

THE EARTH

(Fr Dan Bădulescu)

Ro version: <http://www.hexaimeron.ro/Cosmologie/Pamintul.html>

From the beginning God made heaven and earth

For those who believe exactly this thing, the position (location) of the Earth in cosmos (space) could be only one: *at the center* (geocentric), and in terms of motion, stationary, unmoved (geostatic).

Scriptural passages about the stability (immobility) of the Earth

If you can rightly say that Scripture does not indicate anywhere that the earth is strictly in the middle of the universe, however it is clearly stated that he is *still* (geostatic). This excludes in texts related to these things, absolutely, any rotational movement, be it a daily one on its axis or a yearly orbital around one the sun. These movements of the earth have not, as we shall see below, any sense, theological, physical or astronomical, being just some suggestions of some thinkers who have sought alternative explanations to the scriptural and patristic ones.

Scriptural passages are found in many Psalms: Psalms 18:15; 78:75; 93:2; 96:10; 102:25; "Thou *didst set the Earth on its foundations*, so that it should never be shaken." (Psalm 104:5) And in order not to be accused that we are stacked as the neoprotestant fundamentalists in the strict literally sense of the word, we bring the interpretation of Blessed Theodoret of Cyrus: "5. *Who laid the foundations of the earth*

And Achille and Simmah "over his stay."
that it should not be removed for ever.

Because, putting *the foundations* over itself, gave to it the stillness, and it will remain so as long as He wishes.

Thus saith and elsewhere: "*hanging the earth over nothing.*"

Ps. 119:90: "*Thou hast established the earth, and it abideth.*"

Blessed Theodoret: "*Thou hast established the earth, and it abideth*

By Thy order the day stay on,

You gave the land long-lasting stability. And it remained as You commanded."

Job 26:5-6; Job 38:4-8; Isaiah 13:10-13, 44:23-24; 48:13, Proverbs 3:19; 8:27-29;

"A generation goes, and a generation comes, but *the earth remains for ever.*" (Ecclesiastes 1:4)

John 17:24; Hebrew 1:10.

"Fear God, whose command was reinforced earth above the waters ... the One *who founded the earth on his strength and will not shake for ever...*" (Exorcisms at the Holy Baptism)

The only exceptional case of earth motion is the earthquake. But in no case is a rotating permanent whatsoever, but a temporary wobble: 2 Samuel 22:8, 1 Chronicles 16:30; Job 9:6; Psalm 60:2; 77:18; Isaiah 13:13; 24:18.

The earthquake is always something so unusual. But beware! "Wobbling", "earthquake", are indeed movements that take the Earth from its motionless state, but in no way constitutes rotations. The Earth does not rotate, not spinning, and the rining (earthquakes) are something exceptional, of short duration and local area.

The same St. Basil, who stops the investigation of human curiosity, supports without combat the following sentences:

"There are inquirers into nature who with a great display of words give reasons for the *immobility of the earth*. Placed, they say, *in the middle of the universe and not being able to incline more to one side than the other* because its centre is everywhere the same distance from the surface, *it necessarily rests upon itself*; since a weight which is everywhere equal cannot lean to either side. It is not, they go on, without reason or by chance that the earth occupies *the centre of the universe*. *It is its natural and necessary position...* Thus heavy bodies move from the top to the bottom, and following this reasoning, the bottom is none other than the centre of the world. Do not then be surprised that the world never falls: *it occupies the centre of the universe, its natural place*. By necessity it is obliged to remain in its place...

By the same reason which makes them attract the earth, heavier than water, from the extremities of the world to suspend it in the centre..." (*Hexaemeron*)

"...What need is there to discuss whether the earth hangs in the air or rests on the water? From this would arise a controversy as to whether the nature of the air which is slight and yielding is such as to sustain a mass of earth; also, the question would arise, if the earth rested on the waters, would not the earth by its weight fall and sink into the waters? Or would not the waters of the sea give way to the earth and, moved from its accustomed place, would not the sea pour itself over the borders of the land? There are many, too, who have maintained that the earth, *placed in the midst of the air, remains motionless there by its own weight...* As to this subject, let us reflect on what was said by the Lord to His servant Job when He spoke through the clouds: 'Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell me if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? Or who hath stretched the line upon it? Or upon what are the circles grounded?' (Job 38, 1, 4-6)... Does not God clearly show that all things are established by His majesty, not by number, weight, and measures? For the creature has not given the law; rather, he accepts it or abides by that which has been accepted. The earth is therefore *not suspended in the middle of the universe like a balance hung in equilibrium, but the majesty of God holds it together by the law of His own will*, so that *what is steadfast* should prevail over the void and unstable. The Prophet David also bears witness to this when he says: 'He has founded the earth upon its own bases: it shall not be moved for ever and ever.' (Psalm 104, 5) There, certainly, God is asserted to be not merely an artist, but one who is omnipotent, as one... according to His command... *did not allow it to sway*.

...When we read: 'I have established the pillars thereof' (Psalm 74:4) we cannot believe that the world was supported actually by columns, but rather by that power that props up the substance of the earth and sustains it. How the disposition of the earth therefore depends upon the power of God, you may learn also where it is written: 'He looketh upon the earth and maketh it tremble,' (Psalm 103:32) and elsewhere: 'One again I move the earth.' (Haggai 2:7) Therefore, the earth remains immovable not by its balances, but is moved frequently by the nod and free will of God (Job 9:6), as Job, too, says: 'The Lord shaketh it from its foundations, and the pillars thereof tremble.' (Job 26:6-8)... *By the will of God, therefore, the earth remains immovable*. 'The earth standeth for ever,' according to Ecclesiastes (1:4), *yet is moved and nods according to the will of God*. *It does not therefore continue to exist because based on its own foundations. It does not stay stable because of its own props. The Lord established it by the support of His will*, because 'in his hand are all the ends of the earth.' (Psalm 94:4) *The simplicity of this faith is worth all the proffered proofs...*

The earth, placed in the midst of the air, *remains motionless there by its own weight, because it extends itself equally on all sides...*" (St. Ambrose of Mediolanum *Hexaemeron*)

"And wells, again, and rivers will never exist without the Earth; but the Earth is not supported upon itself, but is set upon the realm of the waters, *while this again is kept in its place, being bound fast at the center of the universe*." (St. Athanasius *Against the Heathen*)

"The earth is one of the four elements, dry, cold, heavy, *motionless*, brought into being by God, out of nothing on the first day. For «in the beginning, he said, God created the heaven and the earth»: but the seat and foundation of the earth no man has been able to declare. Some, indeed, hold that its seat is the waters: thus the divine David says, «To Him Who established the earth on the waters» (Psalm 136:6). Others place it in the air. Again some other says, «He Who hangeth the earth on nothing» (Job 26:7). And, again, David, the singer of God, says, as though the representative of God, «I bear up the pillars of it» (Psalm 75:3), meaning by .pillars. the force that sustains it. Further, the expression, «He hath founded it upon the seas» (Psalm 24:2), shews clearly that the earth is on all hands surrounded with water. But whether we grant that it is established on itself, or on air or on water, or on nothing, we must not turn aside from reverent thought, but must admit that all things *are sustained and preserved* by the power of the Creator." (St. John Damascene, *An Exact Exposition Of The Orthodox Faith*)



Let us not be deceived by the phrase "*the seat* and foundation of the earth no man has been able to declare." This is by no means "where is the seat of" the earth, because as we have showed the testimonies are clear, but only that it is a patristic research for the "foundation" of the earth, nothing more. The need for this research derives not only from logical and scientific reasons invoked by those physicists, but rather from the fact that the earth is *the only inhabited celestial body*, i.e. bearer of life, upon which was to embody in about 5500 years The Son of God.

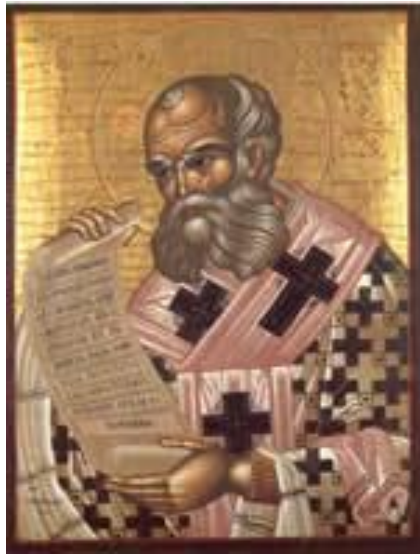
God destined the earth instead the place of the center of the universe having as prescience the iconomy of universal salvation through the incarnation, birth, passion, resurrection and ascension to heaven, all this happened in spirit but also in flesh, i.e. in the physical plane, where else? *In the center of the earth* which is at the center of the universe, where it was fitting to the King of kings:

"You have wrought salvation *in the midst of the earth*, Christ God; You stretched out Your immaculate hands on the Cross, so gathering together all the nations, who cry: Lord, glory to You!" (Troparion tone 2, 6th hour, Monday, Tuesday and Thursday in The Great Lent)

We have thus a first time - days 1, 2 and 3 - in which there is only "heaven" i.e. the universe, the cosmos and the only celestial body, the earth. The works of God are great, terrible and

incomprehensible, but that does not mean that there are absurd, without logic and pointless. Teleology says about heaven and his subsequent ornament that they were made for the earth, i.e. for the life that will appear *on earth*, where it will be made man, the crown of creation, God's image and likeness, and where God will incarnate, be born, will live, will be crucified, will arise, *from which* He will ascend to heaven, and upon which "shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead"; of course "Whose Kingdom shall have no end", and we know that His Kingdom, the kingdom of heaven, is not of this world. But the place *upon* which occurred the creation and the events of the iconomy of salvation afore mentioned, is exactly *the physical earth*, in fact, not only spiritual, much less "symbolic" as in vain try to interpret the so- called modern "traditionalists".

Let's remember that in all Scripture there is not even a single verse to indicate any movement of rotation of the Earth around the sun or the around its axis! Again, it should be noted that the Earth is rigorous right on the vertical axis N-S, and the terrestrial poles coincide with the celestial poles. The celestial equator is also the same as earth's equator. We shall show further that the famous earth's axis inclination by $23\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ represents in fact the tilting of the zodiacal band to the horizontal plane of the ecliptic.



The Church Fathers and writers continue to teach:

"But the Earth is not supported upon itself, but is set upon the realm of the waters, while this *again is kept in its place, being bound fast at the center of the universe.*"

"...the mountains are reared on high, the sea is rough with waves, and the living things in it grow, *the earth abides fixed...*" (St. Athanasius *Against the Heathen*)

"The Creator, long-suffering, merciful, the sustainer, the benefactor, ordaining love of men, counselling purity, immortal and making immortal, incomparable, dwelling in the souls of the good, that cannot be contained and yet is contained, who *has fixed the great world as a centre in space, who has spread out the heavens and solidified the earth.*" (St. Clement *Homily II*)

"The Earth has kept *the place in the middle, giving it a sense of a center* and surrounding it with the waters of Ocean, as to enhance the beauty of the blue garb, and then, causing him to be the hearth, the mother and nanny to *all living things across it*, watering it with rain and water murmurs and giving it the purpose to bring forth through its forests and its beautiful flowers, in order to increase joy in life." (Eusebius of Caesarea, *Life of St. Constantine the Great* 4th century)

"In the midst of the covering and veil, where the priests were allowed to enter, was situated the altar of incense, the symbol of the Earth placed in the middle of this universe; and from it came the fumes of incense." (St. Basil *The Mystic Meaning of the Tabernacle*)

"In the same way, as concerns the earth, *let us resolve not to torment* ourselves by trying to find out its essence, *not to tire our reason* by seeking for the substance which it conceals... If I ask you *to leave these vain questions*, I will not expect you to try and find out *the earth's point of support*. The mind would reel on beholding its reasonings losing themselves without end. Do you say that the earth reposes on a bed of air? How, then, can this soft substance, without consistency, resist the enormous weight which presses upon it? How is it that it does not slip away in all directions, to avoid the sinking weight, and to spread itself over the mass which overwhelms it?...

Put then a limit to your thought, so that your curiosity in investigating the incomprehensible may not incur the reproaches of Job, and you be not asked by him, "*Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened?*" (Job 38:6)

If ever you hear in the Psalms, "I bear up the pillars of it;" (Psalm 74:3) see in these pillars *the power which sustains it...*

You do not reflect that the idea of the earth *suspended by itself* throws your reason into a like but even greater difficulty, since from its nature it is heavier. But let us admit that the earth rests upon itself, or let us say that it rides the waters, we must still remain faithful to thought of true religion and recognise that all is sustained by the Creator's power. Let us then reply to ourselves, and let us reply to those who ask us upon what support this enormous mass rests, "In His hands are the ends of the earth." (Psalm 95:4) It is a doctrine as infallible for our own information as profitable for our hearers.

There are inquirers into nature who with a great display of words give reasons for *the immobility of the earth*. Placed, they say, *in the middle of the universe and not being able to incline more to one side than the other because its centre* is everywhere the same distance from the surface, it necessarily rests upon itself; since a weight which is *everywhere equal cannot lean to either side*. It is not, they go on, without reason or by chance that *the earth occupies the centre of the universe. It is its natural and necessary position*. As the celestial body occupies the higher extremity of space all heavy bodies, they argue, that we may suppose to have fallen from these high regions, will be carried from all directions to the centre, and the point towards which the parts are tending will evidently be the one to which the whole mass will be thrust together. *If stones, wood, all terrestrial bodies, fall from above downwards, this must be the proper and natural place of the whole earth. If, on the contrary, a light body is separated from the centre, it is evident that it will ascend towards the higher regions. Thus heavy bodies move from the top to the bottom, and following this reasoning, the bottom is none other than the centre of the world*. Do not then be surprised that the world never falls: *it occupies the centre of the universe, its natural place*. By necessity it is obliged to remain in its place, unless a movement contrary to nature should displace it... nor will you ask me upon what foundation the fluid element rests. By the same reason which makes them attract the earth, heavier than water, from the extremities of the world to *suspend it in the centre...*" (St. Basil *Hexameron*).

"Since the sky covers everything from his bosom, and gathered itself is infinite, *and that's the surrounding land and floats in the middle and that all bodies rotate around a point is stable and solid*, if not necessarily that the elements that are above ground to and lie beneath him, for the one and the same substance surrounds the mass of the Earth." (St. Gregory of Nyssa *On the Soul and Resurrection*)

"This is the book of the generation of heaven and earth," saith the Scripture (Genesis 2:1), when all that is seen was finished, and each of the things that are betook itself to its own separate place, when the body of heaven compassed all things round, and those bodies which are heavy and of downward

tendency, *the earth and the water, holding each other in, took the middle place of the universe*; while, as a sort of bond and stability for the things that were made, the Divine power and skill was implanted in the growth of things, guiding all things with the reins of a double operation (for it was by rest and motion that it devised the genesis of the things that were not, and the continuance of the things that are)... continually augments the whirling motion of those things which revolve round it, and intensity is produced in equal measure in each of the natures which thus differ in their operation, in the stationary nature, I mean, and in the mobile revolution; *for neither is the earth shifted from its own base, nor does the heaven ever relax in its vehemence, or slacken its motion.*" (St. Gregory of Nyssa *On the Making of Man*)

"*The earth, which bears the same proportion to the heaven as the center to the whole circumference of a wheel, for the Earth is no more than this in comparison with the heaven...*" (St. Cyril of Jerusalem *Catechetical Lectures*)

"Let not the philosophers, then, think to upset our faith with arguments from the weight of bodies; for I don't care to inquire why they cannot believe an earthly body can be in heaven, *while the whole earth is suspended on nothing. For perhaps the world (i.e. the Earth) keeps its central place by the same law that attracts to its center all heavy bodies.*" (Blessed Augustine *City of God*)

"For they who are mad imagine that nothing stands still, yet this arises not from the objects that are seen, but from the eyes that see. Because they are unsteady and giddy, *they think that the Earth turns round with them, which yet turns not, but stands firm.* The derangement is of their own state, not from any affection of the element." (St. John Chrysostom, *Homily on Titus*)

"And again, the earth is fixed, but the waters are continually in motion; and not the waters only, but the clouds, and the frequent and successive showers, which return at their proper season." (St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies to Antioch*)



"But as well as *the earth stands* according to its nature, when does the water take the bottom course?...

Then, by working in masterly way and adorning the world, He has ordained, *in six days*, the proper settlement and order to each that were His own and filled the world, separating each only by His command, and, as He would be remove from hidden treasures, brought to the sight the hidden, dividing them and gathering them all this together, in a harmonic and highly careful way, each one for all and all for each. *And to the unmoved earth was ordained around, as to a center, a circle sitting very high up, and in a very skillful way He linked the eternally moving heaven by those in the middle, so that the world remain both steadfast and moving; for the bodies in continuous and fast moving are seated in a circle, and what is unmoved necessarily got the middle place, with the counterweight for its movement against the stillness, not to move out of place, like a cylinder, the sphere of the universe.*" (St. Gregory Palamas, *Homilies*)

"And some all-round coverage is the sky of all created things visible and invisible. Inside it are also the rational powers of the angels and all the sensible things, the stars and everything else, including the earth itself, *which is a point and a center to all world...* For indeed, or sphere, or sphere image, which is said to be the realm of the blessed. Of which the uppermost part is the all sides roundness, and the lowest one is the middle, *where the earth as a center sits motionless, as the old wise men outside and the Divine Scripture also teaches.*" (St Athanasius of Paros, *Dogmatics*)



And a witness of our time wise father Seraphim Rose (XX century):

"But Divine revelation, as interpreted by the Holy Fathers, tells us the contrary: that the earth comes first, both in time and in significance, and the sun comes second. If our minds were not so chained to the intellectual fashions of the times, if we were not so fearful of being thought "behind the times," we would not have such difficulty in opening our minds to this alternative explanation of the world's beginnings..."

In the Scriptural-Patristic view the earth, as the home of man, the pinnacle of God's creation, *is the center of the universe*. Everything else - no matter what the scientific explanation of its present state and movement, or the physical immensity of it in comparison to the earth - is secondary, and was made for the sake of the earth, that is, for man..." (Father Seraphim Rose *Genesis, Creation and Early Man*)

Let's not forget the other crucial thing that makes the earth to be unique in all the universe above all other heavenly bodies: here was made also the heaven, paradise, the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:8).

"So, wishing the too wise and good Creator, being sympathetic to the reasonable man, for who built and beautified the whole world, a special place on the earth, and especially, more beautiful, more honored, as a royal city for the one who would be king of the earth , He prepared on the forehand the all lighten Paradise - I say – He planted it in the east, for which also St. John Damascene says so: (in the book *for Orthodox Faith*) "Now when God was about to fashion man out of the visible and invisible creation in His own image and likeness to reign as king and ruler over all the earth and all that it

contains, He first made for him, so to speak, a kingdom in which he should live a life of happiness and prosperity. And this is the divine paradise, planted in Eden by the hands of God, a very storehouse of joy and gladness of heart (for "Eden" means luxuriousness)..."

But the old Fathers as Irenaeus, Justin, Athanasius, Epiphanius and others with a union speak for Paradise on earth, in whom was Adam..."

And the fact that Paradise was created on earth, as the highest place of all creation, the proper place for the one that would be her master, the man, makes the earth the most valuable body of the universe.

Summarizing the above to review:

1. The earth is *spherical* (and not at all flat), hard, dense, stable, unmoved and stand in the midst of heaven (the universe), suspended on nothing.
2. The earth is *not* a planet.
3. The Earth has also the *ontological* primacy over all other celestial bodies as a "first done."
4. It is the only center of the universe.
5. It is the only fixed and unmoved body (outside the special circumstances of the earthquake, but these however are not extensive and continuous rotations or movements, but accidents)
6. It is the only celestial body which bears life.
7. On it was created the man.
8. Here was created the Paradise, the Garden of Eden, Heaven.
9. Here was the Savior incarnate, lived and worked the stewardship of our salvation, was crucified, resurrected and ascended to heaven.
10. Here will He come with glory to judge the living and the dead (even if it will be a new heaven and a new earth, the essential data is not changed).

So, by all these things, the earth is completely different from other heavenly bodies, the planets, with which it has indeed a few common ground and similarities mice, but nothing more.

"Those who have written about the nature of the universe have discussed at length the shape of the earth. *If it be spherical... equally rounded in all parts...* - It will not lead me to give less importance to the creation of the universe, that the servant of God, Moses, is silent as to shapes; he has not said that the earth is a hundred and eighty thousand furlongs (one furlong = 147-192 meters) in circumference; he has not measured into what extent of air its shadow projects itself whilst the sun *revolves* around it, nor stated how this shadow, casting itself upon the moon, produces eclipses." (St. Basil *Hexameron*)

"It followed, therefore, from this rotundity of the heaven, that the earth was enclosed in the midst of its curved surface. But if this were so, *the earth also itself must be like a globe*; for that could not possibly be anything but round, which was held enclosed by that which was round. But if the earth also were round, it must necessarily happen that it should present the same appearance to all parts of the heaven." (Lactantius *False Wisdom of Philosophers*)

Speaking of measurements, before and bring a fragment of St. Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain *Unseen Warfare*:

"And then this puncture and that nothing, i.e. the earth, to be as wide as the range includes many kingdoms of the world and many nations and countless multitudes. To be as high as it's surrounding is, according to the most recently sailors' observations, *twenty-five thousand and two hundred (25,200) miles* (46,670 kilometers), or straight and true to say, *as being too large sphere*, as all the people from the creation of the world, *now more than seven thousand years*, looking and searching both on land and sea to find its edge and measure so far failed, but every day they find new places

inhabited and uninhabited, and from now on they will find some places like those and always until the end of the world, there will be left many parts of the earth covered and unknown to people. "