

RECEPTION OF GENESIS 2,2–3 IN THE ORTHODOX WORSHIP OF THE HOLY WEEK

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Abstract. Orthodox Christians come into contact with Holy Scripture during Great Lent, especially through cultic readings. During this period there are daily readings from Genesis, so the entire book is read during the first six weeks of Lent. The faithful also interact with the Bible through the hymns of Lent, which contain references to Old and New Testament texts. The reception of biblical texts also reveals how they have been understood, so we can consider cultic hymns as a form of interpretation, which newer research calls "liturgical exegesis". This article examines four texts used in Orthodox worship on Good Friday and Holy Saturday that include references to Gen 2,2–3. Both the sung and read texts make connections between the sixth day of creation and Good Friday and between the seventh day of creation and Holy Saturday. Adam's actions in the Garden of Eden determine Christ's response on Calvary. But the hymnographers also affirm a reversed determinism: the present creation achieves its purpose only through the New Creation, the first Sabbath being sanctified through the sanctification of Great Saturday. By reading Gen 2,2–3 through the grid of the Gospel accounts, the cultic authors do not simplify but rather amplify the semantic potential of the text.

Keywords: liturgical exegesis, Genesis 2,2–3, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, Orthodox hymnography, Synaxarion.

“The Orthodox don’t read the Bible, they pray the Bible.” The point of this anecdotal observation, the origin of which I could not specify, is that for practicing believers, interaction with the Bible occurs more frequently in Church worship than in private reading. This observation is most appropriate during Great Lent. The first impression conveyed by the Eastern Church's Lenten rituals is that of long divine services, marked by solemnity and sobriety, but also by a complexity that is difficult to understand even for the Orthodox faithful. The amplitude of the celebration becomes even more evident in the case of the Bible readings. Over the first six weeks of Lent, the books of Genesis, Proverbs, and Isaiah are read almost entirely as daily readings.¹ In Holy Week the biblical readings continue with passages from

¹ At Vespers, passages from Genesis and fragments from Proverbs are read. At the Sixth Hour, passages from Isaiah are read. Eugen J. Pentiuc considers that Genesis, Proverbs, and Isaiah

Exodus, Job, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah. The number of Bible readings increases considerably in the last two days. On Good Friday (at the service on Thursday evening), the accounts of Christ's Passion from the four Gospels are read in the form of 12 readings.² At the Royal hours, there are 7 readings from the Old Testament. On Holy Saturday (at the service on Friday evening) the faithful can listen to the reading from Ezekiel 37,1–14, and at Vespers (Saturday morning) there are no less than 15 readings from the Old Testament.³

In addition to this avalanche of Old and New Testament readings, the faithful also interact with Holy Scripture through the hymns of this week. The hymnography is full of quotations and allusions from the New and Old Testaments. So too is the synaxarion – a text read during Matins which informs the faithful what feast or saints are celebrated that day. Generally speaking, the reception of biblical texts also reveals how they have been understood. Thus, we can look at cultic hymns as a form of biblical interpretation which can be labeled as “liturgical exegesis” or “hymnographic exegesis”.⁴

The purpose of this article is to examine some characteristics of the Byzantine hymnographers' interpretation of the Bible. I will analyze below four liturgical texts that refer to Genesis 2,2–3. The first two texts are read on Good Friday and are part of the day's synaxarion. The other two texts are taken from the

correspond to the three parts of the Tanak in Judaism (Torah, Prophets, and Writings), and argues that the Church uses these readings to show that the Old Testament had a preparatory role for the coming of the Savior (Eugen J. PENTIUC, *Hearing the Scriptures: Liturgical Exegesis of the Old Testament in Byzantine Orthodox Hymnography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021, 12). But this division of the Old Testament was most probably unknown to the majority of Christians in Byzantium. For the complete list of OT readings used in the Orthodox Church during a church year, see Wolfgang KRAUS and Martin KARRER (eds.), *Septuaginta Deutsch. Das griechische Alte Testament in deutscher Übersetzung*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2009, 1495-1500.

² The texts read and their order is as follows: 1. John 13,31–18,1; 2. John 18,1–28; 3. Matthew 26:57–75; 4. John 18,28–19,16; 5. Matthew 27,3–32; 6. Mark 15,16–32; 7. Matthew 27:33–54; 8. Luke 23:32–49; 9. John 19,25–37; 10. Mark 15,43–47; 11. John 19,38–42; 12. Matthew 27:62–66.

³ The texts read and their order is as follows: 1. Genesis 1,1–13; 2. Isaiah 60,1–16; 3. Exodus 12,1–11; 4. Jonah (the whole book); 5. Joshua 5,10–15; 6. Exodus 13,20–15,19; 7. Zephaniah 3:8a–15; 8. 1Kings 17,8–24 (3Kings 17,8–24 LXX); 9. Isaiah 61,10–62,5; 10. Genesis 22,1–18; 11. Isaiah 61,1–10a; 12. 2Kings 4,8–37 (4Kings 4,8–37 LXX); 13. Isaiah 63,11b–64,4a; 14. Jeremiah 31,31–34; 15. Daniel 3,1–88a LXX (= Dan 3,1–23 + Sg Three 1,1–65a).

⁴ PENTIUC, *Hearing the Scriptures*, 291-295 prefers the term liturgical exegesis, but hymnographic exegesis is also used to name the interpretation of the Bible in Byzantine hymns. See Bogdan G. BUCUR, “‘The Mountain of the Lord’: Sinai, Zion, and Eden in Byzantine Hymnographic Exegesis.” *Scrinium* 5 (2009): 129 – 172; Constantin H. OANCEA, “The trees in the middle of Paradise (Gn 2:9) during the Great Lent: Orthodox hymnography as biblical interpretation.” *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 77.4 (2021), doi: <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v77i4.6699>; IDEM, “«Der Jordan wandte sich ab». Ein alttestamentliches Motiv und seine Rezeption in der Grossen Wasserweihe des orthodoxen Gottesdienstes.” *Theologie der Gegenwart* 59.4 (2016): 280-298.

hymns sung on Holy Saturday. I will start from the assumption that the Byzantine authors of these texts interpreted the biblical text used in worship during Lent, which until the 15th century could be found in the worship book called *Prophetologion*.⁵

1. Gen 2,2–3 as a cultic text

The Book of Genesis is read during the evening services in Lent. In the first week, on Monday evening, the account of the first three days of creation is read (Gen 1,1–13). The reading of Tuesday evening depicts the fourth and fifth day of creation (Gen 1,14–23). Gen 2,2–3 is part of the lection read on Wednesday evening (Gen 1,24–2,3). The text is almost identical to that of Rahlfs' edition of the Septuagint.⁶

Gen 2,2	And God completed on the sixth day his works that he made; and God ceased on the seventh day from all his works that he made.
	Καὶ συνετέλεσεν ὁ Θεὸς ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἕκτῃ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ, ἃ ἐποίησε ⁷ , καὶ κατέπαυσεν ὁ Θεὸς ἐν ⁸ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἑβδόμῃ ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ, ὧν ἐποίησε.

Gen 2,3	And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, for in it he ceased from all his works that God began to make.
	Καὶ εὐλόγησεν ⁹ ὁ Θεὸς τὴν ἡμέραν τὴν ἑβδόμην, καὶ ἡγίασεν αὐτήν, ὅτι ἐν αὐτῇ κατέπαυσεν ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ, ὧν ἤρξατο ὁ Θεὸς ποιῆσαι.

There are some differences between the Masoretic text on the one hand and the Septuagint LXX and the Orthodox reading on the other hand. Generally, scholars distinguish in the Hebrew text of Genesis 1–3 two initially independent

⁵ Gradually the biblical readings were included and printed in the other worship books, thus making the printing of the *Prophetologion* unnecessary. The Lenten readings are available in the critical edition by Carsten HØEG and Günther ZUNTZ (eds.), *Prophetologium*, vol. 1, fascicle 2. Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaards Forlag, 1940.

⁶ *Septuagint with Logos Morphology: Rahlfs Edition* (Electronic ed.). Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1979. The differences between the text of the Septuagint and that of the readings used in the Orthodox Church are also indicated in KRAUS and KARRER, *Septuaginta Deutsch*, 5-6.

⁷ The aorist 3rd sg. is without movable *nu* in the Orthodox reading.

⁸ Rahlfs does not contain ὁ Θεὸς ἐν.

⁹ Rahlfs reads ηὐλόγησεν.

literary units. The first is the Creation history (Gen 1,1–2,4a).¹⁰ The second section, Gen 2,4b–3,24, whose literary composition is much more debated today than that of the first section, is known as the Paradise story (*Germ.* Paradieserzählung).¹¹ The connecting point between the two units in the Hebrew Bible is Gen 2,4. In the Septuagint, the transition from the first narrative to the second is more clearly delineated than in the MT, in the sense that Gen 2,3 functions as the conclusion of the creation story.¹² For the LXX, creation must end with the Creator’s act of blessing. This view was subsequently reflected in the way the cultic readings are divided during Great Lent. The Genesis reading on Wednesday also ends in Gen 2,3.

The second significant difference between the MT and the LXX concerns how God’s rest is recounted. The Hebrew text states that God completed creation in seven days and rested on the seventh day. The Septuagint asserts that God ended creation on *the sixth day* and rested on the seventh. Presumably, the Greek translator, like any good Jew aware of the importance of observing the Sabbath tradition, wanted to exclude even the faintest idea of any activity of God on the Sabbath.¹³

Consequently, the delineation between the work of creating the world and the Creator’s rest is more obvious in the LXX than it is in the MT. This feature of the biblical text used in the Church’s cultic reading may also have influenced the understanding of Gen 2,2–3 by the authors of liturgical texts.

2. The synaxarion about the sixth day and the seventh day

The synaxarion for the Holy Week was traditionally composed by Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos (ca. 1256-1335).¹⁴ The first text we reproduce below is

¹⁰ More specifically, Gen 1,1–2,3, since the two narratives are editorially linked through 2,4a. See Jan Christian GERTZ, “Tora und Vordere Propheten,” in *Grundinformation Altes Testament*. Edited by Jan Christian GERTZ. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006, 254-258 and the bibliography indicated there.

¹¹ For a summary of the research and bibliography see Henrik PFEIFFER, “Paradies/Paradieserzählung,” in *Das wissenschaftliche Bibellexikon im Internet (WiBiLex)*. Edited by Michaela BAUKS, Klaus KOENEN and Michael PIETSCH (eds.).

Available online at <https://www.bibelwissenschaft.de/stichwort/29971/> .

¹² Susan BRAYFORD, *Genesis* (Septuagint Commentary Series). Leiden: Brill, 2007, 226.

¹³ Cf. BRAYFORD, *Genesis*, 225.

¹⁴ See Fr. David (KIDD) and Mother Gabriella (URSACHE) (eds.), *Synaxarion of the Lenten Triodion and Pentecostarion*. Rives Junction, Michigan: HDM Press, 2001. Nikephoros is best known for his vast work *Historia Ecclesiastica* (8 books), edited in volumes 145-147 of Migne’s *Patrologia*. Cf. Christian GASTGEBER and Sebastiano PANTEGHINI (eds.), *Ecclesiastical History and Nikephoros Kallistou Xanthopoulos: Proceedings of the International Symposium*. Vienna: Verlag der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2014. Cf. art. “Nicephorus Callistus Xanthopoulos,”

taken from the English translation of the Synaxarion by Fr. David Kidd and Mother Gabriella Ursache. For the second text, I preferred the English translation available on the website of the Holy Metropolis of Oropos and Phyle of the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece, which is more accurate than that of Fr. David and Mother Gabriella. For the Greek text, I have used the modern edition of the Triodion.¹⁵

(A) Holy Friday, Matins on Thursday evening, synaxarion

It is fitting to understand that on the sixth day of the week, Friday, the Lord was crucified because on the sixth day of the week during Creation, Adam, the first man, was formed. Furthermore, at the sixth hour of the day, He was suspended on the Holy Cross because at the sixth hour, tradition tells us, Adam stretched out his hands towards the forbidden tree to eat the fruit and inherited death. Therefore, it was fitting that at the same shattering hour the Old Adam would be created anew. The Lord's Crucifixion was in a garden because Adam was deceived in a garden in Paradise.¹⁶

Ἰστέον μὲν τοι, ὡς τῆ ἕκτη ἡμέρα τῆς ἐβδομάδος, δηλαδὴ τῆ Παρασκευῆ, ἐσταυρώθη ὁ Κύριος, διὰ τὸ καὶ τῆ ἕκτη ἡμέρα, τὸ καταρχάς, πλασθῆναι τὸ ἄνθρωπον. Ἀλλὰ καὶ ἕκτη ὥρα τῆς ἡμέρας ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ ἐκρέματο· ὅτι ἐν ταύτῃ, ὡς φασι, καὶ ὁ Ἀδάμ, τοῦ ἀπηγορευμένου ξύλου, τὰς χεῖρας ἐκτείνας, ἤψατο, καὶ ἀπέθανεν· ἐχρῆν γὰρ τὸν κατ' αὐτὴν συντριβέντα, κατ' αὐτὴν πάλιν ἀναπλασθῆναι. Ἐν κήπῳ δέ, ὅτι καὶ ὁ Ἀδάμ ἐν τῷ Παραδείσῳ.¹⁷

in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 19. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1911, p. 648, where the Synaxarion is not mentioned among the writings of Nikephorus.

¹⁵ *Τριώδιον: κατανοητικὸν περιέχον ἅπασαν τὴν ἀνήκουσαν αὐτῷ ἀκολουθίαν τῆς Ἀγίας καὶ Μεγάλης Τεσσαρακοστῆς*. Athens: Apostolic Diakonia of the Church of Greece, 2010.

¹⁶ KIDD and URSACHE, *Synaxarion*, 153.

¹⁷ *Τριώδιον*, 913.

(B) Holy Saturday, Matins on Friday evening, synaxarion

However, just as in the original creation of the world God made all of the other creatures in six days and created man, the most important of all His creations, on the last day, to wit, the sixth, and subsequently rested from all His works on the seventh day and hallowed this day, calling it the Sabbath, which means “rest”; so also in this case, in the creation of the noetic world, after making all things very well, again on the sixth day He recreated man, who had fallen into corruption, renewing him through His life-giving Cross and voluntary death, and on this seventh day rested completely from His works, sleeping the sleep of death that is life-giving and salvific.¹⁸

Ὡς γὰρ ἐπὶ τῇ πρώτῃ κοσμογενείᾳ, πᾶν ἔργον διαπραξάμενος ὁ Θεός, καὶ ὕστερον τὸ κυριώτατον κατὰ τὴν ἕκτην πλάσας τὸν ἄνθρωπον, τῇ ἐβδόμῃ κατέπαυσεν ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἡγίασεν αὐτήν, Σάββατον ὀνομάσας, ὃ δὴ κατάπαυσις ἐρμηνεύεται· οὕτω καὶ ἐν τῇ τοῦ νοητοῦ Κόσμου ἐργασία, ἀρίστως ἅπαντα ἐργασάμενος, καὶ κατὰ τὴν ἕκτην ἀναπλάσας αὐθις τὸν φθαρέντα ἄνθρωπον, καὶ ἀνακαινίσας διὰ τοῦ ζωηφόρου Σταυροῦ, καὶ θανάτου, κατὰ τὴν παροῦσαν πάλιν ἐβδόμην κατέπαυσε τὴν τελείαν τῶν ἔργων κατάπαυσιν, τὸν φυσίζωον ὑπνώσας ὕπνον καὶ σωτήριον.¹⁹

The fragment from the Good Friday synaxarion (A) summarizes the Gospel account of the time of the crucifixion. Drawing on Luke 23,54 and John 19,31, Xanthopoulos mentions that Christ was crucified on Friday, the sixth day of the week. From John 19,14, Xanthopoulos deduces that the sentence was pronounced and executed in the sixth hour of the day. The Synoptics state that Christ was on the cross at the sixth hour and the death of Jesus occurred at the ninth hour (Mt 27,45–46, Mk 15,33–34, and Luk 23,44–46). Xanthopoulos insists on the importance of the sixth hour of the sixth day because in this way he can connect the crucifixion with the creation and fall of man (Gen 1–3).

In Xanthopoulos’ view, the details of the crucifixion are determined by those of creation because the crucifixion represents the creation of man anew (the *re-creation* of man). Thus, the place of crucifixion had to be in a garden (John 19,41), because Adam’s fall took place in the garden of Eden. The day of the crucifixion had to be the sixth of the week, like the day of man’s creation (Gen 1,26.28.31). Genesis 1–3 does not mention the time of Adam’s fall, but Xanthopoulos takes it to be the time

¹⁸ Translation from Nikephoros Kallistos XANTHOPOULOS, *Synaxaria of the Triodion Great Saturday*. Available online at:

<https://www.imoph.org/pdfs/2017/04/11/20170411bSynaxGreatSat%20Folder/20170411bSynaxGreatSat.pdf>. This is a more faithful translation than that provided by KIDD and URSACHE, *Synaxarion*, 158.

¹⁹ *Τριώδιον*, 981.

of the crucifixion, thus the sixth hour, “as they say” (ὡς φασι). The source of this tradition is not specified by Xanthopoulos, but the view that Christ died on the same day that Adam fell and was expelled from Paradise is affirmed by some Church Fathers. Because Adam is a type of Christ, Irenaeus of Lyon deduces that Adam also died on the sixth day. Christ dies on the sixth day, the day of Adam’s creation, to bring about a new creation of man who was in death (*Adversus haereses* 5.23.2).²⁰

The claim that Christ creates man anew through his death on the Cross is continued by Xanthopoulos in the Holy Saturday synaxarion (B). He starts from the statement in Mk 16,1, from which he infers that on the Sabbath day following the crucifixion, Christ’s body was in the tomb. In (A), Xanthopoulos asserted the connection between the sixth day of the creation week and Good Friday. Now he notices the connection between the Sabbath following the crucifixion and the first Sabbath of the world. The reference to Gen 1,1–2,3 is explicit. Xanthopoulos not only paraphrases the biblical text, but he also explains that Sabbath means “rest”. Undoubtedly, he interprets Genesis in the Septuagint version. God created the world in six days (Gen 1,1–25). Creation is completed by the creation of man on the sixth day (Gen 1,26–2,1). God finished the creation of the world on the sixth day and rested from His work on the seventh day (Gen 2,2–3). The same sequence is observed by Xanthopoulos in the redeeming work of Christ, which he considers to be a new creation of the world. Redemption ends with the crucifixion, that is, with the re-creation of man. On the Sabbath following the crucifixion, Christ rests from his redeeming and life-giving work while being in the grave.

3. Hymnographers about the sixth day and the seventh day

The English text of the two excerpts below is the one translated by Sister Mary and Kallistos Ware.²¹ The Greek text is reproduced from the modern edition of the Greek Triodion, also available online.²²

²⁰ See Marta PRZYSZYCHOWSKA, *We Were all in Adam. The Unity of Mankind in Adam in the Teaching of the Church Fathers*. Warsaw & Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2018, 12. The view that Christ was crucified on the sixth day because Adam was also expelled from Paradise on the sixth day occurs in a homily attributed to Saint John Chrysostom or Eusebius of Alexandria (*In Sanctam Parasceve, et in Sanctam Passionem Domini*, PG 62,721-724).

²¹ Mother MARY and Kallistos WARE (trans.), *The Lenten Triodion*, Faber & Faber, London, 1978.

²² ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΑ ΛΕΙΤΟΥΡΓΙΚΑ ΚΕΙΜΕΝΑ, *Μηναίων, Οκτώηχος, Τριώδιον, Πεντηκοστάριον*. Available online at: <https://glt.goarch.org/>.

(C) Holy Saturday, Matins on Friday evening, The Canon, Canticle 4,

Today Thou dost keep holy the seventh day,²³ which Thou hast blessed of old by resting from Thy works. Thou bringest all things into being and Thou makest all things new, observing the sabbath rest, my Saviour, and restoring Thy strength.²⁴

Ἐβδόμην σήμερον ἡγίασας, ἦν εὐλόγησας πρὶν, καταπαύσει τῶν ἔργων· παράγεις γὰρ τὰ σύμπαντα, καὶ καινοποιεῖς, σαββατίζων Σωτὴρ μου, καὶ ἀνακτώμενος.

(D) Holy Saturday, Matins on Friday evening, at Lauds

Moses the great mystically prefigured this present day, saying: “And God blessed the seventh day”. For this is the blessed Sabbath, this is the day of rest, on which the only-begotten Son of God rested from all His works. Suffering death in accordance with the plan of salvation, He kept the Sabbath in the flesh; and returning once again to what He was, through His Resurrection He has granted us eternal life, for He alone is good and loves mankind.²⁵

Τὴν σήμερον μυστικῶς, ὁ μέγας Μωϋσῆς προδιετυποῦτο λέγων· Καὶ εὐλόγησεν ὁ Θεός, τὴν ἡμέραν τὴν ἑβδόμην· τοῦτο γὰρ ἐστὶ τὸ εὐλογημένον Σάββατον, αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ τῆς καταπαύσεως ἡμέρα, ἐν ἧ κατέπαυσεν ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ, ὁ Μονογενὴς Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, διὰ τῆς κατὰ τὸν θάνατον οἰκονομίας, τῇ σαρκὶ σαββατίσας, καὶ εἰς ὃ ἦν, πάλιν ἐπανελθὼν, διὰ τῆς Ἀναστάσεως, ἐδωρήσατο ἡμῖν ζωὴν τὴν αἰώνιον, ὡς μόνος ἀγαθὸς καὶ φιλόανθρωπος.

The Triodion indicates Mark the Monk, Bishop of Hydrous (9th century B.C.) as the author of the first text (C).²⁶ The reference to Gen 2,3 is explicit since Mark uses the same terminology as in the biblical text. Only the order of the acts is reversed: God sanctified the seventh day (LXX: ἡγίασεν / (C): ἡγίασας), blessed it

²³ Lit. “You have sanctified this, the seventh day”.

²⁴ MARY and WARE, *The Lenten Triodion*, 648.

²⁵ MARY and WARE, *The Lenten Triodion*, 652-653.

²⁶ Hydrous is the Greek name for Otranto, a town in Apulia, Italy. Very little is known about this Mark, the composer of this strophe. The following sources only retain the information that Mark is the author of the Greek religious office of the Lord's burial on Holy Saturday: Cf. Ferdinando UGHELLI, *Italia sacra sive De episcopis Italiae et insularum adiacentium*, vol. 9. Venice, 1721, 55; Giuseppe CAPPELLETTI, *Le chiese d'Italia, dalla loro origine sino ai nostri giorni*, vol. 21. Venezia, 1870, 300. See also Daniel SUCEAVA, “Episcopul Marcu al Corintului și opera sa muzicală (I).” *Studii și Cercetări de Istoria Artei. Teatru, Muzică, Cinematografie, Serie nouă* 2.46 (2008): 104.

(LXX: εὐλόγησεν / (C): εὐλόγησας) and rested (LXX: καταπαύσει / (C): κατέπαυσεν) from His works.

The first Sabbath of creation is linked to Holy Saturday since they share the same author. For Mark the Monk, the first Sabbath is the work of the Son, as is the Sabbath following the crucifixion.²⁷ Christ's rest on Holy Saturday is the echo of His rest from the beginning of creation. If for Xanthopoulos the new creation is the fruit of the Cross, Mark links the renewal of creation to Christ's rest but implicitly alludes to His resurrection. Presumably, Mark is using the image of biological sleep here, through which the vital energy of the mind and body are renewed. Similarly, the rest on Holy Saturday anticipates Christ's resurrection the next day and the beginning of a renewed creation.

Text (D) resorts to an interpretation specific to the Eastern Church – typology.²⁸ Two elements indicate that the hymnographer refers to Gen 2,2–3: a) the mentioning of Moses, traditionally considered the author of the book of Genesis; b) the quotation from Gen 2,3a (without the mention of sanctification)²⁹ and Gen 2,3b (where the pronoun αὐτῆ is substituted with ἡ).³⁰ Applying the principle of typology, text (D) makes a connection between Moses, the one who narrates the creation of the world in Genesis, and the Gospels which recount its restoration.

The hymnographer quotes the verse to explain how the statements in Genesis apply to Holy Saturday. Mystically, the first Sabbath was a foreshadowing of Holy Saturday. In this way, the blessing of the Sabbath in Genesis is also the blessing of Holy Saturday. The hymnographer even seems to suggest that the first Sabbath is only fulfilled on the second, as if creation could not have existed or made sense without the resurrection of the Son of God. As in text (C), the One who blesses and rests from His works on the first Sabbath and Holy Saturday is the Son of God.³¹

²⁷ On the hymnographic identification of Christ as the Creator see Bogdan G. BUCUR, “‘The Feet that Eve Heard in Paradise and Was Afraid’: Observations on the Christology of Byzantine Hymns.” *Philosophy and Theology* 18.1 (2006): 5-9.

²⁸ On typology as a patristic and hymnographic exegetical method see: John A. MCGUCKIN, *The Orthodox Church. An Introduction to its History, Doctrine and Spiritual Culture*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008, 456; Peter W. MARTENS, “Revisiting the Allegory/Typology Distinction: The Case of Origen.” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 3.16 (2008): 283-317; Brent E. PARKER, “Typology and Allegory: Is There A Distinction? A Brief Examination of Figural Reading.” *SBJT* 21.1 (2017): 57-83. An innovative approach is proposed by PENTIUC, *Hearing the Scriptures*, 308-315.

²⁹ Καὶ εὐλόγησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὴν ἡμέραν τὴν ἑβδόμη.

³⁰ ... ἐν αὐτῇ κατέπαυσεν ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ.

³¹ For a detailed analysis of this hymnographic text see PENTIUC, *Hearing the Scriptures*, 245-250.

Concluding remarks

The texts read and sung during Holy Week in the worship of the Orthodox Church refer to Genesis. The two weeks – the first week of the world and the Holy Week – are closely related in the view of the cultic authors. An important role in their interpretation is played by the sixth day and the seventh day of creation (Gen 2,2–3). By juxtaposing Genesis and the Gospels, the cultic authors observe several symmetries of events in salvation history. The synaxarion and the hymnographers read Gen 2,2–3 through the grid of the Gospel accounts. However, this technique does not restrain the message of the biblical text but rather augments its semantic potential.

From this liturgical perspective, there is a direct symmetry between the sixth day of the first week of creation and the sixth day of Holy Week. Both are days of fulfillment and completion of God’s creative work.

The first week	Holy Week
God works six days.	Christ works six days.
The work culminates in the creation of Adam on the sixth day.	The work culminates in the re-creation of man on Good Friday.
At the end of the day, creation is accomplished.	At the end of the day, a new creation is accomplished.

Direct symmetry can also be observed between the first Sabbath and Holy Saturday. As the first Sabbath of creation was blessed by God, so is the last Sabbath of Lent blessed. Both are days of God’s rest; both leave their mark on creation. At the same time, there is also an inverted or chiasmic symmetry between the two weeks, as the first begins with creation, while the last is followed by the new creation:

The first week	Creation the first day the seventh day
Holy Week	the seventh day the first day The new creation

These brief remarks on the symmetry between Creation and Salvation in the liturgical exegesis of the Church allow us to conclude that the authors of the cultic texts had a thorough knowledge of the Holy Scripture. As expected during Lent, the interpretation of Genesis is done looking toward the Cross. Adam's actions in the Garden of Eden determine Christ's response on Calvary. But the hymnographers also assert an inverted determinism: the present creation achieves its purpose only through the New Creation, and the first Sabbath is sanctified only through the sanctification of Holy Saturday. The unity between the Old and New Testament is Christologically grounded. Following the exegesis of the Church Fathers,³² hymnographers describe both the creation of the world and its renewal as the work of the Son of God.

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³² The creation of the world by the Logos who is the Son of God is commonplace in patristic exegesis. See for example IRENAEUS, *Adversus haereses* 1.22.1, SC 264, 308; cf. IRENAEUS of Lyons, "Irenaeus Against Heresies," in *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*. Edited by Alexander ROBERTS, James DONALDSON, and A. Cleveland COXE, vol. 1, The Ante-Nicene Fathers. Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1885, 347.; ORIGEN, *In Genesim homiliae* 1.1; cf. ORIGEN, *Homilies on Genesis and Exodus*. Translated by Ronald E. HEINE (The Fathers of the Church 71). Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1981, 47. ATHANASIUS, *De incarnatione Verbi Dei* 1.4, PG 25,97; cf. ATHANASIUS of Alexandria, "On the Incarnation of the Word," in *St. Athanasius: Select Works and Letters*, ed. Philip SCHAFF and Henry WACE, trans. Archibald T. ROBERTSON, vol. 4, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second Series. New York: Christian Literature Company, 1892, 36; AUGUSTINE, *De Genesi ad litteram liber imperfectus* 3.6. Saint AUGUSTINE, *On Genesis*. Translated by Roland J. TESKE, S.J. (The Fathers of the Church 84), Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1991, 148.

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