

Eusebius of Caesarea

Commentaries on the Psalms: Six Selected Passages

CPG 3467

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¹ “Fr. Alban Justinus” is the pen-name of an Orthodox monk. This translation was commissioned by Roger Pearse, Ipswich, and is released into the public domain.

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Introduction

The *Commentary on the Psalms* by Eusebius of Caesarea (d.339 AD) is a vast work. It has never received a critical edition and has never been translated into any modern language. In part this is because of the problem with the text, discussed below.

However it does contain a certain amount of material which deserves to be more widely known. A complete translation would be beyond my means. But a little while ago I drew up a short list of a few passages of this kind known to me, and requested a translation.

Fr. Alban Justinus kindly began work on this last year. Unfortunately he was obliged to stop work for unrelated reasons after only completing, or nearly so, six sections of material from my initial list. Since there is little prospect of more, I've felt it best to release what has been done. This material is what appears below. Fr. Justinus also wrote the footnotes, except where indicated.

The Greek text translated is that of Montfaucon, as reprinted in the *Patrologia Graeca* volumes 23-24. The column numbers are indicated below as convenient. The headings in the Greek text are translated and placed in bold. The passages of scripture at the head of each commentary are as Eusebius gives them. Words in italics have been introduced by the translator. I have ventured to break up some of the longer sentences in the interest of readability.

Every discussion of the *Commentary* must inevitably mention the peculiar state of the Greek text that is available to us. As is common with long ancient texts, the work was broken down into sections, which were copied independently. It would seem that there were three such sections, each containing the commentary on about fifty psalms.

Only one of these sections has come down to us. It is preserved in a single 9th century medieval manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale Française, BNF Paris Coislin

44.² This contains the commentary on Ps.51-Ps.95:3. All this material is certainly by Eusebius. Likewise the commentaries on Ps.37, that on Ps.49, and that on Ps.118 have reached us individually.

The remainder of the material in those two volumes of the PG was assembled by the editor, Montfaucon, from the medieval bible commentaries, or “catenas”. The word “catena” means “chain”, and the commentaries consist of chains of quotations from earlier, usually now lost, commentaries. Usually the catena compiler marked each extract with the name of the author quoted. Montfaucon assembled his edition from the catenas by including material attributed in them to Eusebius. But Eusebius is a very common name. Much of the material could easily be by other authors. In addition the labelling of extracts by the catenists is not to be relied on. Finally the catenists often altered the quotation at the start or end, in order to produce a connection with the extracts before or after. They also abbreviated it, or produced an epitome. It is, therefore, a very risky procedure to collect all the fragments labelled “Eusebius” and assume that they are from the same work, by the same author, and in the form in which he left them.

In fairness to Montfaucon, the labour in analysing each extract was probably too great for any single scholar to adopt any other method. But it does mean that material outside the direct transmission must be used with caution. In this selection, this problem applies to the introductory material.

RP

² This may be found online at the BNF site, at <http://beta.bibliissima.fr/fr/ark:/43093/mdata5a8b7a24a5a3f243279131af418001b6499b4ed7>

1. The introductory material³

[col.66] Eusebius, On the titles of the psalms. An interpretation of some in epitome.

The Psalms come to one hundred and fifty, happening to be composed of the sacred number fifty; making a Pentecost of days, whereas in years, according to the Jews, it is called a jubilee⁴. The Psalter is called Nablā⁵ by the Jews, which is indeed unique and most genuine⁶ among the musical instruments, not facilitating the sounds from the lower scales, but having resonant bronze from above. The psalms therefore are begun through an instrument only without a voice⁷; whereas a song is by means of a harmonious voice; it is a song instead of a psalm *if* the accompanying voice leads the instrument; it is a psalm instead of a song *if* the voice is being lead by those playing. By reason of allegory, a psalm is the harmonious movement of a body in good works, although not quite something leading to theoria⁸; whereas a song without activity is true perception, a soul enlightened by God and His oracles. It is a song instead of a psalm *if* activity precedes knowledge, according to "If you desire wisdom, keep the commandments and the Lord will supply it to you."⁹ It is a psalm instead of a song *if* activity is being lead by knowledge; concerning how and when it must be done. For this reason also the first *lines* of the psalms are titles, for the saint does not begin from theoria, but he believes everything follows from activity. There are many songs at the end, and in some places songs of ascent¹⁰, in no way a psalm, neither on its own, nor through union; whereas songs are always on their own, since the ascent looks only towards theoria. A musical interlude¹¹ is not found in the Hebrew by Aquila¹², in its place is 'ἀεὶ'.¹³

³ All of the introductory material has been translated. The titles are those found in the Greek text in Migne. [RP]

⁴ Reading Ἰωβήλ for Ἰωήλ, likely a copyist's error.

⁵ Νάβλα (Hebr. נבל) - An instrument of 10 or 12 strings which traditionally produced the melodies to which David composed his psalms.

⁶ ὀρθότατον - this could also be interpreted to mean 'upright', like a harp. If this is the intended meaning, his use of the superlative would have to be rendered as 'the only completely upright of the musical instruments'.

⁷ φωνή - can mean either 'sound' or 'voice'. In this brief passage used to describe the interplay between the instrument and the person singing, both meanings are employed.

⁸ Eusebius makes use of the standard categories of praxis and theoria when speaking about different levels of spiritual activity.

⁹ Sir. 1:26.

¹⁰ ἀναβαθμοί - The title in Greek for the set of psalms sometimes referred to as 'songs of ascent'. The literal meaning is 'a flight of steps' or 'staircase'. They were psalms traditionally sung by Jewish pilgrims as they ascended from the plain up to Jerusalem, from which their metaphorical name was derived. Unfortunately, the use of 'song' for 'songs of ascent' slightly blur the lines he is laying for the definition of 'psalm' and 'song'.

¹¹ English often transliterates the Hebrew as 'selah', which originally indicated the point in the psalm at which the singing of the song ceased, while the instrument continued to play; something akin to a musical interlude.

¹² Aquila - The copyist by whose hand we have received some of the oldest Hebrew manuscripts, along with Symmachus and Theodotion. It must be noted that Eusebius may have had access to manuscripts, in both Greek and Hebrew, which have since been lost.

¹³ The Greek translators of the Septuagint opted for this word instead of transliterating 'selah', the literal meaning in Greek is eternity. In lieu of the original intention of the word in Hebrew, since music did not

Prologue by Eusebius Pamphilus

Here is the division of the book of the psalms, since the Hebrew surpasses the exactness of the copyists. No one ought to interpret that all the psalms are David's, but also from other prophets in which those prophesying sang psalms. Wherefore, all the writing of the psalms by the Jews are not entitled *with the name* of David, nevertheless it is named the book of psalms loosely. The children of the Hebrews divided the whole book of the psalms into five parts; the first into those from 1 to 40; the second, those from 41 to 72; the third, those from 73 to 88; [col.68] the fourth, those from 89 to 105; the fifth, those from 106 to the end. 19 psalms are without title, 131 have been titled. As such there are divisions for those with titles; those of David are 72; those of Kora are 11; those of Asaph are 12; one by Aitham the Israelite; Solomon 2; Moses 1; anonymous 17; those in Hallelujah are 15; the anonymous are as many as those having titles, for which some are not known.

Subjects for the psalms by Eusebius himself.¹⁴

1. Encouragement for piety and dissuasion of the opposite.
2. Prophecy concerning Christ and the calling of the nations.
3. Prophecy of the future good things by David.
4. Prophecy by David concerning those things which he had suffered.
5. A prayer from a person of the Church.
6. Teaching of confession.
7. A confession from David and teaching about the calling of the nations.
8. Prophecy of the calling of the nations
9. Death of Christ and resurrection, teaching of the kingdom, destruction of all enemies.
10. Victory hymn of those struggling for God.
11. A charge against the wicked, and prophecy of Christ's coming.
12. Rebellion of enemies, and expectation of Christ's coming.
13. A charge against the wicked, and prophecy of Christ's coming.
14. The final restoration¹⁵ by God.
15. Elect of the Church, and the Resurrection of Christ.
16. Man's end, or also a prayer of Christ for those who will be saved by Him.
17. David's thanksgiving and a prophecy of Christ's coming and Ascension.
18. Theology with ethical teaching.
19. Prayer for the righteous cooperating with David.
20. Intercession for those cooperating with David.
21. Prophecy of Christ's sufferings, and the calling of the nations.

accompany the singing of psalms in Greek, the musical interlude, in theory at least, was replaced with a slight meditative pause.

¹⁴ The headings or titles for the psalms are written in a kind of shorthand, for the sake of brevity, and in the Greek many words were intentionally left absent, particularly articles. These omissions have been restored in the translation for the sake of clarity.

¹⁵ ἀποκατάστασις – This word has a somewhat charged meaning theologically, because Origen uses the phrase "ἀποκατάστασις τῶν πάντων" in various passages in his works, where it means a restoration of all things, in which all of creation will eventually be reconciled to God.

22. Teaching and an introduction of a new people.
23. Prophecy of the calling of the nations, and the perfection of the saved.
24. Teaching of confession.
25. Intercession for those advancing for God.
26. Thanksgiving and request for good.
27. Supplication with a prophecy.
28. Enigmatic prophecy with theology.
29. Thanksgiving with confession.
30. Confession with supplication.
31. Prophecy of those saved by Christ.
32. Exhortation for singing of praises with theology.
33. Teaching of thanksgiving.
34. Supplication of a righteous man, and prophecy concerning Christ.
35. Refutation of the impious with theology.
36. Teaching of a pious life.
37. Teaching of confession.
38. Intercession with confession.
39. Thanksgiving of those saved by God and mention of the Church.
40. Prophecy about Christ and about the betrayer¹⁶.
41. Prophets' supplication pertaining to the rejection of the Jewish nation.
42. 43. Also concerning the same.
44. Manifestation of Christ's kingdom.
45. Preaching of the Apostles.
46. Calling of the nations.
47. Hymn to God about the Church and destruction of persecutors.
48. Teaching on divine judgment. [col.69]
49. Annulment¹⁷ of the Law of Moses and introduction of (the law) of the New Testament.
50. Teaching of Confession.
51. Refutation of the way of a wicked man, and his end.
52. Savior's manifestation, and deliverance from godlessness.
53. Prayer of a man struggling for God.
54. Indication of the things suffered by Christ.
55. Thanksgiving of a righteous man saved from enemies.
56. David's thanksgiving and prophecy of the calling of the nations.
57. Teaching on the righteous judgment of God.
58. Calling of the nations and the casting away of the Jews.
59. Casting away of Judaism and calling of the nations.
60. Petition and thanksgiving.
61. Teaching on healing.¹⁸
62. Thanksgiving for the end according to God.
63. Teaching of a pious champion.
64. Calling of the nations.

¹⁶ Alternately, 'the betrayal'.

¹⁷ More literally, 'overthrow' or 'ruin', but I have opted for a less severe gloss given Mt. 5:17.

¹⁸ More literally, 'healing teaching' or 'therapeutic teaching'.

65. Calling of the nations and witness of Apostles.
66. Calling of the nations and preaching of Apostles.
67. Christ's incarnation and calling of the nations.
68. Christ's sufferings and casting away of the Jews.
69. Supplication of righteous man and Christ Himself.
70. Christ's suffering and resurrection.
71. Prophecy of Christ's kingdom and calling of the nations.
72. Confession of human weakness in light of the success of the wicked and longsuffering of God.
73. Suspension of the final oppression of Jews occurring during the reign of Vespasian and Titus.
74. Christ's theology and mention of divine judgment.
75. Vengeance against the impious by God's judgment.
76. Concerning the longsuffering of God and His miraculous works.
77. Christ's command to the Church, and concerning the lawlessness of the previous people.
78. Prophecy of those under Antioch in Judea who come to terms with them, the history according to the Maccabees.
79. Prophecy of those under siege by the Assyrians, and petition concerning Christ's appearance.
80. Calling of the nations, and teaching of the things that happened to the previous people.
81. Accusation against the rulers of the Jewish people.
82. Prayer for the people suffering sadness, and prophecy of the end of the nations by Christ.
83. Christ's incarnation and concerning the Church.
84. Prophecy about Christ and those redeemed by Him.
85. A prayer of David and prophecy of the calling of the nations.
86. Christ's incarnation.
87. He prophecies the death of Christ.
88. Christ's kingdom from the seed of David.
89. Discarding of the Jews.
90. Christ's victory and everything accomplished by Him.
91. Concerning rest according to God.
92. A hymn of Christ's kingdom in His first coming.
93. Concerning the dogmas according to the Church.
94. The calling of the Jews and their rejection.
95. Calling of the nations and Christ's coming.
96. A hymn of Christ's kingdom in His first coming.
97. Calling of the nations and Christ's coming.
98. A hymn of Christ's kingdom.
99. Calling of the nations.
100. A hymn of perfection according to God.
101. Lamentation for the previous *people*, and prophecy about the people, and calling of the nations. [col.72]
102. Teaching on thanksgiving.

103. Teaching on confession.
104. Teaching to the nations on the good works of the previous people of God.
105. Teaching of the impiety of the Jewish nation.
106. Prophecy of the calling of the nations, and the illumination of man by the Word of God.
107. Calling of the nations.
108. Christ's sufferings.
109. Christ's victory.
110. Christ's thanksgiving.
111. Christ's teaching.
112. Calling of a new people.
113. Teaching of a new people.
114. Advancement of a new people.
115. Perfection of a new people.
116. Calling of the nations.
117. Victory of those struggling in Christ, prophecy concerning Christ.
118. Elementary teaching of ascent *of the soul* according to God.
119. Sojourning.
120. Return from Babylon and the Diaspora.
121. Evangelic good things.
122. A prayer.
123. Thanksgiving.
124. Restoration.
125. Expectation of things to come.
126. Building of the Church.
127. Calling of the nations.
128. Victory of Christ's army.
129. Prayer of martyrs.
130. On humility.
131. Prayer of David and manifestation.
132. People's completion.
133. The coming people.
134. Introductory teaching.
135. Thanksgiving of those redeemed.
136. The voices of saints in captivity.
137. Thanksgiving with prophecy.
138. Supplication of the righteous with theology.
139. Voices of those struggling for God.
140. A prayer for perfection in God.
141. Voices of those warring for God.
142. Prayer of one confessing.
143. Thanksgiving of one victorious.
144. Hymn with theology.
145. Hymn with theology.
146. Hymn with theology.
147. Hymn with theology.

148. Hymn with theology.
149. Hymn with theology.
150. A catholic intercession by means of hymn.
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Eusebius, on the Psalms

A psalm seems to be called derivatively as such on account of the psaltery; and that called psaltery is a musical instrument differing in form from the lyre, on which the song being struck up is called a psalm. A song then is the resounding music through melody without the organ of speech¹⁹. It is called a psalm instead of a song, whenever that melody of the song is guided by playing the psaltery. It is called a song instead of a psalm conversely. As in the history of the Kings and the Chronicles, David the king after the death of Saul, while leading up the ark of the covenant of the Lord, being in the house of Abinadab twenty years, from when it was necessarily transferred from the Ashdothites, and they placed it in Jerusalem, [col.73] it is said that four from the tribe of Levi by lot were leading the chanting of songs, chanting and singing before the ark to the Lord, and offering up a cheerful voice in confession and praise on harmonious instruments, and with songs, with kinnors²⁰, and with nabras, and with drums, and with cymbals, on the psaltery, and on the horn by Asaph, Heman, Ethan, Jeduthun; on whom the number of songs which had been ordered, 280 being chanted, 72 by each; 32 from Ham; 25 from Shem; 15 from Japeth.²¹ Who, while standing before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, chanted and sung to the Lord; which were on stringed instruments, on cymbals, on lyres, and on the psaltery; amidst whom the blessed David stood, himself leading those leading the songs, holding the psaltery in *his* hands. Each sang and chanted hymns to God in the Holy Spirit in an orderly manner. Therefore at the time when the Spirit abounded upon those leading the chanting, the others present where lead on peacefully, answering harmoniously to those chanting; *Hallelujah*.

In the Hebrew book of the psalms, all were written without the addition of the number and separately. Some are joined together, yet others divided. For instance, the first and second are joined together according to the Hebrew; and again the ninth, joined together for us, in the Hebrew is divided into two. However it must be noted that the order of the psalms is not composed in conformity with the years of history; it is clear that this order crosses over itself a great deal, just as the book of the Kings. As such, when a great deal of idolatry prevailed over the Jewish race, they say they it caused them

¹⁹ Somewhat contradictory of the definition he himself gave for a song at the opening. It seems these 'definitions' are made to fit a metaphorical or typological analysis, and are not definitions of a given word, strictly speaking.

²⁰ Often translated as 'stringed instruments'.

²¹ I have been unable to locate the Scriptural (or other) reference for 288 songs divided among the four leaders of those playing music into 72 apiece. I am even more perplexed as to the relationship between the transferal of the ark and a listing of Noah's sons. Likely, there is a portion of text missing. Perhaps, the numbers attached to each of the son's of Noah are intended to indicate the number of ethnicities which came forth from each of the sons of Noah, and in this way, singing 72 songs before the ark of the covenant symbolically takes on the meaning of singing on behalf of all the races of mankind who came forth from those in the ark of Noah. But this is just a theory.

to forget the ancestral writings, neither did they follow the book of the law of Moses, nor did they preserve a memory of the piety of the fathers. So, then, the prophets were passionately desiring to expose their impiety. In such a bad situation as those times, miraculously, not even then did that which was contained in the book of the psalms perish, they forgot to hand it down for many years. Later on after these things, either Ezra or some other prophet²², while being occupied with their synagogue, by whom also the book of psalms was brought forth, not finding them as a whole, but at different times. Those being found first were placed at the first, not even those of David are all laid out successively, but amidst them are also those of the sons of Korah, and of Asaph, and Solomon, and Moses, Hemen, Ethan, and Jeduthun, and again those of David are to be found here and there in the book arranged, not according to the times they are composed, but to the time they were found.²³ On account of which those occurring later in time by being found first were included nearer the beginning, yet those being found after the earlier ones were arranged in the second place; you may find this same things in the prophets.

Everything has been stored up in the book of the psalms as though in some great and common treasury. [Col.76] And there you will find that the book of psalms contains a new teaching after the legislation of Moses, and the teaching contained in this book is second after the written legislation of Moses. So then after the passing away of Moses and Joshua, and after the Judges, comes David, as though he was made worthy to bear the title father of the Savior, first he handed down a new type of chanting to the Jews, through which he did away with those things legislated concerning sacrifice by Moses, and he introduces a new type of worship of God through hymns and crying out. And he himself teaches many others of the reality entirely transcending the law of Moses.

Eusebius of Caesarea, On the Musical Interludes²⁴

There are five leaders who expressed the musical interlude when writing, they were selected by David the king from the tribe of Levi, their names are these; Asaph, the sons of Korah, Heman, Ethan, Jeduthun. The number of songs attributed to this is 72 to each one. These while standing before the holiness of the Lord, praising the ruler of all, some having cymbals, others the psaltery, others a stringed instrument, others a horn, others a lyre, while David was stood in the midst. And so they made a beginning of the songs while holding such instruments in their hands, and each being moved by the Holy Spirit sang to God, and all the rest responded to the chanting with 'Hallelujah'. At whatever time the grace of the Holy Spirit departed for a little while, then from the musical instruments while not moving, at that time it was opportune to prescribe the musical interlude.²⁵

²² The book of the Law of Moses was found by Hilkiah the priest during the reign of Josiah (2 Chron 34:13-18). This was followed by a brief, but intense, period of repentance and reform, particularly exemplified in the keeping of Pascha, before the final fall of Jerusalem to Babylon in the next generation.

²³ A most interesting explanation for the arrangement of the psalms; it would be worth the research to confirm both his sources and the validity of such a claim.

²⁴ The "musical interlude" refers to "Selah". [RP]

²⁵ Here the introduction ends, and the text continues with the commentary on Psalm 1.

2. Extract from Commentary on Psalm 60

On Ps. 60, v.6. (PG 23, col.580C – 581C)²⁶

VERS. 6. 'For You, O God, have heard my prayers; You have given an inheritance to those that fear Your name.'

If ever there was some simple prayer sent up by David it is the psalm at hand. It was not at all necessary to include this in the book of the psalms, since likely he himself made thousands of other prayers to God, just as we do each day, according to the time, sometimes we pray certain things, other times others. Yet when something is prayed many times in this way, either psalms being struck up or hymns being sent up, it is filled with prophetic power. Reasonably it is no longer *understood* as a simple prayer, but that those words spoken indicate other prophetic words and were set down in the divine books which contain the grace of discernment of spirits. So indeed sometimes, after such things were said, by inserting a *selah* (musical interlude) afterwards the prophet makes a change in meaning, perceiving the arrival of the Holy Spirit, being enlightened by him and knowing that the prayer spoken by him happened to be heard by God. Wherefore above he prayed saying 'Hear, O God, my prayer', yet here after the *Selah* he says, 'For You, O God, have heard my prayers.' Do you see that he perceived that he was heard? And this very thing was that which was proclaimed to the worthy by God speaking through the prophet Isaiah, "Hereafter I will speak to you saying, 'Behold, I am here.'" Yet further on speaking through the prophet, the Holy Spirit being established in him, he makes it clear that truly it was conceded that you were heard. Wherefore he says, 'For You, O God, have heard my prayers.' This understanding is defended according to the other translators, since according to Aquila it is said, 'For Thou, O God, has heard my prayers', and according to Symmachus, 'For You, O God, have heard my prayers.'²⁷ Then he says, 'You have given an inheritance to those that fear Your name.' For since up until now you have heard me, I know, being enlightened by your Spirit, that not only to me, but also to all those fearing your name you will give a reward worthy of your fear, the inheritance which you promised to them.

Thus, speaking mystically, 'to those that fear Your name,' he spread out grace upon all men, since the inheritance was not proclaimed to Israel, nor to the race of the Jews only, but also to all those fearing His name. 'To the Jews first' says the Apostle, 'then the Greeks.' Many times it has been demonstrated to us that all those from the nations having respect toward God, the Logos is accustomed to call 'those fearing the Lord'. So for these reasons to them, he says, you have given an inheritance; and that which he did not say, he bequeathed for us to seek. And so, to Israel a land flowing with

²⁶ This passage is of interest because it discusses the inspiration of the scripture.

²⁷ Here, Eusebius is likely referring to different manuscripts from the main Hebrew copyists/translators of the LXX. Though the meaning from each copyist is essentially the same, there are slight differences in the Greek which are impossible to render into English. More interestingly, he emphasizes that on this particular point they are in concord, leading us to believe that this was not true in all places. Since almost no original manuscripts exist of the LXX, we are left to infer from such statements as these the relative degree of concordance or discordance amongst varying early translations.

milk and honey was promised through Moses, but to those fearing *Him* the sort of inheritance he gave, he advised to be sought. You will find this in the beatitudes of our Savior, in which it is said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 5:3). And again, you have the promise of the Savior, by which he says, "and in this age shall receive a hundredfold, and in the future shall inherit eternal life" (Mt. 19:29). And on account of this very inheritance the fifth psalm is entitled, 'For the end; for her that obtained the inheritance' and in the fifteenth psalm this inheritance is demonstrated according to, 'The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and my cup, you are the one who restores my inheritance...indeed, to me my inheritance is most excellent.' (Ps. 15:5-6 LXX).

3. Extract from Commentary on Psalm 62²⁸

On Ps 62:2-3 (PG 23, col. 599A-604B)²⁹

Psalm 62: A Psalm of David who was in the wilderness of Judea.

VERS. 2, 3. 'Oh God, my God, unto Thee I rise early at dawn.'

While fleeing, David drew near to the priest Abimelech, from there to Achish the king of Gath, and from there to Mizpah of Moab. The prophet Gad, when attending to him, advised *him* not to waste time amidst the foreign tribes. Wherefore, after departing from that place, he dwelt in the wilderness of Judea. At that time also the Scripture gives an account saying, "And David dwelt in Maserem in the wilderness, in the narrow *passes*; and dwelt in the wilderness in mount Ziph. And Saul sought him continually, but the Lord delivered him not into his hands." (1 Sam. 23, 14. LXX) While being in these situations, he arranged the verse of the psalm³⁰, the time being signified through the title. Wherefore it says, "A psalm of David when he was in the wilderness of Judea."

It is reasonable at this point to indicate again those things *mentioned previously*, that the order of the psalms is not composed according to the sequence of historical time, but the times cross over one another a great deal. So, for example, the history contains the first explanation in which Saul sent messengers to the house of David in order to kill him; and that Michal his wife let him down through a window. Yet the writing of the psalms makes mention of this action in the 58th *psalm*.

At the same time the Scripture sets forth the order of the histories, that David went to Naioth to the priest Abimelech³¹; yet, the book of the psalms makes mention of this action in the 33rd psalm. And again the writing of the Kingdoms says: "David therefore departed from there and escaped by going into the cave of Adullam" (1 Kings 22.1), but the book of the Psalms mentions this act in the 56th psalm. And yet again, after these things, the writing of the Kingdoms mentions Doeg, that he calumniated the priest Abimelech to Saul; yet the book of the Psalms indicates this time in the 51st psalm. Yet David, knowing the false accusation of Doeg, flees and comes near to the wilderness of Judea, at that time also he sets down the psalm by hand. And the writing of the Kingdoms after the time at which the psalm was penned, I am speaking of the 62nd psalm, makes mention of certain activities; that the Ziphites betrayed David to Saul; yet the book of the Psalms makes mention of these things in the 53rd psalm, which is entitled, "For the end: among the hymns of instruction by David, when the Ziphites came, and said to Saul: Lo,

²⁸ This is the beginning of the commentary on Psalm 62. Eusebius ignores verse 1. [RP]

²⁹ This extract is of interest because it describes how the psalter was put together. [RP]

³⁰ προκειμενον ψαλμόν - Literally, 'pretext of the psalm'. In the modern Greek Orthodox usage, the word προκειμενον is used before various readings during the services both from the Old and New Testaments. But with respect to the psalms, it is the verses after the numbering, before the psalm begins, which provide either historical information about the psalm's composition, a dedication, musical instruction, etc.

³¹ Following the chronology set forth in 1 Kings, after being saved by Michal, David went to Samuel in Ramah.

is not David hidden with us?" And the 56th psalm is entitled "when the foreigners took him in Geth." The book of the Kingdoms has placed this later in the history.

You see that the former things are placed later, and the latter placed former; that if it were ordered according to the sequence of time the 58th psalm would be placed first, followed by the 33rd, and third after these would be the 56th, and fourth from these the 51st, and then following accordingly the fifth would be the 62nd, and the sixth would be the 53rd, and after all these the 55th. After the death of Saul, he chants the 59th psalm first, then Joab made slaughter in the cleft of Allon, and shut in under his hand 12,000 of Moab. Then the 50th; after these, when Nathan the prophet came to him, at which time he had gone into Bathsheba. Then the 3rd is placed in order, when he was fleeing from the face of his son Abessalom; and after these the 7th 'concerning the words of Chusi, the son of Jemeni.'

Is there anyone, then, who would not inquire into the cause for these things? Certainly, it is not reasonable without having certain necessary purposes, to have arranged these things in this way.

Another *reason* is to expect that these numbers contain a certain strength; wherefore the meaning contained in the words is to be applied to each number, which for as an example the 50th in number concerning forgiveness, contains an account of sins, on account of the mentioning of the 50 year period in the law, which the children of the Hebrews call Jubilee, in which remission and forgiveness was made for debtors, and freedom of servants, and other such things had been legislated to be performed. The fiftieth psalm is applied for forgiveness and remission of this fault for the sake of the confession. In this way, then, also for each psalm according to certain reasons by means of the power of the numbers it may be said that a corresponding understanding ought to be applied.

But even while saying such things it does not seem to me to touch upon the purpose; first then because none of the numbers are mentioned at all in the Jewish book of the Psalms, they are entitled without the addition of a number; and so because they are joined together in a different manner, thus also are they separated differently. For example then, the first and second at the beginning of the book are joined together in Hebrew; and again the ninth though joined together by us is divided into two in Hebrew. And the entire book of the Psalms is divided into five parts, just as it has already been said above.

Certainly things being this way, the most likely consideration for the numbers ought to be examined. Someone ought to say for which reason there is, let us say, for the psalm at hand, I am talking about the 62nd, the reason for which a certain number is applied; either for each of the 150 numbers, the same reasoning will be defined concerning each, or for each number; but anyone desiring these things ought to receive them in a certain way.

As for me, I am lead *to believe* that the psalms are placed in order of each with respect to the other, for the most part, by reason of those things written, and in this way for the majority when it is examined it is also found to be such,³² wherefore they are joined together having a relation and order between themselves. Hence it does not give an account according to time, but according to the sequence of meaning.

This has already been shown earlier by the majority of the others, indeed from the 41st to the 50th, in which we set forth convincingly that in the writings ascribed to the sons of Korah, they often preserve a sequence which shows their meaning. After these things in a text of Asaph and again through those things connected with the confession of David recorded in the 50th psalm, without force the understanding which we concede is supplied.

Therefore, there is one reason, as it seems to me, that the ordering of the psalms would be so, yet I have much else to say.³³ For when a great deal of idolatry gained mastery over the Jewish race, the history of the Kingdoms teaches that they were made to forget the writings of the fathers, so that neither the book of the law of Moses appeared, nor the memory of the piety of the fathers preserved by them. Thus, they also killed the prophets who censured their impiety, and for the sake of them above all else they were handed over to captivity under the Assyrians. It is not then a wonder that in such a dismal state of times, even the things recorded in the book of Psalms was lost, relegated to be forgotten for many years. After these things either Ezra or a certain other one of the prophets, while being occupied in their synagogue, among other things the books of the psalms was brought forth, not being found as a whole, but at different times. Those being found first were placed first, as such not even those of David are laid out successively, but amidst them are also those of the sons of Korah, and of Asaph, and Solomon, and Moses, Hemen as well as Ethan, and again those of David are to be found arranged here and there in the book, not according to the time they were composed, but according to the time they were found. On account of which those occurring later in time by being found first were included nearer the beginning, yet those being found after these were arranged in the second place. These things, then, ought to be said from the likelihoods in the inquiry set out before us. Already then even for those things written in the psalm at hand a due measure has been applied.

³² An interesting theory, which he claims he has proved definitively elsewhere in the commentary, wherein certain sections of the Psalter are ordered neither by numerological or historical methods, but according to the intrinsic meaning of each psalm. This, together with the aforementioned reasons, brings the number of contending forces for the ordering of any given psalm in the Psalter to four; historical, numerological, by meaning, and according to the order in which they were found after the captivity. Though he here mentions ordering the psalms by reason, in the following passage he reverts to the theory espoused in the introduction, that at least for this section, they have been arranged according to their post Babylonian exile date of discovery.

³³ From here to the end of 604B the writing closely resembles section 73C-D of the introduction.

4. Extract from Commentary on Psalm 86³⁴

On Ps 86:2-4 (PG 23, col. 1040B – 1043A)³⁵

For the Sons of Korah, Song Psalm 86

VERS. 2-4. 'His foundations are in the holy mountains, the Lord loves the gates of Sion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken about you, city of God. I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know me' (Ps 86:1).

Before this they published 'by the Sons of Korah, Aquila and Symmachus, the Sons of Korah', as being composed by them. Indeed through them the psalm is mentioned and named, not only by the psalter, but also with a song.

While inquiring on my own, for what reason all were not entitled 'by the Sons of Korah' for those in the collection, but in the following way, specifically the first ones after the 51st *psalm*, and again two specifically dedicated, the 83rd and the 80th; and again another two, the *psalm* at hand and the one following it.

The 85th *psalm* entitled 'A prayer of David' has been inserted in the middle of these two, the things presented by me have been revealed in a vision of the latter things about which we have already spoken earlier.³⁶

It might be said, if someone *desires*, also in another way, that all the words received in the book of the Psalms, having been spoken by different men in the prophetic spirit, were sung independently, as it were *some* being spoken at one time, or being prophesied at others. For example, then, some are entitled by Moses, and others by Asaph, and again others by David, and another by Solomon, and again Ethan the Esdrahite³⁷, and others, the latter, a great number were recorded by them without titles, and it is quite impossible for us to know by who. And so since they were spoken by different people here and there in ancient times it was preserved by those zealous for such things. And then later the 150 were gathered into one book.

Then, he who gathered *them*, either Esdras himself, as the children of the Hebrews say, or someone else like him, arranged those coming to him first³⁸ at the beginning in the book. Since all of them were not found together at one time, by necessity he joined those falling into *his* hand with those received beforehand. Wherefore the first seven *psalms*, each of the sons of Korah, were arranged then when they were found altogether at once, after these those coming after them were joined to them. Then having found many in the

³⁴ This is the beginning of the commentary on Psalm 86. Eusebius again ignores verse 1. [RP]

³⁵ This extract is of interest because it has more material on how the psalter was put together. He explicitly denies that the psalm numbers carry inherent significance. [RP]

³⁶ This phrase could be rendered in a different manner: the things represent to me *something* revealed in a vision of the latter things about which we have already spoken previously.

³⁷ Interestingly, some versions translate this as the 'Israelite', but clearly the Greek here Esdras.

³⁸ I.e. coming into his possession first chronologically.

meantime, into the book of psalms already received with the 62nd psalm, again another two of the Sons of Korah were found, which he arranged accordingly by joining in the third place with the 60th and the 62nd. Then meanwhile, during the time the prayer of David was found, this was also put in after the 62nd. And again after the prayer of David, having been laid down in the 65th place, another two by the sons of Korah were found, the one under discussion and the one following it. And by necessity these too were joined to the prayer of David. This is the reason of the position.

That which has been said will be confirmed by prophetic citations, for since in the prophetic books many times those later texts in the order³⁹ are found to be spoken earlier in time, and those prophesied later in time are arranged ahead with those going before. As such, Jeremiah begins to prophesy during *the reign of Josiah*, and continues until Zedekiah and the captivity. Zedekiah was the fourth king from Josiah, since after Josiah his second son Joachim was appointed successor in the beginning, Jeconiah being the third son after Joachim, Zedekiah being the fourth brother after Joachim⁴⁰, during whose *reign* all those things by Jeremiah were prophesied. His eponymous writing begins from Josiah, then proceeds with mentioning *those things under Jeconiah* the third from Josiah, then prophesies those things taking place under Zedekiah who was forth from Josiah; in which he allows those things prophesied during the reign of Joachim, who was second after Josiah, to be placed in the fourth place. Then, next he introduces those things in the beginning of the same Joachim, then those things under Zedekiah, and again the things under Joachim. Then he makes mention of the captivity in Babylon, even so he placed *it* after Zedekiah leaving undone *the time* before Gedaliah, and that Israel appointed Gedaliah, with whom Johanan the son of Kareah was leader. And after all these things he then brings forth those prophecies spoken in the years of Joachim, and again those things spoken at the beginning of *the reign* of king Zedekiah.

You may find *it to be* about the same in Ezekiel. Following thereafter, as well as in this writing, the things prophesied are not woven together following chronological time, but the things in twenty seventh year of the captivity are placed before those spoken of in the eleventh year of the captivity. And again, after those things in the eleventh year, others things spoken in the tenth year are mentioned, and next after these those in the twenty fifth year. And it may be said thus of all such things if there is not any other reason aside from the one given. For here and there, as is probable, for those things prophesied throughout the years and during each king in particular, saving the older ones along with the more important ones, either by Esdras or some others, while gathering into one section the things spoken of by each of the prophets at different times, those writings found first were arranged first in order; at once those found next were joined to them, although they occurred previously in time.

This is the reason also for the ordering of the Psalms, in general for all of them, but particularly for those at hand being examined by us. Unless, perhaps, by means of those things being examined, some deeper meaning may present some other reasons escaping us. At least those things arranged for us in the ordering by the Sons of Korah,

³⁹ I.e. The ordering of the books of the prophets.

⁴⁰ I am tempted to replace this with Jeconiah, in keeping with the sequence, but have left it as is.

both concerning the prayer of David from the text of the psalm at hand and that placed in between by the Sons of Korah, though it is placed beforehand by them it needs to be read according to those things spoken by us earlier. These things, however, have not been studied by us in any detail.

5. Extract 2 from Commentary on Psalm 86

On Ps. 86:5-7. (PG 1048B-1049C)⁴¹

By means of the things completed, even here, through works confirming the truth of the word by the grace of salvation, both in Babylon and Tyre, and all the other nations and enemies of the nation of Israel, and through the washing of regeneration and the renewal by the mysteries of the New Testament revealed in the city of God.

VERS. 5, 6. "He will say Mother Sion: a man and a man born in her; and: The Most High Himself has founded her" (Ps 86:5).

The translation of the other interpreters presents the meaning of the text more clearly.⁴² For Symmachus produced this version: "Concerning Sion it shall be said by each of them: That man was born there, the Highest Himself founded her. The Lord will number the people in writing; that one was born there"⁴³ (Ps 86:5-6). And Theodotion says, "And it will be said in Sion; A man and a man born in her, and he founded her, and the Most High prepared her. The Lord will describe in a writing of the people; This one was born in her" (Ps 86:5-6). And pay attention to another version among these *writings* which says concerning the foreigners that: "The foreigners and Tyre and the people of the Egyptians, these were born there. This one and that one it will be said, saying: A man and a man born there" (Ps 86:4-5). And again the following, "The Lord writing about the peoples, this one was born there" (86:6). First it is said concerning the foreign people, second concerning the man being referred to as having been born there, and third concerning the Lord Himself. Since the Lord, they say, the One prophesying these things and writing to the people, that one was born there.

Clearly though the Word sets before us the man being born there, that is in the city of God, it infers the person of the Savior; saying the Lord Himself has been born there, presenting the indwelling in man of the Word of God. For just as Sion, being the city of God, happens to be a place for the one being born in her, so also this man becomes a place and a bearer of God the Word being born in him, as in a holy altar and temple, even more so as the image and vessel of the divinity dwelling in him. And the Word teaches these things necessarily so that it may be known how the foreigners and Tyre and the people of Egypt were born in the city of God, and have become sons of God through regeneration by Him.

⁴¹ The interest of this passage is that for this psalm the LXX differs notably from the other Greek versions.

⁴² It should be pointed out here that, once again, Eusebius is undertaking in this passage what, today, we call comparative textual analysis and criticism. Here, he is using the clarity of meaning alone to gauge the validity of a text; a method still reliable, though not entirely so, today. For this reason I have left certain passages poorly translated rather than trying to force a more interpretive meaning like 'this man and that man was born in her'. In this was the translation reflects the very fact that he says their meaning isn't quite clear. That he is interested in such work at all is an indication of the high level of intellectual cultivation in Cappadocia and particularly Caesarea in the fourth century.

⁴³ Both the placement and different choice of words cannot be fully conveyed for these two Greek versions of the same passage.

For, according to a certain version, since so much grace pours forth in heaven, it is represented by saying such things concerning the man born there, and the Lord, again, being born in the man. Saying this in connection with all of these things, "As the dwelling of all those made joyful in you", compared with that which Akylas⁴⁴ says, "even as choirs praising all the springs in you. And they will praise as on flutes all the springs in you." I think that it also means, through *saying* such things, in the gathering of all the faithful, of all those deemed worthy of the holy city of God, and the restoration of one choir.

On account of which it is said, 'In you', the place again I understand to mean the city of God, of which the foundations were in the holy mountains, the gates and the entrances here below that are for us, in the midst of these all those gathered are prophesied to dwell with joy as in a divine and harmonious choir. The present psalm being a type of such mountains, prophesying the incarnation of God according to the reading of the translation of the seventy, the mystery was revealed.

⁴⁴ Better known as Aquila, one of the later Jewish translators of the Old Testament into Greek. [RP]

6. Extract from Commentary on Psalm 87

On Ps.87:11 (PG 23, Col. 1064A)⁴⁵

"Will your wonders be praised in the darkness, will your righteousness be remembered in the forgotten land."⁴⁶

If anyone may have fixed their mind on the wonders accomplished⁴⁷ for us, at both the tomb and the shrine of our Savior, truly it will appear as those prophesied works. A contemplation of these things exceptionally interprets *the meaning of* the land amidst the dead. First, clearly, by recalling the dead, second those in the tomb, third those in destruction, fourth in darkness, fifth those in the forgotten land, concerning which the man-loving and good God surely showed and provided miracles; his mercy that is to say the truth and righteousness of God will be explained.

⁴⁵ This mentions the *mnema* (tomb) and *martyrion* (shrine/church) of the Saviour in Jerusalem, where miracles are being performed among the faithful. This indicates that the *Commentary* is a late work, written after the church was built by Constantine. [RP]

⁴⁶ This quotation from Ps.87:13 is inline in the Greek text, although strangely it is omitted in the parallel Latin version printed in the PG. [RP]

⁴⁷ The Latin translator understood the aorist “accomplished” and “for us” as “nostro tempore... patrata sunt”, “have been accomplished *in our time*.” [RP]