985): 65–78.
- Tehillim: A New Translation with a Commentary anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic and Rabbinic Sources [Psalms 73–150]*. Artscroll Tanach Series. New York: Mesorah Publications, 1969.
- Tehillim with Rashi's Commentary 2*. Jerusalem: Feldheim Publishers, 2009.
- Theodoret of Cyrrhus. *Eranistes*. PG 83, 27–317.
- *Interpretatio in Psalmos*. PG 80, 857–1998.
- Theodoret of Cyrus. *Commentary on the Psalms: Psalms 73–150*. Translated by Robert C. Hill. FC 102. Washington: Catholic University of America, 2001.
- van der Horst, Pieter. "The Site of Adam's Tomb." In *Studies in Hebrew Literature and Jewish Culture*, edited by Martin F. J. Baasten & Reinier Munk, 251–255. Amsterdam Studies in Jewish Thought 12. Dordrecht: Springer, 2007. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004271111_002.
- Walker, P. W. L. *Holy City, Holy Places? Christian Attitudes to Jerusalem and the Holy Land in the Fourth Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- Wilken, Robert L. *The Land Called Holy: Palestine in Christian History and Thought*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992.